



Educational policy issue areas and budget requests listed below are priorities that AFT New Mexico's Executive Council adopted in preparation for the 2020 New Mexico Legislative session. While not an exhaustive listing of bills we will support and budget requests we will advocate for, a significant portion of our union's time and energy will be spent addressing these critical needs.

As always, our legislative priorities prioritize the needs of our students first. We believe that by serving our students, their families, and the communities in which we live and work, we can provide better outcomes for New Mexico's students and also strengthen and grow our profession.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

1. **Legislative Goal:** Expand Community School models for all early childhood programs and K-12 school settings. Community schools are a proven success in other areas of the country and should be replicated in New Mexico on a widespread scale.
 - **Legislation and/or Budget:**
 - Build on 2019's HB 589 which invested \$2M into community schools by investing more money in this program through budgetary appropriations.
2. **Legislative Goal:** New Mexico should fund universal early education for all 3 & 4-year olds.
 - **Legislation and/or Budget:**
 - Continued support for 2019's HB 623, which outlines how to recruit, retain, and support early educators to ensure we have high quality early education. There should be an appropriation of at least \$100 million each fiscal year in order to provide high-quality universal early education for all 3 & 4-year-old in support of HB 623.

K-12 EDUCATION

High School

- **Legislative Goal:** As New Mexico works to rebuild and modernize our CTE programs — let's start with Educators Rising in every high school.
- **Legislation:**
 - Pursue legislation which supports EVERY high school to have an "educators rising" program. In addition, continued support of 2019's HB 25, which provided for a statewide coordinator of various teaching pathways.

Pre-Service

- **Legislative Goal:** Raise the bar for both teaching candidates and teacher education programs, including embedded on-going clinical experiences, and loan forgiveness for graduates who commit to teaching in NM for a minimum of 3 years.
- **Legislation:**
 - Support an expansion of 2019's HB 275, which increased funding for loan forgiveness to educators. There should at least \$2 million allocated for this each fiscal year to ensure educators are supplied with loan forgiveness, especially in hard to staff subject areas or districts.

Paid Teacher Residencies

- **Legislative Goal:** Establish strong paid teacher residencies as one pathway to licensure for post-baccalaureate and second career candidates.
- **Budget:**
 - APS has been working with higher education institutions and LCPS is beginning to work with higher education institutions in order to create paid teacher residencies. There should be at least \$4M appropriated each fiscal year in order for districts and higher education institutions to create and maintain high quality teacher residency programs with a minimum salary for residents of 35K in order to allow the resident to focus on teaching and not multiple secondary jobs.

Mentoring

- **Legislative Goal:** Restore and increase the funding for the requirement of the NM Administrative Code. Allocate a minimum of \$2000 per beginning teacher in order to maintain high quality mentor programs in every district.
- **Legislation and Budget:**
 - 2019's HB 495 would have provided for this level of commitment to mentoring and provided this appropriation for mentoring beginning teachers. There should be at least \$4M through the SEG (permanent, above-the-line funding) in order for districts to maintain high quality mentor programs. Funds should be appropriated per beginning teacher based on district need.

Induction

- **Legislative Goal:** Include additional funding to support extended mentoring/induction for Level 1 teachers in years 2-5.
- **Budget:**
 - There should be at least \$4M appropriated through the SEG in order for districts to create and maintain high quality induction programs for those that need additional help beyond year one.

Professional Development

- **Legislative Goal:** Supporting legislation/appropriations which acknowledges the significant research that investment in teacher-directed professional development pays off in increased student learning. Paid time must be embedded into the school year for all educators.
- **Budget:**

- High performing countries invest in their teaching profession. There should be at least an additional \$20M appropriated through the SEG (permanent, above-the-line funding) in order for districts to invest in high quality professional development and collaboration time.

Resources

- **Legislative Goal:** New Mexico must create an adequate per-student amount that is revisited and revised every 5 to 10 years. That number, the foundation of the SEG, must be the Multiplicand and the students (times the weighted factor) must be the Multiplier. That promise of sufficient funding should be kept yearly. The NM Legislature should institute a failsafe (perhaps the state's School Permanent Fund) to be enacted only in order to maintain sufficient funding.
- **Budget:**
 - There should be at least an additional \$500M appropriated in order for districts to provide the educational system, including staffing and support for students' social emotional needs as well as restorative justice practices. This commitment is in line with the recent *Martinez/Yazzie* decision. The 2019 Legislative appropriation of \$450M helped New Mexico education funding reach 2008 FY levels, and this was an important first step. This additional \$500M towards public education will help New Mexico advance into 2020 and beyond.

