




## B i t e - S i z e

 Out of 308 thousand students enrolled in New Mexico public schools during the 2022-2023 school year, approximately 4 thousand students are expected to participate in K-5 Plus and 126 thousand students are expected to participate in Extended Learning Time (ELT) programs. Without an increase in participation, K-5 Plus is expected to spend \$7.2 million of the \$119.8 million appropriation, and ELT programs are expected to spend \$75.5 million of the \$95 million appropriation.

 PED released a draft assessment schedule to resume administering assessments for the 2022-2023 school year. The draft assessment schedule details specific assessments that will be used and details about when assessments will be administered. New Mexico has not administered a statewide, summative assessment for the past two years due to federal testing waivers.

 In response to a 2017 school shooting the legislature authorized \$46 million over four years for school security and safety projects to be expended by FY22 using the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) and Public School Finance Authority (PSFA) to award these funds. School districts took full advantage of the school security program each year with awards for security from FY19 to FY22 ranging from \$6 million to \$16 million annually. At the end of July 2022 PSCOC and PSFA will no longer be authorized to make school security awards.



# i n f o r m E D

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Senator William P. Soules, Chair / Representative G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair / Gwen Perea Warniment, Director / July 2022

### From the Chairman

#### Teachers Critical to Student Success

The Legislature made significant investments to support a diverse teacher candidate pool and a well-prepared educator workforce. Raising the minimum teacher salaries to \$50 thousand for level 1 teachers, \$60 thousand for level 2 teachers and \$70 thousand for level 3 teachers is a step in the right direction to recruit and retain teachers in our state.

With the Martinez and Yazzie lawsuit, the court found high-quality teachers are critical to student success, and paying teachers a reasonable salary is necessary to attract and retain high-quality educators. Pay influences teacher recruitment and retention, and it helps create a well-prepared, stable, and racially and ethnically diverse educator workforce.

The Legislature passed legislation during the 2022 legislative session to appropriate funding to address teacher vacancies. The Legislature will get to see the results of these investments over the next few months as we begin another school year.

In an effort to attract teachers, the Legislature also approved legislation to increase funding for teacher residency programs. The Public Education Department awarded eight higher education institutions to fund 374 teacher residents during the 2022-2023 school year. This funding will provide a \$35 thousand-a-year stipend to teacher residents, while also providing stipends for mentor teachers and participating principals.

National research indicates 80 percent of graduates of teacher residency programs remain in the teaching profession after five years compared with up to 50 percent of their non-residency program peers. Investing in teacher residency programs in New Mexico is an effective strategy to not only recruit highly qualified teachers into the workforce but also to retain teachers beyond five years.

Our work does not stop there; we must continue to invest in teacher preparation and retention strategies that bring new teachers to the educator workforce and keep teachers in the classroom.

By continuing to make investments in teacher pay and focus on retention strategies, we can create a robust educator workforce to best serve the students of New Mexico.

## The Road to the New Mexico Diploma of Excellence

The LESC heard from the Public Education Department (PED) on revisions to current graduation requirements at its June meeting in Santa Rosa.

Currently, students across New Mexico are required to complete 24 credits of specified coursework and successfully demonstrate competency within five core content areas: math, reading, writing, science, and social studies.

The proposed changes from PED would require 18 credits in total, with 16 core content credits and two electives. LESC will want to ensure competency is at the forefront of the conversation as it considers statutory changes to graduation requirements.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, PED made available options to demonstrate competency with an array of assessments available to show students have gained a proficient understanding of an academic subject before receiving a high school diploma.

The PED menu of options offers three choices to select from to demonstrate competency. The options include the Every Student Success Act required assessments, where students must earn a passing cut score on these assessments

in order to fulfill the competency requirement; the local demonstration of competency utilizing rigorous portfolio projects or industry recognized credentials; and an innovative assessment option which includes capstone projects and graduate profiles.

Local school districts and charter schools have the authority to determine which competency options to offer to their students, including establishing requirements that are more rigorous, or setting higher cut scores for assessments than those set by PED.

The innovative assessment option is currently being developed and piloted by PED and Future Focused Education, a New Mexico based non-profit, utilizing an 18-month grant to define and prototype the new competency alternatives. The innovative assessment options are anticipated to be made available statewide in 2023.

