Legislative Task Force Report
Screen Use in Elementary Classrooms

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As schools have increasingly assigned technological devices to students since the Covid-19 pandemic, families and educators have raised concerns about the amount of time elementary students spend on digital devices for tasks that could be achieved through additional developmentally appropriate and hands-on methods. Some research suggests screen time can have a harmful impact on language development in young children, and beginning screen time at a later age has some potential benefits. In addition, research has revealed an association between higher total screen time and lower reading and math achievement on standardized tests.

Despite this, schools in New Mexico administer computer-based assessments to elementary students several times per year, and the Public Education Department (PED) mandates students to participate in computerized tutoring sessions associated with those assessments, as well as computerized intervention sessions for students who do not score proficient.

House Memorial 2 (HM2), signed during the 2026 legislative session, requested LESC to conduct a comprehensive study on the use of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms, including the impacts of programs on student learning, development, and well-being. HM2 also requested PED to collaborate with families, educators, and administrators to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily use in elementary classrooms. It is important to note LESC staff work on screen time—the use of screens in classrooms—is distinct from LESC staff work on artificial intelligence (AI) in classrooms, though the work intersects.

In response to HM2, LESC staff convened a Screen Use Legislative Task Force to study the impacts of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms and draft policy options for consideration for the Legislature. The task force was composed of families, educators, administrators, high school and postsecondary students, New Mexico Parent Teacher Association (NMPTA) members, LESC members, and PED staff. Task force meetings were held in June, focus groups were held in July and August, and task force members continued to provide feedback on recommendations and the contents of this report through early September. Please see **Attachment A: HM2 Task Force Research Plan** for an overview of the task force's research plan.

The research plan established key questions for the task force's review, including the impact of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms on student learning, development, and well-being. This report provides an overview of LESC staff and HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force work to answer these questions; findings and data reviewed by the task force, including relevant research and policy work in other states; and recommendations for the Legislature, PED, and local education agencies (LEAs) to consider to ensure screen use in classrooms is developmentally appropriate and supportive of student learning.

Key Takeaways

- The HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force was formed in response to concerns about screen use in elementary classrooms *(Page 1)*.
- New Mexico law is silent on screen use, but PED requires some computer-based assessment and instruction in elementary schools *(Pages 1-3)*.
- Research shows active use of technology can empower student learning; passive use of technology can harm student learning *(Pages 4-5)*.
- In 2026, five states passed legislation addressing school-directed instructional screen use, including New Mexico's HM2 *(Page 6-7)*.
- The HM2 task force recommends the Legislature define screen time and require age-appropriate standards, among other options *(Pages 7-12)*.

Screen Time for Instruction and Assessment

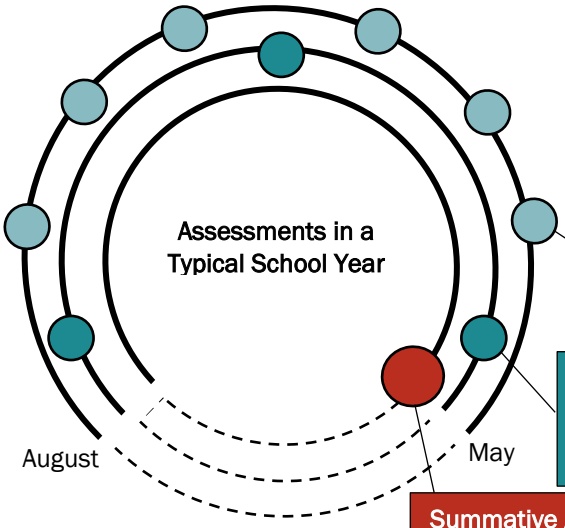
New Mexico law does not currently define screen use for the purpose of instruction in kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) classrooms. State law does require all school districts and charter schools to implement a wireless communication device policy (see Section 22-1-17 NMSA 1978). Other than this mandate for school districts and charter schools to develop their own policies regarding the use of wireless communication devices, there are no laws guiding the use of screens for instructional purposes in elementary classrooms.

New Mexico law also does not mention screen-based assessment. While the law does require academic assessments and screening evaluations for certain grade levels—such as dyslexia screening for first grade students—the law does not specify assessments or how these assessments are administered. Public School Code (Section 22-2C-4 NMSA 1978) enumerates summative assessment requirements to meet federal and state law. Under federal law, students must be assessed in English and math once a year in third grade through eighth grade and once in high school; New Mexico state law mirrors these federal requirements but specifies high school students are tested in 11th grade. Please see **Attachment B: List of New Mexico Assessments** for a list of assessments administered in New Mexico classrooms as a result of state and federal policy.

Mirroring state law, New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) is also silent regarding the use of screens in elementary classrooms for instruction or assessment. However, PED does provide some guidance on the use of screen time, such as screen time at home guidance for prekindergarten caregivers released in 2019.

The graphic below illustrates how summative assessments as used alongside formative and interim assessments in the classroom. Summative assessments are required by state and federal law and are used to measure whether students have achieved subject-matter proficiency. Formative and interim assessments help teachers track student growth and content acquisition.