Competitive Salaries

- **Legislative Goal:** Create a Teacher-Weighted Formula that supports an innovative and competitive, statewide Career Ladder compensation system. (We are seeking a House Memorial to study this issue in the 2020 Interim Session.)
- **Budget:**
 - New Mexico should appropriate at least \$200M to begin creating a Teacher-Weighted Formula.
 - Additionally, salary increases of 4-5K for licensed teachers (based on Level) and all licensed support and related school personnel.
 - These raises represent 4K, 5K, and 5K raises for Level I-III teachers, respectively, and we recommend these raises be codified into law as the new 3-Tiered minimums. This not only would achieve greater recruitment of new, inexperienced teachers, but would also acknowledge experienced teachers and give them commensurate raises, recognizing that retention is equally important to recruitment.
 - These additional increases combat the salary compression that occurred during the Martinez administration, and also increases contributions into the ERB.
 - Research shows there is a shortage of educational employees across the country and state, and current NM PED policies are exacerbating New Mexico-based vacancies.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation

- **Legislative Goal:** Changing the teacher and principal evaluation system can be a powerful tool for positive change.
- **Legislation:**
 - We are working with the taskforce to create a new evaluation system for teachers and principals. We need to make changes to every component in a system in order for the system to work smoothly. As partners in this process, we will support the recommendation of the NM PED taskforce as long as it provides for meaningful and fair feedback/evaluation.
 - Once the work of the taskforce (and associated legislation) has been completed, we are seeking a meaningful principal evaluation process as well. This will help address teacher turnover in our schools as we know that poor principal quality (lack of support and exclusion from decision-making) are some of the main reasons cited for teachers exiting the profession. High turnover accounts for over 90% of the demand for new teachers, and exacerbates shortages while simultaneously impacting academic progress.

Addressing Current Staffing Levels to Meet the Social, Emotional, Mental, and Physical Health Needs of our Students

- **Legislative Goal:** We advocate for a state-funded staffing formula for nurses, counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.
- **Legislation:**
 - New Mexico has some of the highest rates of children suffering from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The more ACEs each child suffers, the more likely the trauma will lead to negative impacts on well-being and health that can follow a child for life and contribute to chronic health issues and problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide.
 - ACEs can cause toxic stress which can interrupt normal physical and mental development and can even change the brain's architecture. The 2019 NM Kids Counts profile shows that our state ranks 50th in indicators of child well-being.
 - As public school educators, we are often the first responders in our students' lives including, but not limited to, issues such as relationship disappointments or conflicts, family issues (such as death, divorce, parent-child issues, parent substance use, or mental health problems), test or performance anxiety, general academic stress, procrastination, panic attacks, social isolation, mild to severe depression, cutting and other forms of self-injury, and suicidal thoughts, plans, and/or action.
 - Teachers and our students depend on school nurses, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists to ensure that the ever-increasing complexity of students' needs are met. Years of disinvestment in public education has led to schools that are inadequately staffed to meet the needs of our students.
 - In our state, it is the Legislature that is responsible for the public-school funding needed to adequately and appropriately staff our schools for the for the social, emotional, mental, and physical health needs of our students.

Other Specific Priorities (some that had passed in previous years but vetoed)

1. **Legislative Goal:** Rising costs in health care (including dental and vision) and retiree health care have greatly impacted educators. Retirement benefits have been cut for new educators and retirement contributions from educators have increased. Thus, New Mexico should put out at least \$100M more into each fund to cover the rising costs to the educators in order to attract and retain educators.
2. **Legislative Goal:** New Mexico needs to add Dual-Licensed Instructional Support Providers to the Three-Tiered Licensure System in order to fairly compensate these educators for their expertise in supporting students. (2019's HB 446).
3. **Legislative Goal:** Revamp instructional materials definitions in order to modernize the practice and allow educators to differentiate their tools according to the needs of their students (2019's HB 45. Failed in Senate Education Committee.)
4. **Legislative Goal:** Extend National Board Certification stipend to school all school personnel eligible, specifically, but not exclusively counselors. (2017's SB 200, vetoed by then-Gov. Martinez and 2019's HB 412)
5. **Legislative Goal:** Greater investment in career technical and trades education in K-12 school settings. In many countries CTE is well funded, academically challenging and aligned with real workforce needs. It is hands-on, attractive to students and parents, and can lead to university for students who may seek professional and managerial positions later. CTE is a pathway to good jobs, by building technical skills that can be achieved much earlier than the traditional academic experience.
6. **Legislative Goal:** Licensure Competency for certified teachers to allow for professional dossier to be evidence for licensure competency (currently professional dossier is included in PED Rules) (2017's HB 124 was vetoed by then-Gov. Martinez)
7. **Legislative Goal:** Moratorium for new charter schools and equalize the funding between charters and public school districts. (2019's HB 434, stalled in House Government Committee)
8. **Legislative Goal:** Changes to PEBA to clarify and/or expand rights for workers (2019's HB 659) PEBA's mission, to allow collective bargaining among public sector employees, has been diluted by well-meaning provisions, creating a fractured and inconsistent labor policy across the state. The proposed legislation will reinvigorate public bargaining by adding administrative remedies to protect workers who exercise existing rights; it establishes a more uniform labor policy by consolidating the nearly 90 local labor boards and updates the law to provide a system of bargaining which is more consistent with established and developed federal labor law. Updates include language to make union elections equitable, identify time limits for labor actions and the removal of language rendered obsolete by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Janus*. The proposed

