




## B i t e s i z e

 School districts and charter schools received nearly \$24 million in federal Impact Aid in March, an amount that might not have been included in the Public Education Department January calculation of the funding unit used to distribute money to school districts and charter schools because of uncertainty with the federal budget. If the additional payments were not part of the calculation, the department could distribute another \$10 million in June.

 The 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress scores show New Mexico has made little progress on closing the gap with higher performing states. The assessment tests a sample of fourth and eighth grade students on math and reading every other year. New Mexico has consistently performed about 10 to 15 percentage points below the national average since 2000.

 The K-3 Plus extended school year program and K-5 Plus pilot program will serve a record high 22,800 students this summer, a 52 percent improvement over enrollment in summer 2017, when the Public Education Department reduced slots statewide. Overall funding is estimated at \$28.8 million, with 26 school districts and charter schools piloting the program to extend the program to fourth and fifth graders.



# i n f o r m E D

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Senator Mimi Stewart, Chair / Representative G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / May 2018

### From the Chairwoman

#### Show Your Work

Process is boring. Process is the steps it takes to get from start to finish, when we just want to be finished. But any math teacher will tell you going through all the steps not only gets you to the right answer, it demonstrates you know what you're doing.

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires states to go through a process to intervene with failing schools. In the New Mexico plan for complying with the federal law, the Public Education Department established that schools identified as struggling – comprehensive support and improvement schools, or CSI schools – will have three years to improve, with technical assistance and support from the state, before being identified as in need of “more rigorous intervention.”

Recently, the department identified three schools in the Albuquerque school district and one in Dulce for more rigorous intervention, sending them identical letters rejecting each plan and asking for additional conditions. While these schools are struggling with low proficiency and high numbers of highly mobile, English-learning students living in poverty – significant barriers to their success – the department skipped the three years of support and jumped straight to the highest level of intervention. Worth noting, nothing in state statute authorizes the department to close a school for performance.

In addition, after the Albuquerque district revised its turnaround plans to meet the department's initial objections, the department added conditions, effectively moving the goal posts. The department then “conditionally” accepted two of the plans but rejected the plan for Hawthorne Elementary School, even though the three were very similar and all incorporated educational practices backed by research and success in other schools: a longer school year, a longer school day with a “genius” hour for enrichment, help for teachers to achieve national board certification, and engagement with local business and other community supports. Further, Hawthorne is strongly supported by its families and a neighborhood association that has been working hard for the school and has been held up by the department in the past as a model for implementation for turnaround strategies. Nevertheless, the department said it would come up with its own plan for Hawthorne.

The department's aggressiveness in addressing the schools' failures is admirable but it seems to have forgotten the importance of process and clearly demonstrating it knows what it's doing.

Senator Mimi Stewart

## Early Childhood Plan Would Up Funding, Reach

A plan to grow funding for early childhood programs by about \$16 million a year for the next five years could lead to most New Mexico 4-year-olds gaining access to publicly funded prekindergarten, more families getting help through home visits, and a stronger early childhood workforce, the plan says.

The New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group, a collaborative of eight public and private charitable foundations, is scheduled to present the plan put together by Bellwether Education Partners to the committee at 9:05 a.m. on May 18.

The *Business Plan for Early Childhood in New Mexico*, which could not be implemented without legislative and executive approval, calls for increasing spending steadily for the next five years up to a total increase of \$84.7 million a year by 2024.

Most of that – \$72.6 million – would be used to expand prekindergarten and home visits for new families.

However, the state must also invest in expanding the workforce and system capacity. The report calls for \$11 million to be invested in scholarships and wage incen-

tives for those entering the early childhood field and \$1 million for better coordination with tribal systems, working with local community capacity, and greater outreach to and engagement with families.

The plan also notes New Mexico's early childhood system is fragmented with poor coordination across the agencies that administer them and says the first step to better coordination is a senior level leadership position with the authority to enforce coordination – an early childhood czar – or a cabinet-level agency for early learning.

State-funded early childhood programs serve only a fraction of children with need for services, the plan says, but increased spending will be ineffective without targeted investment in quality programs, incremental expansion, and the availability of effective early childhood workers.

New Mexico has the highest child poverty rate in the country, with more than one-third of children under age 6 living in poverty, the plan says.

New Mexico children also experience nearly twice the national rate of “adverse childhood expe-

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# Learning Time Loss Worse for Poor Students

Children of low-income families typically have accumulated 6,000 fewer hours in learning time by the time they reach middle school, a national education consultant told committee members in April.