Assessment Literacy: Understanding Different Types of Assessment



Assessments used for different purposes are referred to by different titles. For example, summative assessments, such as NM-MSSA, are offered once per year at the end of the year. By contrast, formative and interim assessments are more frequent, and often less formal. In recent years, PED has worked to ensure educators and stakeholders understand the different types of assessment and when they are administered.

Formative Assessments (Istation, classroom assessments)

Administered frequently and informally by teachers to track content acquisition in the classroom.

Interim Assessments (iMSSA, locally determined assessments)

Administered to track growth from the beginning to the middle and the end of the school year, also called BOY, MOY, and EOY.

Summative Assessments (NM-MSSA, NM-ASR, PSAT, SAT)

Required by state and federal law at the end of the school year; used to determine whether students have achieved subject-matter "proficiency." MOY, and EOY.

Source: LESC Adaptation of PED Graphic

Computer-Based Instruction and Assessment in Elementary Schools

Currently, PED requires computer-based testing in elementary schools for reading, math, and science. New Mexico uses Amira's (formerly Istation) Indicators of Progress (ISIP) early reading assessment in kindergarten through second grade (K-2) to track foundational reading development and inform intervention decisions. Please see the red box below for more context on Amira.

Amira Learning

In June 2024, Istation—a K-12 assessment vendor—merged with Amira Learning—a provider of AI-driven personalized reading support created at Carnegie Melon University.

New Mexico has used Istation to assess K-2 students in reading and math since SY17. Beginning SY26, K-2 students in New Mexico began using the Amira ISIP assessment with real-time student voice recognition and AI analysis, which were not components of the former Istation web-based platform. While PED requires Amira for K-2 students, many districts require it for students in other grades, as well; according to Amira's presentation to LESC in July 2026, over 55 thousand kindergarten through eighth grade students are using Amira in New Mexico, including the Amira ISIP assessment, the Amira tutor component, and Amira instruct to partner with teachers on lesson planning. Amira is also required for assessment in Idaho and has been authorized for use in six other states.

Amira establishes a new statewide baseline for K-2 literacy assessment. However, because of the Istation and Amira merger, and procurement processes within PED, Amira was rolled out in SY26 with a memorandum to LEAs explaining the transition.

PED explained in its SY26 memo that Amira's real-time voice recognition and AI analysis powering ISIP's digital framework "enable[s] more precise measurement of oral reading fluency, automatic error detection, and immediate feedback." The memo also emphasizes that Amira is intended to complement, not replace, teacher observation, classroom assessment, and professional judgment. PED also explained that along with beginning-of-year (BOY), middle-of-year (MOY), and end-of-year (EOY) testing requirements—which had also been in place for K-2 students previously—monthly progress monitoring would now be required for students not testing as proficient on the Amira assessment. PED's SY27 early literacy assessment memo notes PED now requires a minimum of 30 minutes of Amira tutoring a week for K-2 students, in addition to BOY, MOY, and EOY testing; monthly progress monitoring for students identified as needing literacy support; and using assessment results to inform instruction, intervention, or acceleration within a multi-layered system of supports (MLSS).

On August 4, PED sent a memo to LEAs to ensure consistent administration of the Amira assessment, progress monitoring, and tutoring after at least two school districts, Los Alamos Public Schools and Santa Fe Public Schools, indicated they would not be using the Amira assessment following stakeholder concerns regarding student data privacy and assessment accuracy. The memo notes PED developed an Amira Nonstandard Data Retention and Administration Options Request form that LEAs may use to request different data retention practices, Amira paper-based administration, or alternative assessment programs that differ from the standard statewide Amira administration model. PED also notes in the memo that parental opt-outs from state-required assessments or other educational programs or services are not provided for by law or department policy. PED encouraged LEAs to share Amira guidance from PED—as well as a letter to families from Amira—with families "to communicate the purpose of these assessments and services, the benefits they provide, and the importance of broad student participation in supporting both individual student learning and continuous improvement across New Mexico's public education system."

According to PED, as of September 8, 2026, 18 LEAs opted out of one or more components of the standard Amira assessment administration process. LEAs must administer a locally selected and purchased assessment, a method of tutoring all K-2 students 30 minutes a week, and monthly interventions for students testing below proficiency if they opt out of Amira's assessment, tutoring, and intervention AI services.

Amira ISIP for early literacy uses real-time student voice recognition and AI analysis to power ISIP's digital testing. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year (SY27), PED also requires K-2 students to use the Amira AI agent for instructional purposes: all students are required to use Amira for tutoring for a minimum of 30 minutes a week, and students who have not yet achieved proficiency are required to use Amira for monthly progress monitoring as well. PED also requires K-2 students to use Amira for formative math assessment; however, student voice

recognition is not utilized in Amira math ISIP. Amira ISIP is also an approved PED dyslexia screener; LEAs have four dyslexia screeners to choose from, and Amira ISIP and Amira Evaluar (the Spanish screener) are the only electronic options.

New Mexico also uses the New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) summative assessment to test reading and math proficiency for grades three through eight, a computer-based, fixed-form assessment. In science, students are tested in fifth and eighth grades with the New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness (NM-ASR), which is also a computer-based assessment. In addition, some school districts and charter schools supplement with additional interim testing, some of which is also web based, such as the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS) assessment for K-12 students.

