

TEACHER AND SCHOOL LEADER PREPARATION PROGRAMS: NMPREP AND NMLEAD

AGENCIES: Teacher and School Leader Preparation

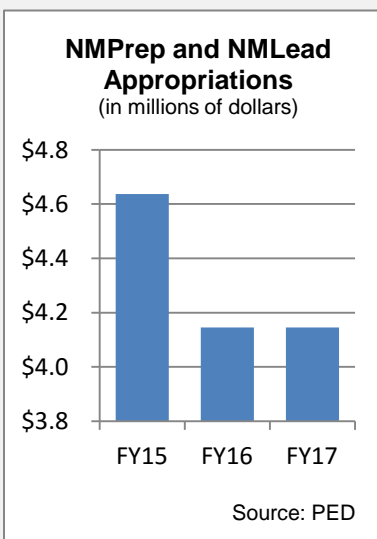
DATE: August 18, 2016

PURPOSE OF HEARING:
Teacher and school leader preparation programs: NMPrep and NMLead

WITNESSES: Matthew Pahl, Director of Policy, PED; Andrea Fletcher, Chief Academic Officer, LCPS; Claudia Gutierrez, Director of Student Achievement, APS; Dr. James Alarid, Professor of Special Education, NMHU; Dr. Penny A. Garcia, Dean of College of Education, ENMU; and Dr. Janet Buzzard, Dean of College of Business, ENMU

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EXPECTED OUTCOME:
Improved understanding of the particular partnerships funded with NMPrep and NMLead appropriations, which is one of the strategies to improve teacher and school leader pipelines in the state



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers and administrators remains an ongoing challenge for most states and local education agencies throughout the nation. Alternative pathway programs for teachers and administrators offer solutions to increasing and retaining the number of high-quality teachers and school leaders in the state. States offer alternative routes that focus on providing an efficient path to a career change. Alternative pathway programs for teachers and school leaders allow individuals who have already obtained a bachelor's degree to bypass the time and expense involved in attaining a teaching degree or completing a graduate program. Completion of alternative pathway programs typically results in a standard teaching certificate or an alternative certificate. Depending on the state, providers of alternative certification can be colleges of education, nonprofit organizations, or school districts.

These programs often focus more on “on the job” training rather than theory. Participants frequently begin working in the classroom while completing their coursework—sometimes from the very beginning of the program—rather than in the last year of a traditional program. Some programs allow candidates to earn a teacher's salary or stipend while completing the program, making them more appealing to a mid-career professional than a traditional pathway. However, while alternative pathway programs can offer quicker paths to teaching, in some cases the required coursework and program length are the same as traditional paths. Many of these programs are less selective than traditional programs and attract a broader pool of applicants, especially mid-career professionals looking to change their career tracks. By attracting a wide range of applicants, alternative pathway programs may not only increase the supply of teachers but contribute to the diversity of the teacher pool. Many alternative pathway programs specifically target hard-to-staff schools by placing new teachers in these schools during their program.

The Public Education Department (PED) has developed two key initiatives, NMPrep and NMLead, to address the critical need for effective teachers and school leaders in New Mexico. Utilizing related, recurring “below-the-line” funding for Next Generation School Teacher and School Leader Preparation Programs, PED created a unique opportunity for local teachers and school administrators to begin a course of study or to gain teacher or administrator licensure through one of the state's institutions of higher education (IHEs).

This brief identifies current state examples of alternative pathway programs and highlights New Mexico's NMPrep and NMLead funded programs, which seek to establish alternative teacher and school leader preparation programs at the state's IHEs to incorporate best practices and training for participants in the programs.

Every state offers some alternative certification for prospective teachers, but the eligibility and program requirements vary quite significantly from state to state.

Many states offer an alternative pathway program because this helps to expand the pool of high-quality teachers, provides an opportunity to hire and retain nontraditional candidates who wish to transition to careers as classroom teachers, and assists school districts by addressing staffing needs in teacher shortage areas.

