

**MINUTES**  
**Legislative Education Study Committee**  
**State Capitol, Room 322**  
**Santa Fe, New Mexico**  
**October 24 – 26, 2017**

**Tuesday, October 24**

Senator Mimi Stewart, Chair, called the meeting of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) to order at 9:07 a.m., on Tuesday, October 24, 2017, in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC voting and advisory members were present: Voting: Chairwoman Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair Stephanie Garcia Richard, Senators Craig W. Brandt, Candace Gould, and William P. Soules, and Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, Dennis J. Roch, Tomás E. Salazar, James E. Smith, and Sheryl M. Williams Stapleton. Advisory: Senators Gay G. Kernan and John Pinto, and Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Rick Little, Elizabeth “Liz” Thomson, and Linda M. Trujillo.

The following LESC advisory members were not present: Senators Carlos Cisneros, Daniel A. Ivey-Soto, Linda M. Lopez, Howie C. Morales, and Michael Padilla, and Representatives David M. Gallegos, Jimmie C. Hall, D. Wonda Johnson, Tim D. Lewis, G. Andrés Romero, Patricia Roybal Caballero, Angelica Rubio, Patricio Ruiloba, Debra M. Sariñana, Christine Trujillo, Jim R. Trujillo, and Monica Youngblood.

On motion by Representative Smith and seconded by Senator Brandt, the October agenda was approved with no opposition.

On motion by Representative Roch and seconded by Representative Smith, the LESC September meeting minutes were approved with no opposition pending revisions.

**PED Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reconciliation for FY11 through FY15.** Christina McCorquodale and Joseph Simon, LESC staff, provided the committee with background information regarding local-level maintenance of effort shortfalls in FY11 through FY15. Mr. Simon discussed the standards used in calculating local-level MOE. He also noted that, according to federal regulations, the federal government held the state liable for any failure to meet MOE at the local level. He said the state could have the option to seeking recovery of those funds from the school district or charter school, depending on state procedures.

Amy Baca, Financial Coordinator for Special Education Bureau, Public Education Department (PED), said school districts and charter schools are required to budget at least the same amount for special education in the current year as was spent the most recent prior year for which data was available to be eligible for grants under Part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-B). In addition, a school district or charter school must spend at least as much as in the prior year to remain compliant with IDEA-B, though there are certain exceptions which allow expenditure reductions. She noted school districts and charter schools could calculate spending based on total expenditure or on a per-student basis and federal funding is not allowed in local-level MOE calculations. Ms. Baca said that if the school district or charter school is found to have missed MOE targets, the school district or charter school could appeal that decision. She noted PED would still allow appeals for FY16.

Matt Montaña, Deputy Secretary, PED, said PED identified local-level MOE issues in FY15. He said beginning in 2016, PED was notified by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) that school districts and charter schools were reducing MOE targets for expenditures with federal Impact

Aid, which was not allowed by federal law. He provided the committee with a breakdown of local-level MOE shortfalls by school district and charter school.

Christina Velasquez, Chair, Coalition of the Special Education Administrators, said there is much confusion regarding MOE requirements and noted IDEA needs to be reauthorized to clarify the formula and provide for local control. She noted PED had previously provided guidance on how to calculate MOE which has now changed, making it difficult to know which expenditure figures should be used to calculate MOE. She added conflicting information provided by PED compounds this difficulty. School districts were not given adequate information in a timely fashion to correctly calculate their liabilities and many of the alleged shortfalls did not make sense to school districts.

Mel Morgan, Superintendent, Pojoaque Valley Schools, said PED notified Pojoaque of a \$20 thousand liability but did not provide any detail documenting the liability. He said Pojoaque does not use Impact Aid or Medicaid funds in their MOE calculation. Dr. Morgan noted it would be important to him to receive documentation from PED regarding the MOE calculation prior to remitting any shortfall payment to PED.

Veronica García, Superintendent, Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS), noted there is a lack of ongoing formal communication from PED regarding MOE. She said there appears to be a change in the calculation process for FY18 but PED has not provided any formal guidance or communication regarding possible reductions to MOE targets, though she noted informal telephonic communications may be happening. Dr. García highlighted the importance of formal documentation, especially since school district leadership often changes. She said SFPS did not receive any MOE correspondence from PED between January 2015 and September 2017. She said school districts would appreciate a more transparent system.

Jerry Reeder, Director of Special Services, Rio Rancho Public Schools (RRPS), noted RRPS had previously received local-level MOE verification from PED through FY14 and would like an explanation from PED for those alleged shortfalls. RRPS has historically been given the opportunity to make their case for liabilities through a verification process, including the right to a hearing when requesting to reduce MOE levels. He questioned whether PED was going to provide an opportunity for a hearing on the current alleged shortfalls because it appeared school districts were only going to be able to appeal FY16 calculations. He also noted RRPS is concerned about FY16 MOE. RRPS was having difficulty finding and replacing teaching and related service staff. When they do find related service staff, it is often through a contract, which comes at a higher cost.

Senator Stewart asked if PED had been completing local-level MOE calculations every year, noting the current assessment dates back to FY11. She asked if PED miscalculated MOE over the past few years. Mr. Montaña said PED calculates MOE annually but the department miscalculated MOE in years past by including Impact Aid expenditures. He said USDE gave specific consultation on this issue in 2016. Senator Stewart noted perceived unfairness of miscalculations completed by both PED and school districts that were now the liability of school districts. Senator Stewart asked if all miscalculations were related to Impact Aid expenditures. Representative Roch noted many schools in eastern New Mexico do not receive Impact Aid and have MOE shortfalls shown on the spreadsheet PED provided. Mr. Montaña said Impact Aid was the largest issue related to the miscalculation, but noted miscalculations also resulted from inclusion of Medicaid funds and other issues.

Senator Stewart asked if school districts could use any of the four federal methods for calculating local-level MOE, and Ms. Baca said PED's calculations were only based on two of the four available methods. Senator Stewart asked if PED contracted with anyone to complete the reconciliation of local-level MOE liabilities, and Ms. Baca said she and an external auditor completed the

reconciliation. In response to Representative Thomson, Ms. Baca said MOE calculations are approved by PED and not the federal government.

Representative Salazar noted there is no discussion of an appeal process in the emails shared by school districts. Mr. Montaña said PED has not yet sent out formal correspondence on the issue and that the emails were merely one of the many reminders given to school districts. Representative Linda Trujillo asked if PED is going to allow appeals going back to FY11. Deputy Secretary Montaña said PED already provided an opportunity for appeals in each fiscal year except for FY16, and the current modifications to school district and charter school calculations should not be appealable because they are not allowable expenses. Representative Roch asked if PED previously issued letters to school districts indicating they had met MOE in FY11 through FY15 and Deputy Secretary Montaña said yes. Representative Roch asked if the current calculated liability would be covered by PED if a school district previously received a letter from PED indicating it had met MOE in light of federal law assigning the liability to PED. Mr. Montaña said PED would say that local-level MOE was not achieved in some cases as new information arose.

