




B i t e - S i z e

 The Public Education Department plans to pull funds from the transportation emergency fund to help school districts and charter schools cover higher school bus fuel costs. The additional funds will be based on a comparison of the current cost of fuel to the average cost of fuel on July 1, 2021, multiplied by miles traveled. The department said it will be asking the Legislature for a supplemental appropriation during the 2023 session to cover the fuel funding shortfall.

 New Mexico was recognized for its investment in teacher residency programs in a U.S. Education Department publication on strategies to increase the number of prepared teacher candidates. The Education Department's fact sheet discussed evidence-based residency programs, teaching apprenticeships, loan forgiveness programs for educators, and increased teacher compensation.

 The Public Education Department's [web-based dashboard](#) on federal relief funding for public schools now allows the public to track the first and second rounds of the \$488 million in the elementary and secondary school emergency relief fund, including the percent of funds spent by districts and what the districts are spending the money on. Some of the areas receiving the most investment are educational technology, continuity of services, and air quality systems.



i n f o r m E D

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Senator William P. Soules, Chair / Representative G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair / Vanessa K. Hawker, Acting Director / April 2022

From the Chairman

On the Road Again

While technology has improved public access to the legislative process, with most committee meetings webcast and New Mexicans statewide able to participate in the periodic virtual meeting, nothing quite matches the experience of committee members meeting people in their own communities. Even with the advances of telecommunications, Santa Fe and the decisions made there can seem distant and the lawmaking process opaque.

The Legislative Education Study Committee often has no choice but to meet in Santa Fe to hear from state education administrators and the statewide professional organizations for teachers and school administrators about plans for the session. The preliminary work for the legislative session starts in the fall in the capital. But during the summer, the committee hits the road, and our summer schedule this year starts in Jemez Pueblo.

Both local control of the public schools and the unmet needs of Native American students have been topics of concern for the last several years and when we meet in Jemez we will be seeing first-hand how pueblo leaders have developed language and cultural immersion programs, educational partnerships, and teacher recruitment programs specific to the needs of their community.

The committee also plans to travel to Santa Rosa, Alamogordo, Shiprock, and Hatch over the summer, where we will hear from students and teachers in each community on concerns specific to their communities and broader concerns about public education in New Mexico. These providers and consumers of public education can contribute real-world perspectives to our ongoing discussions on the critical need to develop a high-quality education workforce, effective support for career and technical education, nondiscriminatory school discipline practices, and other complicated topics.

The committee's goal in all it does — whether it's listening to national policy experts or community leaders, whether it's meeting in Santa Fe or a hundred miles away — is to develop policy that puts the students first. Listening to a diversity of perspectives in a diversity of communities will help us get there.

Public participation is central to democracy. Even if you can't attend a meeting, please participate. Links to meeting [agendas](#) and the [webcast](#), including an archive of past meetings, is available on the [LESC website](#).



New Teacher Licensure Could Exclude Tests

Concerns about the current system of licensing teachers and advancing teachers through the licensing levels has prompted policymakers to consider eliminating certain qualifying tests and making other changes to a system that has been fundamentally intact for almost two decades, LESC staff report.

In staff memos and a brief prepared for a hearing on teacher licensure scheduled for 10:30 a.m. April 29, staff note the Public Education Department has announced new teachers, those applying for level 1 licensure, will immediately be exempt from the Praxis series of basic skills exams, although elementary teachers will still be required to take a reading content test required in state law and other teaching practices and content tests.

The department has also announced it is looking into a process to allow teachers to advance to level 2 licensure through micro-credentials, an approach that provides teachers with the opportunity to demonstrate competency in new skills that includes feedback from an evaluator.

In a position paper on unsuccessful legislation introduced during

the session earlier this year, the New Mexico Association of Colleges of Education said New Mexico is one of just 15 states that require a basic skills exam, although all but one state requires some type of licensure test. The association reported 55 percent of first-time test-takers failed the Praxis basic skills exams.

Testing costs range from about \$425 to over \$700, depending on the grades being taught, and those costs multiply with every failure, the association noted.

The association also cited national research that shows content tests, except that for teaching reading, are poor predictors of classroom effectiveness.