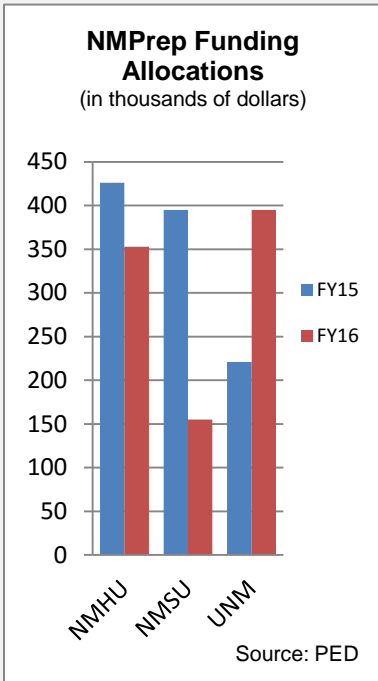
State Examples of Alternative Pathway Programs. Alternative pathway programs are often used by states in an effort to expand the pool of teachers and to attract high-quality candidates who are otherwise unlikely to enter the teaching profession. By creating an alternative route, a state can offer opportunities to transition into teaching that require little to no coursework, waive pre-requisite requirements, or eliminate periods of unemployment. Many states offer financial relief to participants by allowing them to teach and earn a salary while completing coursework requirements for a general certification. States and school districts are permitting more candidates to enter through these routes to fill vacancies.

Oklahoma Alternative Placement Program for Teacher Certification. In Oklahoma, the initial alternative teaching certificate does not require coursework beyond the applicant's bachelor's degree; however, applicants are required to have at least two years of work experience related to the anticipated teaching subject area. Additionally, applicants must also pass the Oklahoma General Education Test and the appropriate Oklahoma subject area test and within three years of receiving initial certification, applicants must complete an additional 12 to 18 college semester hours or professional development hours to qualify for standard certification.

Utah Alternative Route to Licensure. In Utah, applicants who will teach at the elementary level through an alternative route are required to have a bachelor's degree and complete 27 to 38 credit hours in elementary curriculum content areas. On the other hand, applicants who will teach at the secondary level through an alternative route are not required to complete additional credit hours if the applicant has a bachelor's degree in a relevant major.

Colorado Alternative Teacher License. In Colorado, applicants are required to meet professional competence in a state-approved endorsement area for an alternative license, such as passing the state-approved elementary content exam for elementary candidates. Additionally, the candidate's employment must match the endorsement area, and the candidate is required to select or be selected by a state-approved designated agency for alternative preparation.

New Mexico's Next Generation School Leader (NMLLead) and Teacher Preparation (NMPrep) Programs. According to PED, NMPrep and NMLLead initiatives were launched in FY15 to promote alternative teacher and school leader preparation programs at the state's IHEs, in conjunction with PED-approved partners, with the aim of bringing more qualified and effective individuals into those pipelines. Specifically, PED awarded competitive funding to collaborative partnerships between IHEs, school districts, charter schools, and their partners to establish new and innovative alternative teacher preparation programs. Additionally, PED wanted to provide opportunities for augmenting and improving existing preparation programs with the lessons learned in these new alternative programs.



Because the number of people entering teaching through traditional undergraduate routes is dropping, states are eager to find creative ways to encourage professionals to make a career shift.

NMPrep. According to research from Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain in 2000, effective teachers are the most important factor contributing to student achievement. Although class size, curricula, family and community involvement, and principals all contribute to school improvement and student achievement, the most influential factor is the teacher. Selected partnerships were provided NMPrep funding to initiate teacher preparation programs targeting areas of specific need in identified school districts. According to PED, \$1,041,873 was allocated in FY15 to three NMPrep programs. In FY16, \$903,476 was allocated to the same three programs. The funded programs have higher admission standards than current teacher preparatory programs, train teachers in significantly less time than traditional programs, offer a practice-based training and curriculum, attract new candidates to the profession, and support new teachers in their initial years of teaching through coaching.

New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) Prep. NMHU is collaborating with Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the Northwest Regional Educational Cooperative #2 to provide alternative licensure for special education teachers. As of August 11, 2016, APS staff reported 92 special education teacher vacancies. Participants in the program receive rigorous training as well as ongoing on-site training. Additionally, APS special education teachers provide co-teaching, mentoring, and supervision, including support for at least the first two years of teaching. NMHU was awarded \$394,884 in FY15 and \$155 thousand in FY16. According to the intergovernmental agreement with PED, NMHU expended \$67,336 on faculty and staff salaries and fringe benefits in FY15 and \$119,035 was estimated to be expended on these same expenditures in FY16. NMHU expended \$119,577 on other direct costs, including parking permits, computer software, student recruitment, in-state travel, participant payments, approved partner consultants, meetings, conferences, and student stipends, fees, and tuition, in FY15 and \$210,250 was estimated to be expended on these same expenditures in FY16.

