



LESC 2025 Research Agenda and Work Plan

	Topic	Roadmap Area	Analyst	2025 Interim Research Agenda Focus	
1	Artificial Intelligence	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Bedeaux	As AI tools become increasingly integrated into educational settings, there is need to understand which applications are most effective in supporting teaching, learning, and administrative decision-making. In particular, concerns around student data privacy, environmental impacts, and the sovereignty of tribal data demand scrutiny. HM2 from the 2025 legislative session asks LESC staff to convene a working group to study AI and recommend policies necessary to effectively harness the technology.	1
2	Bilingual and Multicultural Education	Academic Design Overarching Systems	Davalos	New Mexico offers numerous bilingual and multicultural education programs, but implementation varies widely due to educator shortages, disparate resources, program quality, and limited support for oral language preservation, especially in rural and tribal communities. LESC staff will conduct a comprehensive review of BMEPs including what types exist, how these various programs impact student outcomes, and what options exist for the Legislature to consider in program access .	2
3	Capital Outlay: State and Local Match Formula	Overarching Systems	Montoya	During the 2025 session, the Legislature enacted Laws 2025, Chapter 16 (Senate Bill 82), which made two changes: it extended reduced local match requirements for school districts undertaking school infrastructure projects through FY27 and broadened eligibility for local match waivers through the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC). The broader state and local match, however, needs long-term corrections. LESC staff, in partnership with LFC and PSFA staff, will work to find long-term solutions to the state and local match formula to ensure it is responsive to school needs and fiscally sustainable for the state.	3
4	Career-Connected Learning (Career and Technical Education)	Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Bedeaux	As New Mexico continues to scale its investments in CTE, LESC staff will develop detailed, nuanced ways to measure the multifaceted outcomes of CTE, which include traditional academic measures alongside more holistic indicators such as career readiness, social emotional development, and post-graduation outcomes. This will allow the Legislature to learn more about the costs of providing effective, robust CTE programs, with the ultimate goal of creating a funding mechanism to ensure all schools have access to the resources necessary to offer quality career-connected learning.	4
5	Charter School Governance	Academic Design Overarching Systems	Montoya	There are currently 99 charter schools operating in New Mexico, comprised of both state- and locally-chartered schools. There are distinct differences regarding oversight and support structures for charter schools, depending upon their respective authorizing entities. LESC staff will collaborate with all stakeholders to deliver a comprehensive overview of the support and oversight framework for both state - and locally-chartered schools .	5
6	Compensation for School Personnel	Educator Ecosystem	Armatage	Concerns about school personnel compensation continue to occupy conversations amongst both policymakers and professionals in the field. Although the Legislature raised teacher minimum salaries and instituted average salary increases for all public school staff during the 2025 legislative session, other efforts for both minimum wage salary increases and targeted differential pay went unrealized. LESC plans to continue studying ways to create compensation systems that deliver competitive and sustainable salaries that also address compaction .	6
7	Data Governance	Overarching Systems	Bedeaux	Data governance plays a critical role in ensuring education data systems are thoughtfully designed, promoting timeliness, consistency, accuracy, accessibility, and security. HM2 from the 2025 session asked LESC staff to convene a working group to study educational data governance , helping to establish clear protocols for data management, formal governance structures, build trust in data-driven processes, and empower stakeholders to make informed decisions.	7

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8	Early Childhood School Readiness	Whole-Child Supports	Andrews; Davalos	New Mexico adopted a new kindergarten readiness assessment in 2024, building on the state's investment in early childhood education and care in recent years. LESC staff will examine how early childhood education providers and experiences contribute to school readiness , using data analysis to identify how readiness varies by early childhood provider types and geography, among other factors. This effort will strive to demonstrate the connection between the state's enormous effort to provide early childhood and care with its intention of better student and community outcomes.	8
9	Education Act Advisory Councils	Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Davalos	Despite statutory establishment of advisory councils intended to inform and guide PED on critical education issues, such as bilingual education, Indian education, Hispanic education, Black education, and equity, there remains a lack of clarity and consistency regarding the role, function, and impact of these councils. LESC staff intend to study how advisory councils operate, processes for developing council recommendations, and how councils interact with PED to make recommendations .	9
10	Education Governance and Long-Term Planning	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design Overarching Systems	Hathaway	Numerous efforts to improve education governance have been discussed in recent years. These have included proposals for a change to statewide education governance by returning to a state school board, numerous plans to address the <i>Martinez-Yazzie</i> lawsuit, development of LESC's own Roadmap to improve education, and how long-term educational planning could further New Mexico's efforts. LESC staff will examine statewide governance structures designed to improve continuity of leadership, incorporate broader community voice, and build a cohesive statewide vision for public education statewide .	10
11	Educator Health Insurance	Educator Ecosystem Overarching Systems	Estupiñan	The rising costs of healthcare have placed an increasing burden on public school employees, school districts and charter schools, and the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). As the costs of healthcare continue to rise, LESC staff intend to assess how NMPSIA is approaching cost containment, how the Legislature can support future increases in premiums, and whether there are opportunities to align public school employee benefits with those of state employees .	11
12	Educator Preparation Course and Clinical Experience Quality	Educator Ecosystem	Chavez; Armatage	New Mexico faces challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. Teacher quality is one of the most influential in-school resources for improving student learning, but access to a highly qualified teacher requires a high-quality educator preparation program (EPP). LESC staff will examine course offerings and clinical experiences in New Mexico's traditional undergraduate EPPs to determine if there are differences in how teachers are prepared and if so, what policy recommendations may be considered to ensure high-quality EPPs are available statewide.	12
13	Educator Preparation Recruitment and Staff Quality	Educator Ecosystem	Armatage	Research shows teachers are the most important school-related factor for improving student achievement and some research suggests teacher candidates with higher prior academic achievement are more likely to be effective educators. However, educator preparation programs (EPPs) may struggle to operate competitive admissions processes if the supply of candidates is too low to meet programmatic goals and workforce needs. LESC staff intend to research how well prepared teacher candidates are—as well as the quality of learning experiences in EPP programs—in an effort to attract quality teacher candidates .	13
14	High Impact Tutoring	Whole Child Supports Academic Design	Hicks	Research has shown tutoring can increase academic achievement by roughly three to 15 additional months of learning. New Mexico has attempted to launch statewide high impact tutoring programs in recent years but questions about appropriate funding and evaluation of program quality remain. LESC staff will analyze current high impact tutoring programs in New Mexico (including funding and program availability) and assess how these programs compare with national research on high-quality high impact tutoring programs.	14



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15	House Bill 63 (State Equalization Guarantee Changes) Implementation	Whole-Child Supports Academic Design Overarching Systems	Estupiñan	House Bill 63, enacted during the 2025 legislative session, revised the state's public school funding formula by changing the methodology of the at-risk index, creating a cost differential for current and exited English learners, and increasing the cost differential for grades six through 12 to 1.30. To support the implementation of those changes, the Legislature also appropriated \$132.9 million to the SEG for FY26. LESC staff will assess the implementation and programmatic impact of statutory changes made by HB63 .	15
16	Learning Time	Educator Ecosystem Academic Design	Bedeaux	In 2023, the Legislature enacted calendar reforms that created a flexible framework for professional work time, including time spent in mentorship, coaching, and collaboration. Since the law was enacted, little work has been done to understand whether school districts and charter schools have taken advantage of this flexibility to allow teachers additional work time, both individually and with teacher teams. This first part of a two-year study aims to better understand the ways teachers spend time at school, as well as the structures and supports that may be necessary to allocate additional time for teachers to pursue mastery of their profession .	16
17	Literacy Policy and Practices	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Andrews; Chavez	As New Mexico continues its effort to ground literacy instruction in the science of reading, LESC staff will conduct a gap analysis of the rollout of the Structured Literacy New Mexico Initiative , looking at New Mexico's implementation compared with other states that have implemented structured literacy laws. Staff will also monitor newly provided literacy training for secondary educators, as well as the requirement for all educator preparation programs to provide prospective teachers with structured literacy training .	17
18	Long-Term Financial Planning	Overarching Systems	Estupiñan	Several long-term trends pose challenges for the Legislature, school districts, and charter schools, including volatility in revenue, declines in student enrollment, and the increasing costs of serving each student's unique needs. As public schools continue to face challenges in meeting the needs of students, LESC staff will assess the potential for building on these existing strategic planning tools in ways that promote greater intentionality in financial planning among school districts and charter schools .	18
19	Math Education and Teacher Supports	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Andrews; Bedeaux; Armatage	While New Mexico has targeted resources and supports to the improvement of student literacy, student math performance continues to lag. National efforts to identify "the science of math" have not resulted in a concrete path forward. LESC staff will continue its work from the 2024 interim, working with PED and math experts to identify best practices and legislative levers that will support improved math instruction and outcomes .	19
20	Out-of-School Time Programs	Whole Child Supports Academic Design	Hicks	Out-of-school time (OST) programs provide students across New Mexico with access to tutoring, internships, physical activities, social emotional learning, STEM education, and more. However, approximately 75 percent of OST providers and programs are concentrated along the Rio Grande corridor, leaving regions of New Mexico with some of the highest rates of poverty and juvenile justice referrals without local OST availability. LESC staff will conduct an in-depth study of the OST landscape in New Mexico and provide policy, practice, and budget recommendations to improve OST program quality and offerings .	20
21	School Climate and Culture	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design Overarching Systems	Hicks	According to New Mexico data from the Panorama school climate survey, students' perceptions of school climate are lower than their peers nationwide, with only 57 percent and 38 percent of New Mexico students grades three through five and six through 12, respectively, having favorable views of their school climate. LESC staff will investigate the relationship between positive school climate and student outcomes, the factors influencing school climate, and how the Legislature can support best practices in this area.	21



