



National Education Association - New Mexico



2019 LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Supporting Students

Funding Public Education

Respecting Education Employees

Returning Decision Making to the Citizens

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Supporting Students

- 1. Legislation to increase student success must address poverty and quality of life for students, parents and the community:** This should include, but not be limited to, raising the minimum wage to a living wage based on community standards, providing access to quality public early education and improving student health and well-being.
- 2. Class size limit:** Statutorily prohibit blanket class-size waivers. Restore funding for sufficient staff, including support service professionals, to adhere and meet all students' needs.
- 3. Ensuring Equitable Student Opportunity:** The state of New Mexico must meet the requirements of the judicial decree in Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico. All students need the opportunity to learn and perform to their full potential. We must remove barriers to learning. Support culturally and linguistically appropriate programs (as identified in the Hispanic Education Act and the Indian Education Act) to educate the whole child. Maintain appropriate support for students with priority needs, such as special education, gifted, and English Language Learners. Provide for more fine arts, physical education and vocational programs taught by qualified licensed instructors.
- 4. Student Assessments:** Varied performance assessments must be used for diagnosis of student needs, improvement of instruction, and not for high stakes decisions for school grading or staff evaluations and compensation. The development of curricular standards and their accompanying assessment system is a legitimate State priority. This includes, but is not limited to, a statewide criterion-referenced test/assessment which must be authentic and actually measures whether rigorous standards for student learning are being met. Assessments which purport to measure change in performance over time within a student cohort group must be designed to measure the progress of the same students from year to year—not simply students who happen to be in each grade level at a given school, whether or not they were in the cohort the preceding year.
- 5. Providing Adequate High-Quality Health Care:** Students' success is impacted by their health. Increase funding for school-based health care services, including physical, dental and mental health care. Providing mental health care is also a component of school safety. All New Mexico students should have full health care coverage.
- 6. Support Community Schools:** Community schools meet the needs of students with nutrition, social services, and after school programs to mitigate the barriers to learning. An on-site coordinator would help engage communities by helping districts develop parental involvement plans, bringing families into school improvement processes, and expanding the community schools model across the state to integrate health, social services, and community development in a culturally respectful manner into our schools.
- 7. Provide a safe learning environment for all students:** Encourage Districts to provide alternative disciplinary models other than expulsion and suspension utilizing the restorative practice concepts. Develop uniform methods for collecting data on discipline and attendance, and create a statewide student tracking system on student enrollment. All students in all schools should be provided the social-emotional support and instruction required for their success.

Funding Public Education

- 1. Prioritize Education Funding to Guarantee Adequate Recurring Revenues:** Over the last ten years, public school funding has been reduced as a percent of general fund expenditures. Every dollar spent through the failed strategy of tax breaks for the rich and profitable is a dollar taken from our students. Adopt a strategy to provide revenue for sufficient funding to meet student needs for every New Mexico student.

- Repeal the 2013 Corporate Tax Give-Away
- Restore Personal Income Tax Rates of 2003
- Cigarette Tax
- Gas Tax

- 2. Preserving Public Funding:** Resist schemes to privatize the education of any public-school students. Privatization of educational services cannot be tolerated, including those supported by the PED through below-the-line programs funneling public funds to private enterprises. Privatization is an abdication of public accountability. Prevent giving control of students' education to private, for-profit providers—be they delivered on-site or through virtual technology.
- 3. Preventing Vouchers, Tax Credits, Public Scholarships or Other Schemes to Privatize Public Schools and Resources:** Free uniform public schools are required by the New Mexico Constitution. Direct all financial support for student education toward fulfillment of this constitutional obligation, and none should support private schools, home schooling, or for-profit management of public schools, including charters.
- 4. Building Higher Education Funding:** Higher Education funding cuts must be restored, and no more cuts made. A statutorily defined formula, similar to that in the School Finance Act for Public Schools, should be enacted to provide sufficient funding for Higher Education holding harmless all institutions during the transition. Funding must allow Higher Education to prioritize faculty and staff increases over capital costs.
- 5. Early Education Funding:** Student Achievement gaps among diverse cohorts are proven to be eliminated when at-risk students are provided quality pre-K and K3+ summer programs like K3+together; fund expansion of these programs statewide. Quality home visiting programs and other early childhood interventions are also proven to help our students be fully ready to benefit from their K-12 schooling.

