

Bitesize

 Because funding for the K-3 Plus extended school year program for kindergartners through third graders is the same this summer as last but the cost per student is higher, fewer students will receive services this summer. The Public Education Department has awarded \$23.7 million in grants to serve 19 thousand students at district and charter schools. New Mexico public schools serve about 105,000 students in those grades.

 The number of New Mexico students in special education has dropped 21 percent since New Mexico adopted the “response to intervention” model in compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorization in 2004. Total student population increased 8.2 percent during the same period. The three-tier RtI model uses increasingly intensive interventions based on data on the student’s response to the interventions.

 A Pueblo of Jemez educator was honored at the White House during National Teacher of the Year ceremonies in May. Lana Toya is a former chair of the Southwest Consortium of Indian Head Start Programs board and the current director of Jemez Walatowa Head Start, where the program emphasizes the pueblo’s commitment to language, culture and immersion.



informed ED

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

From the Chairman

Balance

For three years, almost all of the state’s 89 school districts and several dozen charter schools have received a boost for their early literacy programs from Reads To Lead, a state program that pays for screening, professional development, bilingual outreach and interventions. But many schools could lose that money this year, not because funding was cut or because they’ve done something wrong, but because the method for allocating the money is changing.

When the program launched in FY13, the Public Education Department used a competitive application process to distribute \$4.5 million to 13 school districts and the nine regional education cooperatives. In subsequent years, the department dropped the competition and this year all but one districts and 35 charter schools shared \$10 million. Now the department, concerned that some schools have failed to use the funds effectively, has announced it will go back to a competitive process, and some schools that were counting on Reads To Lead money might not get any.

Accountability is important. With tax dollars tighter than ever and education dollars always in high demand, policymakers have an obligation to ensure every cent is spent as effectively as possible. But right or wrong, the department’s actions are stressful to those districts and charter schools that have come to rely on this important support for critical early literacy. Perhaps equally stressful for the schools has been the department’s audit of special education student counts, which could result in a significant financial hit for some districts.

The department has a responsibility to be accountable but it also must be sensitive to the problems it creates. At the same time, schools districts and charter schools, even as they scramble for dollars to provide services, must be accepting and responsive to calls for greater accountability. We need both to do the best for our children.

Representative Dennis J. Roch

Colleges Take On Teacher Shortage

Some New Mexico colleges have launched alternative teacher certification programs and are working with local high schools to help rebuild dwindling teacher ranks, but the impact on the teacher shortage in New Mexico is still unclear, LESC analysis shows.

The committee is scheduled to hear reports on national trends in the teaching workforce, alternative paths to teaching and the college of education pipeline throughout the day on June 16 during the committee’s hearing in Los Lunas. Among those expected to speak are researchers with the National Conference of State Legislatures, administrators from Highlands University and Central New Mexico Community College, and a representative of the New Teacher Project, which works to ensure poor and minority students get equal access to good teachers.

A snapshot of teacher shortages in New Mexico from December 1 showed school districts had 513 teacher openings. While most of the vacancies were in the high-

population districts in the central region, all regions of the state had significant shortages.

Although the New Mexico State University researchers who took the snapshot noted the data was imprecise, the researchers said it indicates the greatest shortage was among special education teachers and then early childhood and elementary teachers.

The researchers also reported school districts are employing hundreds of long-term substitutes, instructors working under certification waivers, and instructors with alternative licenses, suggesting the teacher shortage is worse than the vacancies suggest.

LESC research shows a more than 18 percent drop in the number of New Mexico college students completing a teacher preparation program between FY10 and FY14, and a drop in enrollment between the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years of at least 28 percent, an echo of national data showing

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Company Plans Major Expansion of NM Charters

An education nonprofit has announced plans to open 30 new charter schools in New Mexico and the Public Education Department is working on increasing enrollment in high-performing charter schools, but LESC analysis shows expanding charter schools could reduce per-pupil funding in traditional public schools.