In the hearing, PED stated a workgroup made up of PED staff worked to develop suggestions for revisions to statute, noting a significant representation of individuals with experience as educators. The working group at PED came up

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# Revitalization of Career and Technical Education

Research reviewed in LESC hearings shows a rigorous academic curriculum, combined with access to high quality career and technical education (CTE) is important to give all students options.

New Mexico receives both federal and state CTE funds. New Mexico will receive nearly \$10.1 million in federal Perkins funding in 2022.

## Making Room for Student Voice and Choice

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with four tenets for change: assessment informed instruction, quality teachers and materials, state required courses, and local choice.

The PED workgroup hopes that through these suggestions for revision, students can find space to develop their interests, make competency the foundation of every class, encourage local communities to develop graduate profiles, and promote community engagement by offering capstone projects.

The PED workgroup suggests creating more room for student choice by reducing schedule crowding and eliminating credit requirements for courses like physical education, dual credit, New Mexico history, algebra II, and health.

PED noted removing courses like health could be simple, stating, "In many districts health is taught in 8th grade, and we could just leave it in 8th grade." The representative from PED also noted courses such as New Mexico history could be woven into U.S. history and does not need to be a requirement for high school students.

Members of the committee raised concerns about removing New Mexico

During the 2022 legislative session, the Legislature also appropriated \$10 million to PED to make grants to school districts and charter schools to establish and sustain CTE programs.

While expanded funding for CTE has led to increased access in such programming—65 thousand high school students take CTE courses each year

history, algebra II, health or physical education. Senator Mimi Stewart stated, "We would have to work through it and show where the coursework can be done so we're not really removing it, were just readjusting so there's more flexibility in the schedule."

Chair William Soules noted that while New Mexico's high school graduation rates lag behind other states, New Mexico has substantially higher graduation requirements than others. LESC staff stated that there would need to be a correlational study to examine if our graduation rate is linked to the number of units that are required for high school students.

in New Mexico—these programs have historically been disconnected from labor market needs, vary by region, and often lack programmatic elements that make CTE programs effective.

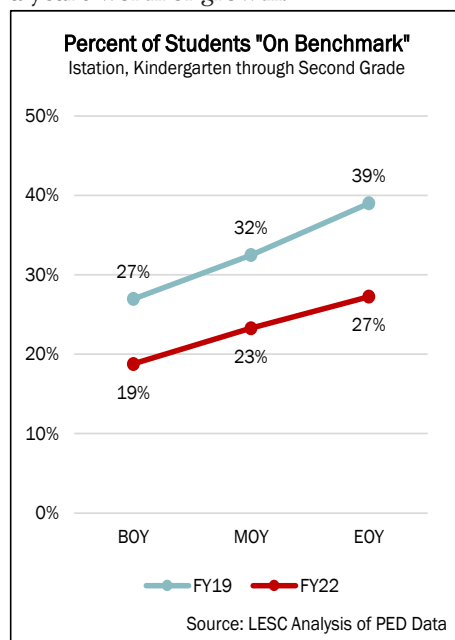
With more than two out of three jobs now requiring some kind of post-secondary education, making sure students get the learning experiences they need is crucial. While not all jobs will require a four-year degree, additional training—such as obtaining a certificate or industry credential—will be needed, leading to renewed interest in CTE.

High-quality CTE does not replace traditional academic learning. Instead, it complements it by offering applied, hands-on learning. Research from the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Education Policy shows international CTE programs are more robust than those in the United States, often linking educational systems to larger economic goals.

As New Mexico continues its investment in CTE, there is opportunity to ensure New Mexico's students have a place in the future economy and workplace.

## Percent of Students "On Benchmark"

Evidence from the statewide Istation early literacy assessment suggests students began the 2021-2022 school year behind where they would begin a typical school year, but managed to attain about a year's worth of growth.



In FY19, the last year of data available before the pandemic, students grew from about 27 percent "on benchmark" in reading at the beginning of the year (BOY) to 39 percent of students on benchmark at the end of the year (EOY).

The trajectory for students in FY22, the first year of in-person instruction after the pandemic, was similar, with students growing from 19 percent to 27 percent on benchmark over the course of a year.

However, one year's worth of growth is not enough for students to catch up with baseline data from previous years; additional learning time, targeted academic supports, and accelerated learning will be necessary to ensure students have the opportunity to succeed. LESC is set to hear about these results and other assessment findings at the LESC meeting in Alamogordo on Thursday, July 28, 2022, at 11:00 a.m.

## informed

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