According to APS staff, cohort one began in fall 2014 with seven teachers and these participants only received benefits from the funding in the last semester of their program. Cohort two began in spring 2015 with 12 teachers, cohort three began in fall 2015 with 15 teachers, cohort four began in spring 2016 with eight teachers, and cohort five will begin in the fall with 14 teachers. In total, there are 56 teachers who will receive special education certification in one school year through NMHU’s alternative licensure program. After teachers receive their special education certification, they are strongly encouraged to remain with APS for a minimum of three years, post certification. Additionally, the teachers are only two semesters (four to five classes) away from completing their master’s degree in special education after completing NMHU Prep.

According to research from Dr. Jenny DeMonte, *A Million New Teachers Are Coming: Will They Be Ready to Teach*, approximately 20 percent of new teachers enter the profession through alternative pathway programs.

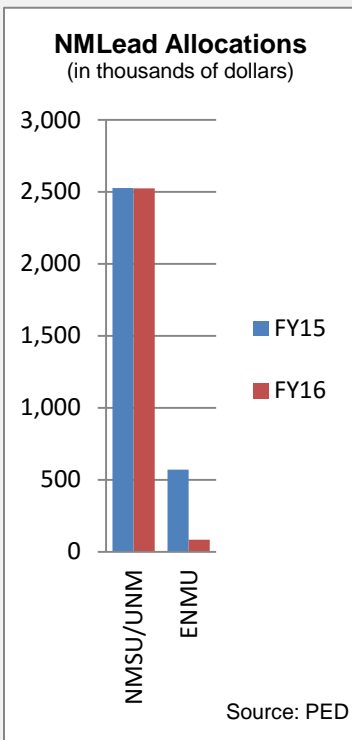
A study conducted by Fuller and Young in 2008 found that elementary schools have the longest principal tenure and highest retention rates, less than 30 percent of newly hired high school principals stay at the same school at least five years, and the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in a school is a major determinant in how long a newly hired principal will stay showing that principals in high-poverty schools having shorter tenure and lower retention rates.

Aggie Prep. New Mexico State University (NMSU) is in partnership with Western New Mexico University, Northwest Regional Education Cooperative #2, and the Three Rivers Education Foundation and is tasked with providing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teachers in partnership with several high-need school districts across the state, including APS, Lovington, Bloomfield, Las Cruces, Hobbs, Ruidoso, Socorro, Rio Rancho, and Farmington. Participants in the program are provided training, expanded content knowledge, and improved clinical experiences during an intensive 12-month program. Teachers will then receive an additional two years of professional development and training. In FY15, PED provided funding of \$425,694 to establish Aggie Prep's initial cohort. In FY16, PED provided funding of \$353,334 for the second cohort.

According to NMSU staff, the first cohort included seven participants, five of whom have completed the program and have been offered new contracts. The second cohort also included seven participants, five of whom have completed the program and are currently teaching in the school districts where they were initially hired. The strengths of the program include courses that are taught by NMSU staff, university STEM faculty and supervisors are intensively involved in the program, on-site mentors maintain contact with participants up to three years into their teaching careers, and there is greater flexibility when completing the program. To strengthen the program for the third cohort, NMSU staff would like to focus on improving the mentorship component by having university faculty serve as supervisors who will be in constant contact with the participants and their on-site mentors. Additionally in the future, NMSU staff would like to have more contact with on-site mentors to ensure that the participants' needs are being met throughout the first year of teaching. NMSU's spending plan for the current year includes the following: \$133,538 for faculty and staff salaries; \$61,500 for materials, \$12,625 for travel, and \$95,450 for services and tuition.

University of New Mexico (UNM) Accelerated Alternative Licensure Program. UNM's College of Education (COE) is in partnership with APS, UNM's Veterans Resource Center, National Network for Educational Renewal, and Teach for America-New Mexico. The program recruits STEM professionals and veterans (usually as a second career) into middle and high school to become licensed STEM teachers. It provides student scholarships, intensive field experiences, master teacher supervision and mentoring, content and curriculum preparation, national and regional networking opportunities, and job placement in APS upon completion of the program. Courses are taught by COE faculty and APS master teachers. Additionally, APS provides supplementary online trainings, best practice symposia, and field liaisons. According to UNM staff, PED provided funding of \$662,916 in FY15 to establish the initial cohort. In FY16, PED awarded UNM \$616,438 for the second cohort. As of June 2016, 12 students have completed the program.