Senator Soules raised issues about accuracy of correspondence Mr. Montaña promised PED would be sending school districts in the next week in light of the fact that previous correspondence from PED indicated no liabilities for some school districts. Mr. Montaña said PED is working with USDE to ensure the state is using the right calculations methodology and exceptions when calculating local-level MOE.

Senator Stewart asked Mr. Montaña which PED staff is responsible for local-level MOE calculations. Mr. Montaña noted previous staff responsible for the calculations were released and Ms. Baca is now responsible for the calculations. Mr. Montaña said PED believes they have accurately determined how to make calculations and there should not be concerns with future calculations. Senator Soules noted concern that PED was requesting repayment for school districts for shortfalls when the state is the entity that bears the financial responsibility and asked Mr. Montaña about PED's responsibility. Mr. Montaña noted both PED and school districts are responsible and PED is open to discuss shared responsibility. Senator Stewart asked if PED was open to partially covering the financial liability and Mr. Montaña said yes, though he noted he was unsure if PED could absolve school districts from their responsibility. Director Gudgel said LESC staff spoke with USDE staff, who indicated the federal liability lies at the state, rather than the school district level. Representative Garcia Richard asked Mr. Montaña if PED has asked USDE for guidance on who bears the responsibility to cover a shortfall when a state education agency previously miscalculated the MOE target. Mr. Montaña indicated he did not believe PED had posed that specific question to USDE. Senator Kernan asked if federal government has told PED to ask school districts for the money and Mr. Montaña said he would like to get further guidance from USDE.

Senator Soules asked the school districts if they relied on PED to give guidance on meeting local-level requirements and Dr. Morgan answered yes. Senator Soules said he was concerned PED was not providing enough resources to assist school districts. He asked PED when school districts would receive a formal letter notifying them of the liability and Mr. Montaña said the letter should be sent shortly, perhaps within a week. Senator Stewart asked Mr. Montaña to provide the LESC director with a summary of those letters.

Representative Linda Trujillo asked if state education agencies could compel a school district to pay a liability and Mr. Simon indicated USDE told staff that if a state could compel a school district to pay it would be based on state-level procedures. Ms. Gudgel noted there is nothing in state law that would, for example, allow PED to withhold funding from the state equalization guarantee distribution.

Representative Garcia Richard asked when “internal roadblocks” referenced in former Deputy-Secretary Aguilar’s emails were discovered and Mr. Montaña said he did not know. Representative Garcia Richard noted she is employed by a school district with a liability and she has been helping the superintendent gather correspondence but that determination letters have not been received since FY14. She asked what happened to those letters and Mr. Montaña said he did not know. Representative Garcia Richard said she hoped Mr. Montaña takes this as an indication that there needs to be more one-on-one communication with school districts.

Senator Stewart also encouraged PED to communicate with school districts and asked PED to share their audit work with school districts to help resolve this issue. She noted both school districts and the state have been struggling with MOE since 2011. She said the state owes about \$85 million for state-level MOE, and PED had never previously notified the Legislature of a local-level MOE problem. She said school district budgets have been cut severely and said PED should consider shouldering the shortfall burden, especially since it appears the liability for the miscalculation lies with PED. She asked Mr. Montaña to communicate with the LESC Director about how this issue will be resolved.

**House Memorial 49: Media Literacy Best Practices.** Representative Antonio “Moe” Maestas introduced the topic of media literacy, noting he carried House Memorial 49 (HM49), Media Literacy Best Practices, in the 2017 regular legislative session. Media literacy, he indicated, is an elective in high school, though it should be woven throughout the curriculum.

Pamela Pereyra, Chair, New Mexico Chapter, Media Literacy Now, New Mexico Chapter, indicated she has been a media literacy educator for 20 years. She said the National Association of Media Literacy Education describes “media literacy” as being able to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act within media, all of which involve certain foundational skills, such as critical thinking, reading, writing, and construction and deconstruction of concepts. The skills must be applied to fundamental questions to achieve media literacy, such as who authors an item, what its message and values are, what lifestyles it represents, and how different people might view the same material. Digital citizenship represents use of media literacy to address concepts such as cyberbullying and internet safety, privacy, security, and etiquette.

Ms. Pereyra indicated media literacy was previously at the forefront of New Mexico content standards and benchmarks, but now must be aligned with the common core state standards. Noting that the National Association of Media Literacy Education had assembled a guide on the topic, she suggested library media specialists might be the group best suited to train students in media literacy. She requested a subcommittee or working group to examine the issue and try to determine a path forward for the state on media literacy and good digital citizenship.

Dmitri Calvert, Technology Integration Consultant and Systems Engineer, School Tech Solutions, noted media, literacy, media and technology literacy, information technology, and educational technology have become largely inseparable. It takes expertise, however, to interact with technology safely to improve student achievement and safe interaction involves some knowledge of how things work. For example, he noted high school students are likely to know what “proxies” are and that they can be used to skirt internet filters, but high schools do not actually understand how that process works, that all information channeled through proxies is cached, meaning it can be downloaded and viewed by anyone else with access. Students may be opening themselves to risk because of this lack of understanding, despite common misconceptions that students truly understand this technology and teachers can keep students safe. Instead, Mr. Calvert suggested technology should be used more effectively, and using technology more effectively, and teachers should be trained to better use information.

MaryBeth Weeks, President-Elect, New Mexico Parent Teacher Association (PTA), noted in a world filled with fake news and viral social media, it is important for students to be able to spot

what is real and what is not. Using her own children as examples, she indicated her sixth-grader has been required to assemble PowerPoint presentations for all his classes; her third-grader routinely uses Chromebook over pen and paper, and her fourth-grader can bypass most security measures. Nevertheless, she indicated, in a world filled with fake news and viral media, students must be able to spot the truth from fabrication, and teachers must be equipped to know what students are doing with their technology. She requested the committee look at national media literacy resources from the PTA, noting “Smart Talk” is a collaboration between national PTA and Lifelock, a preventative identity theft organization that encourages families and students to talk about making good decisions when using the internet.

Vice Chair Garcia Richard asked Ms. Pereyra what types of media literacy are available around the state, who responded some teachers have already incorporated media literacy in their curriculum, but that it comes down to what local school districts and schools prioritize. Mr. Calvert agreed much depends on where one lives; New Mexico is divided between those who have and those who lack IT infrastructure, with rural areas having the least infrastructure and support. The more rural areas have no IT infrastructure or support person. Ms. Pereyra noted it would be useful to map IT infrastructure and connectivity in the state. Representative Smith then said the Public Schools Facility Authority (PSFA) has been working to map connectivity and already has a good idea of what is available at the state’s school districts and charter schools, with Chair Stewart adding that PSFA also knows internet speeds available throughout the state.