Respecting Education Employees

- 1. Building an Appropriate School Employee Evaluation System:** Our students, and the public, deserve an educational workforce accountable to them. Student success is enhanced when evaluation systems emphasize professional growth and development. Fair evaluation systems that appropriately measure teacher impact on student achievement do not use standardized student test scores. Evaluations must be fair and impartial and based on multiple objective observations. Only trained and certified administrators who work together as a team for student success should evaluate school employees, not outside contractors or the Public Education Department. Licensure advancement and evaluation must be fair and transparent and available to all licensed employees, not as a subterfuge for Merit-Pay schemes.
- 2. New Teacher Induction and Mentoring:** Statutorily mandated induction and mentoring programs for public education employees must, finally, be funded. Colleges of education should be funded to collaborate with and provide support for teacher induction and mentoring in public schools.
- 3. Due Process and Just Cause:** Unjust adverse job actions against any school employee destabilizes the provision of high-quality education for our students. Statutory provisions for due process procedures to guarantee just cause for all discipline and program decisions of educational management. Preserve and enhance current protections and extend them higher education and supervisory employees.
- 4. Sustaining Collective Bargaining:** Students gain a lifelong love of learning when their educators have a significant role in educational and professional decisions and workplace conditions. The

process of elected employee representatives of their choice collectively bargaining with their elected Boards of Education and the administrators who serve them, as provided for under the Public Employee Bargaining Act, must be maintained. So-called “Right to Work” legislation and other efforts to diminish the influence of Unions in the workplace must be opposed.

- 5. Protecting Retiree Health Care:** When the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority (NMRHCA) was created, it was not a pre-funded retirement benefits program. Provide sufficient funds to maintain the commitment made by New Mexico citizens to public employees. Limited increases in employee and employer withholdings, funded by the state, to improve the solvency of the system may be required.
- 6. Safeguarding School Employee Retirement:** Retirement credit is earned compensation—not a “gift” from taxpayers! Provide all education employees the full benefits of retirement through a fully-funded defined benefit plan, without offsets for other pension plans. The financial security of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (ERB) must be ensured through measures supported by the stakeholder groups comprising ERB membership.
- 7. Providing Affordable Health Insurance for Education Employees and Protecting Sick Leave:** As with student learning, the quality of teaching is impacted by educator health. Escalating health insurance premiums and benefit decreases impact recruitment and retention of quality educators. Appropriate health care options must be provided. The statutory limit for employer paid insurance premium subsidies must be increased and funded to maintain a healthy workforce of quality educators. Educators must have access to utilize employer-provided sick leave without the fear of punitive repercussions. Sick leave should also be portable from one New Mexico public school employer to another, and to incentivize employee attendance, a “pay out” of unused sick leave should be available upon retirement.
- 8. Providing Pay Equity and a Living Wage for All School Employees:** Student success is enhanced with a stable, resourced high-quality educational workforce. Provide a \$15 minimum wage, and a minimum ten percent raise for all school employees. Fully fund the statutorily required increase to statewide Teacher Licensure levels to \$40,000 for Level One; \$50,000 for Level Two; and, \$60,000 for Level Three. Enact and fund appropriate licensure level minimum salaries for Education Assistants/paraprofessionals, and other licensed educational professionals.
- 9. Adequately Funding Fixed Costs:** We advocate funding to provide for built-in fixed costs and for district flexibility so employees and elected school boards, through collective bargaining, may determine local priorities.

Returning Decision Making to the Citizens

- 1. Returning Public Schools to the Voters:** We support a constitutional amendment to place authority now held by the appointed Secretary of Education in an elected State Board of Education, who may hire an experienced New Mexico licensed professional educator as Superintendent of Public Instruction.