New Mexico does not collect data on screen time in classrooms. PED does not collect data on screen use in public school classrooms. A survey of task force members regarding how much time they believed elementary students in their local public school were spending on screens revealed disparate answers. The most popular survey results were "three hours" and "four hours" and answers that indicated respondents were unsure, such as "I don't know" and "I think it depends on the teacher." Several task force members expressed concern regarding the amount of time elementary students were spending on screens, sharing anecdotes such as kindergarten students complaining of headaches for staring at screens too long in school.

According to an informal national survey of prekindergarten through 12th-grade teachers conducted by The New York Times in October 2025, 99 percent of teachers said their school provided devices to students to use in class. Survey results also suggest a sharp increase in schools assigning devices to students since the Covid-19 pandemic, as eight in 10 teachers said students at their school had a device assigned to them in 2025, compared with about a third who said that was the case in 2019. Regarding youth time on screen in elementary classrooms, most teachers in the survey estimated students use them for an hour or less a day.

Given the absence of data in New Mexico regarding screen use for the purpose of instruction in elementary school classrooms, HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force members discussed their experiences to better understand screen use in New Mexico classrooms. Task force members were quick to distinguish teacher-led screen use—for example solving a math problem on a SmartBoard—from the time a student spends on an electronic device for individual student use in a classroom setting. Task force members gave examples of teacher-led screen use to increase student engagement in this way, for example by showing a short video illustrating an instructional concept to "hook" students before a lesson, or playing background music to help students remain calm and focused while working individually.

Some task force members expressed concern with young students spending too much time on individual electronic devices for reading and math instruction, crowding out opportunities for teachers to instruct students with more hands-on, developmentally appropriate methods. For example, task force members spoke of students spending too much time on individual laptops while engaged with interactive educational programs, or reading for hours from school-issued iPads. Other task force members expressed concern regarding school-issued instructional devices being preloaded with noninstructional entertainment applications that distract student learning during class. For example, task force members reported noticing students playing games or watching videos when they should be engaged with educational content on their school-issued devices. Task force members spoke in agreement regarding limiting Internet access and applications consistent with age-appropriate standards. Please see page 9 of this report for more detail on task force work on screen time for the purpose of instruction in elementary classrooms.

Research on Screen Time in Elementary School Classrooms

Electronic devices, such as cell phones and interactive screen media, have revolutionized learning and communication, but recent peer-reviewed academic research indicates screen media may have adverse impacts on children's health. In 1970, research shows the average age at which kids engaged with screen media on a regular basis was four years old. Today, the average age at which kids engage with media on a regular basis is four months old, research from the University of Michigan shows. While well-designed interactive media can have educational benefits starting in prekindergarten, research shows children younger than two years old require adult interaction to learn from screens and too much screen time can be harmful for young children.

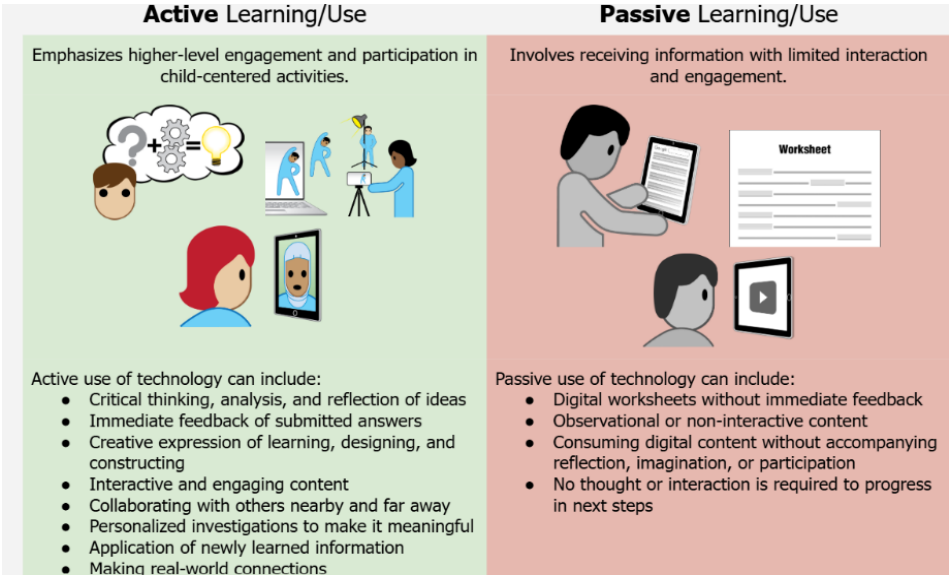
***Research* shows excessive screen time for young children causes negative impacts on social and emotional growth and language development.** Excessive screen use has detrimental effects on social and emotional growth in children, including increased likelihood of obesity, sleep disorders, and mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, peer-reviewed research shows. Screen time can also have a harmful impact on language development, as screen time reduces the amount and quality of interactions between children and their caregivers, resulting in fewer chances for children to practice and develop their language abilities.

Academic research also suggests increasing the amount of screen time at an early age has negative effects on language development, and beginning screen time at a later age has some potential benefits. Researchers stress while screens have become common in homes and schools, it is crucial to educate caregivers and early childhood educators about the potential risks associated with prolonged screen exposure in young children. Some studies also suggest that more screen time at four years old is associated with lower levels of emotional understanding at six years old.

