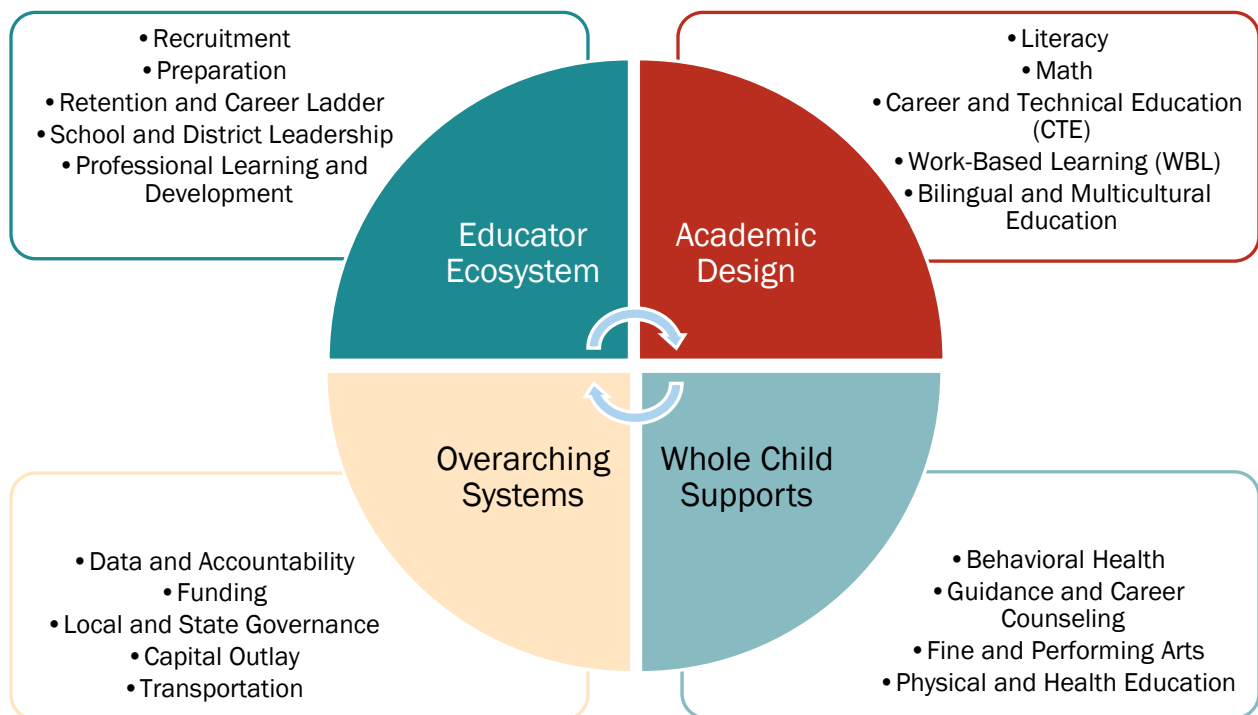


History

In 2022, Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) staff presented a [brief](#) identifying critical gaps in New Mexico’s education system. To support the committee—and the Legislature more broadly—in beginning to address those issues, as well as remedy the findings in the *Martinez-Yazzie* sufficiency lawsuit, staff developed the LESL Roadmap. Focusing on four major topics and informed by analysis of in-state, national, and international research, the roadmap specifies specific areas and efforts the Legislature can make to improve New Mexico’s education system on a long-term, sustainable basis.