Representative Salazar asked about the mission of the National Association of Media Literacy Education, to which Ms. Pereyra replied they are a group of national educators who work to define media literacy, holding annual conferences, sponsoring Media Literacy Week, publishing a newsletter, and acting as a resource for educators.

Chair Stewart expressed concern over the effects of digital misinformation, noting the alleged interference in the national elections of 2016. Representative Maestas agreed with the concern, noting that the state has a responsibility to arm students with tools to discern and reject misinformation online. Chair Stewart also noted Laws 2017, Chapter 144 (Senate Bill 134), which allows computer literacy to count as a required math or science high school credit might provide a good course to teach media literacy, though the Public Education Department will need to promulgate regulations regarding who may teach such a class.

**Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture Task Force Strategic Plan.** Kelsey Rader, Natural Resources Policy Director, New Mexico First (NM First), provided an overview of the Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture Task Force Strategic Plan (Ag Plan) and issues around farming and ranching.

Kate Greenberg, Western Program Director, National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) said the NYFC has worked in New Mexico for the last four or five years. Three young farmers facing similar challenges around access to affordable land, credit and financing, and student loan debt formed NYFC seven years ago. NYFC now has members in all 50 states. They have 38 young farmer-led chapters including two in New Mexico: the Rio Grande Farmers Coalition and Northern New Mexico Young Farmers Association.

Ms. Greenberg stated NYFC was part of the NM First task force. They were part of the Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers subcommittee with the Future Farmers of America (FFA), New Mexico State University, and the Agricultura Cooperative Network. Together they identified top barriers facing young farmers and ranchers as well as solutions.

Ms. Rader explained before NM First considered creating an agriculture plan they looked at challenges facing the agriculture industry. One of the main issues is an aging population of farmers and ranchers. There is a critical mass of farmers and ranchers over the age of 60 and

nearing retirement that are not being replaced because of barriers such as student loan repayment, capital access, and the lack of food access in the state.

Ms. Greenberg said when they decided to develop a state plan, they asked stakeholders to identify challenges through 13 regional meetings with over 600 participants. They developed that into a background report that is on the NM First website. NM First synthesized input and supplemented it with research. The report set the platform for a 33-member task force of industry leaders, and state and federal officials. They used input from the regional meetings and the report to develop the plan, which was released in August. Now they are in the implementation stage and gathering a working group largely from members of the task force.

Ms. Greenberg continued the next generation of farmers and ranchers section addresses three issues: education and training; land access; and capital and credit access. Their highest priority recommendation is to promote and expand agricultural education and training opportunities. Strategies to accomplish this recommendation include holding stable financial support for agricultural education in public schools for programs such as 4-H and FFA. Another recommendation is dual credit. Last is the student loan repayment program.

Ms. Greenberg said NYFC surveyed 700 farmers and ranchers from across the United States in 2015 around barriers related to student loans. Nationally, young farmers have an average of \$35 thousand in student loan debt and about 20 percent are unable to access additional credit because of student loan debt. The average debt in New Mexico is about \$21 thousand and 58 percent of students graduate with student loan debt.

Ms. Greenberg continued there are 35 states with education loan forgiveness or repayment programs. Examples in New Mexico are the health professional loan program and teacher loan repayment program. These programs provide incentives for people to build careers in underserved and rural areas. One study found 93 percent of participants completed their commitments and about two-thirds remained in the area for at least eight years. The task force considered and recommended a student loan repayment program for young farmers to reinvigorate the rural fabric and to ensure New Mexico's agricultural legacy.

Senator Stewart said she is intrigued by the student loan repayment idea and questioned whether the lottery scholarship program could be used as an economic incentive program. She asked what institutions students are attending to learn to farm. Ms. Greenberg noted students attend land grant universities and other institutions. She noted a generation of young people have learned they want to farm while attending college and accumulating student loan debt along with multigenerational family farmers whose kids have to choose between college and staying on the farm. A student loan repayment program would help students get an education and go into farming.

Representative Smith asked what about the impact of increased student loan debt. Ms. Greenberg said the rate of tuition increases have been high and the recession negatively impacted young people who were about to graduate and were unable to find jobs. Many young people discovered farming during the recession.

Representative Smith asked about collaboration with the Navajo Nation on the report. Ms. Rader said one of the biggest challenges on tribal lands is land ownership. To get collateral for a loan, people cannot use tribal land because it is held in trust by the federal government. The ability to lend to tribal producers is unclear for lending organizations. Some land has fractured ownership and its decision-making authority is unclear.

Senator Gould asked if there were programs similar to Galloping Grace Youth Ranch, and Ms. Greenberg said there are apprenticeship programs through organizations like the Quivera

Coalition that train mentors and apprentices and are part of a national network. Ms. Rader said Galloping Grace does an excellent job for career access and education. Programs in other states include Ag in the Classroom.

Representative Roch asked if there were any discussion about creating a farming-centered charter school during development of the report. Ms. Rader replied it has not come up during discussions, but they would be supportive. Senator Stewart added New Mexico just received a \$22 million multi-year grant, some of which is to develop new charter schools. Representative Roch said two of the largest FFA chapters in the nation are in urban areas, built around agriculture magnet schools.

**Director's Report: Administrative Rulemaking.** Kevin Force, LESC staff, reviewed a recent emergency rulemaking promulgated by the Public Education Department (PED) to address transportation to and from school in sport utility vehicles (SUVs) to comply with Laws 2017, Chapter 94 (Senate Bill 381). On September 29, 2017, PED adopted the emergency rules; the Notice of Emergency Rulemaking was published in the October 17 issue of the *New Mexico Register*. Under the State Rules Act, a normal rulemaking process must be initiated within 180 days of adoption to make the emergency rule permanent. The rule contains requirements not in statute, like a prohibition against counting students transported in SUVs for transportation funding.

Representative Roch noted the safety features required by the rule for SUVs would make SUVs so expensive that it is likely no school district would be able to take advantage of the law, thus upending legislative intent. Further, the school district would not be able to count students in SUVs for transportation funding, counter to the law's purpose of enabling districts to save money by not using buses for transportation to difficult-to-reach areas. Senator Brandt moved the committee to send a letter to PED during the normal rulemaking process, once initiated, indicating members feel the rule goes farther in its restrictions than student safety requires, effectively rendering the statute useless; the motion was unopposed.