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22	Special Education Identification and Costs	Educator Ecosystem Whole-Child Supports Academic Design	Andrews; Estupiñan	LESC has researched the provision of special education services in New Mexico to ensure students with disabilities receive an inclusive, integrated, and equitable education. Staff will focus work this interim on the identification and provision of services for students with disabilities across the state, examining how identification practices and services for students with disabilities vary by school district and charter school and identifying what is needed to ensure all students with disabilities receive an adequate, sufficient education.	22
23	Transportation	Overarching Systems	Montoya	Many local education agencies (LEAs) have expressed concerns that the transportation distribution formula may not fully align with their actual transportation costs. LESC staff will continue to examine both the structure of the formula, and how LEAs utilize funds and create transportation budgets to better understand and assess potential disparities .	23



Topic: Artificial Intelligence

Classroom tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) have the potential to fundamentally alter what it means to go to school. AI tools can personalize instruction, streamline school operations, and quickly identify students who are at-risk of disengaging from education, but their use also raises important ethical and legal challenges. As AI tools become increasingly integrated into educational settings, there is a growing need to understand which applications are most effective in supporting teaching, learning, and administrative decision-making. In particular, concerns around student data privacy, environmental impacts, and the sovereignty of tribal data demand careful scrutiny. House Memorial 2 from the 2025 legislative session asks LESC staff to convene a working group to study artificial intelligence and recommend policies necessary to effectively harness the technology. A clear policy framework developed by educators and AI experts can ensure AI tools are used to enhance education.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May 2025:** AI working group members identified.
- **June 2025:** Working group convenings begin, promising practices identified, policy considerations discussed.
- **August 2025:** Working group develops policy recommendations, presents recommendations to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Educators have an understanding of effective applications of AI tools.
- The Legislature's policy framework enables innovation, fosters equitable access to AI tools, and protects sensitive student data and tribal data sovereignty.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How are AI tools being used in New Mexico schools, and which use cases represent promising applications of the technology to personalize instruction, reduce administrative burdens, and close opportunity gaps?	• Collaborative discussions with educators, students, and AI experts
What is the role of the Legislature in regulating the use of AI? What policies are necessary to ensure AI use is equitable, transparent, and additive to educational experiences?	• Collaborative discussions with educators, students, and AI experts

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature establishes clear guidelines and requirements for AI use in educational settings and funds educational technology with high-impact AI integrations, and PED provides structured support and professional development for schools to understand how to implement AI tools effectively, and educators and school leaders share best practices on using AI tools and critically evaluating their effects, and students and families are engaged in conversations about the responsible use of AI to enhance learning, then educators will be empowered to use AI to personalize instruction, improve student engagement, and streamline administrative tasks; schools will foster innovation while protecting student data and ensuring equitable access to AI-enhanced learning experiences; and AI will support deeper learning, enhance equity, and foster more effective teaching practices, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes.

Partners

- LESC Members
- Public Education Department (PED)
- School districts and charter schools
- Educators
- Students
- Future Focused Education
- AI subject matter experts



Topic: Bilingual and Multicultural Education

New Mexico offers five kinds of bilingual and multicultural education programs. Still, implementation varies widely due to educator shortages, disparate resources, program quality, and limited support for oral language preservation, especially in rural and tribal communities. According to a 2022 Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) evaluation, participation in bilingual programs has declined by 21 percent since FY13, despite record-high per-student funding. Moreover, fewer than half of the students in Spanish bilingual programs demonstrated proficiency in the language, raising concerns about whether current models are achieving their intended goals. While students should not have to choose between cultural identity and academic success, current models often struggle to support both. LESC staff will conduct a comprehensive review of programs.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April - May 2025:** Review statute, rules, and PED guidance on bilingual programs. Begin data requests from PED, Technical Assistant Centers, and, if possible, tribes, nations, and pueblos.
- **June - September 2025:** Analyze program structures, student outcomes, and educator pipelines. Conduct background research on oral language development and biliteracy. Hold stakeholder interviews and site visits of bilingual programs.
- **October 2025:** Present research with policy recommendations to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Students who wish to achieve bilingualism will be supported to do so.
- New Mexico will be a national leader in honoring linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Student outcomes will improve through high-quality and equitable culturally sustaining bilingual education system.
- Explore the potential of alternative or innovative models to support culturally sustaining, community-driven approaches to bilingual education and Native language revitalization.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What bilingual education models are currently implemented in New Mexico, and how do their design, intensity, and intended outcomes vary?	• Bilingual program counts by type and student outcomes • Language and grade WIDA data
How effective are these bilingual programs in advancing bilingualism, biliteracy, cultural identity, and academic achievement, particularly for English learners and heritage language speakers?	• Types of bilingual programs used across the state
What systemic factors influence the quality of bilingual programs, including educator preparation and certification (e.g., 520 NALC, TESOL), availability of culturally relevant materials, and access to institutional supports such as technical assistance centers?	• Higher education programs • 520 NALC and TESOL data • Technical assistance centers data

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature, PED, education agencies, and institutions of higher education invest in equitable educator preparation pathways, including 520 NALC and TESOL certifications, and support technical assistance centers, **and if** bilingual programs are implemented with attention to cultural and linguistic sustainability, especially for oral language traditions, **and if** the state defines clear expectations for biliteracy outcomes, provides appropriate instructional materials, and ensures that schools have the staffing, resources, and autonomy to meet diverse student needs, **then** New Mexico will strengthen the quality, reach, and responsiveness of its bilingual education system, **and as a result**, more students, particularly those in rural, tribal, and linguistically diverse communities will achieve both academic success and cultural affirmation through equitable and culturally sustaining education.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Bilingual Teacher Preparation Programs
- Tribal Education Departments
- Tribal Culture and Language Departments
- Bilingual Advocacy Organizations
- Bilingual Teacher and Family Participants
- Students



