

B i t e - S i z e

 LESC staff has convened a working group that will meet throughout the 2023 interim to review the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG). The working group will meet in-person in Santa Fe and will have three primary goals: identifying existing challenges, strengths, and opportunities related to the SEG; identifying what constitutes adequacy in the context of the SEG; and building consensus on whether the SEG is responsive to the current and evolving needs of all students.

 The Public Education Department has released a request for applications (RFA) for the development of wellness rooms on middle or high school campuses. According to the RFA, schools can apply for up to \$125 thousand for these projects. These wellness rooms are physical spaces intended to offer students a space to focus on overall wellness, behavioral health, and the development of social and emotional skills for students.

 According to Legislative Finance Committee staff, FY23 revenues are tracking approximately \$581 million above the consensus revenue estimates that were released in December 2022. Among the key drivers of the increase are personal income tax, currently \$220.6 million above consensus revenue estimates, and investment income, which is tracking \$148.6 million above consensus estimates.



i n f o r m E D

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Representative G. Andrés Romero, Chair / Senator William P. Soules, Vice Chair / Gwen Perea Warniment, Director / July 2023

From the Chairman

School is Back in Session

It's late July and if you're like my family then you are preparing to go back to school. While families, students, and educators prepare for the upcoming school year, we at the Legislative Education Study Committee are doing the same. Some of the issues we are working on include our school funding formula, special education, and school attendance.

This interim, the LESC has set out to study our state's school funding formula. In 1974, New Mexico pioneered the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) to fund the state's schools with the goal of dividing funds equally between school districts. Over the years the SEG has had various additions and changes to address issues of the time. These additions and changes, along with shifting student and district priorities and our state's changing population numbers, have raised the question: is the SEG as it currently stands still providing adequate and sufficient funding for our students?

Also on the agenda is a deep dive into special education. While the Governor has moved forward with an Office of Special Education, the LESC is spending the summer touring the state and listening to all stakeholders on how the legislature can partner with communities to improve our special education services for families, educators, and students.

Since returning from remote education in 2021, districts have noted a decrease in average student attendance rates. We know there are numerous reasons why students miss class time: appointments, family and cultural commitments, mental health issues, instability, caring for a younger sibling, and even working to provide for their families. In 2019, the legislature enacted the Attendance for Success Act (AFSA), intended to ensure better data collection and interventions that keep students in class. The aim of the Attendance for Success Act was particularly for districts to better understand student and family barriers and work individually with each student to overcome them so they can participate in, and benefit from, in-person instruction and class time. This interim, the LESC will review what the attendance data is telling us and how the AFSA can be a tool to help our students be in, and stay in, class.

As always, we value your input and partnership as we look forward to a great 2023-2024 school year!


Representative G. Andrés Romero
Chairman

Strengthening and Expanding New Mexico's Dual Credit Enrollment Program

According to PED's 2020-2021 Dual Credit Annual Report, the latest available, three metrics provide insight into the condition of New Mexico's dual credit program. First, student enrollment in dual credit courses decreased by 24%. Second, in the 2020-2021 school year, the total four-year cohort graduation rate was 76.9%. In comparison, 89.3% of the four-year dual credit cohort graduated. Third, 75% of unique courses were completed with a passing grade. The report contains limited data about student characteristics and academic performance, but gives legislators a basic idea of how policy might support strengthening and expanding the program.

The state's dual credit enrollment program appears to be an effective tool to bolster high school graduation. Dual credit students have demonstrated significantly higher graduation rates compared to their non-dual credit enrolled peers. However, the report also raises questions about how to increase dual credit student enrollment and improve student academic performance in dual credit, while paying special attention to *Martinez-Yazzie* student groups.

In 2020, The Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teacher College published "The Dual Enrollment Playbook: A

Guide to Equitable Acceleration for Students." The playbook identified five principles to design an equitable and high-quality dual enrollment program: set a shared vision and goals that prioritize equity; expand equitable access; provide advising and support that ensure equitable student outcomes; provide high-quality instruction that builds students' competence and confidence; organize teams and develop relationships to maximize potential.

According to Columbia's playbook, reducing the costs for tuition, fees, and books is fundamental to expanding student access. Under New Mexico's dual credit program, postsecondary partners waive tuition fees, while high schools pay for course material. The state also maintains a tribal college dual credit fund. The state has taken significant measures to remove barriers to dual credit student enrollment.

The playbook notes strong dual enrollment advisory systems are necessary to advance equitable student participation and success. An excellent dual enrollment advisory requires colleges, school districts, and high schools to provide high-quality academic advising, cultivate and maintain cross-partner coordination, and proactively support struggling students. Legislators may

continued on back

Dual Credit Cybersecurity Program in Rural Ruidoso

In the 2020-2021 school year, 16,587 students were enrolled in at least one dual credit course in New Mexico. Dual credit helps students earn credit for high school graduation and a postsecondary degree or certification. The most common subjects students take dual credit in are English Language and Literacy, and Mathematics and Statistics. However, in Ruidoso, a small community college is making national connections in cybersecurity.