Mr. Force next reviewed PED's proposed repeal of the rule of supplemental educational services. The department proposed the repeal because these services are not required under the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*, and the state-level requirement was repealed as a result of LESC-endorsed legislation during the 2015 session. The public rule hearing is Monday, November 20, 2017, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Heidi Macdonald, LESC staff, addressed a repeal and replace of rules on licensure in early childhood education, prekindergarten through third grade, at Part 12 of 6.61 NMAC. The proposed replacement reduces the semester hour requirements for applicants seeking an early childhood education license, beginning August 1, 2018, reflecting the provisions of Laws 2015, Chapter 97 (Senate Bill 329).

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

### **Wednesday, October 25**

Senator Mimi Stewart, Chair, called the meeting of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) to order at 8:37 a.m., on Wednesday, October 25, 2017, in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC voting and advisory members were present: Voting: Chairwoman Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair Stephanie Garcia Richard, Senators Craig W. Brandt, Candace Gould, and William P. Soules, and Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, Dennis J. Roch, Tomás E. Salazar, James E. Smith, and Sheryl M. Williams Stapleton. Advisory: Senators Gay G. Kernan, Howie C. Morales, Michael Padilla, and John Pinto, and Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Rick Little, Patricio Ruiloba, Debra M. Sariñana, Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson, and Linda M. Trujillo.

The following LESC advisory members were not present: Senators Carlos Cisneros, Daniel A. Ivey-Soto, Linda M. Lopez, and Representatives David M. Gallegos, Jimmie C. Hall, D. Wonda Johnson, Tim D. Lewis, G. Andrés Romero, Patricia Roybal Caballero, Angelica Rubio, Christine Trujillo, Jim R. Trujillo, and Monica Youngblood.

Also present was Representative Rebecca Dow.

**National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) *No Time to Lose* Welcome and Introductions.** Michelle Exstrom, Education Program Director, NCSL, said the committee will begin looking more deeply at each of the elements from the *No Time to Lose* report that correlate with the National Center for Education and the Economy's (NCEE) *Nine Building Blocks for a World-Class Education System*, that are important for establishing and implementing a high-performing education system. Specifically, the committee will hear from an expert on brain science and brain development and the impact that has on long-term learning followed by experts from NCEE who will talk about early learning and supports for families with young children. In the afternoon, the committee will hear from international experts virtually from the United Kingdom and Finland. Finally, NCSL staff will present on early learning policies from birth through kindergarten that are being considered and implemented in the United States. The presentations will highlight differences between what is currently happening in the United States versus what is happening in high-performing countries and factors to consider to improve early childhood education in the state.

**Why Early Childhood Education Matters: The Science of Brain Development.** Amelia Bachleda, Outreach and Education Specialist, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, University of Washington, researched early childhood learning and brain development, including how children learn, how to support their learning, and what is going on in their brains as they are learning. She stated research shows people's earliest experiences influence who they are and what they become. For instance, early childhood years are a period of rapid change in the brain, which forms and refines a complex network of connections through a variety of developmental stages, including neuron pruning. The pruning process shapes the brain of a young child through refinement of overproduction of brain synapses based on experience. Connections used regularly become stronger and more complex, while connections that are not used are considered nonessential and eventually naturally pruned by the brain to increase efficiency. The result is a healthy, thriving, attuned brain.

Dr. Bachelada said one of the earliest areas of focus at the Institute of Learning and Brain Science is on language learning. She recounted a test conducted with babies to determine whether babies can hear differences among sounds from different languages. Specifically, the researchers studied the ability of English learning infants and Japanese learning infants to hear "la" and "ra," sounds that exist in the English language but do not exist in the Japanese language. Researchers found infants between 6- and 8-months-old were equally good at telling the difference between the sounds. She noted babies are able to tell the difference between different language sounds throughout the world. However, over time, babies get better at telling the difference between sounds of their native language and get worse at telling the difference between sounds in other languages, which is a direct response to the experiences the babies are having. English learning babies are forming strong connections between those networks in their brain, and the Japanese learning infants are not getting that experience and those connections are being pruned away.

The Institute of Learning and Brain Sciences also focuses on children who learn two languages. Children who are learning two languages get a boost in brain development, which means they have a longer period during which their brain is open to learning the sounds and rules of languages. During this study, 11-month-old babies who spoke either one language or two languages were invited into the lab. The researchers looked at their brain activity and found babies who are learning two languages are specialized to respond to both languages. Children



who are learning one language are specialized just for that one language. Researchers also saw increased activity in the prefrontal cortex, which is important for executive function skills, such as cognitive flexibility, flexible thinking, attention, focus, and impulse control, for children who are learning two languages. This gives those skills a boost, which eventually spill over into other aspects of a child's development.

Children are engaged learners from the moment they are born. In terms of language acquisition, infants learn language best through live interaction. Other important aspects of learning languages involve the quality of the language and type of speech an infant is hearing. Research found infants learn language better if a person uses infant directed speech, which extends the vowel sounds, is slower, higher, and it puts structure into the language. Researchers found the more infant directed speech a child hears, the more babbling they do at 9 months. The more infant directed speech the infant hears at 12 months, the higher their vocabulary is at 24 months.

Research shows early learning programs that incorporate high-quality curriculum using infant directed speech, rich language content, and highly social interactions produced higher learning gains for children than low-quality programs. Specifically, children in high-quality programs learn five times the amount of English sounds and words as children in lower quality programs. Studies have shown children who have access to a high-quality program have more efficient brain processing at age 5 as opposed to children from low-income backgrounds who may not have access to opportunities and to a high-quality program.

In conclusion, she stated the very early years set the stage for a child's learning and development. Hearing infant directed speech is linked to greater vocabulary later. Being able to read social cues predicts future vocabulary and the ability to understand how others are thinking, feeling, and interacting. The ability to hear different speech sounds is also linked to future vocabulary. Children's vocabulary is linked to their ability and reading proficiency at age 5. Executive functioning skills predict growth in all academic outcomes. To create lifelong learners, it is important for children to know basic education concepts such as colors, shapes, and the alphabet; how to take turns; seek help; solve problems; self-regulate and control impulses; explore their environment; understand routine; and become aware of emotions. These are the core skills that children are building in early, high-quality childcare programs that will enable children to be successful learners later in life.

Representative Dow stated not all Head Start programs are high-quality programs and asked if there are models that are helping Head Start programs improve. Dr. Bachleda said that is a top focus of the work at the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, which is a partner with the National Center for Early Childhood Development Teaching and Learning. They are providing some training for Head Start teachers and child care providers, including focusing on continuous quality improvement with practice-based coaching.

