

A Commitment to our Children

A successful education system is one of shared commitments, where each stakeholder understands his/her responsibilities and takes seriously the work that must be done to reach the common goals of our collective society. The responsibilities of schools go beyond reading, writing and arithmetic. Schools are fundamental to our democracy.

To transform our education system, New Mexico needs true leadership – an educational leader will work with all education stakeholders and commit to our shared ideals for the betterment of our children.

The superintendents, through recommendations contained herein, commit to the future of our education system.

The superintendents commit to the responsibility to educate, care for and empower students across New Mexico.

The superintendents commit to articulate the resources we need to engage in the work expected of us.

We ask that policymakers, business leaders and communities at large join us in our commitment, so we may work toward a brighter New Mexico future.

If we can establish a common vision, captured in the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, and establish the resources necessary to fulfil that vision, we can also build stable systems that develop the human capital we need and deliver public education to students equitably. We must trust the voice of our educators and empower their voice to continually guide us toward our vision – a vision that benefits our children.

Creation of a Common Vision: *The Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*

Establish, in law, an Education Vision Taskforce which would be responsible for creating a common vision of education to create a brighter future.

The taskforce would be responsible for:

- Creating the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* – the knowledge, characteristics, traits and skills (both hard and soft skills) a graduate needs to be successful in college or career once they leave the public school building;
- Establishing baseline services necessary to support the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*; and
- Providing oversight in the implementation of the vision and ongoing recommendations to align systems and monitor systems progress.

Baseline Services Necessary to Support the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*: A Sufficient Funding Formula

The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* should be used to identify the services and opportunities students have a right to receive during their time in our public schools. Adopting baseline services as the definition of “sufficiency” necessitates a comprehensive cost-analysis to calculate the investments and monetary resources needed to provide these services. To ensure appropriate funding reaches schools for the delivery of services, the **State Equalization Guarantee must be reviewed and renewed so it reflects the reality of new associated cost of service.**

Stable, Sufficient Funding

The state must accept its responsibility to appropriately, sufficiently and sustainably fund the public school system.

- Establish, fund and **invest in a dedicated “rainy day” or revenue stabilization fund for public education** which could be used to stabilize education appropriations in times of economic crisis.
- Adopt a program review and **approval framework for voluntary programs so those programs are formula funded.** Programs that should be immediately considered for program review and approval include: Pre-K; K- 3/K-5 PLUS; Reads to Lead; Principals Pursuing Excellence; Teachers Pursuing Excellence; Truancy/Attendance Coaches.
- Phase in, over several years, a studied **increase to the At-Risk multiplier** that matches national averages. Use a three-year average of Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) eligible students rather than the Title I census to generate at-risk numbers.
- Consider amendments to ancillary service provider units so all students have **access to social workers and mental health providers.**
- **Fully fund the ten Regional Education Cooperatives** by providing a substantially larger operating budget.
- **Fully fund unfunded mandates**, such as: transportation; special education; instructional materials; New Mexico State Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan; development and implementation of school safety plans; Teacher Cost Index; elementary physical education; teacher salary increases.
- Introduce legislation that would **prohibit laws or regulations from being enacted and enforced until funding is appropriated by the State.**

For the Full 19-page Detailed Document of Recommendations Please Visit Our Website at www.nmcel.org



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Develop, Recruit and Retain Human Capital

Public schools, unequivocally, rise and fall on the expertise, collective buy in and support of its personnel. A significant majority of public school budgets are invested in personnel, and those individuals must be adequately prepared to walk through the public school doors and deliver world-class instruction. To ensure New Mexico can develop, recruit and retain a high-quality education workforce we request the following actions be taken:

