

# Improving Education the New Mexico Way



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# LPI Research Questions

## Current Priorities

- What do New Mexicans value?
- What reforms seem necessary?

## Current Status & Challenges

- How do key features of the system now fall short?
- What “bright spots” help show the way?

## Promising System Improvement Strategies

- What evidence-based strategies can improve key elements of the system?
- What is needed for high-quality implementation, accountability, sustainability?

# LPI Research Methods

## Document Analysis

- Reform Proposals from 15+ NM groups
- LESC, LFC, PED publications

## Stakeholder Interviews

- State & local policymakers, educators, academics, nonprofit leaders, business partners, advocates

## Analysis of New Data & Existing Research

- PED and public data sets
- Scientific studies
- Case examples

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent blue circles of varying shades, creating a layered effect. A horizontal white band runs across the middle of the image, containing the main text. In the bottom right corner, there are abstract geometric shapes in shades of red, purple, and blue.

# **Improving Education in the Context of COVID-19**

# Four Big Findings

- 1. New Mexico has unique characteristics that complicate improvement & require more resources & capacity**
- 2. Systems making significant improvement focus on 5 key elements—we need to do this in a New Mexico way**
- 3. Supportive accountability can foster capacity & high-quality implementation/improvement**
- 4. This is not easy work—needs long-term strategy and shared ownership**

# What Complicates Education Improvement in New Mexico?

- Making the most of rich geographic, cultural, and linguistic diversity requires balancing state direction with local flexibility and strong local capacity
- NM's distressed economy brings high costs, but little state revenue—resulting fairly equitable funding that is inadequate
- Too little capacity + Too little funding = Disappointing educational outcomes

# Improving Education the Complicated New Mexico Way

- Diversity is an asset, not a liability
- Poverty creates barriers but does not prevent learning or school success
- Students affected by marginalization and poverty must be at the center of the system
- Districts/schools require support and capacity to make the most of diversity and reduce barriers

# What Can State Policymakers Do?

## Focus on 5 Fundamental System Elements



**New Mexico  
Needs**

- 1. Meaningful Learning Goals**
- 2. Knowledgeable and Skillful Educators**
- 3. Supports that Meet Students' Needs**
- 4. High-Quality Early Learning**
- 5. Adequate and Equitable Funding**



1. Meaningful Learning Goals
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## Goals for New Mexico

### Evidence Base

### Current Status

### Recent Progress

### Short-term Steps

### Longer term Steps



# 1. Meaningful Learning

# Meaningful Learning

## Deeper Learning

- Teach for high-level cognitive skills in the disciplines  
Use assessments that measure and encourage it

## Whole Child Approach

- Make curriculum & instruction culturally and linguistically responsive

## Whole Child Approach

- Include social and emotional learning and trauma-informed practices

## Strong High School Pathways

- Make college and career preparation engaging and relevant by integrating academics and CTE



# Evidence from the Science of Learning and Development

Learning is supported by:

- **Positive school climate**, promoting attachments and relationships, safety, belonging, and trust
- **Social and emotional development**, promoting self-regulation, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and resilience
- **Productive instructional strategies**, promoting conceptual understanding and metacognition
- **Systems of support**, promoting healthy development and addressing barriers to learning



# Short- and Long-Term Steps

Establish a state online hub that provides access to deeper learning, CLR, and SEL resources

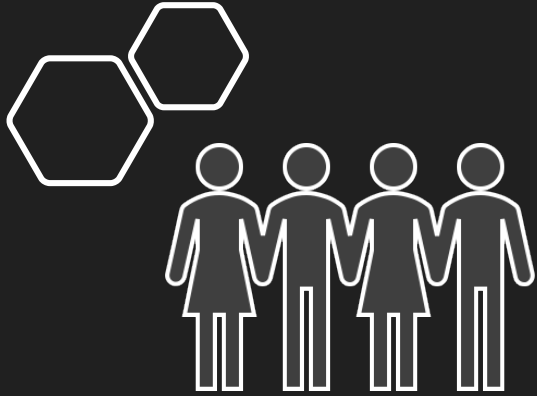
Invest in high-quality curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, assessments, and PD in these areas