legislation will create a more normative and uniform system of laws for bargaining in New Mexico.

9. **Legislative Goal:** Greater support for Newcomer Programs which are designed for recent immigrants at the secondary school level who have little or no English proficiency, and limited or no formal education in their native countries. These programs have been developed to meet newcomers' needs before they enter into general education classrooms. The goals of newcomer programs are mainly to help kids develop linguistic survival skills and start adapting to the new culture.
10. **Legislative Goal:** Social Justice and equity in our classrooms and schools is union work, and has taken on greater important and focus since the landmark *Martinez/Yazzie* decision. Collectively we must envision a cultural shift in our K-12 classrooms, moving from students being seen as "receptacles" for learning to a framework that recognizes students' intersecting identities (race, class, sexuality, gender, citizenship status, differing abilities, primary language, etc.). Traditionally, schools situate those identities in systems of inequity instead of valuing students' lived experiences as assets in the classroom.

In the multicultural and ethnic studies circles, professionals refer to this as culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy. As educators it critical for us to help lead the charge for immigrant rights and ethnic studies as a framework for teaching all students K-12 in every school, to ensure that not only do our students receive the culturally relevant lessons they deserve, but also, that we as educators have the freedom to teach it in a meaningful way.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RELATED PERSONNEL (Early Ed teachers and K-12 through Higher Education classified staff)

1: **Legislative Goal:** New Mexico should provide a living wage of \$16/hour (minimum) and \$5-\$6/hr. longevity wage increase for educational employees for all educational employees (including transportation employees with private contractors) and provide for COLAs. Providing this increase of at least \$10,000 per classified staff will support the educational employees who have been working in the educational settings longer. New Mexico should also invest in its educational workforce, and provide for higher wages in publicly run early education centers.

- **Budget:** These additional increases (both living wage increases and longevity raises) combat the salary compaction that occurred during the Martinez administration, increases contributions into the ERB, and increases to health care and retiree health care plans.

2: **Legislative Goal:** Scholarship Fund for educators in early childhood settings and classified educational employees in K-12 and higher education settings. New Mexico should provide scholarships for higher education for early educators and all education classified staff, with possible rebates for working in high needs/rural educational settings.

- **Legislation and Budget:** 2019's HB20 began this process, however additional changes are needed to be more inclusive for applicants, and add at least \$1M to have it apply to Early Ed teachers and classified educational employees in K-12 and higher education.

3: **Legislative Goal:** PTSD related to Workman's Comp applicability for educational workers, especially for those serving in classified positions.

- **Legislation and Budget:** New Mexico should conduct a study to analyze how many educators experience PTSD from their employment and to study what treatment has been used to treat PTSD and what changes have been made to lower the risk of PTSD.

4: **Legislative Goal:** Air-conditioning for all school busses. While language was added to state law allowing for district-owned busses to use transportation appropriations for purchase of AC-equipped vehicles, it did not cover busses which are run by private contractors.

- **Legislation and Budget:** Enact 2019's SB 321, and add at least \$10m (each year) to cover costs for air conditioning to be on school buses.

5: **Legislative Goal:** We are seeking a House Memorial to study instituting a task force to create a licensure/advancement system for PSRP educators that provides meaningful increases in responsibility, pay, and professional development.

HIGHER EDUCATION

1: **Legislative Goal:** Increase funding for Higher Education to at least pre-recession levels. Funding for higher education in NM has decreased by over 30% per pupil since the 2008 recession; the restorations in this past budget cycle were welcome but fall far short of what NM faculty, staff, and students need to recover from previous brutal cuts.

- **Legislation and Budget:** New Mexico should provide at least a 20% increase over current levels to the General Instructional Budget

2: **Legislative Goal:** New Mexico must raise wages for faculty and staff in order to attract and retain the best teaching staff possible for our higher educational institutions.

- **Legislation and Budget:** New Mexico should appropriate a minimum of 10% across the board salary compensation, including to the per credit hour pay of part-time faculty, as well as cover costs for increases to healthcare (including dental and vision), retiree health care, and retirement.