Jeannie Oakes, Ph.D., said middle class parents are more likely to read to their children as babies, take their children on enriching trips, and enroll their children in preschool and after-school and summer programs, resulting in their children completing elementary school with substantially more hours spent learning.

Similarly, the most affluent parents spend six times as much as poor families on after-school and summer enrichment, said Oakes, a senior fellow of the Learning Policy Institute and presidential professor emeritus at the

University of California Los Angeles.

That means low-income students are more likely to rely on public schools for learning time, she concluded, and public school agencies need to implement extended school year, after-school, and summer programs to help those students keep up.

Echoing Oakes, Stan Rounds, executive director of the New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders, told the committee chronic truancy among poor students doubles as students age and the learning gap widens.

While funding is crucial, he said, it's not enough. Rather, he said, learning supports and afterschool opportunities are key.

In New Mexico, almost 71,000 public school students participate in after-

school programs, but almost 91,000 more children would if a program were available.

About 27 percent of New Mexico families have a child enrolled in a public school summer program, but another nearly 60 percent would like their children to participate, Oakes said.

Oakes recommends New Mexico provide state funding for after-school programs, take advantage of federal education grants for community programs, and expand the number of full-day prekindergarten spots for 3- and 4-year-olds by blending state and federal money.

Many of Oakes' findings are supported by a 2016 Legislative Finance Committee study that found most students lose a third of instructional days to testing preparation, parent-teacher conferences, teacher and student absences, and other interruptions, and low-income students lose additional days to breakfast programs, additional assessments, and remediation.

Both Oakes and the LFC study recommend expansion of the state's extended school year K-3 Plus program and better use of the school day, with time outside the academic calendar for teacher professional development, and extended learning opportunities.

## Group Proposes Early Childhood Plan

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periences," experiences with abuse or neglect, exposure to substance misuse or mental illness, or other damaging conditions often just called ACEs.

The plan notes addressing early childhood issues will help ensure those children are ready for school.

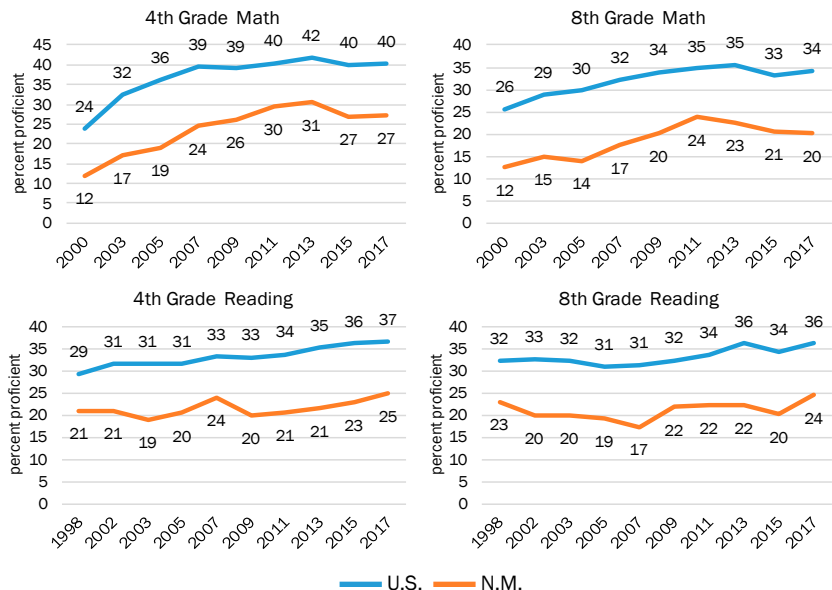
Among the steering committee members listed by the New Mexico Early Childhood Funders Group are staff of the Legislative Finance and Legislative Education Study committees, a former dean of the University of New Mexico Anderson School of Management, bankers, healthcare executives, local government leaders, economic development consultants, charitable organization leaders, and early childhood specialists.

Funding for early childhood pro-

grams has been a high profile topic during the last few legislative sessions. General fund spending on early childhood programs has more than doubled in the last seven years, but some advocates want earmarked revenues. Critics of plans to increase funding have complained those proposals do not address how the money would be spent.

## National Test Shows Little Change for NM, US

The results of the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress, administered every two years, show little growth in scores for New Mexico or the nation since 2009. Over a longer term - since 2000 - math scores have improved, although scores on reading have been stagnant.



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