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MARIANA D. PADILLA
SECRETARY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

June 12, 2026

RE: 2026 National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) Teacher Prep Review

Dear Deans, Directors, and Faculty of New Mexico's Colleges of Education,

I am writing to congratulate and thank you for the important progress New Mexico's educator preparation programs have made in strengthening literacy instruction and preparing future teachers to teach reading using evidence-based practices grounded in the science of reading.

The recently released *2026 National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) Teacher Prep Review* demonstrates significant improvement in teacher preparation programs across the country. Most notably, the percentage of programs earning an A grade for Reading Foundations more than doubled, from 26 percent in 2023 to 53 percent in 2026. This achievement reflects the dedication and commitment of colleges and universities that have worked to align teacher preparation with decades of scientific research on how children learn to read.

As New Mexico continues its efforts to improve literacy outcomes for students, your work has never been more important. Nine New Mexico elementary teacher preparation programs were evaluated by NCTQ, and 80%, or eight out of nine, earned an A or A+ covering five core components of scientifically based reading instruction.

This year, we celebrated a major milestone in our state's educational progress. Reading proficiency among New Mexico students in grades 3–8 reached 44 percent in 2025, representing a 10-percentage-point increase in just three years. Particularly encouraging were the gains among students who have historically faced the greatest barriers to success, including Native American students, whose proficiency increased by 13 percentage points; Hispanic students, whose proficiency increased by 10 percentage points; and English learners, whose proficiency increased by 8 percentage points.

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These gains are a result of sustained investments in early literacy, structured literacy instruction, teacher professional learning, and a statewide commitment to implementing the science of reading. The educators entering New Mexico classrooms today are helping make this progress possible, and colleges of education have played a critical role in preparing them for that responsibility.

Over the past several years, the Public Education Department has been proud to partner with educator preparation programs across New Mexico to strengthen teacher preparation. Together, we developed comprehensive literacy preparation standards aligned to the science of reading and established greater consistency in the literacy coursework required of all elementary teacher candidates. We also recognize the importance of ensuring that future educators are taught practices that are supported by research. The progress reflected in both New Mexico's student outcomes and the NCTQ findings demonstrates what is possible when educators, preparation programs, school districts, and state leaders work together around a common vision. We have seen firsthand that evidence-based literacy instruction changes lives. The improvements in student achievement across our state are proof that these efforts are making a difference for children and families.

Thank you for your partnership, leadership, and commitment to continuous improvement. We recognize the hard work that meaningful change requires, and we celebrate the progress your institutions have made in preparing the next generation of educators.

Together, we are building a stronger future for New Mexico students, one where every child has access to effective literacy instruction and every teacher enters the classroom equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to help students succeed.

This work is not yet done; however, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your accomplishments and thank you for your continued dedication to educational excellence. I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Signed by:



Mariana D. Padilla

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Mariana D. Padilla

Secretary of Public Education

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