Active use of technology can empower student learning; passive use of technology can harm student learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a professional organization of pediatricians in the United States, does not provide a definitive recommendation regarding screen time in elementary classrooms. Instead, AAP defers to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) recommendation regarding screen time in elementary classrooms. Rather than focusing on time, ED stresses the importance of active versus passive use of technology:

- **Active use** involves critical thinking and includes activities such as coding, immersive simulations, media production, interaction with experts, making global connections, design, and peer collaboration.
- **Passive use** includes activities such as filling out digital worksheets or consuming digital content without accompanying reflection, imagination or participation.

Figure 1: Active Learning/Use Versus Passive Learning/Use



Source: Wilmette Public Schools

AAP also notes recommendations regarding active versus passive use of technology should be paired with their "5Cs of Media Use:"

- **Child:** Educational technology should help accommodate learning tailored to the needs of the child and increase inclusion;
- **Content:** Educational technology must be evidence-based and work to help kids learn, and devices should block access to age-inappropriate content;

- **Calm:** Technology should not be used to calm children's emotions;
- **Crowding Out:** Educational technology—and personal device use—must not displace other opportunities for children to learn skills that can be better taught through hands-on activities or having social interactions; and
- **Communication:** Teachers should communicate with caregivers to set clear expectations for how and when technology will be used and how it helps their child's learning.

Research reveals an association between more total screen time and lower reading and math achievement on standardized tests in elementary school. A 2025 study published by the JAMA Network, a peer-reviewed journal published by the American Medical Association, of a cohort of children in grade three and grade six in Canada found higher caregiver-reported total television, video game, and screen time was associated with lower reading and math achievement on standardized tests in elementary school. The study found each additional hour of total screen time per day was associated with a 9 to 10 percent decrease in achieving a higher academic level in grade three reading and grade six math. Similarly, higher screen time was associated with lower achievement levels in grade three reading and grade six math. The authors suggest early interventions to reduce screen time exposure should be developed and tested to promote healthy screen use habits and enhance academic achievement in elementary school.

It's also important to note recent technological advancements, such as the release of the iPhone in 2007, have coincided with a worldwide decline in test scores since the early 2010s, leading some researchers to posit the downward trend in test scores comes from an inability to concentrate fueled by digital devices and social media usage.

Research suggests reading physical books and writing with pencils leads to deeper student learning. Recent research suggests reading print books lead to deeper learning and better reading comprehension compared with digital reading. A 2024 meta-analysis of 49 studies published by Trends in Cognitive Science, a peer-revied scientific journal, found students who read on paper consistently scored higher on comprehension tests than students who read the same material on screens. The researchers called this impact the "screen inferiority effect" to reflect their finding that digital reading leads to lower information retention and understanding.

Similarly, research suggests handwriting leads to better memory retention, conceptual comprehension, and neural connectivity compared with typing. Handwriting is a complex neurophysiological process integrating cognitive and motor skills, as well as psychological significance. A recent study also suggests using paper and pencil in math, as opposed to educational technology, deepens mathematical understanding and confidence.

Overview of State Policy Landscape

In absence of federal policy on the use of screens in classrooms, and the growing conversation regarding the role of technology in public schools, on August 20, 2026, the ED Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, released a Dear Colleague Letter on the responsible use of education technology in classrooms. The letter underscored the need for centering educational value when discussing educational technology and directs policymakers to focus on whether or not the technology we ask teachers and students to use improves learning and students' academic outcomes.

The guidance also encourages states and school districts to vet educational technology tools, beginning with ensuring responsible design, which the letter describes as "the floor." As states and school districts evaluate educational technology, they should expect providers to:

- Publish rigorous, independent evaluations of product impacts on student learning when feasible;
- Share implementation guidance grounded in effective classroom practice;
- Provide transparent information about product capabilities, limitations, and performance; and
- Continuously improve products using evidence from implementation and student outcomes.

The letter elevates procurement guidelines in Louisiana, Arkansas, Indiana, Michigan, and Texas, which establish shared performance measures, standardize modern student data privacy protections, clarify expectations for implementation support, and align vendor partnerships with school district goals.

State Legislative Policy Trends Nationwide

As conversations regarding the benefits and risks of technology in education evolve, state legislators are introducing a variety of measures to regulate the use of technology in the classroom. Introduced legislation includes efforts to reduce potential harm, strengthen safeguards, and equip young people with skills to navigate digital environments safely. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), a bipartisan organization that serves state lawmakers and legislative staff in the United States, in 2026 at least 260 bills related to technology in education were considered across 43 states, with 20 states enacting legislation, as shown in NCSL's Education Legislation Database.

As reported by Education Commission of the States (ECS)—a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization helping state leaders create effective education policy—over the past several years, education technology policy conversations have focused on student access to personal devices, particularly cell phones. However, more recently, ECS reports some policymakers are also looking more broadly at the role of screens, social media, and school-issued technology during the school day. Some states are going beyond restricting students from possessing a device and focusing on how digital tools are used during the school day, especially for younger students.

In 2026, five states took legislative action addressing school-directed instructional screen use, including New Mexico's HM2. New Mexico was the only state to pass a memorial convening a legislative task force to study the issue. Other state measures varied from a hard limit on all daily screen time in elementary classrooms to requiring LEAs to implement local policies to reduce unnecessary screen time.