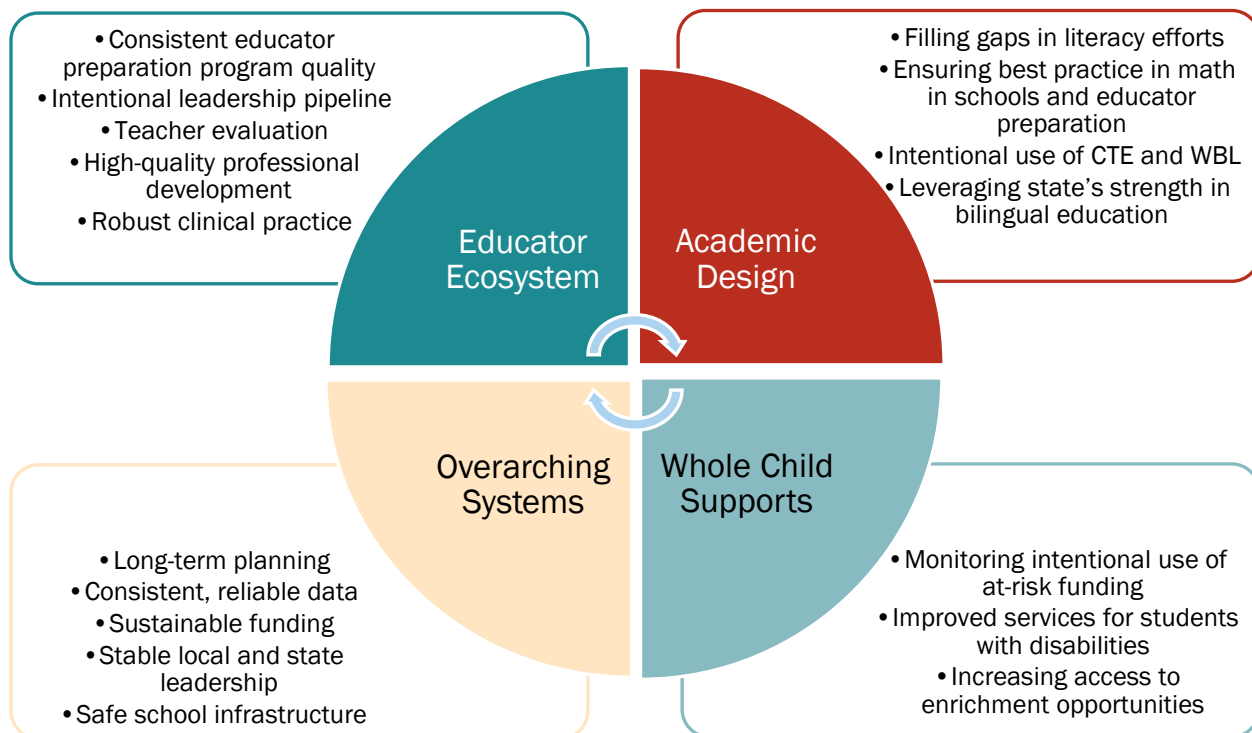
Since the development of the roadmap, LESL has put forward legislation to provide policy frameworks and funding proposals aligned with the committee’s work and the feedback of education partners across the state. The list below includes some of the recent major changes adopted by the Legislature.

- Increased instructional hours, including professional work time for educators (Laws 2023, Chapter 19)
- Funding for structured literacy initiatives
- Modernized graduation requirements to provide the flexibility needed in a rapidly changing society (Laws 2024, Chapter 2)
- Funding formula revisions to provide targeted funding, as well as accuracy, transparency, and accountability (Laws 2025, Chapter 89)
- Improved standards for educator and administrator preparation to ensure high quality instruction (Laws 2025, Chapters 148 and 149)
- Increased salaries to recruit and retain educators (Laws 2025, Chapter 149)
- Improved school board training to improve local decision making (Laws 2024, Chapter 43)

Next Steps

New Mexico's increased investments and targeted efforts have begun to pay off. Graduation rates have slowly increased, as have rates in literacy proficiency. While many teacher vacancies remain, the number of students entering and completing educator preparation programs is growing. Schools serving low-income students are receiving more funding than ever before. And innovative practices in career and technical education, as well as work-based learning, mean more students have access to a relevant, engaging educational experience.

But there is much work to do. Students continue to struggle in math. It is unclear if prospective educators are receiving the preparation they need to serve New Mexico's students. High rates of chronic absenteeism signal a lack of student engagement and point to larger environmental issues. A lack of timely and accurate data means it is difficult to track student progress, school spending, or long-term student outcomes. Lastly, high rates of leadership turnover at the local and state level make sustained progress difficult



LESC intends to build on its past efforts, aligned with the LESL Roadmap, to take further steps toward an improved education system. The Public Education Department was tasked by the First Judicial District Court with developing a comprehensive remedial action plan to address the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit, and while LESL staff will assist in that process, the roadmap can provide a guide for long-term sustained legislative action that can continue regardless of changes at the state and local governance levels. It can also support the Legislature in vetting education budget and policy proposals from staff, PED, and external stakeholders.

The need for systemic improvement goes well beyond compliance with the court's orders in the lawsuit. Even before the suit was filed, New Mexico lagged behind regional and national peers. Only through intentional, long-term planning and action can the state move toward not just a sufficient or adequate education but toward one that provides all students with opportunities that lead to a successful and fulfilling career and life.