Additionally, PED allocated \$400 thousand in FY16 to Northern New Mexico College's (NNMC) American Indian Education Training Program with Indian Education Act funding. As of July 2016, the program has expended \$211,100, and has a remaining balance of \$188,900. The American Indian Education Training Program is a collaborative project between NNMC's Northern Pueblos Institute and College of Education. It is a culturally responsive program aimed to establish tribal members of New Mexico's 23 tribes and urban American Indian populations as effective and qualified teachers, counselors, and administrators in public schools.



According to PED, these funded programs have higher admission standards than current school leader preparation programs, focus training on leadership competencies aligned with those outlined in Public Impact's School Turnaround Leaders, offer a practice-based curriculum, provide financial aid to students to participate in a full-time practicum, and support new principals in their initial years of leading a school through coaching and mentoring.

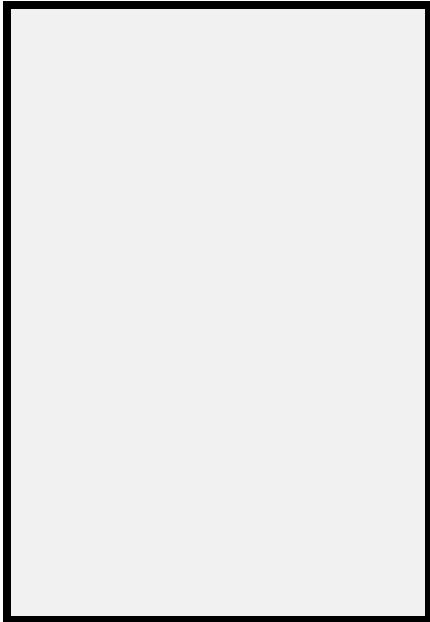
NMLead. According to research from Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe from 2008, the leadership of a school principal is a determining factor in school effectiveness, second only to the role of a student's classroom teacher. A principal's capacity to facilitate conditions for student learning, manage the school, and build community partnerships is vital to reaching essential school and student outcomes.

NMLead programs offer new and innovative principal preparation programs that range from hybrid master of business administration (MBA) programs that mix business leadership and management acumen with educational leadership and pedagogy, to unique programming and frameworks similar to existing leadership programs.

The Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership. The COEs and business schools of UNM and NMSU are in partnership with the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation to provide rigorous, competency- and project-centered training. Fellows receive stipends covering the cost of tuition and related expenses, and an intensive year-long internship followed by three subsequent years of executive coaching. According to PED, this program received \$2,528,333 in FY15 to establish and implement the initial cohort. In FY16, the program was awarded \$2,524,719. According to NMSU staff, 11 participants were in the first cohort at NMSU, and 12 participants were in the second cohort at NMSU. For FY17, PED has projected 18 participants in the program at NMSU and 23 participants at UNM.

Eastern New Mexico State University's (ENMU) Tomorrow's Leaders Today. The Tomorrow's Leaders Today (TLT) program is a collaborative venture between ENMU's COE and College of Business and the National Institute of School Leadership (NISL). TLT's main objective has been to create a pipeline of leaders for small rural school districts by encouraging highly qualified teachers to prepare for administrative positions across all levels. According to ENMU staff, TLT received \$571,524 in FY15 from PED, which covered the expenses associated with the first cohort and the majority of the second cohort's expenses. In FY16, TLT received \$84 thousand. In FY17, TLT received \$192,233, which will be used to purchase the NISL curriculum for the third cohort. Additionally, ENMU has committed to providing matching funds that will pay for the students' tuition for the 12 credit hours of the NISL program.

According to ENMU staff, the first cohort began in July 2015 and consisted of 15 local educators as well as five professionals who are preparing to become NISL facilitators in future years. As of August 2016, the first cohort completed the NISL executive development curriculum, and many of the participants have moved to increased leadership responsibilities in their local school districts or have been recruited to leadership positions in other eastern school districts. The second cohort began in July 2016 with 25 local educators, including



22 teachers, one faculty member, and two principals. In both cohorts, there are students who will complete their master's degree in science with an emphasis in educational administration and students who already have a master's degree who are seeking licensure only in educational administration.

Conclusion. New Mexico is investing a substantial amount of money in new and innovative alternative teacher and school leader preparation programs that are addressing particular needs of New Mexico's school districts. However, programs appear to be extremely expensive. For example, the Aggie Prep program cost almost \$78 thousand per student for 10 students to complete the program (four students who started the program did not complete the program). Most programs appear to have an extremely high cost per student completing the programs. Additional data is still needed to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs, including where graduates are placed into teaching and administrative positions upon completion and how effective they are.