Alabama. In March, the governor of Alabama signed House Bill 78, which requires the establishment of screen standards and teacher training for young children. The law impacts early childhood settings, including childcare and prekindergarten, as well as public kindergarten. The law establishes evidence-based standards and guidelines for screen use, and emphasizes screen media should not replace developmentally important activities such as teacher-led instruction, reading, hands-on learning, and outdoor play. It also provides exceptions for disability-related accommodations and certain required assessments.

Iowa. In May, the governor of Iowa signed House File 2676, which limits digital instruction for kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) students to no more than 60 minutes per day, with exceptions for assessment, computer science, and special education. The law also requires districts to complete a technology adoption checklist before adopting or renewing one-to-one device programs. The Iowa Department of Education is also required to convene a working group on the impact of school-provided technology on cognitive function and academic performance in grades six through 12.

Tennessee. On July 1, House Bill 2393/Senate Bill 2310 became law in Tennessee, which requires every LEA to adopt a digital device policy for K-5 classrooms to minimize unnecessary screentime. The law notes policies must prioritize in-person, teacher-led instruction and nonelectronic instructional materials for K-5 students. The law also provides exceptions for targeted instructional support, intervention, or remediation; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations and services; and required state and federal assessments.

Utah. In March, the governor of Utah signed House Bill 273, which requires the Utah State Board of Education to create model policies on balanced classroom technology use, as well as for AI use, and include grade-level frameworks for local practice. For kindergarten through third grade, the framework prohibits classroom screen time except for computer science standards and assessment, prohibits a required ratio of one electronic device to one student, emphasizes hands-on learning exercises, and prohibits homework requiring the internet. The law also stipulates that, for students in middle and high school, instructional technology must be balanced with instruction through teacher-led, print-based, and analog methods.

While state policy approaches in 2026 have varied considerably, with some states establishing statewide requirements and others emphasizing local decision-making, some best practices—including grade-band guidelines, stronger protections for younger students, an emphasis that screens should not replace teacher interaction and hands-on learning, and explicit exemptions—point to potential recommendations for New Mexico lawmakers to consider.

HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force

In alignment with HM2 and the LESC work plan, LESC staff convened a task force to study the impacts of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms on students and draft policy considerations for consideration by LESC and the Legislature as a whole.

Figure 2: HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force Timeline



Source: LESC Files

As shown in **Figure 2: HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force Timeline**, the task force met in June, a smaller focus group met in July and August, and the task force as a whole had opportunities to provide feedback on draft the report and draft recommendations in September, before the publication of the brief and presentation to the committee in September.

Task Force Members

Members of the task force were identified by LESC staff and through nominations by LESC members. LESC staff would like to thank the members of the HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force, listed below:

- **Benajmin Barlow**, administrator
- **Francesca Blueuer**, educator
- **Erik Bose**, administrator
- **Nina Bunker Ruiz**, educator
- **Fatima Ceballos**, NMPTA
- **Duncan Christensen**, Policy Analyst, PED
- **Marissa Chrysler**, community member
- **Tom Cloward**, Policy Analyst, PED
- **Sally DeRadke**, community member
- **Cassie Flemming**, community member
- **Aden Gachupin**, student
- **Bowie Galloway**, student
- **Serenity Galloway**, student
- **Pilar Garcia**, student
- **Yvonne Garcia**, Deputy Secretary, PED
- **Representative Joy Garratt**, HM2 sponsor
- **Celeste Hernandez**, educator
- **Janet Resnick-Wandel**, community member
- **Dr. Soña Saiz,** Safe Schools Manager, PED
- **Nina Simbana**, community member
- **Carol Valenzuela**, educator
- **Joanna Watkins**, community member
- **MaryBeth Weeks**,community member
- **Lien-Shin Wang Offerman**, Legislative Aide
- **Timothy Wells**, educator
- **Renata Witte**, NMPTA

Study Questions and Process

In alignment with the LESC work plan approved by the committee in April, LESC staff began HM2 work by establishing the following key questions for inquiry:

- What are the impacts of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms on student learning, development, and well-being?
- How is PED collaborating with HM2 stakeholders to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in elementary school classrooms?
- What guidance and support does PED provide for school districts and charter schools to ensure required technology use in the classroom is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development? What impact does this have on teacher practice?
- How is PED ensuring required technology use in elementary classrooms is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development?

Task Force Meetings

The task force held one virtual meeting and one full-day in-person meeting at the New Mexico State Capitol in June. In addition, the task force convened three virtual focus group meetings with a smaller contingency of the task force in July and August.

June 10. The task force met for the first time at a virtual meeting. After introductions and establishing how the group would work together, the HM2 task force reviewed the text of HM2, and provided initial feedback on guiding questions that had also previously been shared with NMPTA members:

- How much time do you think elementary students are spending on screens while in school?
- How much time do you think is appropriate for elementary students to spend on screens?
- What concerns do you have about screens in schools?
- What specifically do you hope this study helps to address or understand?