Topic: State and Local Match

During the 2025 legislative session, the Legislature enacted Laws 2025, Chapter 16 (Senate Bill 82), which made two key changes: it extended reduced local match requirements for school districts undertaking school infrastructure projects through FY27 and broadened eligibility for local match waivers through the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC). However, staff from LESC, the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), and the Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA) have identified additional components of the state and local match formula that warrant further examination. These include factors such as construction cost per square foot and assumptions about the use of local mill levies, which no longer reflect current economic conditions. The increase in waiver requests from school districts in recent years signals a need to revise the existing formula or consider an entirely new approach. LESC staff, in collaboration with its partners, will continue working toward long-term, equitable reforms that align local match requirements with districts' fiscal capacity and reduce future reliance on local match waivers.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May – August 2025:** Analyze district revenue data and review state-local match assumptions. Analyze construction cost data. Collaborate with partners on cost estimates and prioritization methods.
- **September – October 2025:** Capital projects for funding trends and local contributions; meet with LEAs to identify facility needs.
- **May – October 2025:** Site visits to assess school facilities.
- **November 2025:** Present findings, progress, and potential solutions to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Monitor construction costs and LEAs' capacity to meet local match requirements, while continuously assessing the impact of formula changes on project funding and equity.
- Maintain strong communication with partners and stakeholders to ensure the state's funding system remains transparent, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of districts.
- Support a funding mechanism that accounts for true construction costs, local fiscal capacity, and facility needs, ensuring all districts can sustainably provide safe, adequate, and equitable facilities to support a constitutionally sufficient public education for all students.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
Does local revenue adequately support school construction projects across districts?	• Revenue and budget data
How do state-funded facilities under adequacy standards compare to the actual facility needs identified by school districts?	• Project design plans • Adequacy standards • Site visits
Does the state's funding formula accurately reflect local fiscal capacity, construction costs, and the facility needs required for educational adequacy?	• Cost and revenue data • Project design plans

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** establishes a sound mechanism for funding the construction of adequate school facilities reflective of current construction costs, local fiscal capacity, educational facility needs, and economic conditions **and PED** provides aligned guidance **and school districts and charter schools** understand how to implement funding options and are supported with equitable and sustainable pathways to fund capital projects, **then** school districts, regardless of local wealth, will be able to provide and maintain safe, adequate, and equitable school facilities that support a constitutionally sufficient public education for all students.

Partners

- Legislative Finance Committee (LFC)
- Public School Facility Authority (PSFA)
- Public Education Department (PED)
- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- School districts



Topic: Career-Connected Learning

Career-connected learning, including career and technical education (CTE), student internships, and work-based learning programs, have proven a popular mechanism to make education more tangible and relevant for students, with national research suggesting such programs directly improve student academic outcomes. As New Mexico continues to scale its investments in CTE, LESC staff remain interested in developing detailed, nuanced ways to measure the multifaceted outcomes of CTE, which include traditional academic measures alongside more holistic indicators such as career readiness, social emotional development, and post-graduation outcomes. The Legislature should learn more about the costs of providing effective, robust CTE programs, with the ultimate goal of creating a funding mechanism to ensure all schools have access to the resources necessary to create career exploration programs.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May – August 2025:** Continued engagement with CTE school leader working group.
- **June – August 2025:** Analysis of data, graduate profiles, and student outcomes; CTE site visits.
- **September 2025:** Presentation to LESC on effectiveness of CTE pathways and potential funding mechanisms to expand CTE.

Long-Term Goals

- Establish a broader understanding of student success beyond academic proficiency and graduation rates.
- Allocate funding and other resources efficiently to expand CTE programs statewide.
- Ensure students have access to high-quality, rigorous pathways to college and careers.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
Which students are participating in CTE programs, and in what ways does participation in CTE affect student outcomes (academic achievement, attendance, graduation rates)?	• Student-level CTE participation and outcome data
What other holistic outcomes does CTE participation produce, such as career readiness, social and emotional learning, and soft skills? Which metrics should New Mexico measure and track at a statewide level?	• National research on promising measures of “student success” • Qualitative analysis of school district graduate profiles • Engagement with CTE leaders in New Mexico schools
What is the true cost of providing robust, differentiated CTE programming in New Mexico schools, and how do those costs differ by CTE program types?	• National research on CTE costs and funding structures • Site visits and review of New Mexico case studies

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** better understands multifaceted and holistic outcomes of its investment in CTE programs and gains insight into the cost, scope, and structure of effective CTE programs, **and the Public Education Department** effectively administers supports, funding, and technical assistance aligned with research, **and school districts and schools** are able to offer aligned, well designed, and comprehensive CTE programs tailored to their local context, **then** the state will better understand how CTE programs contribute to overall student success; CTE programs will be structured to meet modern needs; the state will have an aligned strategy to offer robust, differentiated CTE programs; and New Mexico will see higher levels of student engagement and holistic outcomes that create pathways to college, career, and civic readiness.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS)
- School districts and charter schools
- CTE educators
- CTE students
- CTE organizations and nonprofits



Topic Charter School Governance

There are currently 99 charter schools operating in New Mexico, comprised of both state- and locally-chartered schools. There are distinct differences regarding oversight and support structures for charter schools, depending upon their respective authorizing entities. There are also several entities involved in the charter school landscape, which include but are not limited to, the Public Education Department (PED), the Public Education Commission (PEC), local education agencies (LEAs), Public Charter Schools of New Mexico, and regional education cooperatives (RECs). During the 2025 legislative session, several statutory changes were proposed focusing on various aspects of charter schools, including their governance structure, financial oversight and responsibilities, and support systems. LESC staff will collaborate with all stakeholders to deliver a comprehensive overview of the support and oversight framework for both state- and locally-chartered schools.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May 2025:** Compile statutes, regulations, and policies on charter school governance and authorization.
- **May – June 2025:** Meet with stakeholders and conduct site visits to charter schools to review oversight and support practices; Analyze charter support budgets and academic performance data.
- **July 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Monitor changes in charter school governance, oversight, and support systems to ensure they align with student and school needs.
- Maintain regular communication with stakeholders to support effective governance and sustained operational support.
- Promote a charter system where state- and locally-chartered schools receive sufficient support to meet students' long-term needs and provide a constitutionally adequate education.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How do authorizing procedures and governance structures differ between state-chartered and locally-chartered charter schools?	• Statutes, regulations, and policies • Chartering documents • Organizational structures
What types of operational support do charter schools receive, how is it funded, and which entities are responsible for providing it?	• Statutes, regulations, policies • Budget data • Documentation of support services provided • Feedback on support, quality, and availability
How is accountability for academic performance and financial management enforced across different chartering authorities?	• Statutes, regulations, and policies • Performance and accountability data • Charter contracts

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** clarifies governance structures for charter schools and if **PED** creates aligned administrative rule and if **authorizers** of charter schools carry out effective oversight and if **state- and locally-chartered charter schools and respective governing bodies** fulfill their roles effectively, **then** charter schools will be better positioned to meet the comprehensive and long-term needs of their students, advancing the goal of a constitutionally sufficient public education for all students.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Public Education Commission (PEC)
- Public Charter Schools of New Mexico
- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- Regional education cooperatives (RECs)
- Charter schools



Topic: School Personnel Compensation

National research shows teacher salaries can affect the quality and quantity of individuals preparing to become teachers, with individuals more likely to choose the teaching profession when salaries are competitive with other occupations. Despite recent legislative investments in teacher salaries, the wage penalty remains high, future salary funding remains uncertain, salary compaction continues, and teacher vacancies persist, particularly in high-need areas. Other professions in public schools face similar concerns, including administrators, education assistants, ancillary staff, and more. To better understand and address these problems, policymakers need timely, nuanced, and valid school workforce data.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April 2025:** Request workforce data from PED and identify additional information that must be collected to analyze workforce compensation.
- **August 2025:** Conduct analyses feasible with data available. Collaborate with stakeholders to identify potential policy solutions.
- **November 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- New Mexico's public school employee compensation system offers staff in all professions competitive salaries that allow schools to recruit and retain effective employees.
- The compensation system recognizes and compensates additional levels of education, experience, and effectiveness; minimizes compaction; and attracts professionals to high-need locations and subjects.
- With sustainable funding sources and long term planning, public school employees are able to feel confident choosing a career in public schools.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What information is included in the new workforce data PED has begun collecting; What additional data is needed to understand and address school personnel compensation needs and costs?	• New Mexico public school personnel compensation data from FY15 to FY25 in as much detail as possible
How can school employee compensation structures be changed to recruit and retain highly qualified staff, including in high-need subjects and locations?	• New Mexico public school workforce data, including vacancy and turnover rates
What long term funding sources and policy solutions are available that could allow prospective school professionals to determine a career in public schools is a sound decision for their future?	• National landscape of public school employee compensation practices

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature appropriates sufficient, sustainable funds for public school employee compensation and designs holistic, responsive compensation structures, and PED collects timely, nuanced, and valid workforce data that allows for targeted and informed policy making, and school districts and charter schools adopt effective salary schedules, accompanied by positive school environments, then New Mexico schools will be able to recruit and retain well-prepared and effective school personnel and all students in New Mexico will have access to high quality teachers and well-resourced schools.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- School districts and charter schools
- Legislative Finance Committee (LFC)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- Higher Education Department (HED)
- Teacher unions



Topic: Education Data Governance

High-quality data serves as the foundation of almost every educational program and investment, serving as the lever to help the Legislature understand whether programs are meaningfully impacting students' lives. Stakeholders across the education system rely on data to guide decisions that impact student outcomes, resource allocation, and policy development. Data governance—a set of rules and standards that govern how data are collected and maintained—plays a critical role in ensuring that education data systems are thoughtfully designed, promoting timeliness, consistency, accuracy, accessibility, and security. House Memorial 2 from the 2025 session asked LESC staff to convene a working group to study educational data governance, helping to establish clear protocols for data management, formal governance structures, build trust in data-driven processes, and empower stakeholders to make informed decisions.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **June 2025:** Data governance working group members identified; convenings begin.
- **August 2025:** Initial findings of working group are compiled, including clearly articulated goals for a policy framework.
- **November 2025:** Working group develops a policy framework for the 2026 legislative session.

