



# Legislative Education Study Committee Work Plan

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MAY 15, 2024

# Objectives

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1. Purpose of the Legislative Education Study Committee Work Plan
2. Overview of LESC Framework and Roadmap
3. Review of analyst projects
4. Review of team projects

# LESC Logic Model

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## Resources

- Stakeholders
- Partners
- Information
- Team

## Activities

- LESC work plan
- Analysis
- Budget design
- Member requests for information or work

## Outputs

- Policy briefs
- Reports
- Memos
- Program evaluation

## Outcomes

- Committee-endorsed legislation
- Responsive, adaptive policy
- Budget recommendations

## Impact

- Student outcomes
- Healthy communities
- Expert and valued staff
- Improved education systems
- Response to the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit

# Framework

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LESC employs a framework for policymaking and budget that is based on the following five principles:

1. Requiring research and evidence-based policy and program;
2. Ensuring community voice, support, value, and contextual nuance are inherent in the process and resulting policy;
3. Appreciating social connectedness, and therefore, planning for both designed and emergent systems;
4. Understanding implementation science, including program management, resources, capacity, and leadership are dynamic—the programmatic work can model existing status quo and/or help to build healthy communities; and
5. Approaching each action through an adaptive lens that embraces opportunity costs, trade space, and design, because while ideally beneficial, all policy and budget decisions have consequences.

# Roadmap

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- ❖ Diverse, High-Quality Educators and a Vibrant Educator Ecosystem
- ❖ Academic Design that is Rigorous, Culturally Relevant, Engaging, and Meaningful
- ❖ Whole Child Systems that Provide Interventions, Extended Time, Enriching Programming, Tutoring, and Wrap-around Supports
- ❖ Foundational Infrastructure that includes:
  - A world-class data and accountability system
  - A responsive and effective school funding formula that encourages outcomes-based budgeting
  - A governance structure that provides a functional system of reciprocal accountability for excellence
  - Capital outlay, transportation, broadband, technology, and school safety systems



# Marit Andrews

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RESEARCH AREA: WHOLE CHILD

# Special Education

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Federal law mandates equal education for disabled students. However, the consolidated *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit found New Mexico has failed to meet its constitutional obligation to special education students. Special education students are not being adequately served as reflected through low graduation and proficiency rates and LESC's special education stakeholder engagement process in the 2023 interim. A five-year plan to systemically improve student outcomes through an adaptive lens to special education policymaking grounded in community voice will provide a roadmap to drive improved outcomes for special education students through a more effective provision of special education services in New Mexico.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What statutory changes can improve the provision of special education services in New Mexico and address the judge's findings related to special education in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit?
2. How can statutory change remedy concerns and positively change the provision of restraint and seclusion in New Mexico, for special education students and all students?
3. How does the provision of evidence-based practices in special education differ among states; How does New Mexico compare?
4. What constitutes adequate funding for special education programs and services for school districts and charter schools to effectively implement, and for PED to monitor, special education programs and services?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** July 2024: SM68 report provided to LESC and other committees; July 2024: presentation and policy brief, including considerations for a 5-year plan.

# Program Evaluation: Literacy

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Literacy is a foundational skill, but most students in New Mexico cannot read or write proficiently, setting them up for difficulty in school and beyond. While legislative investments in structured literacy and other evidence-based policy and program may have contributed to improved statewide student proficiency in reading, evaluation tying particular programs to student outcomes must be done to understand the successes of state investments, and to help determine a path forward for policymakers. LESC staff will evaluate how and in what ways student growth in reading is impacted by the type of structured literacy support received, whether as a model school, support school, or through receiving general structured literacy supports.

❖ **Evaluation Questions:**

1. What are the differences in funding levels and support offered between structured literacy model schools, support schools, and general structured literacy supports?
2. What initial outputs of the summer literacy institute should be reported and tracked for evaluation purposes?
3. How and in what ways do the levels of structured literacy support received by schools impact reading outcomes?
4. How and what can we learn from other states and better leverage evidence-based practices to teach the science of reading in New Mexico?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: panel discussion to LESC on initial outputs of summer literacy institute; presentation and report with policy considerations for the 2025 session.