Convene a task force to develop a framework and standards for college & career pathways

Invest in a Pathways Trust—a public–private partnership to fund college & career pathways statewide



## **2. Knowledgeable and Skillful Educators**



# Educator Workforce

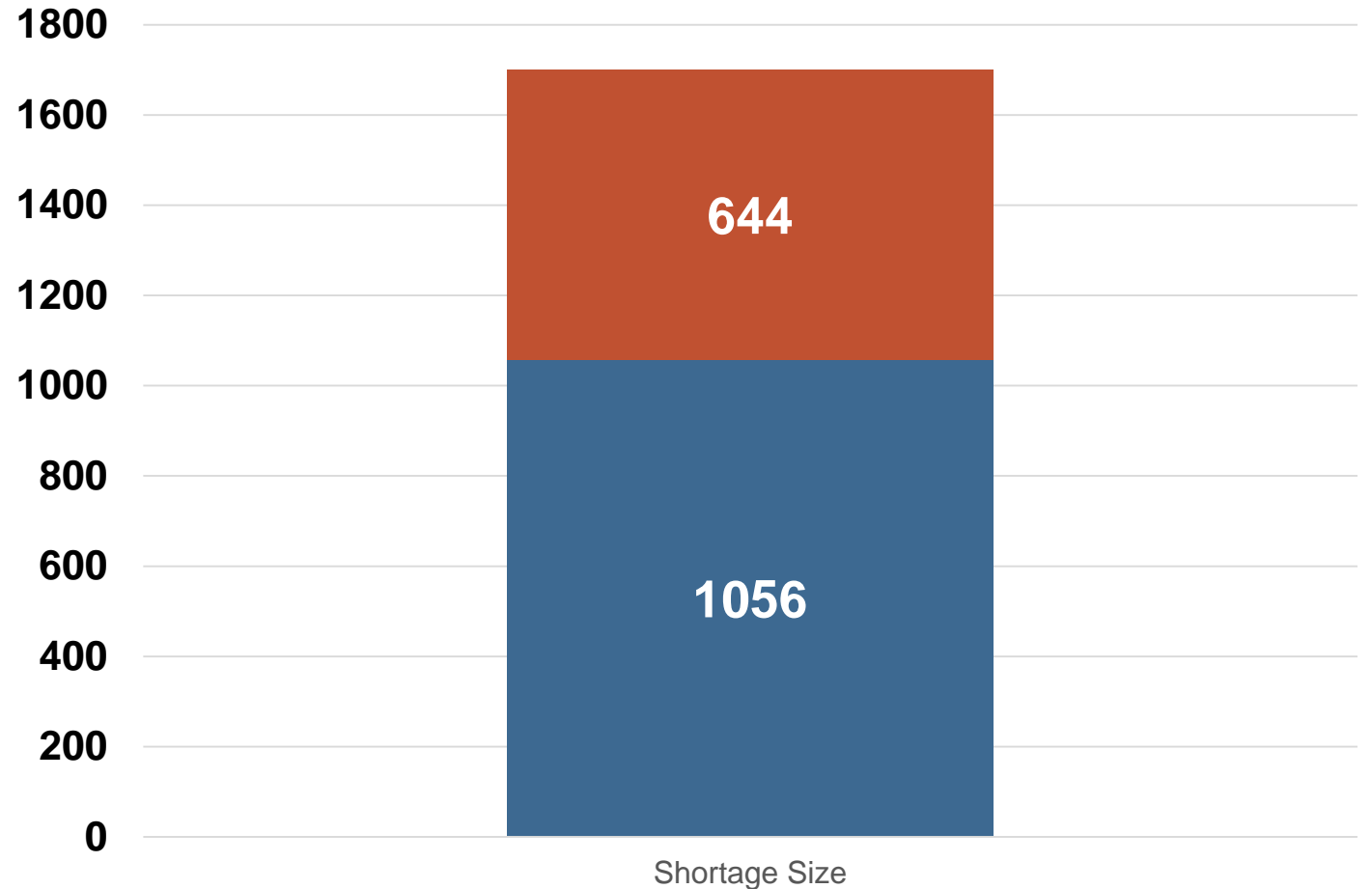
Smart Recruitment

Stable Retention

Greater Effectiveness

**Shortages  
account for  
about 8% of  
all teaching  
positions**

## Estimated Size of New Mexico Teacher Shortages

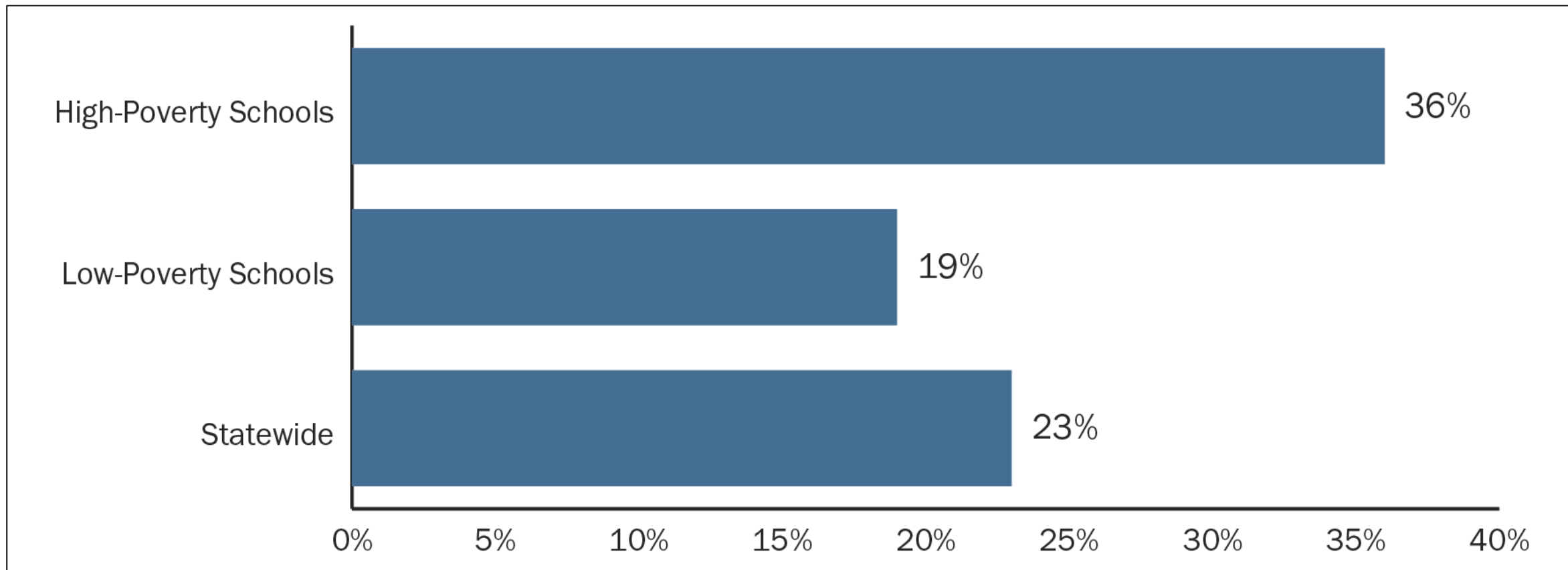


■ Underprepared Teachers ■ Vacancies

Source: 2019 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report; Higher Education Act National Teacher Preparation Data



# Average % Inexperienced Teachers by Schools Serving the Most and the Fewest Students from Low-Income Families, 2018–19



Note: Analysis compares schools in which at least 75% of students are eligible for the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch program with schools in which up to 25% are eligible  
Data source: New Mexico Public Education Department, New Mexico Vistas.