Long-Term Goals

- Stakeholders trust the results of analyses, building a shared statewide understanding of which educational investments are working and why.
- New Mexico leverages its data to scale high-impact investments, and as a result, students see improved academic outcomes.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What are the specific needs of stakeholders that interact with data systems, and how can data governance play a role in meeting those needs?	• Stakeholder user stories • Collaborative discussions with state agency leaders and system administrators
What is the goal of an education data governance framework, and what roles and responsibilities should state agency leaders and system administrators play in such a framework?	• Collaborative discussions with state agency leaders and system administrators
How can an education data governance framework be built to ensure long-term, sustained discussions about system needs and improvements?	• Collaborative discussions with state agency leaders and system administrators

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** creates a formal structure to ensure data is high quality, transparent, and timely, **and state agency leaders** participate in sustained, regular, and collaborative discussions about data priorities, **and state agency system administrators** develop shared norms about data standards and expectations, **and data consumers** provide input about the specific data they need to guide decision-making, **then** data systems will produce high-quality, useful information for end users; policymakers will have greater trust in data used to produce analysis; and data will produce strong, valuable insights about programs that are meaningfully impacting student lives.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Higher Education Department (HED)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
- Department of Information Technology (DoIT)
- Institute for Complex Additive Systems Analysis (ICASA)
- Data Quality Campaign (DQC)
- Research organizations, researchers, and end users



Topic: Early Childhood School Readiness

New Mexico has made significant investments in early childhood education, including establishing the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) and expanding the New Mexico Prekindergarten program. However, gaps in school readiness remain, especially for children from low-income and rural communities. The [Early Development Instrument](#) (EDI), a validated measure used in 18 states, was introduced statewide in 2024 and assesses population-level data on children's readiness across five developmental domains. Initial EDI results indicate many children enter kindergarten unprepared in multiple areas. While prekindergarten participation is linked to gains in early literacy and math, access and quality vary. LESC staff intend to assess whether current investments are equitably distributed and effectively improving readiness to allow for greater coordination, data use, and program evaluation essential to support all young children in their transition to kindergarten.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **June – August 2025:** Develop understanding of how kindergarten readiness is measured and assessed; Conduct research review; Develop connections; Request available data.
- **August – September 2025:** Data exploration and analysis of research questions.
- **October 2025:** Findings presented to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Improve understanding of kindergarten readiness in New Mexico, gaps in readiness based on early childhood settings, and how to better connect resources and policy to improve outcomes.
- Children will be ready to thrive in kindergarten settings and improve long-term academic, social, and emotional outcomes.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How, and for what groups of students, does kindergarten readiness differ in domains measured by EDI (physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communication skills/general knowledge)?	• EDI readiness data • Early childhood student demographics
To what extent are children in different regions of New Mexico demonstrating readiness for kindergarten?	• Early childhood program information (e.g. location, program type) • EDI data by region
What geographic patterns in school readiness emerge based on EDI domain scores, and how do these patterns align with local access to early childhood education services?	• EDI data by region • Gap analysis of early childhood settings
How, and in what ways, does kindergarten readiness differ based on the type of prekindergarten experience and setting children attend?	• Early childhood program information (e.g. location, program type) • ECECD and PED partnership
How does the quality and dosage of early childhood education programs (e.g., length of enrollment, instructional hours, teacher credentials) relate to children's readiness scores across the five EDI developmental domains?	• Early childhood program detail • EDI readiness data

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature better understands how kindergarten readiness is assessed and the PED and ECECD use these findings to tailor and improve the quality of early childhood programs and resource allocation and early childhood education providers in both school- and community-based settings are well supported and align practices to improve quality then more children in New Mexico will be ready for kindergarten and ultimately, see improved academic, social, and emotional outcomes both short- and long-term.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- Early childhood education providers
- UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities (EDI National Support Center)



Topic: Education Act Advisory Councils

Despite the establishment of multiple advisory councils intended to inform and guide the Public Education Department (PED) on critical education issues, such as bilingual education, Indian education, Hispanic education, Black education, and equity, there remains a lack of clarity and consistency regarding the role, function, and impact of these councils. Many of these councils were created by statute or department policy to elevate stakeholder voices. Yet, there is limited information on their structure, meeting frequency, and how their recommendations influence policy or practice.

Concerns have emerged about whether the advisory process is fulfilling its intended purpose. In particular, it is unclear whether PED systematically tracks, responds to, or implements advisory council recommendations. Additionally, the transparency of council operations, including the availability of formal reports or summaries of council activities, varies widely. Without a comprehensive understanding of how advisory councils operate and contribute to decision-making, the state may miss opportunities to incorporate community-driven perspectives into education policy and oversight.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April 2025:** Research the establishment and history of educational advisory councils.
- **May 2025:** Analyze the structure, roles, and outputs of the educational advisory councils. Include how advisory recommendations have influenced PED policy or action.
- **June - July 2025:** Present findings and recommendations to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Advisory councils operate under clear statutory or regulatory frameworks, ensuring consistent participation, representation, and accountability.
- Recommendations from advisory councils are formally acknowledged, reviewed, and integrated into PED policy development and implementation processes.
- Advisory council operations are transparent and accessible, with publicly available meeting agendas, minutes, and annual reports.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
When and why was each educational advisory council established, and what are their core responsibilities?	• Statutes establishing councils • PED's administrative code
How frequently do these councils meet, and what recommendations have they made to PED?	• Council meeting agenda • Council meeting minutes • Advisory formal reports to PED
To what extent has PED responded to or implemented these recommendations, and how is council effectiveness perceived?	• PED action plans

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature clarifies the statutory authority, expectations, and accountability structures of education advisory councils, **and if** PED provides consistent support for council operations, ensures public transparency through regular reporting, and establishes formal processes for reviewing and responding to council recommendations, **then** advisory councils will operate more effectively, reflect diverse community voices, and be positioned to provide actionable, equity-centered guidance to PED, **and as a result**, New Mexico will have a more participatory and responsive education system where stakeholders with lived and professional expertise inform policy decisions.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Bilingual, Hispanic, Indian, and Black Education Advisory Councils
- Key partners of advisory councils



Topic: Education Governance and Long-Term Planning

Since moving to a governor-appointed secretary of education in 2003, New Mexico has had seven secretaries and at least three acting or interim secretaries. While most of that turnover has occurred during the last six years, those changes have meant New Mexico's schools have dealt with major swings in the policies and structures governing education in the state. Simultaneously, no secretary has developed a long-term and comprehensive plan for education in New Mexico, even considering the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit calling for such a plan. While there is now a court ordered mandate for a plan due from the Public Education Department (PED) in October 2025, and there have been several discrete initiatives focused on literacy or teacher evaluations or school grades, no secretary has developed a long-term set of goals or benchmarks by which to mark improvement or progress.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

New Mexico needs a new education governance structure that will allow for the development of a long-term strategic plan, created with input from education stakeholders, and implemented by a body that represents legislative, executive, and local constituencies. The structure should be buffered from changes in state leadership, educational fads, and rash decision making. The structure, along with the budgetary and programmatic decisions it makes, should be aligned to and guided by a set of long-term goals and outcomes. New Mexico has invested in strategies to improve education and is beginning to see progress. A new governance system could allow that progress to continue while ushering in a new era of stability and shared leadership.