# Annie Armatage

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RESEARCH AREA: EDUCATOR WORKFORCE

# Principal Preparation

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Evidence suggests high-quality principal preparation programs can improve principals' feelings of preparedness, teacher satisfaction and retention, and student achievement. A principal preparation task force, formed by the New Mexico Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, developed a series of recommendations to bring school administrator preparation in line with national best practices. To support this work, LESC staff will explore costs and funding options. Staff will also consider the development of separate education administrative licenses or endorsements for different administrative roles.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How can the state prepare school administrators who are highly effective and remain in their positions?
2. How might educator preparation programs better meet the varied needs of different school administrator positions?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** May 2024: panel presentation with PED and Thornburg; November 2024: potential committee endorsed legislation.

# Teacher Supports

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- ❖ **Problem Statement:** New Mexico continues to face challenges in staffing all schools with diverse, well-prepared educators who remain in the profession. As New Mexico seeks to build and retain a diverse and high-quality educator workforce, legislators must decide which evidence-based policy levers to invest in. Over the 2024 interim, LESC staff will investigate educator supports, including class size reductions, career advancement opportunities, and innovative staffing models. LESC staff will approach these analyses from a lens of funding for excellence, while acknowledging that sustainable funding will be key to ensuring long term outcomes.
- ❖ **Essential Questions:**
  1. How do PreK-12 class sizes compare around the state?
  2. Can the Legislature expect implementation of class size reductions, innovative staffing models, or teacher career advancement opportunities to improve teacher retention and student proficiency outcomes?
  3. What would be the estimated costs of implementation?
  4. What might be unintended consequences?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** June 2024: presentation and policy brief with policy considerations, partnership with LFC.

# Program Evaluation: Educator Clinical Practice

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- ❖ **Problem Statement:** Clinical teaching experiences take two forms in New Mexico —16 weeks of student teaching and year-long residencies. Since FY20, the Legislature has appropriated over \$33 million for teacher residency programs, as well as \$60 million for educator practice for FY25 to FY27. To determine the most effective methods of preparing educators, and to guide future legislative investments, LESC staff will evaluate residency and student-teaching clinical experiences and how they interact with traditional and alternative educator licensure pathways.
- ❖ **Evaluation Questions:**
  1. Are different teacher licensure pathways and clinical experiences associated with difference in the outcomes of new teachers' students?
  2. Are there educator preparation program best practices in clinical practice implementation that should be further studied or replicated?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** October 2024: presentation and report including mixed methods evaluation and potential policy and budget considerations.



# Tim Bedeaux

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RESEARCH AREA: ASSESSMENTS, ACCOUNTABILITY, DATA & TECHNOLOGY

# Program Evaluation: Learning Time

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- ❖ **Problem Statement:** In 2023, the Legislature passed House Bill 130, which universalized the Extended Learning Time Program by increasing the minimum hours students spend at school and created K-12 Plus program, offering every school a substantial monetary incentive to add additional days of school. A 2023 LESC report on the K-12 Plus program pointed out that the program resulted in a wide variation in district strategies, with some districts adding additional hours and others reducing hours in favor of other strategies. LESC staff proposed an evaluation of the first year of implementation of the program, which will attempt to quantify the extent to which increased (or even decreased) learning time impacted students' academic growth.
- ❖ **Evaluation Questions:**
  1. How and in what ways did changes in learning time affect student growth during the 2023-2024 school year?
  2. Did schools make effective use of the flexibility offered in the K-12 Plus program? Did flexibility result in a net positive or negative impact on student growth?
  3. Should the K-12 Plus statute be amended to create additional guardrails to guide PED's implementation of the program?
  4. Are the resources and supports provided to schools adequate to support effective implementation of the K-12 Plus program?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: presentation and report, including budget and policy considerations for K-12 Plus program; joint hearing with LFC.

