

Proposal to Develop a Long-Term Strategic Plan for Education in the State of New Mexico

Learning Policy Institute
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Introduction – About the Learning Policy Institute

The Learning Policy Institute (LPI) conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, LPI seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowered, equitable learning for every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, LPI connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness. A central tenet of our work is that improving education opportunity and equity requires the design and implementation of well-grounded policy. We work with policymakers and key stakeholders to enable them to accomplish these goals, bringing strong evidence and our team's extensive experience with the policy process.

LPI is well-positioned to design an articulate, persuasive, and evidence-based policy and implementation roadmap to accomplish the goals of the Thornburg Foundation. Thornburg's goals are at the heart of LPI's mission and are clearly reflected in LPI's prior and ongoing work. Many of LPI's leading staff, including President Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond and Senior Fellow Dr. Jeannie Oakes, who will co-direct this project, have been deeply involved in the research that is needed to make sound, workable policy recommendations. Drs. Darling-Hammond and Oakes are former presidents of the American Educational Research Association and members of the National Academy of Education.

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The Learning Policy Institute's Approach to the Project

The Learning Policy Institute will develop a long-term strategic plan for New Mexico education that is forward-looking, research-based, locally informed, and positioned so that it can be widely embraced. It will provide analytics, policy recommendations, a course of action, timeline, and cost estimates to inform thoughtful actions by policymakers, educators, and concerned New Mexicans. The plan will also be cognizant of the State's near-term obligation to create a plan to address the Court ruling in the Yazzie/Martinez litigation; LPI hopes to develop analyses and recommendations that will be useful to the State and the Court.

The analytics supporting the plan will portray the current status of New Mexico's education system, identifying both potential assets and current barriers to attaining an education system that serves all students well. The recommended policies will be ambitious, practical, and high-leverage, in that they will address specific policy goals with evidence about effective practices, and, at the same time, describe means to pursue them in the New Mexico context so that they can generate positive changes throughout the system. The course of action will outline strategies for successful implementation and sustainability, as well as for policy adoption. The plan will

employ a systems approach to ensure that recommended policies and actions cohere and reinforce one another, knowing that a mere list of “silver bullets” cannot provide the comprehensive transformation that New Mexico’s education system needs.

Although the specific focus of the vision and strategic plan cannot be determined prior to undertaking the research, LPI’s identification of barriers and potential solutions will follow from its deep understanding of core features of the system known to be linked to improved outcomes. These include high-quality pre-kindergarten programs; a sufficient supply, stability, and equitable distribution of well-prepared educators; the time, resources, and professional development sufficient to support ambitious curriculum and instruction for the state’s diverse students (including career and technical education pathways); strategies that address special challenges facing schools in high-poverty rural and urban communities (such as the negative effects of adverse out-of-school conditions on learning); funding that is sufficient and targeted to support these core features; and accountability and improvement systems that use the latest assessment technology to measure what matters most in student learning, provide diagnostic information, monitor progress toward improved system outcomes, and ensure that resources are used efficiently and responsibly.

LPI will also ground its recommendations in an understanding of the capacity and needs of the implementing agencies (e.g. state department and local/regional agencies, universities – whomever is the target of policy) to indicate what will be needed to build capacity where it is lacking, so that implementation can be sequenced effectively and well-managed. It will pay attention to the capacity needs in the State’s small rural communities.

LPI’s approach is informed by its understanding and experience showing that fundamental changes in state education systems must rest on a bold vision, a strong evidence-base, and broad ownership. Vision, evidence, and ownership must be ever-present touchstones that keep the plan vital and flexible, while remaining true to the its foundational principles. They guard against the plan being undermined by limited imagination, captured by popular, but unproven “reforms,” and/or being dismissed as just another of many competing plans from special interest groups.

The possibilities and risks are particularly strong in the current New Mexico context. Education policy is at the eye of a perfect storm of crisis (ranking at the bottom of national indices of education and child well-being) and opportunity (a new governor, a legislature disposed toward system transformation, a court-order requiring fundamental improvement, and a financial windfall). As described below, LPI’s approach will produce a plan that is technically competent and sustains robust New Mexico school improvement over time—assuring the core policy intentions’ survival and fidelity in the face of unanticipated “road bumps” and inevitable technical, cultural, and political challenges when education has become highly politicized.

Bold Vision. The plan will be based on a bold and compelling long-term vision of an educational system that prepares all New Mexico students “with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to reach their full potential, personally and professionally, in the 21st century.” It will understand and embrace the very different educational future that is called for by contemporary changes, including an era when automation and artificial intelligence are dramatically changing the occupational and social structure. As noted in Thornburg’s RFP, by 2020 New Mexico’s students will lack the education required for 63% of the state’s jobs. To compete in this new economic and social world, New Mexico’s students will need a set of human and technical skills that will prepare them for success as lifelong learners. Also central to this bold vision will be the provision of these skills through sufficient,

equitable, and relevant learning opportunities for New Mexico’s historically underserved populations—economically disadvantaged, culturally and linguistically marginalized, female, and rural students.

