



National Education Association-New Mexico 2020 LEGISLATIVE GOALS

- A. **Providing Pay Equity and a Living Wage for All School Employees:** Student success is enhanced with a stable, resourced high-quality educational workforce. Provide a \$15 minimum wage for school employees, including but not limited to school secretaries and other administrative support staff, food service and custodial employees. Fully fund the statutorily required increase to statewide Teacher Licensure levels to \$45,000 for Level One; \$55,000 for Level Two; and, \$65,000 for Level Three, and ensure all experienced teachers at each level are similarly respected by enacting an across-the-board minimal increase of ten percent (10%). Enact and fund appropriate licensure level minimum salaries for Education Assistants/paraprofessionals, and other licensed educational professionals.
- B. **Providing Affordable Health Insurance for Education Employees:** As with student learning, the quality of teaching is impacted by educator health. Escalating health insurance premiums and benefit decreases impact recruitment and retention of quality educators. Appropriate health care options must be provided. The statutory limit for employer paid insurance premium subsidies must be increased and funded to maintain a healthy workforce of quality educators.
- C. **Support Community Schools,** which meet the needs of diverse students and families by including them as full partners in decision-making. Community schools identify both the assets and needs in a school community. A continuous cycle of improvement science is used to address the identified needs through the hiring of an on-site coordinator.
- D. **Legislation to increase student success must address poverty and quality of life for students, parents and the community:** This should include, but not be limited to, raising the minimum wage to a living wage based on community standards, thus, providing access to quality public early education and improving student health and well-being.
- E. **Adequately Funding Fixed Costs:** We advocate funding to provide for built-in fixed costs and for district flexibility so employees and elected school boards, through collective bargaining, may determine local priorities.
- F. **Ensuring Equitable Student Opportunity:** All students need the opportunity to learn and perform to their full potential. Provide or maintain support programs to educate the whole child and success increases. Maintain appropriate support for students with priority needs, such as special education, gifted, and English Language Learners. Provide for more fine arts, physical education, music, and vocational programs taught by qualified licensed instructors. Provide quality internet access for all students.
- G. **New Teacher Induction and Mentoring:** Statutorily mandated induction and mentoring programs for public education employees must, finally, be funded. Colleges of education should be funded to collaborate with and provide support for teacher induction and mentoring in public schools. Provide more support for new and existing programs to encourage more New Mexicans to enter the teaching and the other education professions

- as the best route to provide every New Mexico student with a highly qualified educator, rather than expanding alternative programs as the route to address our teacher shortage.
- H. **Class-size limit:** Statutorily prohibit blanket class-size waivers, or class-size averaging that shorts the students time with educators. Restore funding for sufficient staff, including highly qualified teachers and support service professionals, to adhere to, and meet all students' needs.
- I. **Early Education Funding:** Student Achievement gaps among diverse cohorts are proven to be eliminated when at-risk students are provided quality pre-K and K5+ summer programs together: fund expansion of these programs statewide. Home visiting programs and other early childhood programs are also proven to help our students be fully ready to benefit from their K-12 schooling. Any summer or extended-year programs should be adequately funded to be as fully staffed and in the same facilities as during the "regular" school year.
- J. **Prioritize Education Funding to Guarantee Adequate Recurring Revenues:** Over the last ten years, public school funding has been reduced as a percent of general fund expenditures. Every dollar spent through the failed strategy of tax breaks for the rich (households of \$250,000 + income) is a dollar taken from our students. Adopt a strategy to provide revenue for sufficient funding to meet student needs for every New Mexico student.
- Repeal the 2013 Corporate Tax Give-Away
 - Restore Personal Income Tax Rates of 2003
 - Cigarette and Alcohol Tax Increases
 - Gas Tax
- K. **Providing Adequate High-Quality Health Care:** Student success is impacted positively or negatively by their health. Increase funding for school-based health care services, including physical, dental and mental health care. All New Mexico students should have full health care coverage.
- L. **Student Assessments:** Varied performance assessments conducted in a formative (on-going) manner must be used for diagnosis of student needs and improvement of instruction. Student assessments should never be used for high stakes decisions including school grading or staff evaluations and compensation. The development of curricular standards and an accompanying assessment system is a legitimate State priority; however, much more emphasis must be placed on ensuring cultural and linguistic relevance and responsiveness. This should include a statewide criterion-referenced test (all kids can achieve high levels), that is directly aligned to the standards. Emphasis should be placed on-ensuring that all students have an opportunity to learn the information and skills targeted in the state level assessments. Assessments which purport to measure change in performance over time within a student cohort group must be designed to measure the progress of the same students from year to year.
- M. **Protecting Retiree Health Care:** When the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority (NMRHCA) was created, it was not a pre-funded retirement benefits program. Provide sufficient funds to maintain the commitment made by New Mexico citizens to public employees. Limited increases in employee and employer withholdings, funded by the state, to improve the solvency of the system may be required.