# Data Governance

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- ❖ **Problem Statement:** New Mexico has a wealth of data expertise across the many state agencies that collect education data, including notable current efforts to build a real-time data system at the Public Education Department (PED) and a statewide longitudinal data system at the Higher Education Department (HED). However, these efforts appear to be isolated within state agencies, rather than aligned to a coordinated long-term vision to use data to improve student outcomes. Throughout the 2024 interim, LESC staff will study current efforts to build and improve data systems, working with the state's data experts to identify a pathway to a coordinated data governance structure that builds the state's capacity to organize and analyze data, improves access to data for all stakeholders, and ultimately, helps all stakeholders make data-informed decisions that improve student outcomes.
- ❖ **Essential Questions:**
  1. What is the current status of Project Nova at PED and the RISE NM longitudinal data system at HED?
  2. What are the needs and priorities of the various stakeholders who use education data? Are there shared priorities among agency heads that can guide data governance?
  3. What are the differences between New Mexico's approach to data and effective national models of data governance? What resources does a data governance board or council need to be successful?
  4. What is the administrative feasibility of creating a multi-agency data governance board or council, or an independent agency responsible for data analysis?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** June 2024: panel presentation on RISE NM; November 2024: presentation and policy brief along with considerations for the 2025 session.



# Natasha Davalos

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RESEARCH AREA: EQUITY

# Defining Tribal Education Sovereignty

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Understanding the significance of tribal educational sovereignty and acknowledging tribes' efforts to help shape educational experiences that honor their unique cultural identities, values, and aspirations is crucial for Native American students' success in both an Indigenous and mainstream context. However, a lack of comprehension regarding tribal educational sovereignty may act as a barrier to progress. By creating a strong foundational understanding and accurately defining the concept of tribal educational sovereignty, we can effectively foster appropriate remedies to address the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit. Through a shared understanding of tribal educational sovereignty, we will understand the historical context of how traditional, western educational models often marginalized Indigenous students and the intricate jurisdictional challenges tribes continue to face in public education.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What are the fundamental principles and practical implications of tribal education sovereignty, particularly concerning the rights of Indigenous tribes to self-governance, cultural autonomy, and equitable access to education across the state?
2. How does tribal education sovereignty intersect with broader issues of educational policy, jurisdictional authority, and community engagement, and what are the implications for addressing historical inequities and promoting culturally responsive education for Native American students?
3. What strategies and perspectives do tribes employ to cultivate and navigate their relationships with school boards, and how do they actively engage with school districts to advocate for their educational priorities and ensure cultural relevance and inclusivity in the educational system?
4. In what ways do the principles and exercise of tribal educational sovereignty diverge from those of individual sovereignty and governmental sovereignty?
5. What are the key challenges and opportunities associated with integrating tribal sovereignty principles into broader efforts to reform educational systems and promote educational equity for Indigenous communities as it relates to the findings of the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** June 2024: presentation and policy brief.

# The Status of Homeless and Foster Students

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Many homeless and foster students face significant barriers to accessing quality education due to lack of stable housing, foster placements, and inadequate support systems. This often results in lower graduation rates, increased dropout rates, and inferior academic outcomes compared to their peers. Homeless and foster students require comprehensive support services to address their unique needs. However, the extent of support provided by the education system for homeless and foster students remains uncertain. To gain deeper insights into the educational experiences of homeless and foster students, LESC will investigate the root causes that will enable the development of actionable recommendations fostering significant improvements in educational outcomes.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What comprehensive measures does the state employ to ensure the complex needs of homeless and foster students are effectively addressed?
2. What strategies and support systems do schools implement to effectively serve the unique needs of students who experience foster care placement, housing instability, or homelessness? Specifically, what programmatic and funding choices are the districts and schools making to support homeless and foster students?
3. What systemic challenges and limitations exist within current methods for identifying students who are homeless and in foster care, and how might these methods contribute to undercounting or overlooking vulnerable students?
4. What considerations and provisions are integrated into the current funding formula to account for the unique needs and challenges faced by homeless and foster students within educational systems?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** October 2024: presentation and policy brief with policy considerations.