Network security and computer technology advancements have increased the need for cybersecurity professionals. Ruidoso's community college, Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU-R) has partnered with 6 high schools to offer dual credit courses, including programs like information technology and cybersecurity.

The community college offers most of

Strengthening dual credit

continued from front

want to examine existing dual enrollment advisory systems as a potential tool to improve dual credit student success.

The playbook also emphasizes the importance of monitoring student data and outcomes. Dual enrollment databases should include, but not be limited to, course pass rates by student characteristics; credit hours attempted and completed by student characteristics; rate of college enrollment. If participating dual enrollment LEA's can expand data collection, the state and LEA's may be better equipped to improve dual enrollment programs.

Despite decreased student enrollment, dual credit has shown the potential to improve student outcomes and requires further study. PED and HED officials will discuss dual credit design and updates at the next LESC meeting in Santa Fe on July 26, 2023.

their programs online with cybersecurity being one of the leading programs at the school. Information Technology Director, Stephen Miller, stated the program has partnered with the National Security Agency (NSA) to increase the number of cybersecurity professionals. ENMU-R is one of the first community colleges in New Mexico to be designated by the NSA to teach cybersecurity not only to the public and dual credit students but also to military Department of Defense (DoD) employees and those contracted through the government.

There are currently 26 dual credit students enrolled. Miller shared ENMU-R has a 90% success rate; students either obtain employment after graduation or enroll into a 4-year university. ENMU-R has connections to the workforce that creates a pathway for alumni to work in local, tribal, and national government.

Principal Preparation Program Enrollment in New Mexico

Research shows nearly 60 percent of a school's influence on student achievement is attributable to teacher and principal effectiveness. School principals, when isolated as an impact on student achievement, account for as much as 25 percent of the school's influence.

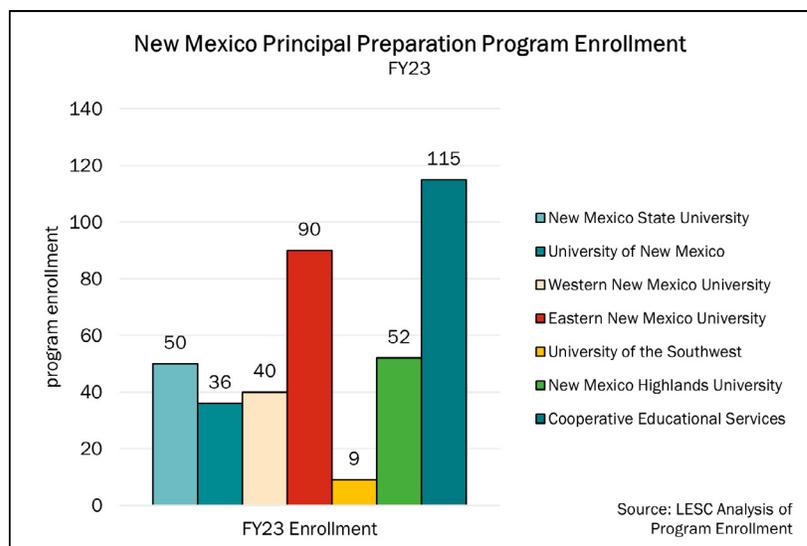
Studies also indicate the effects of school leadership are considerably greater in schools with low academic outcomes and there are virtually no documented instances where struggling schools are turned around without an effective school leader. Consequently, preparing a pipeline of principals who can dramatically improve teacher and learning is essential to increasing student achievement.

ENMU-R has also connected with other universities to help students continue their success with a smooth transition, such as New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

However, there is one challenge Miller has noticed for dual credit students. High school students, their families, and the teachers did not fully understand the level of commitment these courses need. The cybersecurity program requires hands-on learning and comprehensive ability that translates into high-level applications. However, with these identifiable challenges, ENMU-R and high school counselors are working together to help students thrive in the program. ENMU-R also has a Success Emporium that serves as guide for students to empower their independent learning.

According to the Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation & Policy Center's 2022 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report, there were 20 vacancies for school administrators in New Mexico schools. In New Mexico, six universities and the Cooperative Education Services offer programs to prepare principals. In total, these programs enrolled 392 students in FY23.

During the 2023 legislative session, lawmakers included a \$5 million recurring appropriation to PED to fund school leader professional development in FY24. This was a \$2.5 million, or 100 percent, increase over the FY23 appropriation, which will allow the department to provide training to additional school and district leaders.



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