The task force also discussed topics the sponsor of HM2 had identified for task force consideration and requested LESC staff provide information to prepare for subsequent meetings. Prior to the next task force meeting, LESC staff provided task force members with a list which categorized the requests received for information received, how requests would be responded to, and provided a memorandum of a synthesis of law and policy guiding the use of screens in classrooms in New Mexico. Please see **Attachment C: June 10, 2026 Meeting Agenda** for a full agenda of this meeting.

June 22. Next, the task force met in person for a full day of work at the state capitol in Santa Fe. The day began with a presentation from NCSL on current research and legislation on screen time in the United States. Then LESC staff provided a presentation and answered questions on policy levers to address screen time in New Mexico and LESC's role in the legislative process. The morning concluded with task force members generating a list of questions for PED staff, primarily regarding the use of screens for instruction, tutoring, and assessment.

In the afternoon, the task force reviewed example legislation and policy from states and school districts—both enacted and failed—and conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis on the example legislation navigating screen use in elementary school classrooms.

The task force requested LESC staff investigate and provide additional context regarding why some example state legislation failed, share questions for PED with department staff, and convene focus groups for next steps. Please see **Attachment D: June 22, 2026 Meeting Agenda** for a full agenda of this meeting.

After this meeting, LESC staff provided requested documentation to the task force, and provided a survey for task force members to indicate interest in joining the focus group. LESC staff also shared generated questions with PED staff in addition to requesting a meeting to discuss next steps.

Focus Group Meetings

Approximately half of the task force—12 out of 25 members—joined the HM2 focus group. The focus group was representative of the task force, including educators, administrators, students, families, NMPTA members, and PED staff. The primary goal of the focus group was to provide feedback on LESC drafted policy recommendations for the Legislature, PED, and LEAs regarding the use of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary school classrooms, pursuant to the request in HM2.

LESC staff spent time grounding members in New Mexico education policy levers, as illustrated above by **Figure 3: New Mexico Education Policy Levers**, to ensure policy recommendations were appropriately aligned with the roles and responsibilities of each entity.

Figure 3: New Mexico Education Policy Levers



Source: LESC Files

July 30. At the focus group, members discussed how the task force should collaborate with PED to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in classrooms, deliberating:

- Should the task force draft broad recommendations for the Legislature to require PED to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in classrooms and/or establish model policies, as some other states have done, for example Utah?
- Should the task force draft specific recommendations for PED to include in establishing developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in elementary classrooms via administrative code?

The focus group ultimately recommended the Legislature should require PED to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in K-12 grade classrooms to include grade-level policy frameworks for elementary, junior high school, and high school, and that PED must develop these guidelines through research and in partnership with New Mexico school districts and charter schools through a transparent, public process. Please see **Attachment E: July 30, 2026 Meeting Agenda** for a full agenda of this meeting.

August 5. The focus group continued to refine recommendations for the Legislature to fulfill the request of HM2 to establish developmentally appropriate screen time limits in elementary school classrooms and ensure required technology use is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development. At the August 5 meeting, the task force also began discussing potential recommendations for PED. After each task force meeting, LESC staff sent draft recommendations to members to provide additional feedback. Please see **Attachment F: August 5, 2026 Meeting Agenda** for a full agenda of this meeting.

August 14. At the final focus group meeting, the group finished refining the draft task force recommendations for the Legislature, PED, and LEAs. The focus group also workshopped a definition of screen time for potential

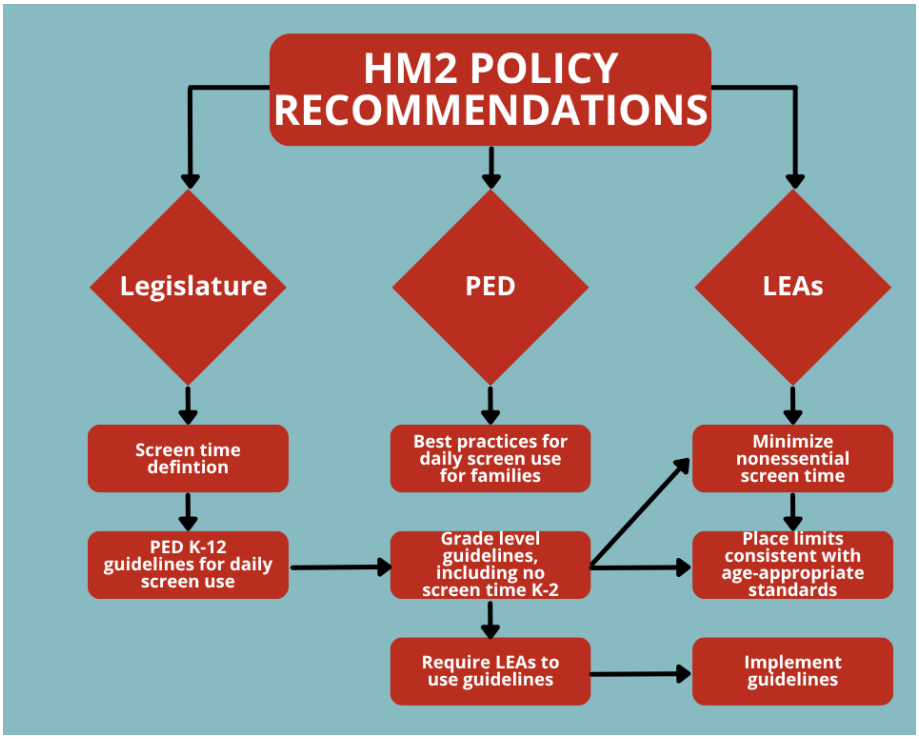
consideration by the Legislature. Please see **Attachment G: August 14, 2026 Meeting Agenda** for a full agenda of this meeting.