# Daniel A. Estupiñan

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RESEARCH AREA: PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE

# Family Income Index

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Research suggests poverty is a key factor adversely influencing student achievement, particularly when there is a significant concentration of poverty in any one community. To alleviate the adverse impact of poverty on student achievement, the Legislature has appropriated supplemental nonrecurring funding through the Family Income Index (FII) for schools with the highest concentrations of poverty. Much of the resulting funding has been used at the school-site level to support after-school enrichment programs, professional learning, counselors and social workers, and academic interventions. However, various challenges have emerged in the administration of the FII, particularly when school leaders are unaware of their school's FII distribution, or when they are informed of their distribution in the closing months of the academic year. In studying these opportunities and challenges, LESC staff will collaborate with external stakeholders in assessing the impact of the FII on student achievement and building the capacity of school leaders, for the purpose of recommending the continuance or discontinuation of the existing program in FY26.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How are funds from the FII currently being used by schools and how have they been used in the past?
2. What impact have programming and services that were sustained by the FII, such as those focused on student attendance and behavioral health, had on student achievement?
3. Are public schools braiding FII with other funding sources, such as Title I, II, and III, community schools, out-of-school time, K-12 Plus, and CTE, and has that yielded any insight into the unique needs of certain communities?
4. Is there sufficient capacity at the school-level to appropriately use FII or other supplemental funds on data-driven practices that improve student achievement?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** July 2024: presentation and policy brief with policy considerations.

# Cash Balances

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❖ **Problem Statement:** There is a perception among some stakeholders in New Mexico that the amount of cash balances held by school districts and charter schools may be considered excessive, particularly in relation to the Legislature's annual appropriation to the state equalization guarantee (SEG). Some local educational agencies (LEAs) have suggested their growing cash balances may be attributed to various challenges associated with the Public Education Department's (PEDs) reimbursement process, as well as a general need to have funds on-hand for capital outlay projects. As a related component of the LESC's simultaneous revision of the SEG, LESC staff will collaborate with external stakeholders in assessing the root causes of some LEA's growing cash balances, whether particular processes at PED or in the capital outlay process are contributing to the growth of those cash balances, and whether there should be recommended thresholds for cash balances that are responsive to different LEAs.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What is the appropriate level of cash balances and does that threshold vary by the size and rurality of an LEA?
2. What is the estimated impact of PED's planned improvements to the reimbursement process on cash balances in FY25?
3. Will cash balances begin to draw down as federal Covid-19 relief funding expires, health and risk premiums increase, and capital outlay projects are completed?
4. What impact do particular below-the-line programs have on the reimbursement process and could a long-term transition of that funding to the SEG alleviate those challenges?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: presentation and policy brief.



# Jessica Hathaway

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RESEARCH AREA: STUDENT SUCCESS

# Middle School

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❖ **Problem Statement:** As the pivotal transitional phase between elementary and high school, middle schools play a crucial role in shaping students' academic, social, and emotional development. However, existing middle school structures often fail to adequately address the needs of adolescents and their educators. This research aims to evaluate current middle school structures (funding, scheduling, staffing, design) and propose reforms to create more responsive school environments.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What are the models of middle school environments being used across New Mexico; How and in what ways do these align with research and best practices on middle school design?
2. What is the relationship between various middle school designs and student outcomes?
3. What are the articulated needs of middle school students and educators and how does middle school design align to this?
4. What is a plausible statewide policy approach to support middle school students?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** May 2024: landscape review on middle school research; October 2024: final report and presentation with policy and budget considerations.

