

Presentation for the Legislative Education Study Committee

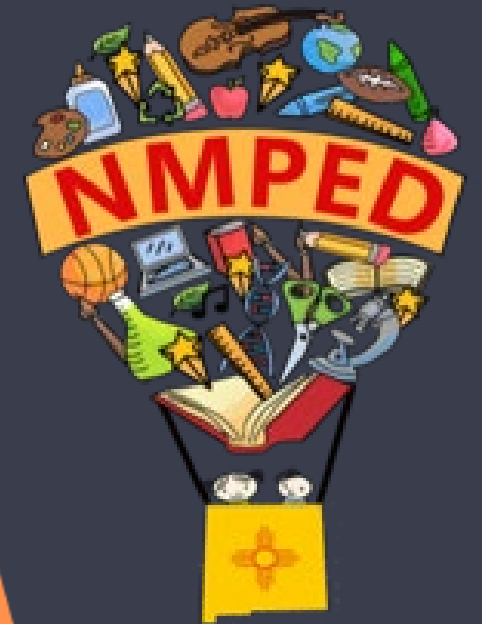
Pay Differentials for Special Education Staff

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Office of Special Education

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Investing for tomorrow, delivering today.



*A Presentation by the
New Mexico Public
Education Department*

Key Milestones

- **Executive order**. Created the Office of Special Education and charged it with promoting the recruitment and retention of special education professionals.
- **LESC listening sessions**. Recommended high-quality staff and pay differentials for special education teachers.
- **LESC Special Education and Bilingual Teacher Pay Differentials**. Recommended differential pay be required for special education.
- **LESC-assembled working group**. Established pay differentials as a recruitment and retention mechanism.

Overview

- Financial incentives for certified special education teachers
 - Fill vacant, hard-to-fill, or high-turnover positions
 - Retain special education staff in their current roles
- Funded through HB2 (2024)
 - \$5 million per year (fiscal years 25–27)
 - \$15 million total

Development Timeline

- **Year 1 (2024-25):** Recruit certified teachers to hard to staff positions
- **Year 2 (2025-26):** Retain teachers and staff who have been in their positions longer than one year

