

Bitesize

 The East Mountain High, School of Dreams Academy, and Lindrieth Area Heritage charter schools and the Carrizozo Municipal school district will receive E-Rate money from the federal government. The Federal Communications Commission program directs money from the universal service fund, funded through a fee on long-distance phone carriers, to schools and libraries for telecommunications and Internet access.

 A 700-student study of the impact of math video games developed by New Mexico State University indicates students who play Math Snacks learn more and retain more knowledge than students in a traditional curriculum alone. Improvements were noted regardless of language preference, income, or ethnicity. The games were developed with support from the National Science Foundation.

 New Mexico student absenteeism has worsened over the last three school years, the Legislative Finance Committee reports. While the percent of students absent 10 or more days in the 2012-2013 school year was 14 percent, that figure was 15.4 percent in the 2014-2015 school year. The U.S. Department of Education reports 13 percent of the students nationally were absent at least 15 days in the 2012-2013 school year.



informED

a publication of the Legislative Education Study Committee

Representative Dennis J. Roch, Chair / Senator John M. Sapien, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / July 2016

From the Chairman

Targets

As is true throughout the nation, New Mexico is short on teachers and, with college of education enrollment dropping, has fewer teachers than needed in the pipeline.

Pay might be a reason for declining teacher ranks. Beginning teacher pay is lower than that for other professionals with similar skill and education requirements and the gap grows the longer the teacher stays in the classroom. But while low pay might be one reason for the shortage, teacher pay has always been low.

Perhaps the difference is attitudes about teaching, both in the public and within the profession itself. Decades of education reform has led to finger-pointing and a lot of those fingers have pointed at teachers – who, according to many studies, are the most important classroom factor in whether a student succeeds. Years of taking the blame for failing schools, along with the testing and curriculum constraints of most reform efforts, have led many teachers to decide it's just not worth it.

Although she later toned down her comments, the international winner of a million-dollar teacher prize told reporters she would tell education students to stay away from teaching, unless they can get a job in a private school. She's not alone in her complaints about being a teacher today. Many teachers are leaving and those who remain are discouraging new colleagues from even entering the profession.

But those teachers need to remember how much they love working with children and how important they are to the future of those children and, through them, their communities.

Similarly, education administrators and policymakers need to remember, that all players in education must be held accountable, teachers need support and recognition for their critical service.

Representative Dennis J. Roch

ESSA Flexibility Opportunity for State

Greater flexibility in the latest reauthorization of the federal education act means New Mexico has the opportunity to revisit some existing education policies, including teacher evaluations, and build greater support among education advocates, LESC analysis shows.

The Every Student Succeeds Act, the reauthorization of the federal law most recently known as the No Child Left Behind Act, requires state education agencies to develop a "Title I plan" in collaboration with state lawmakers, local school districts, tribes, teachers, parents and the public. The plan – named for the section in the law that authorizes federal grants for educating "disadvantaged" students in exchange for a state meeting certain conditions – must cover academic standards, high-quality assessments, statewide accountability standards for student success, and other policies.

The Public Education Department is scheduled to discuss its effort to develop a Title I plan in collaboration with education stakeholders at 8:30 a.m. on July 14 during the

committee's meeting at Los Alamos High School.

At stake is an estimated half billion dollars in federal support for New Mexico from FY17 to FY20.

LESC staff report current New Mexico education policies were developed with little input from the Legislature or other outside groups.

Like many states, New Mexico won federal waivers to the stringent requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act when the U.S. Education Department opened that door in 2011. These waivers ease some NCLB requirements, including those covering standardized testing, but require teacher evaluations to partly rely on student test performance.

New Mexico education policies appear to be in compliance with many of the provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act primarily because they address college and career readiness standards, assessments properly aligned with education standards, and student and

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Charters Benefit from Small School, Growth Funds

Charter schools get more operational funding per student than traditional schools by taking advantage of funding formula enhancements created to address special circumstances in certain schools, LESC staff reports.

New Mexico charter schools get about 14 percent more funding per student than traditional public schools, primarily through factors intended for small schools and rapidly growing schools, and a provision created to help schools starting new programs.