# Program Evaluation: Career and Technical Education

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- ❖ **Problem Statement:** The evaluation of career and technical education (CTE) programs is essential for assessing their effectiveness. However, current evaluation frameworks often lack comprehensiveness and fail to adequately measure the multifaceted outcomes of CTE, which include traditionally sought measures alongside holistic indicators. This research aims to address this gap by defining comprehensive measures of student success and developing an evaluation framework to assess the full spectrum of CTE programs, namely the state's NextGen CTE pilot project.
- ❖ **Evaluation Questions:**
  1. How and in what ways do student outcomes (achievement, including proficiency and growth, attendance, and graduation rates) differ among school districts and charter schools that receive CTE funding and those that do not?
  2. What is the CTE program investment needed to contribute to robust CTE programming statewide?
  3. What additional student outcomes are expected and can be validated?
  4. What is the relationship between legislative investments in CTE and student outcomes; can a predictive model be created?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** July 2024: presentation and report of student outcomes in CTE recipients; Interim 2024: member input and continued iteration of expanded success metrics; Spring 2025: final Harvard Strategic Data Project deliverables.



# Conor L. Hicks

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RESEARCH AREA: EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

# STEM Innovation Network

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❖ **Problem Statement:** As science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics take on an even more significant role in our economy and society, it is critical that New Mexico students are equipped with STEM-related skills to enable them to lead fulfilling, prosperous lives after they complete schooling. Recent PED data on science and math indicate low levels of proficiency for New Mexico students, and stakeholders routinely note the inequity in how STEM resources are distributed across the state. To that end, advocates have proposed a statewide STEM innovation network to ensure students across the state have access to robust and rigorous STEM resources. LESC staff will research similar networks in other states and collaborate with external stakeholders and PED to understand how such a network could be established, how existing programs and organizations can be leveraged, and the expected role of the state in network governance.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What network structure best fits the needs and context considering the assets and gaps in New Mexico STEM education?
2. How will establishing the network better allow New Mexico to provide quality STEM education to students across the state?
3. How will the network be governed and who will have final say on how funding appropriated for the effort is used?
4. How can existing organizations and programs be leveraged to establish the network?
5. What would it cost to develop a STEM network and how does the choice of model impact the funding need?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** July 2024: presentation and policy brief including policy considerations.

# Universal School Meals

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❖ **Problem Statement:** Research shows that providing all students with free school meals improves overall readiness to learn and increases academic performance. In 2023, the New Mexico Legislature unanimously approved the Healthy Hunger-Free Students' Bill of Rights Act, requiring the Public Education Department (PED) to implement a program to provide free and high-quality meals for all New Mexico students. PED's updated projected cost of the Healthy Universal School Meals (HUSM) program for FY24 came in at just under \$44 million in January 2024, exceeding the Legislature's \$22.5 million appropriation. For FY25, the Legislature has appropriated \$41 million, while PED is projecting a price tag of \$42.2 million. With this ongoing underfunding issue in mind, it is necessary to assess whether the current methodology for determining program funding is responsive to local needs and adequate for the purpose of state financial planning. In addition, the act requires school food authorities to meet PED-set meal quality improvement standards beginning July 1, 2025, but compliance with this requirement is currently unknown, nor is the degree to which the HUSM program has been adopted across the state fully understood. LESC staff will engage with PED officials and school district leaders to assess the existing methodology for financial projections, the on-the-ground application of and compliance with the HUSM program's provisions, and challenges for LEAs in scaling up their food programs.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. Which LEA's offer free meals and which do not, and how many are designated as standard program schools versus CEP schools?
2. For maximum state funding going forward, PED-set meal quality improvement requirements must be met by July 1, 2025, how far/close are LEAs to meeting these requirements?
3. Are current PED mechanisms for determining federal funding eligibility adequately identifying all students and how is this impacting the state's ability to maximize federal funding and accurately estimate program funding needs?
4. What challenges have LEAs faced in scaling up their food programs for increased student participation?
5. Why are program cost projections consistently coming in higher than expected and does the current methodology for estimating cost need revision?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: presentation and policy brief with policy and budget considerations.