3: **Legislative Goal:** Lottery Scholarship Sustainability. The Lottery Scholarship should move to a needs-based system that prioritizes students who would not be able to attend an institution of higher education based on rising educational costs.

- **Legislation and Budget:** New Mexico should fund at least \$10M each year from the General Budget (in addition other money already earmarked for the Lottery Scholarship) to provide New Mexico's students with more opportunities for higher education.

4: Legislative Goal: Free Higher Education. AFT New Mexico supports Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's proposal for providing free four-year and two-year higher education scholarships.

5: Legislative Goal: Student Debt Servicing regulation and ombudsman. Currently, student debt servicing is an unlicensed and unregulated industry in New Mexico. AFT New Mexico is seeking the NM Financial Institutions Division to institute licensing and regulation for this rapidly growing predatory field. Additionally, AFT New Mexico supported legislation would create an ombudsman position for individuals to petition when their rights have been violated and allow for the NM Attorney General to prosecute abusive lenders.

FUNDING, DEFECITS, AND REVENUE SOURCES

AFT New Mexico supports these additional sources of revenue for our state:

Personal Income Tax (PIT) The 2003 PIT cuts benefit the wealthiest taxpayers while the bottom 40% of taxpayers received no advantage. A family earning \$22,000 a year pays a personal income tax rate of 4.9%, which is the same rate paid by a family making \$100,000 annually. Returning to the pre-2003 income tax rates could generate as much as \$450 million per year.

Capital Gains Tax This tax was also reduced in 2003 and, like the PIT, also benefitted the wealthy disproportionately. An analysis by NM Voices for children showed that, in 2011, 49% of the tax cut went to those with incomes of more than \$1 million. Restoring the pre-2003 tax rates could generate \$28 to \$45 million additional revenue per year.

Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) Over time, the state's GRT increased from 2% to more than 5% while specific economic activities were excluded from being taxed. Also, new types of goods and services are now a larger part of New Mexico's economy, but are not subject to the GRT. The state's Gross Receipts Tax should be extended to new activity such as more internet sales, which could raise an additional \$25 million, by some estimates. However, if the GRT were to be extended to groceries—disproportionally impacting the poor—there should be a substantial increase to the low-income comprehensive tax rebate (LICTR).

Combined Reporting for All Sectors Enacting combined reporting laws would prevent multi-state corporations from sheltering income in U.S. tax havens. Comprehensive combined reporting laws could bring an additional \$19.4 million in annual revenue to New Mexico, according to a 2014 study by U.S. PIRG.

Tax Expenditures The LFC's 2015 tax expenditure report indicated that New Mexico lost \$1.2 billion in revenue due to "carve outs" in the state's tax base. The state's healthcare industry is the largest beneficiary of tax expenditures, reportedly costing New Mexico \$344 in lost revenue.

Land Grant Permanent Fund (LGPF) The fund is resource that should be utilized to build a system of supports for New Mexico's children from early childhood education through college. The voters should be allowed to decide on a constitutional amendment that would allow the

LGPF to restore K-12 school funding and provide additional payouts for early childhood education, with safeguards to maintain stability of the Fund.

Natural Gas and Oil Severance Taxes New Mexico has different severance tax rates for oil and natural gas. This inequity makes no sense. Equalizing tax rates on the extraction of natural gas and oil potentially could raise \$300 million each year in new revenue.

Cigarette & Liquor Taxes Nationally, New Mexico has the 22nd-highest tax rate on cigarettes. A 1 percent increase in the tax could raise \$18 million a year and still keep the rate competitive with neighboring states. Similarly, New Mexico could raise taxes on liquor and continue to be competitive. Equalizing and indexing taxes on liquor, beer and wine could raise \$24 million in new revenue.

Gasoline Tax New Mexico has the 44th-highest gas tax in the U.S. (at 18.88 cents/gallon). Raising the tax by 1 cent per gallon would keep New Mexico competitive with Utah (29.41 cents/gal.), Colorado (22 cents/gal.), Texas (20 cents/gal.), and Arizona (19 cents/gal.).

Excise Tax on Automobiles Our 3% motor vehicle excise tax is one of the lowest in the region. Raising this tax by 1 percent would raise \$44 million and would maintain a lower rate than Denver, CO (7.6%), Texas (6.3%), and Arizona (5.6%), according to a 2016 LFC Hearing Brief.

NON-STARTERS

AFT New Mexico will vigorously oppose the following legislative policies, as we have in past legislative sessions:

1. Vouchers for Private/Religious Schools
2. Tax Credits for Private/Religious Schooling
3. Adjunct Teachers in K-12 Settings
4. Watering Down Advancement Requirements in 3-Tiered System
5. 4th Tier in 3-Tiered System based on Years of Service
6. Privatizing Public Education Jobs