Senator Stewart asked about the impact of poverty on students in light of the research that shows increased brain development of infants learning two languages. Dr. Bachleda said it is important that children have high quality language experience in the first few years of their lives and often students who are learning two languages are not getting high quality language experiences in their home language or English. Dr. Bachleda noted children perform better if they have a strong foundation in their home language even if it is not English. She said it is important to assess children in their home language, to be able to connect teachers with parents, and provide structure in the classroom so students can practice language skills with each other.

**Early Learning in High-Performing Countries.** Jackie Kraemer, Assistant Director, Center for International Education Benchmarking (CIEB), of the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE); and Nathan Driskell, Senior Policy Analyst, CIEB; provided detail on early learning and care systems in high-performing countries. Ms. Kraemer said CIEB identified high-

performing countries by how well a jurisdiction measured on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and how well it serves the majority of students. CIEB also considered *The Economist's* study of over 50 jurisdictions, which rated jurisdictions on accessibility, affordability, and quality of early childhood learning and care systems. Early childhood education and support for young children and their families is a common building block CIEB sees across high-performing countries. CIEB and NCEE looked at childcare and early childhood education programs, program accessibility, quality, and affordability, requirements for teachers, and the types of services provided to young children and their families in Singapore, Australia, the United Kingdom, Finland, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

Ms. Kraemer indicated governments invest in early childhood education and care for the following reasons: to increase the birthrate (Europe after World War II and Asia currently); because of an increase in women entering the workforce; and to provide children with a better chance of success in school. Each country studied provides systems that have different public and private participation in early childhood learning and care systems. Some western European systems are entirely public while some Asian jurisdictions provide programs through the private sector and other jurisdictions provide systems that are partnerships between the public and private sectors.

All countries studied by OECD shared some commonalities across their early childhood education and care systems. The countries have social and health services for all families, paid parental leave, subsidized care for children in low-income families from birth to 2 years old, and publically funded parent support, with a special focus on disadvantaged and immigrant families. The countries all have prekindergarten programs, many which are free and universal. They also have systems for transitioning students from prekindergarten to primary school and most offer subsidized training and education for those working with young children.

Ms. Kraemer explained there are different models of pedagogy and accountability in different systems. The Nordic/western European model focuses heavily on public-based services, with very loose pedagogy. This model has a national curriculum and national guidance but significant flexibility for local providers control with limited accountability. The Asian model is heavily market based and their pedagogy is highly structured. The Asian model has a medium level of accountability across private and public providers. In the Anglo model, which is closer to the model in the United Kingdom and Australia has a mix of public and private services with moderate guidance on pedagogy and a highly structured accountability system.

Ms. Kraemer said there are growing trends in early childhood education and care systems for these six countries. The countries are making education for 3- through 6-year-olds universal and free or highly subsidized for all families. They are also aligning early learning standards and preschool curriculum to primary school curriculum, and share data about children across systems. She said these countries are building a system infrastructure for early childhood education and care that include a centralized governance with more investments. The infrastructure also includes setting national quality standards and curriculum with quality monitoring. They also focus on building capacity and creating an early childhood education and care profession.

Mr. Driskell talked about a policy gap analysis at the state level. CIEB worked with a group of stakeholders at the state level to analyze how state policies and practices compare with top performing countries. He explained the idea was not to promote adoption of certain models from high-performing countries but rather to provide a range of policy contexts and approaches for improving education in the United States. Their research shows the United States is far behind the international jurisdictions when it comes to providing supports to families of young children. The United States has the greatest income inequality of any of the advanced industrial nations and has approximately 50 percent of its public school population living in poverty.

Mr. Driskell said there are financial supports for children from birth to 3 years old. Finland, Ontario, and Singapore view it as a government responsibility to provide pay and subsidies to mothers when they give birth to babies. Paid parental leave is common, which is a critical difference when compared with the United States, which only guarantees 12 weeks of unpaid leave with a continuation of health insurance to employees through the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Mr. Driskell noted he was aware of a study of parental leave currently being conducted in New Mexico that is scheduled to be released in December 2017, though he was unable to recall which organization is conducting the study. He said the high-performing countries provide publically funded government or privately run healthcare programs that are heavily subsidized for low-income families. All of these countries also provide some sort of home visiting, which focus on health care, parent education, or assessing the quality of the home environment.

Mr. Driskell said the United States provides health insurance for children in low-income families through the federal Medicaid program or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). New Mexico has been investing in early childhood investment zones which are focused on coordinating services and building capacity of home visiting program providers. Mr. Driskell said states in the United States typically subsidize childcare. New Mexico is only providing subsidies for families with income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty line and most other states set the cut off at 250 percent of the federal poverty line, though Mr. Driskell noted differences in cost of living and average income probably account for the differences.

Mr. Driskell pointed out high-performing countries are developing worker qualifications with new diplomas and certificates in early childhood learning and care. Singapore established a one-year certificate program while Ontario has a two-year diploma program. Finland requires early childhood program employees to have a certificate and one of every three providers must have a bachelor's degree, while directors must hold masters degrees. In the United States, the norm is a child development associate certificate, which requires about 120 hours of training.

Mr. Driskell indicated New Mexico, compared with other U.S. states, has severe child poverty. In 2015, 29.4 percent of New Mexico's children lived in poverty, which was the highest in the nation. All U.S. states are far behind international leaders in this area. Recent early childhood efforts in New Mexico, if sustained, will allow New Mexico to match the top performing states. However, further investments are still needed to improve the qualifications of care workers, retention, pay, and provision of health and care services for New Mexico to achieve the level of success of the top performing countries.

**Lessons Learned from Finland and the U.K.** Karen Hammerness, Director of Educational Research and Evaluation, American Museum of Natural History, said Finland has consistently high results on international tests liked Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and is coupled with ensuring equity in student achievement. Finland is often viewed as a homogenous country, but she noted there is growing diversity with one in 10 Finnish students who are not ethnically Finnish. Preschool in Finland is provided for 6-year-old students, which is followed by a nine-year comprehensive, compulsory public education and an additional three years of upper secondary that can be vocational or general education.

Ms. Hammerness said Finland is focused on a strong early start for children. Finland provides paid parental leave to parents until children reach their first birthday and the country is focused on providing comprehensive health services. There is an emphasis on identifying possible learning and developmental difficulties of students prior to students' entry into school and providing preventative measures to struggling students once they enter school. Free, healthy meals are provided to every student in school every day even though child poverty is low. Ms. Hammerness noted there is significant focus on preschool and elementary education, and removing structural

barriers that cause student failure in school. Ms. Hammerness indicated grade retention and reliance on academics are vanishing in Finnish schools. Instead, they focus on teaching less with less testing and students learning more.