# Mark A. Montoya

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RESEARCH AREA: GOVERNANCE AND CAPITAL OUTLAY

# School Board Member Training and Finance Reporting

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❖ **Problem Statement:** School boards play a crucial role in ensuring student success by making decisions that span various areas, such as resource allocation, curriculum development, school oversight, and addressing community interests and concerns. They have significant influence over policy, goals, and the overall vision of their respective school districts. Senate Bill 137, enacted during the 2024 regular session, is comprised of three main components. First, it mandates the public disclosure of school board members' completion of specified training requirements. Second, it broadens the scope of school board members required to report campaign finances. Third, it mandates that both school boards and charter school governing bodies webcast and archive all public meetings. LESC staff will collaborate with external stakeholders to evaluate and ensure the effective implementation of the requirements outlined in SB137.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How are school board member training records being gathered, recorded, and posted?
2. What training is being provided to school board members and what is the training schedule?
3. How are school superintendents addressing and meeting the requirement to webcast and archive public meetings?
4. How is the Secretary of State's office preparing for Senate Bill 137's expanded campaign finance reporting requirements?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** October 2024: presentation and policy brief.

# Broadband and Education Technology

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❖ **Problem Statement:** The New Mexico Legislature and the federal government have dedicated considerable time and resources to establish the necessary infrastructure for widespread internet access for students and teachers across the state. This effort includes the creation of a Statewide Education Network (SEN), which encompasses a comprehensive education technology infrastructure network "that integrates regional hub locations for network services and the installation and maintenance of equipment." LESC staff will work in collaboration with external stakeholders to assess the progress of these initiatives and gain insight into the entities involved, and their respective responsibilities. Additionally, staff will conduct research to ascertain whether teachers are adequately supported in utilizing available technology for instructional purposes.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How much of the state (districts) currently have broadband access?
2. Which organizations are involved in the process and what are their responsibilities?
3. How are districts that do not have broadband coping? What is being done and what is the schedule to get these districts online?
4. How is PED providing support to educators to ensure effective utilization of technology for instructional purposes?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** November 2024: presentation and policy brief with possible policy and budget considerations.



# John Sena

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RESEARCH AREA: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

# School Governance

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❖ **Problem Statement:** In the 20 years since moving to a governor-appointed secretary of education, New Mexico has had six secretaries and at least three interim secretaries. Those changes have meant New Mexico's schools have dealt with major swings in the policies and structures governing education in the state. Simultaneously, no secretary has implemented a long-term, comprehensive strategic plan for New Mexico, even in light of the 2018 ruling in the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit calling for such a plan. New Mexico could benefit from a new education governance structure that will allow for the thoughtful development of a long-term strategic plan, created with input from education stakeholders, and implemented by a body that represents legislative, executive, and local constituencies. The structure should be buffered from changes in state leadership, allowing for aligned long-term goals and outcomes. New Mexico has invested in strategies to improve education and is beginning to see progress. A new governance system will allow that progress to continue while ushering in a new era of stability and shared leadership.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. What aspects of the current system are working? Which are not?
2. What form should a new governing body take to ensure representation, the ability to develop and implement a long-term plan, and the ability to make important thoughtful determinations about the need adapt or change strategies?
3. What resources would a new governing body need to be successful?
4. How, if at all, would a new governance structure affect the operations of the Public Education Department?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: presentation and policy brief with potential endorsed legislation.

# Team Projects

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# Solutions for Mathematics

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❖ **Team Members:** Marit Andrews and Jessica Hathaway

❖ **Problem Statement:** LESC analysis of Public Education Department (PED) spring 2023 data shows that statewide math proficiency peaks in fifth grade with 34 percent of students testing as proficient, and begins to fall in sixth grade with 31 percent of students testing as proficient. Proficiency continues to decline throughout secondary grades. LESC staff will work with stakeholder partners to identify an effective structure for teacher training and student interventions to increase student proficiency. LESC staff will study components of implementing teacher training and student interventions to assess pilot design implications and how these may be designed to improve student achievement. LESC intends to use this research for the purpose of developing sustainable and impactful policy solutions and budget recommendations to improve math outcomes.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How can we leverage evidence-based policy and program to raise student achievement in math in New Mexico?
2. What is the best way for the Legislature to structure and fund teacher training and student intervention math pilot programs?
3. What student groups could most benefit from additional math supports?
4. How can we improve accountability systems to provide more clarity on student growth in math and provide support to struggling schools?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** Spring 2024: Establish LESC math team and work together to determine plan of action; June 2024: Math team prepares slide deck; July 2024: Present slide deck to LESC on evidence-based policy and program to raise student achievement in math in New Mexico; Fall/Winter 2024: Craft bill or budget proposal and present to LESC.