Short-Term Goals

- **May – October 2025:** Stakeholder partnership, discussion, and convenings to discuss strengths and weaknesses of current structure.
- **May – September 2025:** Study other state models of governance and planning; Assess viability of varying models.
- **October 2025:** Presentation to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Improve understanding of potential policy changes that could stabilize education governance.
- Connect LESC's efforts more concretely to a vision for long-term education planning.
- Develop a recommendation on processes and structures to create a long-term educational plan for New Mexico.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What components of the state's current education governance system are working and what components could be improved?	• Systems mapping • National and in-state evaluation/research
What form could a new governing body take and how could this body help develop a long-term plan that is responsive, adaptable, and comprehensive?	• Stakeholder partnerships • National research of models
What specific, yet interconnected, roles do various parts of New Mexico's education system play in supporting strong state governance and a long-term plan? How do these systems and actors work well together and what could be improved?	• Systems mapping • Stakeholder partnerships and deliberation

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the state had a governance structure and a representative leadership body with the ability to develop a long-term strategic plan with clear goals and objectives, and local school boards and governing councils developed local strategic plans aligned to state goals and objectives, and PED and local school districts and charter schools had sufficient resources to meet those goals and objectives, then New Mexico would have the ability to make meaningful long-term progress, evaluate the effectiveness of budgetary, programmatic, and policy investments and provide support and technical assistance, all leading to improved student outcomes.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Education leaders statewide
- School boards and governing councils
- State education and workforce agencies
- New Mexico Children's Cabinet



Topic: Public School Insurance

The rising costs of healthcare have placed an increasing burden on public school employees, school districts and charter schools, and the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). To keep pace with rising costs, NMPSIA increased medical insurance premiums by 9.95 percent for FY26 and revised its plan designs, which have eroded the competitiveness of compensation packages for public school employees and misaligned benefits with those of state employees. Constraining the increase in premiums has also become a significant financial burden on the Legislature, which appropriated \$38.4 million to the state equalization guarantee for increases in premiums for FY26, while also appropriating \$65 million to NMPSIA's fund balances. As the costs of healthcare continue to rise, it is necessary to assess how NMPSIA is approaching cost containment, how the Legislature can support future increases in premiums, and whether there are opportunities to align public school employee benefits with those of state employees.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April 2025:** Request historical data on premium increases, NMPSIA's financial position, and plan redesign considerations.
- **May 2025:** Prepare and finalize presentation for committee members.
- **June 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Monitor changes in national landscape around health insurance and impacts of local revisions to premiums and plan designs.
- Ensure the compensation and benefits packages for public school employees are competitive with those of state employees and are adequately responsive in promoting recruitment and retention.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What strategies is NMPSIA pursuing to contain costs and reduce future premium increases for employees and employers?	• Overview of NMPSIA's revisions to plan designs
What are the distinct differences in the plan designs between those available for public school employees and state employees?	• Plan designs for public school and state employees
Are the current plan and rate designs of public school employee insurance competitive and responsive to employee needs?	• National landscape of benefits packages for public school employees
Are there opportunities to improve the competitiveness of public school employee insurance programs and align them with those of state employees?	• National landscape of benefits packages for public school employees

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature assesses the differences in benefits structures between public school employees and state employees to identify opportunities for alignment, and if NMPSIA implements effective long-term cost containment strategies, then school districts and charter schools can offer sustainable, competitive, and responsive compensation and benefits packages that positively impact recruitment and retention.

Partners

- New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority
- School districts
- Charter schools
- National education organizations



Topic: Examination of Teacher Preparation in Traditional Undergraduate Programs

New Mexico faces challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers. Teacher quality is one of the most influential in-school resources for improving student learning, but access to a highly qualified teacher requires a high-quality educator preparation program (EPP). EPPs play a central role in recruiting a diverse cadre of candidates and equipping them with the skills and strategies to adapt curriculum and instruction for equitable educational outcomes. Additionally, partnerships between EPPs and school districts can provide an effective support mechanism for school improvement by bridging theory and practice, strengthening talent pipelines, and enhancing the reputation of EPPs. Although traditional undergraduate programs for education represent only one type of teacher preparation, its insights can reveal specific program features and lead to improvements in coherence, curriculum content, teaching practices, and clinical experiences, ultimately allowing investigation into how EPPs result in high-quality teachers for every student.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **June 2025:** Comparative analysis of traditional undergraduate educator preparation programs and teacher candidates' professional field experiences.
- **August 2025:** Review literature on teacher efficacy, public school-university partnerships, and accreditation to study New Mexico EPPs.
- **October 2025:** Present to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Educator preparation programs implement cohesive program practices that increase the quality of New Mexico's teacher workforce.
- New Mexico school districts and charter schools are more informed about prospective teachers and educator preparation programs.
- Educator Preparation Programs implement clinical experiences that focus on evidence-based practices to promote long-term development of teacher efficacy.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How does participation in undergraduate-level EPPs differ for prospective teachers based on the specific EPP they attend in New Mexico?	• Course syllabi • Course offerings • Focus groups • Surveys
What challenges exist for New Mexico EPPs in adopting effective clinical experiences that support teacher candidates?	• Interviews with Deans/Directors • Site Visits
What are the key components for building effective partnerships between EPPs and school districts or charter schools that align coursework and field-based experience? How does this impact teacher quality and readiness?	• Site visits • Literature review

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** and **PED** uphold uniform and evaluative provisions for quality and accreditation in EPPs, and **PED** continues to monitor educator preparation curriculum and professional clinical experiences and **EPPs** better align and improve their teacher preparation pathways to provide a quality experience statewide, **then** school districts and charter schools will recruit candidates that are highly qualified and prepared to teach a diverse student body and educators will receive improved teacher training and clinical experiences, enabling them to be quality educators.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- New Mexico Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- Higher Education Department (HED)
- Legislative Finance Committee
- New Mexico higher education institutions



Topic: Educator Preparation Program Staff and Students

Research shows teachers are the most important school-related factor for improving student achievement. As New Mexico continues to face substantial teacher shortages, particularly in high-need areas, as well as high turnover rates, the Legislature has made substantial investments to increase teacher compensation, reduce barriers to educator preparation programs (EPPs), and fund rigorous clinical experiences. Some research suggests teacher candidates with higher prior academic achievement are more likely to be effective. However, EPPs may struggle to operate competitive admissions processes if the supply of candidates is too low to meet programmatic goals and workforce needs. Once teacher candidates enter EPPs, they must be met with well-resourced programs staffed by expert faculty implementing evidence-based best practices.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April 2025:** Request financial data, candidate data, and student assessment from PED and EPPs.
- **August 2025:** Conduct analyses and potential surveys, interviews, and focus groups.
- **October 2025:** Present report to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- EPPs operate competitive admissions programs, admitting sufficient candidates to meet the needs of the teacher supply chain; all admitted candidates have access to the resources and support they need to succeed.
- Every teacher candidate graduates from an EPP prepared to meet the needs of all students, including English learners and those with special education needs.
- Student proficiency growth rates increase across the state and achievement gaps diminish.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
Are EPPs able to operate competitive admissions processes? Are applicants well-prepared to begin a teacher preparation program? Do candidates reflect the diversity of the state's students?	• EPP faculty and staff data, including compensation, experience, turnover, and courseloads (FY15 to FY25, as possible)
Are teacher candidates taught by experts in the field through evidence-based instructional practices? Are programs able to recruit and retain high quality instructors and program staff?	• EPP admissions data, candidate data, and student achievement data linked to teacher graduates (FY15 to FY25, as possible)
Are there relationships between teacher candidate preparation experiences and outcomes of their future students?	• Qualitative information from surveys, interviews, or focus groups

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature adequately funds EPPs and requires EPPs to implement best practices, and the PED ensures accountability of EPPs and provides necessary supports and guidance, and school districts and charter schools partner with EPPs to build a strong teacher pipeline and provide candidates strong clinical experiences, then EPPs will be better able to recruit and admit well-suited candidates and prepare them to meet the diverse needs of all learners in the state; schools will be better able to retain teachers who feel a sense of self-efficacy; and students across the state will have access to high-quality teachers who are able to improve student growth and decrease achievement gaps.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Educator preparation programs
- School districts and charter schools
- Higher Education Department (HED)