The committee is scheduled to hear a

report on the growing number of charter schools and their use of formula factors to enhance funding at 10:30 a.m on July 14 during its hearing in Los Alamos.

Some charter schools get up to 45 percent of their operational funding from a school size factor in the formula created to help small rural schools that do not benefit from economies of scale.

LESC analysis suggests a state law that prohibits districts from creating separate special schools in order to draw the small school funding also bars charter schools from using the factor to boost funds.

Further, it notes, while ambiguous sections of school funding law have been amended to explicitly include charter schools the language on the small school factor has not.

If charter schools did not take advantage of the small school factor, average per student funding for charter schools and district public schools would be essentially the same.

Charter schools phasing in new grades also take advantage of a funding factor created to accommodate the extraordinary costs of a rapidly growing district.

By taking advantage of the enrollment growth factor in conjunction with a special enrollment count method for new programs, some charters have received double-funding for some students. LESC analysis found the state has spent \$19 million double-funding charter school students since FY10.

Between FY08 and FY16, the number of charter schools in New Mexico increased from 64 to 99 and enrollment increased from 3.2 percent of the total public school population to 6.9 percent of the population.

Funding for charter schools increased by about \$108 million during that time.

Reauthorization More Flexible

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teacher accountability, LESC analysis finds.

However, a requirement that teacher evaluations include student test scores and the value-added model, which attempts to measure a teacher's contribution to a student's success, does not appear to be part of the new law.

That requirement in current policy is being challenged in a lawsuit brought by legislators and a teachers' union against the state department.

Working with stakeholders could lead to greater support for department policy, the LESC report concludes.

States must submit their Title I plans by early to mid 2017 for implementation during the 2017-2018 school year.

Under federal law, the plans must include challenging academic and content standards with alternative standards for students with significant learning disabilities and language proficiency standards for English learners.

The plan also must include "high quality" assessments covering math, reading and language arts, and science and may include student portfolios or projects.

Accountability systems must include long-term goals for improved proficiency by all students and student subgroups, high school graduation rates, and English-language acquisition, and be measured through annual assessments and other indicators.

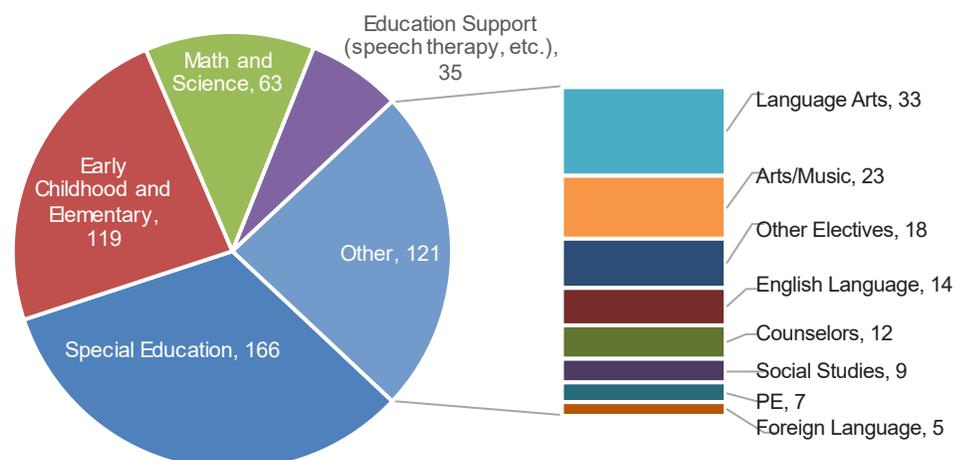
New Mexico Teacher Shortage Uneven

New Mexico school districts had about 500 teacher openings at the end of 2015; however, the shortage was more pronounced in special education and early childhood and elementary education, a report by Karen Trujillo of New Mexico State University shows.

Together, those two teaching areas represented more than half of all openings.

Trujillo is scheduled to discuss efforts to address the teacher shortage at 11 a.m. July 13 during the LESC hearing in Los Alamos.

Teacher Shortage by Area



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July 2016

Published monthly in the interim by:
Legislative Education Study Committee
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