- Increase **minimum salaries** for Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 licensed **teachers to \$45,000, \$55,000 and \$65,000** respectively. Increase minimum salaries for elementary, middle and high school **principals to \$80,000, \$85,000 and \$95,000** respectively.
- Increases to minimum salaries of teachers and principals must be paired with **proportional increases to all school support staff**, including, but not limited to, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, nurses, counselors and other **administrative staff**. Salaries should also proportionately increase in district administrative offices.
- The state should determine how it could **formula fund incentive pay for specific teacher endorsements and teaching hard to fill subject areas**, large at-risk student populations and teaching in rural areas.
- Superintendents support, as a condition of increased minimum salaries of school staffs, **ten additional contract days** or the equivalent hours to embed professional development and collaboration days throughout the school year. The state should invest in instructional coaches who work in real-time to problem solve with and empower teachers when delivering instruction. Ongoing professional development must include dedicated collaboration time between teachers.
- Codify the need for a licensure review workgroup, made up of current practitioners, to review licensure requirements and advancement. Aligning licensure requirements and advancement must be done considering recent implementation of the Teacher Cost Index.
- Adopt robust residency and mentor programs for new teachers.
- Fully fund the **teacher loan forgiveness program** in New Mexico. Work with institutions of higher education for tuition structures that alleviate financial costs of students entering teacher preparation programs.

Implementing Equitable Delivery Systems and Progress Monitoring

Once we define our common vision, and the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, schools must be held accountable to that common vision. The state should develop a planning tool that would assist districts in creating local profiles of a graduate rooted in the common vision. The state should then require every district to articulate the local decisions it has made to reach the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, including goals and action plans for a five year period.

We must refine our equitable delivery systems from graduation all the way back to preschool. In collaboration with educators, the state should:

- Review and **amend high school graduation requirements** to consider:
 - Increased flexibility in courses that may be used to grant core credits in English, math, science and social studies;
 - Maintaining the requirement for **four years of math**, but **amending the mandate of Algebra II** so schools may offer math courses that are more relevant to a student's plan after high school; and
 - Eliminate primary v. alternate pathways to prove competency and replace them with multiple pathways of equal rigor but greater flexibility.
- **Fully invest in career and technical education** programs, apprenticeship opportunities and internships for students.
- Codify collaboration between schools and employers by requiring collaboration between industry leaders and school districts as part of the local profile of a graduate.
- Consider **tax incentives for businesses that provide internship and apprenticeship opportunities** for students.
- **Formula fund and increase funding for four-year-old preschool programs through the SEG** using a program review and approval framework. Allow school districts to contract with private providers to implement preschool programs. Allow school districts to serve preschool students through satellite campuses when appropriate. **Braid federal and local dollars available for preschool to maximize delivery systems.**

- Match any increases in the SEG for four-year-old programs with proportional increases in funding for three-year-old programs using the current PED/CYFD model.
- **Fully fund facilities needs of growing public preschool programs.**
- **Fully fund human capital development for early childhood programs.**
- **Fully fund transportation needs to transport three- and four-year-olds** to publicly funded preschool programs.
- **Allow a local option to increase the minimum number of instructional hours.** Appropriately fund the additional hours through the SEG. Allow maximum flexibility to school districts to establish a school calendar and school day that is responsive to local community needs and values.

Ongoing Advice from Education Practitioners

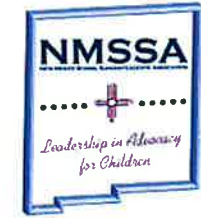
Completing the work of a *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* is pointless if the vision, mission and goals are not contextualized in the day-to-day work of practitioners and policy makers. To ensure the statewide vision is meaningful and operationalized, there must be ongoing communication between schools and the Public Education Department.

The state should pass legislation creating and **granting authority** to the **Education Practitioner Advisory Council**. The advisory council should be appointed by the Executive and the Legislature – an even balance of the two branches of government. Advisory members would include current practitioners of the following groups:

- Superintendents;
- Principals;
- Other Educational Leaders
- Charter School Leaders;
- School Board Members;
- Teachers;
- Parents; and
- Students.

The **advisory council should have the authority to:**

- Ensure alignment to and continued improvement of the Common Vision and *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* including next steps once the profile is created;
- Review new or amended rules prior to being published in the New Mexico Register; and
- Request cost analysis on official decisions and rule changes made by the PED.



A Vision to Transform Education in New Mexico

2019 Policy Recommendations for a Better Future