At the conclusion of the focus group meetings, LESC staff sent draft recommendations for the focus group for additional feedback. Then LESC staff shared a draft of this report with the entirety of the task force and incorporated feedback.

Policy Considerations and Recommendations

The following policy considerations and recommendations from the HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force are intended to guide the discussion around screen use in classrooms from conceptual thinking to clear policy levers that are tangible and actionable for LESC lawmakers.

Figure 4: HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force Recommendations



Source: LESC Files

As shown in **Figure 4: HM2 Screen Use Legislative Task Force Recommendations**, recommendations for the Legislature, PED, and LEAs are intended to work together. Based on the most current research, best practices, and work other states are doing, the HM2 task force recommends the following to fulfill the requests of HM2 and ensure screen use in classrooms is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development.

The Legislature should…

- Consider defining screen time as "the time a student spends on an electronic device for individual student use, excluding time spent on computer science standards and preparation for, and administration of, a standards-based assessment." The Legislature should ensure the definition distinguishes how and for what purpose technology is being used, including whether it supplements or replaces teacher instruction and student engagement. The definition should also address active versus passive use of technology, with nuance for teacher-led activities (for example, allowing SmartBoard use in passive ways such as listening to music while students

are working independently). The definition should ensure virtual learning programs are excluded. For example:

- Consider requiring PED to:
    - Establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in K-12 grade classrooms to include grade-level policy frameworks for elementary, junior high school, and high school by June 30, 2027, which will be reviewed and revised every five years minimum.
    - Develop the K-12 developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen through research, in partnership with New Mexico school districts and charter schools, through a transparent, public process.
    - Ensure education technology use is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development

The Public Education Department should…

- Consider requiring all school districts and charter schools to use PED's K-12 developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use.
- Consider authoring K-12 grade-level policy frameworks within the developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use that includes grade-level screen time requirements, including no screen time for kindergarten through second grade; minimizes nonessential screen time; and place limits on Internet access and applications (for example, entertainment apps and social media) consistent with age-appropriate standards.
- Consider exempting from the requirements of PED's K-12 developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use:
    - Distance learning programs or courses;
    - Courses where instructional technology is integral to the matter of the course or specialty class;
    - A course or instruction designed to meet computer science standards; and
    - Instructional technology use consistent with a student's IEP or Section 504 plan.
- Consider providing K-12 developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use for caregivers supported by relevant research and evidence-based best practices.

School Districts and Charter Schools should…

- Consider developing "Responsible Use" policies that outline annual processes to inform and engage with caregivers on all instructional technology applications used, as well as a process for caregivers to elevate concerns; as well as outlining associated teacher training on instructional technology.
- Consider developing and sharing schoolwide guidance outlining best practices for reducing and monitoring student screentime—including systematic coordination among teachers—to prevent excessive cumulative screentime.
- Consider encouraging the use of paper and pen assignments.
- Consider encouraging schools to utilize laptop carts and/or computer labs for all students.
- Consider prohibiting and/or blocking student-led use of YouTube and other video streaming platforms on LEA provided devices.
- Consider prohibiting and/or blocking the use of social media and noninstructional gaming platforms (e.g., Roblox and Fortnite) on LEA provided devices and networks.

Legislative EDucation Study Committee

Research Plan

HM2, Study Screen Use in Elementary Classrooms

Analysts: Marit Andrews, Principal Policy Analyst

Date: March 15, 2026

Overview and Background

- In response to House Memorial 2 (HM2), signed during the 2026 legislative session, and in response to research revealing an association between higher total screen time and lower reading and math achievement on standardized tests in elementary school, LESC staff will conduct a comprehensive study on the use of screens in elementary classrooms during the 2026 interim.
- This research plan includes key questions for investigation and research, outlines anticipated membership in the study group, and details the anticipated timeline for producing a final report for LESC members.

Rationale

- As stakeholders have reported a sharp increase in schools assigning devices to students since the Covid-19 pandemic, families and educators have raised concerns about the amount of time elementary students spend on digital devices for tasks that could be achieved through more developmentally appropriate hands-on methods. Limiting unnecessary screen time aligns with the goals of improving student well-being, increasing student engagement, and supporting healthier classroom communities. This research aims to evaluate the use of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms, including the impacts of programs on student learning, development, and well-being.

Anticipated Membership

- LESC members; a representative group of youth that reflect New Mexico's student demographics and the student groups named in the *Martinez-Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit; families of elementary school students; elementary school educators and administrators; New Mexico Parent Teacher Association (NMPTA) members; and the Public Education Department (PED).

Key Questions for Inquiry

- What are the impacts of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary classrooms on student learning, development, and well-being?
- How is PED collaborating with HM2 stakeholders to establish developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in elementary school classrooms?
- What guidance and support does PED provide for school districts and charter schools to ensure required technology use in the classroom is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development? What impact does this have on teacher practice?
- How is PED ensuring required technology use in elementary classrooms is purposeful, evidence-based, equitable, and supportive of healthy child development?