- N. **Safeguarding School Employee Retirement:** Retirement credit is earned compensation—not a "gift" from taxpayers! Provide all education employees the full benefits of retirement through a fully-funded defined benefit plan, including the present COLA's, without offsets for other pension plans. The financial security of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Association (ERB) must be ensured through measures supported by the stakeholder groups comprising ERB membership.
- O. **Every New Mexico Student Will Learn in A Carbon-Neutral School!** Develop and initiate funding for a plan to make every New Mexico school carbon-neutral. This program will simultaneously move our state toward increasing the flow of available funds to the classroom (by reducing the structural energy-related "fixed cost" within District and school budgets). It should be structured so that contractors work with the school staff to provide student opportunities for Career and Technical Education instruction and hands-on learning experiences for students (such as understanding the cost/benefit calculations; or the math and engineering; as well as the construction skills involved; and the policy and science behind the initiative). This program will also be a big step toward helping our state achieve its goals of being carbon neutral by 2045 and stimulate economic growth in every New Mexico community.
- P. **Preserving Public Funding:** Resist schemes to privatize the education of any public-school students. Privatization of educational services cannot be tolerated, including those supported by the PED through below-the-line programs funneling public funds to private enterprises. Privatization is an abdication of public accountability. Prevent giving control of students' education to private, for-profit providers and charter "management" corporations—be they delivered on-site or through virtual technology.
- Q. **Preventing Vouchers, Tax Credits, Public Scholarships or Other Schemes to Privatize Public Schools and Resources:** Free uniform public schools are required by the New Mexico Constitution. Direct all financial support for student education toward fulfillment of this constitutional obligation, and none should support private schools, home schooling, or for-profit management of public schools, including charters. The privatization of any public school employee positions, be they full-time, part-time, or temporary, must be resisted.
- R. **Building Higher Education Funding:** Higher Education funding must be fully restored, and no more cuts made. A statutorily defined formula, similar to that in the School Finance Act for Public Schools, should be enacted to provide sufficient funding for Higher Education holding harmless all institutions during the transition. Funding cannot be allowed for any form of "Merit Pay," but must allow Higher Education to prioritize equitable faculty and staff increases over capital costs.
- S. **Building an Appropriate School Employee Evaluation System:** Our students, and the public, deserve an educational workforce accountable to them. Student success is enhanced when evaluation systems emphasize professional growth and development. Fair evaluation systems that appropriately measure teacher impact on student achievement do not use standardized student test scores. Evaluations must be fair and impartial and based on objective observations. Only trained and certified administrators who work together as a team for student success should evaluate school employees, not outside contractors or the Public Education Department. Licensure advancement and evaluation must be fair and

transparent and available to all licensed employees, not as a subterfuge for Merit-Pay schemes.

- T. **Due Process and Just Cause:** Unjust adverse job actions against any school employee destabilizes the provision of high-quality education for our students. Statutory provisions for due process procedures guarantee just cause for all discipline and program decisions of educational management. Preserve and enhance current rights and extend them to higher education and supervisory employees.
- U. **Sustaining Collective Bargaining:** Students gain a lifelong love of learning when their educators have a significant role in educational and professional decisions and workplace conditions. The process of elected employee representatives of their choice collectively bargaining with their elected Boards of Education and the administrators who serve them, as provided for under the Public Employee Bargaining Act, must be maintained. So-called "Right to Work" legislation and other efforts to diminish the influence of Unions in the workplace must be opposed.