The quality of the teacher in the classroom is the most important school-based factor in student success, LESC staff reports, and the creation of New Mexico's three-tiered teacher licensure system was an attempt to build a high-quality teaching workforce as part of 2003 public education reform legislation.

However, the existing professional development dossier system used along with graduate degrees

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PED Working on New HS Competency Requirement

The Public Education Department is considering a change in high school graduation requirements that would provide for new ways for students to demonstrate competency, LESC staff report.

Students must now complete a total of 24 credits, more than students in many other states, and demonstrate competency in core academic subjects, most often through a standardized assessment but also through portfolio projects and other local competency-based options.

Licensure Eyed

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to advance teachers through the licensing levels might fall short.

A 2019 review of the system, in which advancement candidates submit detailed records on their classroom practices and student performance, found reviewers approved essentially all candidates, raising concerns the system does little to ensure the quality of higher level teachers, the hearing brief indicates.

Further, staff reports, teachers who carve out time to collaborate with peers or seek out professional development are not always rewarded. The system rewards teachers who meet certain technical requirements but not necessarily those who improve their skills.

A micro-credential process could address that, and the hearing brief notes successful education systems offer multiple tracks for advancement, including for teachers who want to stay in the classroom instead of moving into management and those who want to provide specialized services.

The department, working with professional organizations and others in a field, is working on new demonstrations of competency that would culminate in student exhibitions of learning, according to a staff brief prepared for a hearing on graduation requirements scheduled for 9 a.m. April 29.

Currently, federally required 11th grade assessments — which some states use as a graduation requirement — include the SAT, ACCUPLACER, and other nationally recognized tests and standards-based assessments.

Local demonstrations of competency, other than portfolios and competency-based options, must be approved by the department.

The alternatives to testing being considered by the department would

be made available statewide.

Much of the legislative discussion on high school graduation requirements has focused on coursework.

However, while national research indicates a 15-credit “college-ready curriculum” can be of high value to students whether they intend to go to college or not, LESC research shows, among 15 states reviewed, a variety of approaches are in practice.

New Mexico requirement of 24 units is more than many other states, and its inclusion of 7.5 electives is unusual.

In the highest performing state systems, social studies, mathematics, and science course requirements appear to have the most rigorous guidelines, with nearly all outlining specific courses and experiences.

Some Tribal Ed Proponents Seek Chartering Authority

The state Public Education Commission and local school districts have authorized 10 charter public schools on or near tribal land or serving a significant number of Native American students, but some tribal education advocates would like to see the authority to charter schools expanded to tribes and pueblos.

The committee is scheduled to discuss the topic at 3:30 p.m. April 27 during a day of hearings on Native American education issues at Jemez Pueblo. The agenda includes a tour of the pueblo's education programs, including their language immersion sites, and a report on efforts to recruit Native American educators.

- 1. Dził Dítł'ooi School**
 - Navajo
 - Grades 6-12
 - 47 students
 - 100% identify as Native
- 2. Dream Diné Charter School**
 - Shiprock
 - Grades K-5
 - 44 students
 - 98% identify as Native
- 3. Gordon Bernell Charter**
 - Albuquerque
 - Grades 9-12
 - 164 students
 - 22% identify as Native
- 4. Hózhó Academy**
 - Gallup
 - Grades K-6
 - 497 students
 - 40% identify as Native
- 5. Middle College High School**
 - Gallup
 - Grades 9-12
 - 140 students
 - 64% identify as Native
- 6. Native American Community Academy**
 - Albuquerque
 - Grades K-12
 - 479 students
 - 83% identify as Native
- 7. San Diego Riverside Charter**
 - Jemez Pueblo
 - Grades K-8
 - 53 students
 - 100% identify as Native

- 8. Six Directions Indigenous School**
 - Gallup
 - Grades 6-11
 - 64 students
 - 95% identify as Native
- 9. Vista Grande Charter High**
 - Taos
 - Grades 9-12
 - 82 students
 - 38% identify as Native
- 10. Walatowa High Charter**
 - Jemez Pueblo
 - Grades 9-12
 - 39 students
 - 95% identify as Native

Charter Schools on or Near Tribal Land or Serving a Significant Number of Native American Students



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