In Finland, prekindergarten is based on an evidence-based, play-based model that is based on the premise that children learn through play. Recess is a requirement, especially in early elementary schools. In early childhood and primary education, there is little formal academic emphasis. In Finland “school readiness” means the schools have to be ready for the children, not children having to be ready for the schools. Focus is placed on appropriate learning goals over time. As of August, every child must have a personal learning plan and parents have to be involved in developing their child’s plan. Ms. Hammerness also noted it is more competitive to become a primary teacher than it is to become a secondary teacher.

Naomi Eisenstadt, Senior Research Fellow, University of Oxford, and Advisor on Policy and Inequality to the First Minister of Scotland, said England is somewhere between Finland and the United States on early childhood issues. The United Kingdom, like the United States, has a commitment to low taxes, but the public in Scandinavian countries generally trust their governments to spend their money. This is a fundamental difference when compared with Anglophone countries (excluding Canada) and the United Kingdom, where the public generally wants to choose how they spend their money for the support of their families, rather than relying on government to make their choices in Anglophone countries and the sentiment in the United Kingdom lies in the middle of the Scandinavian and Anglophone sentiments.

Ms. Eisenstadt stated the government in Great Britain provides free, universal, high-quality health care and focuses on enhancing capabilities of families. The country provides nine months of paid maternity leave, though the rate of pay is fairly low and one year of full leave with a guarantee to return to the job within one year. Maternity leave can be shared between mothers and fathers and flexible work hours are provided to accommodate school holidays. The country provides parenting classes, antenatal and postnatal classes, and midwifery service to help parents be better parents.

Ms. Eisenstadt explained the United Kingdom offers at least 30 hours of free childcare or prekindergarten to children of working parents and 15 hours to children of parents who are not working. Parents have flexibility in how they are able to use the 15 or 30 hours of childcare. This means childcare centers do not have the same group of children every day and cannot use a formal curriculum. Childcare subsidies are universal but there is an acknowledgment that poor children need extra support. A subsidy referred to as the “people premium” is provided to schools for each student whose family receives some welfare benefit. Schools receive £1,300 pounds for each student between the ages of 5 and 11 from a family receiving welfare benefits, £935 for students between the ages of 11 and 16, and the premium for 3- and 4-year-olds in public school programs is £300 pounds. Schools that receive the premiums have to demonstrate they are using the money to enhance the educational experience of the poorest children.

In response to Senator Brandt’s question about maternity leave, Ms. Eisenstadt said new mothers in Great Britain receive six weeks of pay at 90 percent of their salary from the employer and the government subsidy is quite low at about £130 pounds a week. Ms. Hammerness said Finland funded paternal leave. The Senator said the maternity leave that gives families an opportunity to get started is not available in the United States.

In response to Senator Stewart’s question about quality prekindergarten, Ms. Hammerness said quality is measured by international assessment data for 15-year-old students. In Finland, the belief is if kids are performing well by age 15, the prior education programs are setting students up for success. Ms. Hammerness also noted there are not alternative routes into the teaching profession in Finland and elementary teacher preparation is more comprehensive and

competitive than preparation programs for secondary teachers, demonstrating a significant emphasis on early childhood. Additionally, because most prekindergarten programs are housed in elementary schools, students transition from prekindergarten into the public school setting seamlessly because they are already familiar with their surroundings. Ms. Eisenstadt noted in Great Britain there is an all-day “reception” class for 4- and 5-year-olds in public school classrooms that are taught by highly qualified teachers to make the transition into primary school easy.

In response to Representative Salazar’s question about teacher evaluation, Ms. Hammerness said Finland has an evaluation system that is targeted and directed toward individual teacher’s goals. The system focuses on teacher development and teacher learning and professionalism. Regarding teacher preparation, Ms. Hammerness said teacher preparation programs have significant field-based work that combines emphasis on sociology, psychology, group dynamics, culture, context, and pedagogy. The focus in teacher preparation programs is consistent with the emphasis in the curriculum on formal academics as well as socioemotional learning and moral and ethical development.

In response to Senator Soules question about integrating an increased number of immigrants, Ms. Eisenstadt said the immigration issue in Great Britain is complicated because immigrants come from so many different places. Most immigrants have been able to catch up within a generation and are economically and culturally participating in society. She indicated the achievement gap is most notable among white boys who come from a low socioeconomic background. Ms. Hammerness said Finland has also faced considerable immigration, primarily from Russia and Turkey but also from Arabic countries. Approximately 90 different languages are spoken in Helsinki schools and one of the largest challenges is developing teacher education programs that respond to this. Ms. Hammerness noted Finland is providing more courses in multicultural education and educate people to be able to work with children from so many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and abilities.

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

#### **Thursday, October 26**

Senator Mimi Stewart, Chair, called the meeting of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) to order at 9:02 a.m., on Thursday, October 26, 2017, in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC voting and advisory members were present: Voting: Chairwoman Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair Stephanie Garcia Richard, Senators Craig W. Brandt, Candace Gould, and William P. Soules, and Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, Tomás E. Salazar, James E. Smith, and Sheryl M. Williams Stapleton. Advisory: Senators Gay G. Kernan, Michael Padilla, and John Pinto, and Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Rick Little, Linda M. Lopez, G. Andrés Romero, Elizabeth “Liz” Thomson, Christine Trujillo, and Linda M. Trujillo.

The following LESC voting and advisory members were not present: Voting: Representative Dennis J. Roch. Advisory: Senators Carlos Cisneros, Daniel A. Ivey-Soto, and Howie C. Morales, and Representatives David M. Gallegos, Jimmie C. Hall, D. Wonda Johnson, Tim D. Lewis, Patricia Roybal Caballero, Angelica Rubio, Patricio Ruiloba, Debra M. Sariñana, Jim R. Trujillo, and Monica Youngblood.

**Next Generation Science Standards.** Gwen Warniment, K-12 Program Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Foundation noted many were surprised by Secretary-Designate Ruskowski’s announcement that the Public Education Department (PED) would be adopting the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) most as written and without the controversial changes PED proposed to standards addressing evolution, climate change, and the age of the earth, and with only a few of the proposed New Mexico-specific standards.

Ms. Warniment noted she has been working with the NGSS nationally, locally, and at the state level since 2010. As part of that work, she led an initiative at the LANL Foundation to move teachers toward NGSS, many of whom embraced the standards in their curricula and practice. She noted science is a practice to develop and refine knowledge and NGSS codifies this concept; the best way to think of them is as a three-legged stool, supported by the three strands of science and engineering practices, core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. Science and engineering practices involve the act of doing science, engaged through the scientific method, and occur in all scientific work and study. Core ideas reflect scientific principles and phenomena such as electromagnetism or acoustics. Crosscutting concepts are the lenses through which science is viewed, looking for patterns of evidence, cause and effect, introducing a more rigorous level of scientific learning; active practice is encouraged, rather than merely “understanding,” or “observing.” When the NM STEM-Ready Science Standards were proposed by PED, only performance expectations were included, ignoring the integration of these three supporting strands of scientific understanding into the NGSS.