Topic: High Impact Tutoring Access in New Mexico

[Research](#) has shown tutoring on average can increase academic achievement by roughly three to 15 additional months of learning, with a [review](#) of 200 studies showing large positive effects for both reading and math achievement. New Mexico made three attempts in to launch a statewide high impact tutoring program, though implementation challenges appeared to limit participation and effectiveness. In FY25, the New Mexico Legislature appropriated \$8.5 million in funding to support a high impact tutoring grant program as part of a broader appropriation including out-of-school time funding. In FY26, high impact tutoring did not receive a specific appropriation in the General Appropriation Act of 2025. LESC staff will coordinate with PED and stakeholders to understand the level of demand for tutoring services, the sufficiency of existing funding, and provide lawmakers with a clear understanding of the characteristics of high-quality high impact tutoring programs and how best to support development of these programs in the state.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May-June 2025:** Initial collaboration with PED; gather data on grant program (criteria + applicants, etc.); connect with Southwest Outreach Academic Research (SOAR) Evaluation & Policy Center evaluators for presentation to LESC in July.
- **July 2025:** Panel presentation w/ PED and SOAR; policy brief outlining history of funding for high impact tutoring in NM and characteristics of high-quality tutoring programs.
- **November-December 2025:** Make funding recommendations to the Legislature for FY27.

Long-Term Goals

- Stable yearly funding for high impact tutoring will be available for LEAs.
- Evaluate impact of tutoring and out-of-school time as separate budget line items to clarify structure and intended outcomes of both programs.
- Continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of stable high impact tutoring funding on program availability and student outcomes.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What are the characteristics of high-quality tutoring programs and how well do New Mexico programs align with these characteristics?	• National frameworks and research on most effective tutoring models
What program models did New Mexico grant recipients implement and how did outcomes vary?	• PED/SOAR evaluation • Grant selection criteria and applications
How many students did the FY25 grant-funded programs serve and how did the tutoring impact their outcomes?	• SOAR evaluation, PED data, grant awardee feedback
What is the cost of offering quality high impact tutoring programs?	• Interviews with grant recipients • National research/other state case studies

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature provides stable funding year-over-year for high impact tutoring and PED launches an effective outreach campaign and provides LEAs with grant funding and technical assistance and school districts and charter schools use grant funding to stand up high impact tutoring programs responsive to the academic needs of their students during the school day for at least three days per week or 50 hours over 36 weeks then students struggling with particular subjects will receive additional support to improve their skills, be more engaged in school, and see better academic outcomes.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Local education agencies
- National Council on Teacher Quality
- National Student Support Accelerator
- EdResearch for Recovery Project
- NMSU SOAR Evaluation & Policy Center



Topic: Implementation of House Bill 63

While the state equalization guarantee (SEG), the state's public school funding formula, has been continuously revised throughout its history, a lack of revision to its at-risk and basic program components have prevented the Legislature from addressing foundational challenges in its approach to funding public schools. House Bill 63, enacted during the 2025 legislative session, addressed those challenges by revising the methodology of the at-risk index, creating a cost differential for current and exited English learners, and increasing the cost differential for grades six through 12 to 1.30. To support the implementation of those changes, the Legislature also appropriated \$132.9 million to the SEG for FY26. The Legislature should assess the implementation and programmatic impact of these statutory changes to ensure its intent in enacting HB63 is being adequately realized.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May 2025:** Request calculations for the at-risk index and the English learner factor; Request the FY25 final funded run.
- **June 2025:** Request FY26 preliminary funded run to begin analysis of changes in funding.
- **July 2025:** Begin assessing FY26 budgeted expenditures for FY26 for changes in intentionality or programmatic structure.
- **November 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Monitor implementation of the bill's legislative requirements, with a focus on enhanced programming from the basic program revision, as well as intentional investments in programming for low-income students and exited English learners.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How is the implementation of the cost differential for current and exited English learners supporting the current and long-term needs of students?	• EdPlans
How is the implementation of the at-risk index supporting targeted and intentional investments in outcomes among low-income students?	• EdPlans
How is the basic program revision supporting secondary students as well as legislative priorities, such as career and technical education?	• FY26 budgeted expenditures
Is there a need to provide a hold-harmless provision for school districts and charter schools that lose program units because of HB63? How, and in what ways, are school districts and charter schools being impacted by the funding formula changes?	• FY26 preliminary funded run • Meetings with charter schools and school districts

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature appropriates sufficient funding to revise the at-risk and basic program components of the SEG, **and if PED** effectively implements consistent processes for calculating and allocating program units for the at-risk index and English learner factor, and each **school district and charter school** generates an adequate number of program units for programmatic needs unique to secondary students, low-income students, and English learners, **then** school districts and charter schools will have the capacity to effectively and intentionally serve the comprehensive and long-term needs of those student populations, so as to provide a constitutionally sufficient public education, as required in the findings of the consolidated *Martinez-Yazzie* education sufficiency lawsuit.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Association of School Business Officials
- Legislative Finance Committee
- Public Charter Schools of New Mexico
- Coalition of Educational Leaders
- School districts
- Charter schools



Topic: Professional Work Time

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures' *No Time To Lose* report, countries with world-class education systems place a high priority on professional work time, with lighter teaching loads and more time for professional development. In fact, in the highest performing countries, only about 30 to 35 percent of teachers' time is spent teaching students, with the remainder of time spent developing and improving lessons, observing and critiquing classes, and identifying ways to support struggling students. In 2023, the Legislature enacted calendar reforms that created a flexible framework for professional work time, including time spent in mentorship, coaching, and collaboration. Since the law was enacted, little work has been done to understand whether school districts and charter schools have taken advantage of this flexibility to allow teachers additional work time, both individually and with teacher teams. This first part of a two-year study aims to better understand the ways teachers spend time at school, as well as the structures and supports that may be necessary to allocate additional time for teachers to pursue mastery of their profession.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **August 2025:** Statewide educator calendar survey administered. Teacher retention data requested.
- **September 2025:** Themes and findings compiled from survey, promising calendar innovations identified, case studies.
- **October 2025:** Presentation to LESC including budget and policy considerations.

Long-Term Goals

- Establish a statewide understanding of the conditions necessary to support high quality professional work time.
- Develop a policy framework or toolkit to support school districts and charter schools in adopting engaging, innovative calendar models.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What are the primary ways teachers spend their time during a school day? About how much time is spent teaching students compared with other professional work?	• Statewide educator calendar survey
Which school districts and charter schools are implementing highly rated calendars? What are the common features of highly rated calendars?	• Statewide educator calendar survey
Do school districts with higher-rated calendars demonstrate higher levels of teacher retention and satisfaction?	• Statewide educator calendar survey • Teacher retention and turnover
What policy, resource, or other barriers exist that prevent the adoption of innovative calendars with additional professional work time?	• Statewide educator calendar survey • Research on high-performing countries • Case studies of New Mexico schools

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature creates a flexible framework for learning time and provides sufficient resources for schools to increase educator professional work time, **and PED** supports and honors educator work time in school calendars, **and school districts and schools** take advantage of flexibility to craft innovative, engaging school calendars with effective professional work opportunities, **then** educators will have additional time for research, professional learning communities, lesson planning, reviewing student data, and crafting standards-aligned interventions; teachers will experience greater satisfaction and mastery with their career; and students will see lower rates of absenteeism and experience greater academic gains.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- School districts and charter schools
- Educators
- New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network and other community organizations
- National education organizations