LPI has the experience, capacity, and knowledge to develop a visionary plan that is also practical, by recommending high-leverage policies that sustain a trajectory of systemwide improvement. A recent example of a bold vision guiding a high-leverage approach is California’s transformation (which LPI President Dr. Darling-Hammond helped design). California needed to break out of a highly unequal and inadequate system of funding with dozens of inadequate categorical funding streams that kept districts in an inefficient and ineffective chokehold. Their entirely reconceived plan combines equity, local spending flexibility, community engagement, and a system for continuous improvement. This transformative approach was fueled by a theory of action (well-grounded in research) that backs up “vision” with evidence and ownership. The state school finance system had bottomed out and leaders among the political, grassroots, labor, business, and philanthropic sectors marshalled evidence and civic values to build public will for raising revenues and allocating them equitably. A strong-minded governor was willing to stay the course. [New evidence from LPI](#) demonstrates that the funding initiative has already begun to improve outcomes, especially for higher need students and schools, both because of the greater investment and because of the greater flexibility.

New Mexico’s current “perfect storm” (as described above) is poised to develop and advance a bold vision of education with high-leverage strategies. Such strategies do not foreclose incremental improvements; rather, they provide encouragement, coherence and synergies for multiple, often local, contexts and innovations.

Evidence-Based. LPI will draw heavily on the national evidence base to analyze the potential of alternative policy approaches to inform New Mexico’s challenges. LPI’s own research represents a substantial knowledge base about a range of policy strategies that have achieved similar goals across multiple states and nations. We have studied their design, their implementation, and their effects – including the conditions for success and processes to create these conditions. LPI researchers are prominent members of the national education research community, and, as such, have a strong grasp of the evidence-base about education improvements and the policies most effective in yielding them.

Evidence-based policies and practices provide trustworthy directions for improvement, but nothing can be imported directly from elsewhere and planted successfully without adaptation to the local context. Great ideas must be tailored to local conditions and be sensitive to local ways of thinking about those conditions. That is particularly true of New Mexico.

Accordingly, to complement evidence from national studies, LPI will use existing research about New Mexico. Over the years the state has amassed a body of existing studies, data reports, and other evidentiary resources that can be enormously useful to inform the plan. Key sources include university-based researchers, such as those at the NM Cradle to Career Policy Institute, (formerly the UNM Center for Education Policy Research); government agency analyses and reports, including the Legislative Finance Committee Evaluation Reports and the Legislative Education Study Committee Annual Report & Data Reference Guide; and expert reports produced by think tanks and by experts for the plaintiffs and defendants in the recent Yazzie/Martinez litigation.

As needed, LPI will conduct additional analyses of publicly available data bases to examine the critical factors that bear on educational outcomes. Here, the Public Education Department’s accountability data are readily available, including school and district report card data, school- and district-level student achievement data by subgroup, and graduation cohort data, including 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates. Other key data about

education in New Mexico are publicly available through the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Other relevant contextual data can be found through the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census and through the Annie E. Casey's "Kids Count" project, maintained locally by New Mexico Voices for Children.

LPI's recommendations will also rely on evidence about relevant conditions and capacity in New Mexico. Nothing about New Mexico's educational context is like that of any other state. The rather small K-12 student population of 340,365 is spread over 121,589 square miles, with only 4 cities having more than 50,000 residents. The state has 89 districts, almost half of which have under 1,000 students. Nearly three-quarters of students come from families with incomes low enough to qualify for the federal subsidized lunch program, and many of those in rural areas are extremely poor. Twenty-two percent of children live in either rural or urban areas of concentrated poverty—where the poverty rate is 30 percent or more. These children tend to face food hardship, substandard and costly housing, lack of health insurance, family stress resulting from poverty, and, in some cases, unsafe environments—all of which have a negative impact on their learning. Nearly three-quarters of school children are either Hispanic (62%) or Native (10%). Few Hispanic students are immigrants; many are part of families who've lived in what is now the state for centuries. Spanish is recognized in the New Mexico constitution as an official language, equal to English. The Native population, whose New Mexico roots extend back far further, is also quite diverse, with students coming from 23 tribes—19 Pueblos, 3 Apache tribes, and the Navajo Nation that speak eight different Native American languages. This linguistic diversity is reflected in the 16% of New Mexico students whose proficiency in English is limited.