# Short- and Long-Term Steps

Task force to evaluate and strategize about improving educator preparation, licensing, and accreditation.

Invest in improving preparation programs, licensing, and accreditation.

Evaluate mentoring for first-year teachers to guide program design and implementation.

Invest in extending mentoring supports to all second-year teachers.



### 3. Supports that Meet Students' Needs

# Enable all high-poverty schools to become Community Schools with Expanded Learning Time



Enrichment activities emphasize real-world learning and community problem solving.

After-school, weekend, and summer programs provide academic instruction and individualized support.

**Expanded and Enriched  
Learning Time and Opportunities**

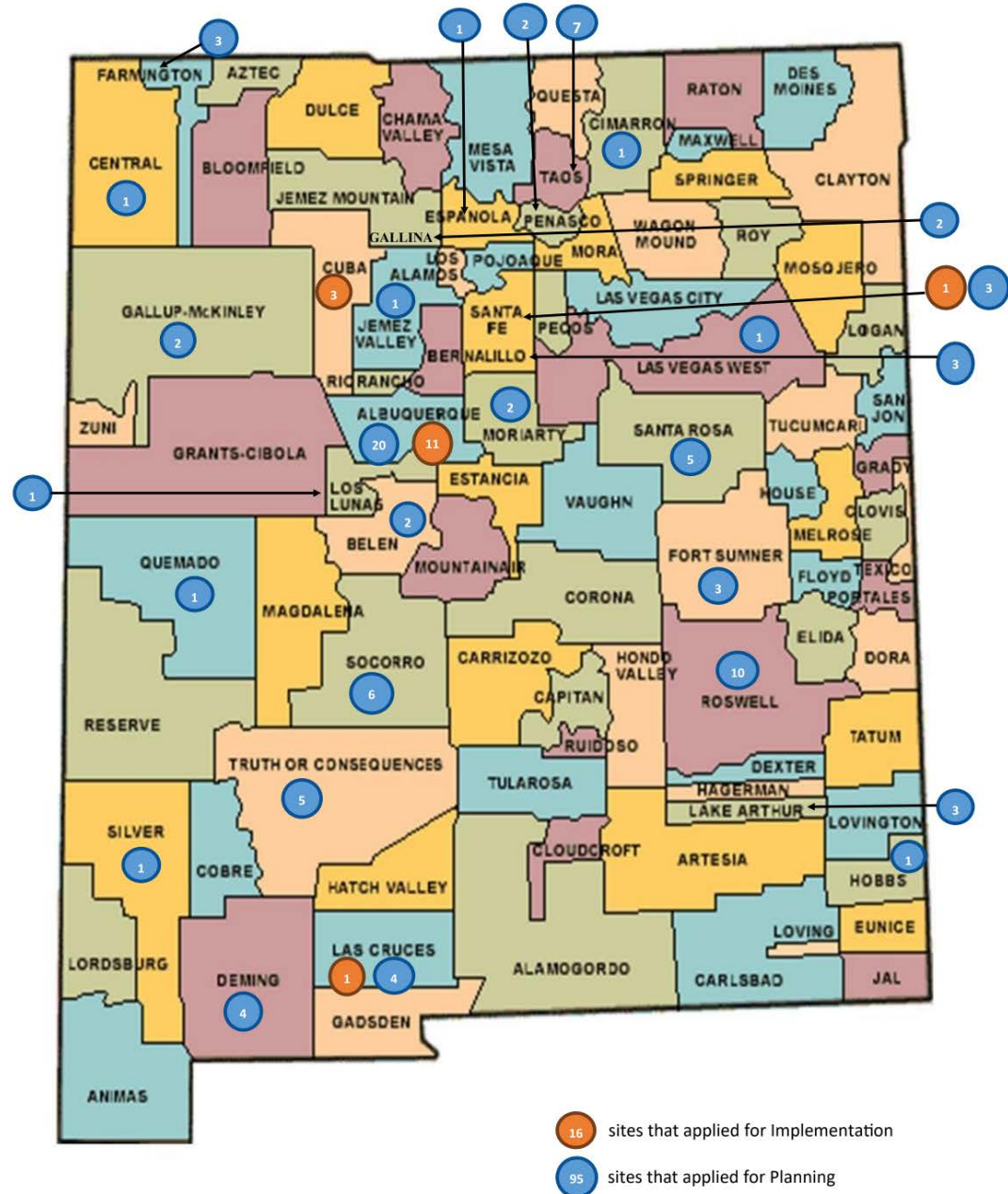
# Evidence About Community Schools

A wide range of well-implemented models yield benefits

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased attendance
- Higher graduation rates
- Improved peer/adult relationships and attitudes toward school
- Reduced racial and economic achievement gaps

Cost-Benefit savings of up to \$15 for every dollar invested





# High Level of Interest in Community Schools

In 2019, 111 applications for PED Community Schools grants

- 95 planning grant applications
- 16 implementation grants

2019 funding (\$2M) sufficient to fund less than 1/3 of applicants

2020 funding (\$3.3) still insufficient

# Short- and Long-Term Steps

Blend and braid state and federal funds to support community schools, and coordinate across agencies

Invest in making community schools and expanded learning time programs the norm at all high-poverty schools

Target professional development at managing successful community schools and expanded learning time

Invest in technical assistance centers to help high-poverty schools implement community schools and expanded learning