Topic: Literacy Policy and Practices

As New Mexico continues its efforts to ground literacy instruction in the science of reading, the state has launched the Structured Literacy New Mexico Initiative, requiring structured literacy training for all educator preparation programs and newly expanding training to secondary educators. However, implementation of structured literacy policies across states has shown the specific content and intensity of policy components significantly affect student outcomes. National research suggests states with comprehensive literacy policies—including strong teacher supports, diagnostics, and intensive student support components—see meaningful and sustained gains in reading proficiency. To ensure New Mexico's literacy reforms achieve intended outcomes, LESC staff will conduct a gap analysis of the state's implementation compared with other states and evaluate whether current policies and training efforts sufficiently support long-term improvements in student reading achievement.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April – May 2025:** Project scoping; Data requests submitted; Analysis of early literacy policies nationwide.
- **June 2025:** Findings consolidated; Presentation to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Understanding of New Mexico's literacy efforts will be improved by understanding how these efforts are situated within best practices in research and emerging findings from literacy efforts nationwide.
- Literacy efforts will be better coordinated statewide all the way from policy to PED supports to school district and charter school practices to everyday classroom practices, enabling students to receive robust literacy instruction and improve reading outcomes.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How does New Mexico's structured literacy policy compare with other states that have adopted comprehensive early literacy legislation in terms of required components, investment levels, and implementation timelines?	• Nationwide analysis of early literacy policy and budget frameworks • Partnership with PED and school districts/charter schools
How does the implementation of the Structured Literacy New Mexico Initiative vary across school districts and educator preparation programs, and which implementation factors are associated with stronger student reading outcomes?	• Analysis of policy components in New Mexico
Are literacy outcomes improving equitably across student groups and what policy adjustments are needed to close persistent achievement gaps?	• Student outcome data related to literacy • Information on implementation of initiative in New Mexico

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** better understands discrete components of other states' literacy laws and funding efforts, how New Mexico's efforts compare within a national context, and how these factors impact student outcomes **and** PED partners with LESC to provide data about student outcomes and literacy efforts **then** the Legislature will be equipped to ensure its structured literacy effort is robust and has all essential components and associated funding to improve school district and charter school literacy practices, educator efficacy in literacy instruction, and ultimately, student achievement in reading statewide.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- School districts and charter schools
- New Mexico education research organizations and partners
- National education research organizations
- Educators



Topic: Long-Term Financial Planning

Several long-term trends pose challenges for the Legislature, school districts, and charter schools, including volatility in revenue, declines in student enrollment, and the increasing costs of serving each student's unique needs. To address those challenges, the Legislature has adopted multi-year funding as a tool in promoting consistency in programming, while communities have increasingly pursued cost-containment measures to address declining enrollment, including revisions to staffing models and facility consolidation. However, these local responses have been focused on short-term planning, despite tools like the educational and facility master plans having been intended to promote long-term programmatic and fiscal planning. As public schools continue to face challenges in meeting the needs of students, it is necessary to assess the potential for building on these existing strategic planning tools in ways that promote greater intentionality in financial planning among school districts and charter schools.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May 2025:** Begin landscape review of existing regulatory and statutory requirements around strategic planning.
- **July 2025:** Receive FY26 preliminary funded run and begin fiscal analysis
- **August 2025:** Begin engagement with school districts, charter schools, and PED in strengthening strategic planning.
- **October 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Build reciprocally informative tools that inform the legislative process and assist school districts and charter schools in managing resources responsibly.
- Use long-term financial forecasting to guide school districts and charter schools in making informed decisions about new initiatives.
- Ensuring long-term local financial solvency.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
Are there regulatory or statutory requirements in place that promote strategic planning among school districts and charter schools and what barriers have they faced when attempting to leverage existing strategic planning tools?	• Landscape review of rule and statute
How can the Legislature promote greater intentionality in how school districts and charter schools leverage their local, state, and federal resources?	• Partner with stakeholders in understanding how strategic planning currently takes place
Could financial planning act as a reciprocally informative tool for informing the legislative budgeting process and targeting below-the-line funding to communities making intentional programmatic investments in areas of legislative priority?	• Review national models around financial forecasting
Is there capacity at PED, school districts, and charter schools to effectively implement long-term financial planning?	• Engage with PED to understand the agencies' current capacity

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature increasingly adopts multi-year budgeting for below-the-line programs and commits to sustainable and adequate recurring funding for public schools, and PED leverages its capacity to assist communities in long-term strategic planning, and school districts and charter schools engage in intentional strategic planning that incorporates long-term financial planning, then the Legislature can build a reciprocally informative framework for long-term financial planning that promotes both intentionality and sustainability in public school programming.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Legislative Finance Committee
- Association of School Business Officials
- Coalition of Education Leaders
- Public Charter Schools of New Mexico



Topic: Math Education and Teacher Supports

While New Mexico has targeted resources and supports to the improvement of student literacy, student math performance continues to lag, with only about one in four students demonstrating proficiency on statewide assessments. Persistent achievement gaps remain for students from low-income backgrounds, English learners, students with disabilities, and Native American students—groups identified in the *Martinez-Yazzie* ruling—as requiring urgent, targeted support. National efforts to identify a “science of math” have yet to result in a clear or comprehensive framework, leaving states with limited guidance for policy and practice. However, research-based instructional practices—such as those outlined by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the Public Education Department’s (PED) New Mexico Math Framework—provide a foundation for more effective and equitable math instruction. These practices include improved teacher preparation, ongoing professional learning, access to math specialists, and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. Building on work from the 2023 and 2024 interims, LESC staff will continue working with PED and math experts to identify best practices and legislative levers to support improved math.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May – June 2025:** Project scoping; Setting up conversations with math stakeholders statewide.
- **July 2025:** Initial math presentation to LESC with a focus on teacher preparation and supports.
- **August – September 2025:** Continued research and data analysis; Continued partnership with math stakeholders.
- **October 2025:** Policy framework and options presented to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- New Mexico will develop a comprehensive policy approach to support effective math teaching and learning.
- An understanding of levers most likely to impact student outcomes in math will be improved.
- Students in New Mexico will have access to high-quality math learning; teachers will have support to effectively teach; and school leaders will be equipped with strategies to align efforts in math.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What components should be included in a comprehensive state policy framework for mathematics in New Mexico to ensure coherent, statewide implementation of effective math instruction, and how can legislation support its development, adoption, and sustainability?	• Statutory and administrative review • Comparative state policy • Partnerships and qualitative data from math professionals and experts • Workforce data
To what extent are New Mexico teachers participating in ongoing professional learning aligned with national math standards, and how does this relate to student performance in mathematics?	• Professional development participation records • Teacher licensure renewal data • Student achievement data
What kinds of teacher training and professional development are most effective at improving student math performance, and how can the state expand access to these programs?	• Professional development participation records • Student outcome data • Mapping of math professional development

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** develops a clear, focused, and research-driven policy and budget approach to math instruction **and** **PED** aligns its framework for math instruction to provide quality professional learning and technical assistance in math **and** **School Districts and Charter Schools** develop aligned school and classroom practices that improve math teaching and learning **then** teacher efficacy in math will improve, students will have access to high-quality learning experiences in math and build greater foundational math skills and finally, New Mexico will see improved math outcomes.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- New Mexico Partnership for Math and Science Education (NMPMSE)
- School districts and charter schools
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- In-state and national education partners and organizations



Topic: Out-of-School Time Availability and Funding Needs in New Mexico

Out-of-school time (OST) programs provide students across New Mexico with access to tutoring, internships, physical activities, social emotional learning, STEM education, and more. However, [approximately 75 percent](#) of OST providers and programs are concentrated along the Rio Grande corridor, leaving regions of New Mexico with some of the highest rates of poverty and juvenile justice referrals without local OST availability. Additionally, consistent funding for OST programs has been a recurring issue in recent years. To better understand funding needs and access gaps across the state, the process through which the Public Education Department (PED) provides funding for these programs, and indicators of program quality, LESC staff will conduct an in-depth study of the out-of-school time landscape in New Mexico and provide recommendations to further support and expand on these programs.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **April through July 2025:** Initial collaboration with PED (data and general planning); Site visits to see OST programs currently operating around the state; Outreach meetings with OST providers.
- **August 2025:** Draft OST report, share draft with PED and stakeholders for input and feedback.
- **September 2025:** Present findings to LESC as part of a panel presentation with PED and OST stakeholders.