Timeline and Outcome

- April—May 2026: Literature review, development of research plan, and forming of working group.
- June—August 2026: Working group meetings (one virtual, one in-person summit) and focus group meetings (if needed) and drafting of recommendations.
- September 2026: Final report and presentation to LESC.

Attachment B: List of New Mexico Assessments

List of New Mexico Assessments

Summative Assessments					
Assessment Name	**Subject(s)**	**Grades Tested**	**Students Tested**	**Administration Window**	**General Purpose**
NM-MSSA New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement	Reading and math	3rd through 8th	All students	Spring	Statewide assessment for federal and state accountability purposes; used to calculate "proficiency" in reading and math.
College Board's **SAT**	Reading, writing, language, and math	11th	All students	Spring	Statewide assessment for federal and state accountability purposes; used to calculate "proficiency" in reading and math. Also used to determine "competency" for graduation.
NM-ASR New Mexico Assessment of Science Readiness	Science	5th, 8th, and 11th	All students	Spring	Statewide assessment for federal and state accountability purposes; used to calculate "proficiency" in science.
DLM Dynamic Learning Maps	Reading, math, and science	3rd through 8th and 11th in reading and math 5th, 8th, and 11th in science	Students with severe cognitive disabilities	Spring	Statewide assessment for students with severe cognitive disabilities; used to determine students' acquisition of the "essential elements" of reading, math, and science
Formative and Interim Assessments					
Assessment Name	**Subject(s)**	**Grades Tested**	**Students Tested**	**Administration Windows**	**General Purpose**
Istation Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)	Reading (in English or Spanish)	Kindergarten through 2nd	All students	Monthly	Statewide early literacy assessment, used to gauge whether students are "on benchmark" to be proficient in 3rd grade. Can be aggregated to produce beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year results.
iMSSA Interim Measures of Student Success and Achievement	Reading and math	3rd through 8th	Students in districts that opt-in	Beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year	An interim assessment designed to provide educators with information on which standards students need extra support to meet. Districts may choose to participate in the iMSSA at no cost.
Specialized Assessments					
Assessment Name	**Subject(s)**	**Grades Tested**	**Students Tested**	**Administration Window**	**General Purpose**
ACCESS ACCESS 2.0 for ELs and Alternate ACCESS	English language	Kindergarten through 12th	English learners (Alternate ACCESS is for ELs with disabilities)	January through March	WIDA's ACCESS assessment is administered to English learners to gauge their acquisition of the English language. Students who score at level 5 or 6 are no longer considered ELs.
Dyslexia Screener	Reading	1st	All students	Before the 40th Day of school or within 2 weeks of initial enrollment	Upon entering first grade, all students are screened for dyslexia.
Gifted Screener	General intellect, creativity, problem solving, artistic ability, leadership ability	Kindergarten through 12th	All students screened before the end of third grade	Varies by district	Each school district and charter school must establish a procedure to ensure every student's potential to qualify for gifted education is assessed. LEAs have the option to choose from a variety of screeners listed in PED guidance documents.

Attachment C: June 10, 2026 Meeting Agenda

REPRESENTATIVES
G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair
Brian Baca
Joy Garratt
Raymundo Lara
Tanya Mirabal Moya
Debbie Sariñana

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Candy Spence Ezzell
Mimi Stewart

House Memorial 2, Study Screen Use in Elementary Classrooms Working Group
Meeting Agenda
June 10, 2026

I. Introductions
II. How to work together
III. Review of House Memorial 2
IV. Issues for working group consideration
    a. Developmentally appropriate guidelines for daily screen use in elementary classrooms;
    b. Computer-based assessment, as well as mandated computerized tutoring sessions associated with assessment;
    c. The impact of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, on classrooms; and
    d. Impacts of screen time and programs on student learning, development, and well-being.
V. Grounding, questions, and initial feedback
VI. Adjourn

House Memorial 2 Working Group Meeting Agenda

9:00—9:15 a.m.	Welcome
9:15—10:15 a.m.	Current Research and Legislation on Screen Time in the United States
10:15—10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30—11:30 a.m.	LESC's Role in the Legislative Process and Policy Levers to Address Screen Time
11:30—12:00 p.m.	Q/A with Public Education Department staff
12:00—1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00—3:00 p.m.	Screen use guidelines and policy considerations working session & identify members for focus group

Agenda

- How to work together
- Key questions for inquiry
- Policymaking process
- Timeline
- Issues for focus group consideration:
  - State-level, broad recommendations for the Legislature to consider;
  - Recommendations for the Public Education Department (PED); and
  - Recommendations for school districts and charter schools.
- Grounding, questions, and begin feedback process on recommendations for the Legislature
- Adjourn

Agenda

- How to work together
- Review of work so far
- Issues for focus group consideration:
  - State-level, broad recommendations for the Legislature to consider; and
  - Recommendations for the Public Education Department (PED).
- Next steps and adjourn

Agenda

- How to work together
- Review of work so far
- Focus group discussion:
  - Screen time definition;
  - Finish recommendations for the Public Education Department (PED); and
  - Recommendations for school districts and charter schools.
- Next steps and adjourn