# 4. High-Quality Early Learning



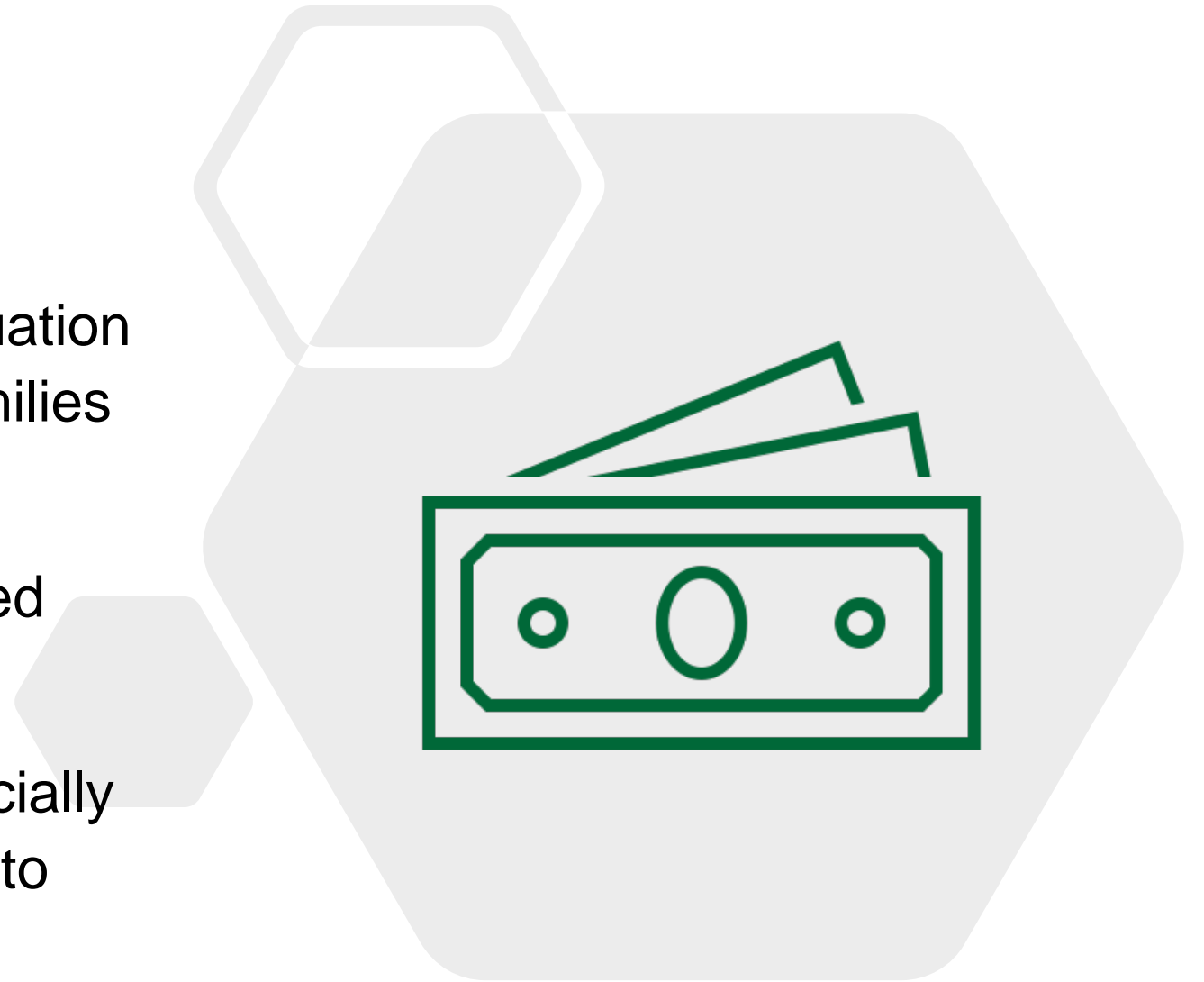


# 5. Adequate and Equitable Funding



# How Does Money Matter?

- Improve achievement and graduation of students from low-income families
- Improve life outcomes, such as employment, wages, and reduced poverty rates
- Investments in instruction, especially in high-quality teachers, appear to leverage the largest gains in performance



# Recent Progress

- Increased education spending by \$672 million
- Tripled at-risk funding formula weight
- Annual increases of 4.8%–5.5% over 5 to 8 years will bring the state to the projected national average in per pupil spending

# Short- and Long-Term Steps

Multi-sector task force to develop strategies for generating additional state income

Increase funding over 5-8 years to reach the per pupil national funding average

Evaluate equity of new teacher cost index and the rural adjustment in the SEG

Further increase SEG at-risk funding + add a concentration factor

# Supportive Accountability:

Building Capacity  
for Improvement  
and Effective  
Use of Funds





# Evidence about Supportive Accountability

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Emphasize meaningful learning skilled and committed educators; and responsibly use of resources

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Set clear goals, collect appropriate data, and provide support for capacity building and continuous improvement

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Design to provide useful information to the public to assess the quality of schools

# Recent Progress

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Shift away from top-down test-based accountability models—learned Deming lessons from business in 1980s

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More comprehensive measures of school quality

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New teacher evaluation system focused on ability to engage students in high-quality learning

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- Development of an online financial reporting system

# Short- and Long-Term Steps

Use a “Profile of the New Mexico Graduate” to develop multiple outcome measures for district/school dashboards




Invest in a research and accountability unit in NMPED to provide analyses and support

Require community-engaged, local budget and accountability processes, including collaboration with tribes

Regional technical assistance, PD, and school reviews to build local capacity to use accountability data for school improvement



# Moving the Agenda Forward



# Benefits of Statewide Stakeholder Commission

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Recommend long-term system changes

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Build collective ownership of a long-term plan

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Avoid future litigation over adequacy and equity

# Next Steps

**Fund, convene, and support an independent, statewide body of diverse leaders charged with developing a plan and providing long-term guidance for education improvement in New Mexico**

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