# School Safety

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❖ **Team Members:** Conor Hicks, Marit Andrews, Natasha Davalos, Mark Montoya

❖ **Problem Statement:** There are many factors that go into the concept of school safety. For students to thrive academically, they need a school environment that promotes social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. To develop responsive policy solutions to the safety needs of New Mexico schools, the Legislature must understand the current landscape of student wellbeing, safety infrastructure, and incident response. In the first installment of LESC staff's report on school safety, analysts will examine existing trends in student wellness, incidents involving firearms, school discipline, current and planned expenditures for safety improvements for school facilities, and other contributors to overall student safety.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How are New Mexico schools currently using tools like community/student partnerships, school safety plans, and communication initiatives to promote school safety?
2. How do social-emotional wellness and school discipline practices contribute to school safety?
3. How is capital outlay funding being leveraged to improve safety measures in New Mexico schools?
4. What are the national and state trends in evidence-based school safety practices, student wellbeing metrics, school discipline, and reported school safety threats?
5. What do national and state data tell us about school safety?

❖ **Outcome/Deliverable to the Committee:** Part One: June 2024, Landscape Analysis; Part Two: November 2024, Next Steps

# Addressing Attendance

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❖ **Team Members:** Jessica Hathaway and Tim Bedeaux

❖ **Problem Statement:** Student attendance is critical for students' individual academic and social success, and also for overall classroom and school progress. Despite a statutory framework for supporting attendance, New Mexico still has a nearly 40 percent chronic absence rate and lacks a methodology to ensure funds allocated to support attendance reach the schools in greatest need. LESC staff will study predictive models of student attendance and identify potential mechanisms to target funds and reduce chronic absenteeism.

❖ **Essential Questions:**

1. How do current data gathering systems and practices accurately capture attendance information, identify root causes, and function for cohesion and understanding at both the local and state level?
2. How and in what ways do current attendance interventions map to tiers outlined in the Attendance for Success Act?
3. What is the cost and scale of attendance interventions best mapped to local success?
4. What further policy approaches may be needed to prioritize attendance intervention and what role does the Legislature play?

❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** June 2024: LESC staff completing analysis for LFC program evaluation; October 2024: Final report and presentation.

# Revision of the State Equalization Guarantee

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- ❖ **Team Members:** Daniel Estupiñan, all other LESC analysts, LFC
- ❖ **Problem Statement:** In its original iteration, the state equalization guarantee (SEG) was an innovative and student-centric approach to identifying student needs and allocating funding to meet those needs. As student needs have evolved, so too has the SEG, particularly with the adoption of the at-risk index and the modification of the size adjustment components. However, several components, such as the formula's basic program components, have not been modified to reflect the continuously evolving needs of public schools. To comprehensively address the findings of the consolidated *Martinez-Yazzie* education sufficiency lawsuit, LESC staff will collaborate with external stakeholders in assessing and revising the basic program and at-risk components of the SEG, assess whether new components should be embedded to increase the SEG's responsiveness to local needs, and identify opportunities for simplifying the SEG.
- ❖ **Essential Questions:**
  1. Are existing differentials in the SEG adequately supporting the diverse needs of public school students, are additional differentials needed to support specific programmatic needs, and are there opportunities to simplify the SEG?
  2. Does the SEG appropriately support public schools in meeting all existing statutory and regulatory requirements?
  3. Does the SEG appropriately balance flexibility with accountability and does it draw on revenue sources that are both sustainable and sufficient for distribution to public schools?
  4. Are there opportunities to embed performance-based budgeting in the SEG?
- ❖ **Output/Deliverable to the Committee:** September 2024: presentation and report; legislation that will be presented for committee endorsement before the 2025 legislative session.

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