The executive director of Excellent Schools New Mexico, the nonprofit that noted in a job advertisement it plans to open the new schools, is scheduled to testify before the committee at 10:45 a.m. on June 15. Representatives of the Public Education Department and the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools

are scheduled to testify in the afternoon. LESC analysis has found charter schools receive more operational funding per student than traditional public schools and charter schools may be more likely to draw students from private schools.

During the 2015-2016 school year, districts received an average of \$7638 per student while charters received an average of \$8732 per student, 14.3 percent more operational funding per student than school districts.

Without an increase in general fund support for public school funding, an increase in charter school enrollment would mean the same pool of money

would have to stretch over a larger public school population with a greater number of more expensive students.

The Legislature earlier this year considered but did not pass a plan to change the public school funding formula to decrease the amount of funding distributed to charter schools through the school-size factor, one source of the extra per-student funding for charter schools.

The New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools says changing the formula would hurt more than half of all charter schools. The coalition says charter schools do not get more money per student if capital outlay funds are included, although capital outlay funding is used for construction and equipment and is not part of the operational budget.

In addition, the coalition complained in a May letter to the Public Education Commission about Public Education Department management of charter schools.

Meanwhile, the department is working with 12 charter schools with A or B grades on identifying and eliminating barriers to increasing enrollment or replicating each school.

Teacher Shortage

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a 30 percent drop in education college enrollment between 2010 and 2012.

Highlands University has created cohort groups at its professional development schools in Rio Rancho and Albuquerque for practicum students and student teachers working on a master's degree and is working with the Albuquerque Public Schools special education program to promote courses for teachers and educational assistants seeking a special education license.

Central New Mexico Community College is working with nearby school districts, including Albuquerque and Rio Rancho, on alternative teacher licensure program aimed at hard-to-staff areas, such as science, math and technology, special education, and English learners.

New Mexico efforts to keep teachers in the classroom – nationally 17 percent of new teachers leave the profession

within five years – are inconsistent. While research shows programs for new teachers improve teacher retention and student learning and New Mexico state law requires districts to have them, many district programs are missing elements that teach essential skills for new teachers.

Prep Time, Workload Outrank Pay

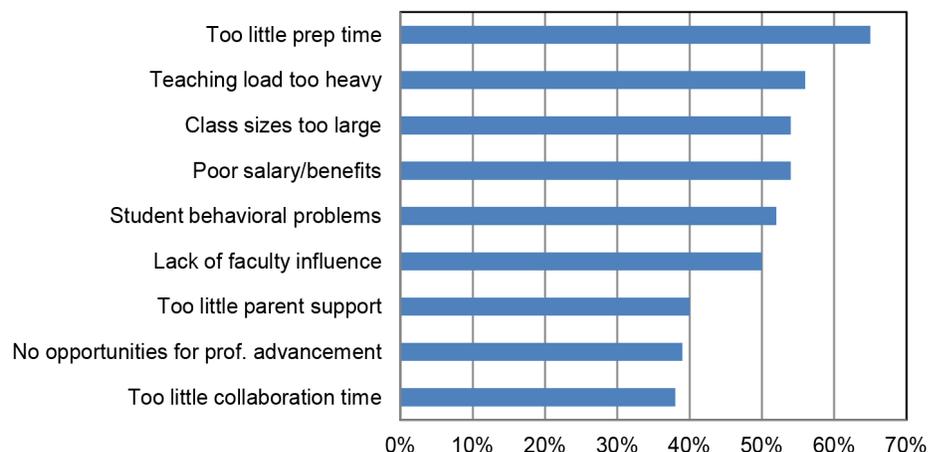
Working conditions are more likely to influence a teacher's decision to leave the profession than salary and benefits, a national survey shows.

In a report on compensation on teacher recruitment, retention, and performance published in 2015, the Legislative Finance Committee cites a survey by *Education Week*

that shows too little preparation time, heavy teaching loads, and oversized classes were more likely to be listed as a reason for leaving than poor salary and benefits.

The LFC report says research shows teachers in high-poverty schools with discipline issues and highly mobile students are more likely to quit teaching or move to another school.

Sources of Dissatisfaction for Outgoing Teachers, Nationwide



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