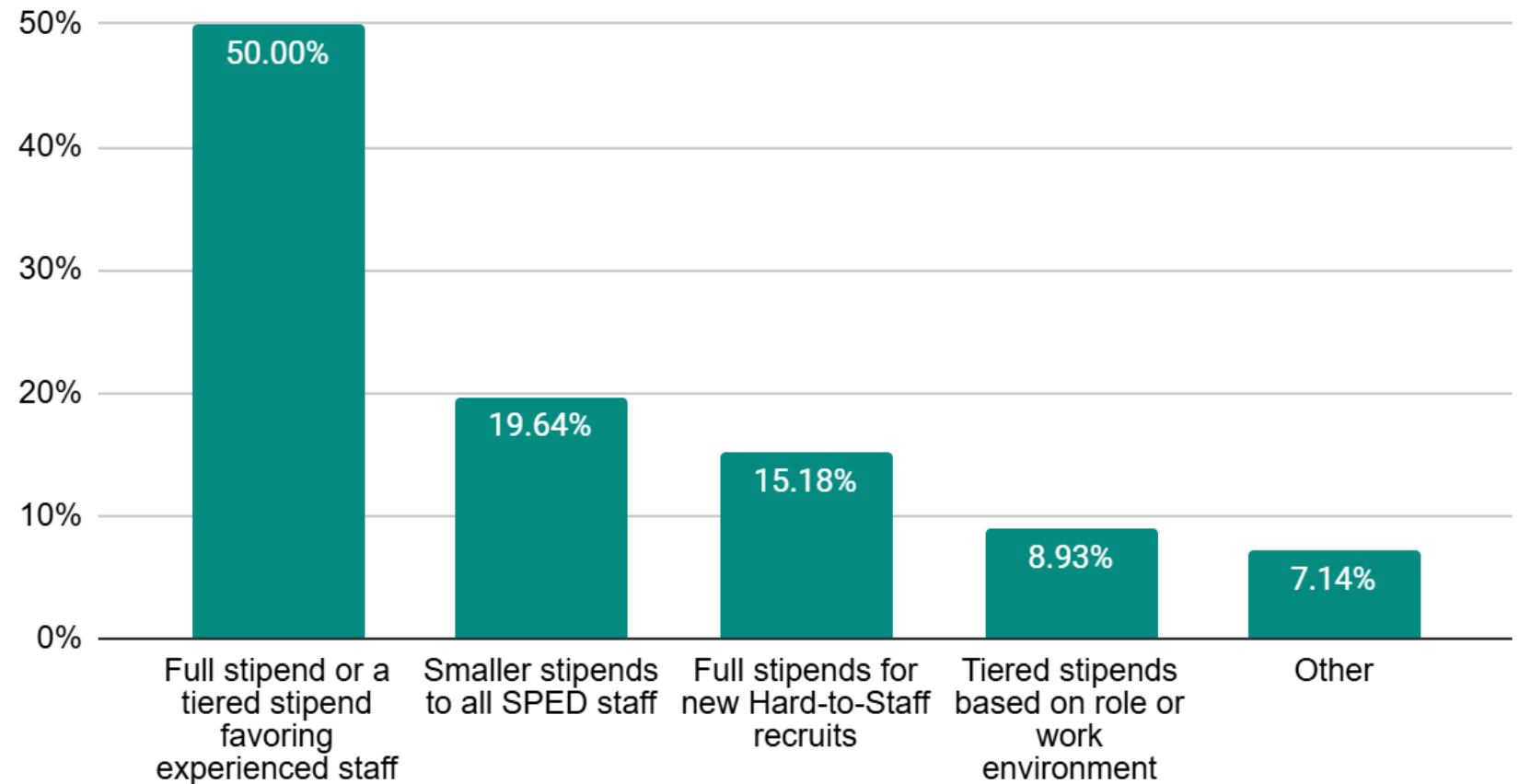


Communication with Schools

- [Initial Memo](#) — June 20, 2024
- Hard to Staff Application Training — July 25–26, 2024
- Frequently Asked Questions ([FAQ](#)) — July 2024
- [Progress Update Memo](#) — April 4, 2025

Stakeholder Feedback

- Stakeholder survey (112 respondents)
- Focus groups
- Respondents favored retention stipends for year 2



Stakeholder Voices

- "These financial incentives not only acknowledged the specialized skills and challenges associated with special education but also contributed to improved educational outcomes by maintaining a stable and qualified teaching workforce." - **Special Education Director, rural district**
- "It acknowledged the challenges faced by educators in remote or underserved areas and provided meaningful financial support." - **Special Education Teacher, rural district**
- "By providing financial incentives, schools could fill staffing gaps more effectively. This improved student access to quality education and resources, supporting teachers and creating a more stable learning environment for students." - **Principal, rural district**

Vacancy Fulfillment

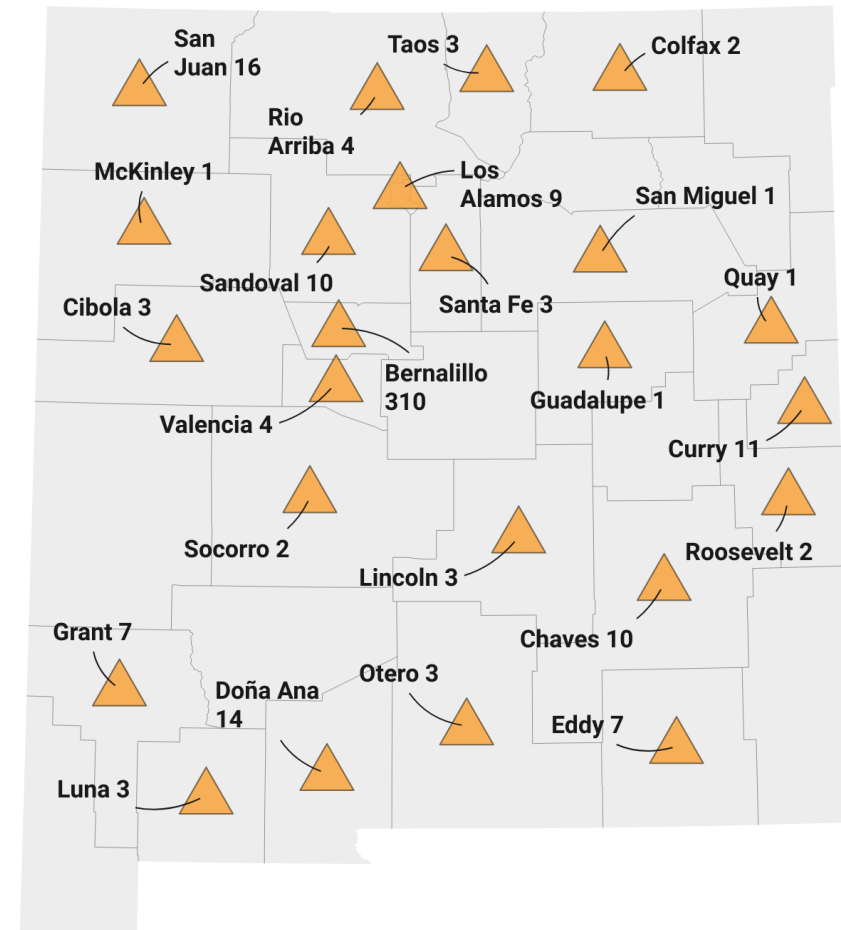
Special Education Vacancy Fulfillment			
Semester	Vacancies Filled	Number of Stipends Awarded	Amount Paid / Projected
1	372	372	\$1.86 million
2	More than 412*	More than 412	More than \$2.1 million

**Verification in process*

Initiative Impact

- Over 70 percent of stipend recipients were already working in New Mexico's education system
- Roughly 30 percent entered from non-traditional pathways or from out-of-state
- 66 percent intend to stay in their current position next school year

Stipends Per County



Next Steps

- **Form working group.** Convene team to plan and implement Year 2.
- **Survey stipend recipients.** Gather insights from recipients on employment history, current role(s), and intent to stay in special education.
- **Explore data needs.** Identify existing and new data needed to track educator pipelines and assess the impact of the initiative over time.
- **Assess funding and capacity limits.** Calculate the funding shortage and define optimal OSE staff capacity for full-scale implementation.

Thank you!

For Questions

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