Long-Term Goals

- Exploring and establishing conditions for statewide access to OST programs.
- Ensuring stable funding for OST that allows for diverse programming including both academic support and enrichment at an intensity and scale determined by lawmakers.
- Schools report they have sufficient funding to meet student and family demand for OST.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What does availability of OST programs look like statewide?	• New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network (NMOST) mapping of OST programs
What are the characteristics of a high-quality OST programs and how well do existing NM programs align with these characteristics?	• RAND OST framework and national research • PED/SOAR OST evaluation
What types of OST programs are operating in New Mexico and does the state's funding mechanism influence the availability of different program options?	• PED grant program data • Evaluation criteria for grants
To what extent is Legislative funding for OST meeting demand for these programs?	• Data on OST program costs • Participation data from PED and Afterschool Alliance

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** provides consistent funding for out-of-school time and **PED** provides timely grant funding and technical assistance for out-of-school time providers and **school districts, charter schools, and community-based organizations** develop, implement, and maintain diverse out-of-school time program options in every region of the state **then** students will be able to supplement their classroom education with additional academic interventions, career exploration opportunities, personal development experiences, and physical activities **and** will be more engaged in their schools and their communities, thereby resulting in improved academic and personal outcomes.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Southwest Outreach Academic Research (SOAR) Evaluation & Policy Center
- New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network (NMOST)
- Afterschool Alliance
- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- Community-based OST providers



Topic: School Climate and Culture

According to New Mexico data from the Panorama school climate survey, students' perceptions of school climate are lower than their peers nationwide, with only 57 percent and 38 percent of New Mexico students grades three through five and six through 12, respectively, having favorable views of their school climate. LESC staff seek to understand the factors influencing school climate and culture. Through a review of national research, analysis of school level Panorama data, and site visits, LESC staff will investigate the relationship between positive school climate and student outcomes, the factors influencing school climate, and how the Legislature can support best practices in this area.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May - June 2025:** Panorama Survey received and analyzed; Presentation to LESC giving high level review of key findings in June 2025.
- **July – October 2025:** Site visits and interviews with LEAs; Review of national research on school climate and culture.
- **November 2025:** Presentation to LESC on policy and budget recommendations for FY27 to support effective school climate and culture practices.

Long-Term Goals

- People at each level of New Mexico's public education system have a common understanding of what "school climate and culture" means and how it influences students' educational outcomes and overall wellbeing.
- Students and staff are more likely to report satisfaction with their school climate and culture. Absenteeism is on a downward trend. Students report greater access to behavioral health resources.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What are research- and evidence-based indicators of positive school climate and culture?	• Panorama Survey • Case Studies/Site Visits • NM discipline data • NM attendance data
What support, training, and resources do school staff need to create a positive school climate and culture?	• Student/staff interviews • National research
How do school staff contribute to positive school climate and culture?	• Site Visits and Interviews with LEAs
What relationship (if any) can be observed between a school's Panorama climate survey results and various measures of student success like attendance and academic outcomes?	• Achievement data • Attendance data • Panorama survey
What do the Panorama survey and case studies inspired by it tell us about the access to behavioral health supports across the state?	• Panorama survey • Site visits and interviews with LEAs, students, parents

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature sets evidence-based expectations for school climate and culture initiatives and provides funding to support implementation of these efforts and PED develops clear, actionable guidance for schools to adopt best practices and provides LEAs with technical assistance to successfully implement these programs and practices and school districts and charter schools commit to effectively implement these efforts and develop student, staff, and family buy-in then students in New Mexico will be able to attend schools with welcoming, inclusive climates that keep them engaged in their education, promote student well-being, and support improved academic outcomes.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- Panorama
- New Mexico Parent Teacher Association
- Students
- Teachers



Topic: Special Education

New Mexico serves a higher-than-average percentage of students with disabilities, yet disparities in identification practices, service provision, and student outcomes persist across school districts and charter schools. Despite increases in funding for special education, outcomes remain low—fewer than 10 percent of students with disabilities are proficient in core academic subjects, and nearly one-third do not graduate on time. LESC has researched the provision of special education services in New Mexico to ensure students with disabilities receive an inclusive, integrated, and equitable education. Staff will focus its work this interim on the identification and provision of services for students with disabilities across the state, examining how these practices vary by school district and charter school and identifying what is needed to ensure all students with disabilities receive an adequate, sufficient education.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May – July 2025:** Scoping of work; Data requests submitted; Identification of data sources and needs; Stakeholder partnership.
- **August – October 2025:** Data exploration and analysis tailored to research questions; Site visits and partnership conversations.
- **November 2025:** Complete work products and present to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- More nuanced, complete, and thorough analysis of special education identification and services will further understanding of how these practices differ across the state, allowing for more robust recommendations to improve special education services statewide.
- Students with disabilities will be provided an adequate, sufficient education, enabling them to be ready for long-term success in life.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
How do identification rates for students with disabilities vary across school districts and charter schools in New Mexico, and what practices or criteria contribute to these differences?	• Special education identification rates by type and disaggregated by student and group characteristics
How does the type and intensity of services provided to students with disabilities differ across districts and charter schools, and how do these variations relate to student outcomes?	• Special education services data • Quantitative and qualitative data from schools and districts
How does the allocation and expenditure of special education funding differ across local education agencies, and what is the relationship between funding levels and student outcomes (e.g., proficiency, graduation, discipline)?	• Special education budget data (OBMS) • Student demographic and outcome data
What are the common characteristics of districts or schools that are successfully identifying and serving students with disabilities, and what lessons can be applied to support struggling systems?	• Site visits with school districts and charter schools

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the Legislature better understands differences in special education practices statewide and enacts any needed policy or budget changes **and PED** provides systemic frameworks and required technical assistance **and school districts and charter schools** effectively implement special education identification, programs, and services **then** the provision of special education services will improve, allowing special education teachers to focus on teaching, **and as a result**, special education student outcomes will improve and students with disabilities will be afforded a constitutionally sufficient public education as required by the New Mexico Constitution and the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Developmental Disabilities Council/Office of the Special Education Ombud
- Previous LESC special education working group participants
- Students with disabilities and parents/guardians
- Special education school and district leadership and educators



Topic: Transportation

The State of New Mexico provides funding to support the transportation of eligible kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) public school students to and from school. This funding is distributed through a formula that incorporates factors such as student ridership, miles traveled, and the number of buses in operation. For FY26, the Legislature appropriated \$141 million for the transportation distribution as part of the 2025 General Appropriation Act. Many local education agencies (LEAs) have expressed concerns that the distribution formula may not fully align with their actual transportation costs. In response, LESC staff will continue to examine both the structure of the formula, and how LEAs utilize funds and create transportation budgets to better understand and assess potential disparities.

LESC Roadmap Focus Areas	
Educator Ecosystem	Whole-Child Supports
Academic Design	Overarching Systems

Short-Term Goals

- **May 2025:** Review the transportation formula structure and key factors incorporating prior LESC work.
- **May–June 2025:** Gather input from PED, districts, and charters on formula inputs and budgeting/reporting practices.
- **June–July 2025:** Identify state-covered vs. locally absorbed transportation costs through targeted LEA interviews and budget review.
- **August–September 2025:** Collect and assess bus driver workforce data to understand cost and staffing impacts.
- **October 2025:** Present brief to LESC.

Long-Term Goals

- Monitor the structure and performance of the transportation distribution formula, ensuring it remains equitable and responsive to the need of LEAs.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with LEAs and stakeholders to assess formula needs and support potential improvements.
- Track workforce and infrastructure needs to inform policy recommendations.
- Promote transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability in transportation funding.

Research Questions	Data/Resources Needed
What portion of LEAs' transportation expenses is covered by the state distribution, and how does this compare with their actual costs?	• Transportation allocations • Budget data • Formula input data • Routing data
What transportation costs are borne locally by LEAs, and how do these costs affect other areas of their budgets or operations?	• Budget and expense data • Feedback from LEAs
Does the current distribution formula accurately reflect the primary cost drivers of school transportation?	• Feedback from PED • Formula input data • Staffing data • Transportation cost data

Theory of Change for Initiative

If the **Legislature** better understands transportation costs and cost drivers, allocates sufficient transportation funding, and clarifies principles of funding transportation sustainably and fairly, and if **PED** manages the transportation distribution in alignment with these principles, and if **school districts and charter schools** are provided with a sufficient and sustainable level of funding to meet transportation needs, and LEAs are able to provide transportation for all eligible students without compromising other core services and responsibilities, **then** they will be better positioned to provide consistent, equitable access to school and ensure all students can benefit from a constitutionally sufficient public education.

Partners

- Public Education Department (PED)
- Local education agencies (LEAs)
- Regional education cooperatives (RECs)