Ms. Warniment outlined three state models of NGSS implementation: Washington, Oregon, and Arkansas. The Washington implementation plan spanned 2014 to 2017, one of the shortest implementation timelines. Oregon’s implementation timeline began in 2014 with an overview and targeted professional development, including teachers, administrators, and state officials, and will end in 2019. Oregon offered regional support groups and professional development for all administrators and teachers, and developed a statewide examination, with performance descriptors and cut scores. Finally, Arkansas began in 2013 and will end in 2018, with a tiered approach across grade levels. The Arkansas plan offers sustained professional development and supports for school districts, as well as color-coded curricula and assessments.

Ms. Warniment said implementation should be strategic and thoughtful, recommending it should take no fewer than four years. The first year should focus on outreach and communication with all stakeholders, including depth of understanding of the standards. Year two should focus on professional development while year three should be focused on developing formative assessments. The final year should focus on developing a statewide assessment. Particular attention should be focused on building the capacity of rural school districts and supporting teacher leadership in rural school districts to help them connect to regional hubs.

Senator Kernan asked how this feedback could be communicated to PED; Chair Stewart noted PED was not present at the hearing.

Next, Jack Jekowski, Principal Partner, Innovative Technology Partnership, spoke about the perspectives of the business and science communities. Since 2011, many organizations with whom Mr. Jekowski has a relationship have been following the development of the NGSS, and have consistently advocated for full adoption of NGSS in New Mexico. He noted organizations that he is involved with contacted him in reaching to PED’s September 2017 proposed rulemaking showing a version of NGSS that had been substantially altered; many were opposed to the proposed standards and preferred the NGSS as written. Mr. Jekowski shared letters in opposition to the proposed change to NGSS from a cross-section of business and science organizations in the state, including the Association of Commerce and Industry (ACI), Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation (LACDC), New Mexico Business Roundtable (NMBR), and Quality New Mexico Excellence in Learning (NMEXL).

NMBR had significant concerns with implementing the modified standards, particularly on such an abbreviated timeline, and noted recruiting and retaining high technology companies could become more difficult in New Mexico. NMBR’s correspondence also noted implementation of altered standards could cost the state millions of dollars more than adopting NGSS would. LANL Foundation and LANL are key partners in this effort, and have questioned how the New Mexico-specific standards were written and integrated with NGSS. Finally, LACDC is concerned the

standards will signal that the state is inhospitable for scientists, and indicate to the federal agencies that provide LANL funding there may be issues within the state.

Stan Rounds, Executive Director, New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NMCEL) and New Mexico Superintendents' Association (NMSA), both of which support adoption of the full NGSS, spoke to issues of implementation. The last major curricular implementation undertaken in the state was the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, a lengthy and difficult process. Mr. Rounds urged the committee to remember implementation timelines and issues will differ from school district to school district.

Mr. Rounds said, in the past New Mexico has taken at least a year to adopt a framework and standards for implementing new content standards. The fastest full adoption timeline Mr. Rounds has seen is six months to a year. Further, any adoption must consider local issues, not to change the standards or framework, but to allow for regional variation in instruction.

Next, he spoke of the adoption of instructional materials. First, the materials must undergo summer review, then be adopted and made available for purchase by school districts, a process that takes about a year. Appropriations for instructional materials peaked in FY09 at \$39 million, before the recession, then, in FY10, the state dropped the appropriation to \$16.5 million and it has yet to return to pre-recession levels. Mr. Rounds noted teacher professional development costs will also likely be significant. There will be a substantial change in the teaching process under the new standards. Every teacher of science will need professional development so they can deliver the new platform. How that training will be conducted, by whom, and the extent of the cost are still unanswered questions.

Mr. Rounds spoke of a potential implementation timeline as follows: adoption of NGSS by fall 2017; development of the framework in spring 2018 for rollout by the summer; textbook adoption in fall 2018 and spring 2019; textbook purchase fall 2019; professional development occurring fall 2019 through summer 2020. This timeline would result in full implementation by fall 2021.

Senator Kernan asked if college readiness tests like SAT and ACT will be changing to include the new standards. Mr. Rounds said the College Board, which develops the SAT and PSAT, is moving toward NGSS as their template for testing, but he was unaware of their timeframe.

When Senator Kernan asked about the timeline and the purchase of textbooks for science, Mr. Rounds said some school districts are already working to implement NGSS by next fall, though the entire process will probably take multiple years. The 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions will be a critical time for the base funding for instructional materials to be appropriated.

In response to Senator Kernan, Ms. Warniment said 18 states have fully adopted NGSS and 18 have adopted altered versions of NGSS. Assessment development, she continued, is not necessarily happening in large companies; assessments may also be developed and shared by states. Vice Chair Garcia Richard asked how the shift in instruction affects potential instructional materials and assessments, to which Ms. Warniment replied more dynamic research and instructional materials integrated with books other than texts is what will be needed.

Representative Romero expressed disappointment at Secretary-Designate Ruskowski's absence, as he wanted more information on who had helped PED with changes PED originally proposed in the NM STEM-Ready standards, noting the public preferred adoption of the NGSS as written. He then outlined several concerning changes to the end-of-course (EOC) assessment blueprints for health and social studies, indicating sensitive topics like civil rights activist Rosa Parks and the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan had been removed. Chair Stewart said staff would follow up on the EOC blueprint issue.

Representative Little expressed concern over rigid standards that may limit student thought, noting changing reference to “4.6 billion-year history” in NGSS to “geologic history” in the NM STEM-Ready standards seemed to allow more room for amendment should scientific standards change.

Senator Stewart opened the committee up for community input. Community members who spoke included: Dr. Robert Ekke, formerly of LANL; Melva Knoll, a lifelong science teacher and member of the New Mexico Academy of Science; Nancy Craig, former professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Jesse Johnson, lifelong New Mexico resident; Kim Johnson, formerly president of the New Mexico Academy of Science and the Coalition for Math and Science Excellence in Education; Charles Goodmacher of NEA New Mexico; Greg Swift of LANL; Dr. Jeanette Fischer, a 30-year teacher; Christopher Moore, formerly of UNM’s computer science department; Mariana Anaya, with the Albuquerque Teachers’ Federation (AFT); Stephanie Ly with AFT New Mexico; Jodi Larson with the League of Women Voters; and Barbara Peterson of the Albuquerque Public Schools board. All community speakers were in favor of the full adoption of the NGSS as written.

With regard to concerns over process and transparency, the Chair noted she was made aware of an Open Meetings Act complaint against PED, and that the department may have to hold another meeting. Barring that, the earliest the NGSS might be finally adopted by PED would be mid-November. She noted that, while sympathetic to public requests that the Legislature address the issue, the adoption of the science standards is regulatory in nature, and thus in the hands of the executive.

**National and Local Early Childhood Education Landscape.** Matt Weyer, Policy Specialist, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), stated he will focus his presentation on state legislative activity on birth through age 5 from a national perspective, provide an overview of the research on early childhood education, and highlight possible solutions for improving early childhood education. He stated positive interactions can strengthen neural connections in early childhood, and negative experiences can impact negative connections. If stress is prolonged, it becomes toxic stress and can negatively impact educational and social outcomes for children. According to a recent study from the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, there are three principles to improve outcomes for children and families, including learning about the sources of stress, finding ways to reduce stress, and supporting core life skills that support responsive relationships. Additionally, he stated the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a study measuring adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which found people who experienced multiple ACEs were negatively affected through lack of school readiness and lower student achievement.

Dr. Weyer said there are approximately 18 evidence-based models of home visiting, which lower the risk for child abuse and neglect, improve maternal and child health, address ACEs, and help screen for parental depression, domestic violence, and child abuse and neglect. These home visiting models help build relationships and resilience, connect families to services, provide parental supports, and promote protective behaviors. In New Mexico, there are strong evidence-based models operating in the state. He stated the children who need these services the most include children in foster care, homeless children, and children with incarcerated parents.

He said there are other comprehensive, statewide, coordinated systems for early identification and referral of children at risk for development and behavioral problems, and these programs try to tackle problems in a variety of ways. For example, Safe Babies, Core Teams is located in Washington D.C. and is a public-private collaboration of local courts with nonprofit community providers to help those kids in the welfare system. Additional programs include Early Head Start and Trauma Informed Care, which is an initiative certain schools could use to move toward discipline practices that are less punitive and look at root causes of behavior.



The National Institute for Early Education Research released the *State of Preschool 2016: State Preschool Yearbook*, which found 1.5 million 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in prekindergarten. State funding rose 8 percent across the country to around \$7.4 billion, which exceeded prerecession levels. State prekindergarten programs range from \$1,500 to \$16 thousand per child. The national average is about \$5,000 per child, and New Mexico is right around the national average. New Mexico revised its standards to focus more on process indicators, including teacher student interaction and classroom climate.

Dr. Weyer stated nationally some students are already behind when they enter kindergarten. In math, African-American students are trailing white peers approximately nine months, and in reading, it is about seven months. Hispanic students are almost 11 months behind in math and over 11 months behind in reading. The bigger gaps are in the income brackets. The lowest income students are almost a year behind in math when entering kindergarten and over a year behind in reading. Low-income students trail in adaptive school readiness skills and health status, they attend lower quality schools with ineffective and inexperienced teachers and fewer resources, they are twice as likely to be chronically absent and face hunger, homelessness, housing insecurity, lack of access to quality healthcare, and they have higher numbers of ACEs.

The benefits of a high-quality prekindergarten program can help alleviate some of these academic and social gaps. According to a report by the Brookings Institute, high quality prekindergarten programs are especially beneficial for low-income students, English learners, and students of color as they show short and long term gains in educational attainment, health, decreased incarceration rates, and increased earnings. High-quality prekindergarten program characteristics include a well-implemented, evidence-based curriculum and coaching for prekindergarten teachers.

Dr. Jon Courtney, Program Evaluation Manager, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), focused on the LFC report regarding the New Mexico-specific early childhood landscape, which looked at four state-funded programs including home visiting, child care, prekindergarten, and K-3 Plus. Home visiting is an intensive parent education program. Child care provides daycare options so parents can go to school or work. New Mexico prekindergarten is a state-run early education program for 3- and 4-year-old students. K-3 Plus is an extended school year program which adds 25 days of instruction for students participating in the program.

The Legislature has continued to increase investments in early childhood education despite declining revenues. There has been about a \$122 million increase, or 62 percent increase, since FY14. In FY18, the four largest state-funded programs were childcare assistance (\$100.2 million), home visiting (\$18.3 million), prekindergarten (\$54.5 million), and K-3 Plus (\$23.7 million).

Charles Saltee, Deputy Director, Program Evaluation, LFC, stated New Mexico has made significant investments in home visiting programs. The state chose a standards-based approach, which means most of the money is going to home visiting programs that do not have a rigorous research base. Different home visiting models impact different factors and have different outcomes. Based on an LFC gap analysis, there are about 6,000 low-income, high-risk families that do not have access to services; it would cost approximately \$23 million to provide home visiting for these families. If federal funds were leveraged, \$6.5 million state dollars could close this gap.

Childcare assistance is the largest early childhood investment the state finances. Childcare assistance in New Mexico is not having any impact on participant outcomes and, in some cases, is having a negative return on investment depending on the care setting. This program is administered by the Children, Youth and Families Department. According to LFC staff, this program does not show educational outcomes or work as an intervention for preventing child abuse and neglect.

Mr. Sallee said depending on the strategy for rolling the program out, LFC estimates there is a \$34 million gap to cover eligible 3- and 4-year-old students in prekindergarten. Research shows prekindergarten has a lasting impact through fifth grade. LFC will be releasing a longitudinal education study next month that tracks a cohort through eighth grade. This program is a good investment because more children are coming to school better prepared. K-3 Plus is another large early childhood investment, and the program appears to be eliminating the achievement gap at kindergarten based on preliminary analysis. If the gap is closed at kindergarten entry, then there might be a better shot at maintaining a good educational outcome. There are significant gaps when it comes to funding K-3 Plus.

Representative Thomson asked Mr. Sallee why the decision was made to stop evaluating the programs that are now self-evaluating. Mr. Sallee said LFC was informed it was too expensive to evaluate these programs. However, LFC staff found the cost was not too expensive and think it is a worthwhile investment.

Representative Little asked if there was an achievement gap in the state and what the state is doing to eliminate the achievement gap, and Mr. Sallee said the bigger achievement gap is based on income. Specifically, there is an achievement gap between low-income white students and non-low-income white students and between low-income Hispanic students and non-low-income Hispanic students. There are systemic things the state is doing that need to change. LFC has noted the school funding formula does not allocate resources in a way that it should for at-risk populations. Schools serving a high proportion of low-income students hire a disproportionate number of beginning teachers who generally have the lowest licensing exam scores. School districts are placing the teachers who need the most support in the most challenging environments, and not supporting them. These teachers need support and effective mentoring so they can succeed as they are starting their careers. Once they receive the support they need, this will in turn create the supports the students need to succeed academically.

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.