In addition to being statistically distinct, the New Mexico culture in which these numbers are embedded differs dramatically from other places. The history of conquest and colonialism are deeply felt, and trauma is often described as generational. The educational system has been instrumental in creating and perpetuating inequalities that pervade the state, through Native boarding schools, corporal punishment for speaking Spanish, and more. Today, although native schools and districts exist on Tribal lands, the reality for most Native students is that they are in the public-school system at some point. Accordingly, some Native leaders call for the State to recognize their right to engage as a sovereign nation in the education process. Any plan, particularly one developed and supported by a group that may be considered elites and/or outsiders, must be cognizant of and responsive to this cultural reality.

To better understand the implications of New Mexico's unique culture and needs, LPI will access the local knowledge of key stakeholders and extant reform proposals (described more in the following section) and consider existence proofs—strategies used successfully in New Mexico. The state has a highly rated (if not broadly accessible) early childhood education system; its K-3+ intervention to provide more learning time to disadvantaged learners has yielded promising results. Other innovations worthy of investigation are more grassroots. For example, in Las Cruces, the district is working with non-profit NGAGE, to transform district schools into community schools that help students grapple with out-of-school barriers to learning. Residents of Tribal communities have used the state's charter provisions to develop schools (the NACA-Inspired Schools Network) that focus both on increasing college enrollment and graduation, and preserving the cultural and linguistic traditions of their communities. These and other innovations should be considered and understood, and LPI's extensive experience in ferreting out the details and accuracy of reform reports will be useful in shaping New Mexico's plan.

Broad Ownership. As described above, LPI will develop high-leverage, evidence-based policy options that can carry the state to high-quality learning opportunities and productive student outcomes in every community. The keys to success of such a plan, however, go beyond its technical proficiency and include the collective ownership of both the vision and the strategies. Failure to develop collective ownership and advocacy can doom the most well-intentioned plan even when there is broad agreement with the substance of the plan. This requires relationship building with key stakeholders and inclusive processes of vision development and strategy decision making. Such processes will enhance both the substantive quality of the plan as well as increase its political viability.

Advisory Group. The first and perhaps the most critical element to developing broad ownership will be the project advisory group. LPI will work with the Foundation to select members from a broad range of relevant leadership and stakeholder groups and the business community who will be key constituents of the plan. The challenge is not to seek like-minded members but those from different vantage points who subscribe to the plan’s bold vision, listen to (and raise questions about) the evidence, and are enthused about open and sustained dialogue across individual points of view. At the end of the process, the advisory group must view the plan as their own and become its chief advocates. LPI has experience in working with such a group, as Linda Darling-Hammond was a key member of the [National Commission on Equity and Excellence](#). Through a process of respectful deliberation about the evidence, the Commission, comprised of strong-minded people with very different views, came to strong consensus about a national education policy agenda that would serve “each and every child.”

Crosswalking Competing Proposals. A second element will be demonstrating to stakeholders that the plan is informed by an evidence-based synthesis and review of the raft of platforms, proposals, and plans in the state (both currently afloat and soon to be launched) to dramatically change education in New Mexico. We will also include prior legislation that, although intended to bring transformative change to New Mexico education, has not been funded or implemented adequately to achieve its goals. To accomplish this, LPI will perform a “crosswalk” analysis¹ that illuminates the commonalities and differences among these documents in key policy areas and the evidence base on which each recommendation stands. Included in the analyses would be the following and other key proposals that might emerge before the analysis:

- Education Platform of the State’s newly elected New Mexico Governor
- National Conference of State Legislatures’ *No Time to Lose* framework and *9 Building Blocks for a World Class Education*, currently being used by New Mexico’s Legislative Education Study Committee to guide its long-term policy planning
- *Yazzie Proposed Remedy Platform*—being advanced by the coalition convened by the New Mexico Center for Law and Poverty, who represent the plaintiffs in the *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico* litigation
- The SUN plan—a comprehensive plan for a culturally responsive educational system that treats culture and language as assets, supported by Voices for Children and the McCune foundation
- Plan to require a higher percentage of current and new spending to be spent in classrooms—being advanced by Think New Mexico, an independent think tank

¹ A “crosswalk” is an analytic strategy that results in a table that shows equivalent elements in more than one [document](#) or data set. It maps the elements in one source to the equivalent elements in other sources in ways that permit an easy assessment of common and disparate elements and their relationship to some independent criteria—for example, an evidence base.

- All Pueblo Council of Governors; Leadership Institute, Santa Fe Indian School; and Pueblo Convocation’s July 2018 *Pueblo Education Recommendations* and All Pueblo Council of Governors Resolution 2018-21.
- Previously enacted New Mexico Indian Education Act (2003); Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (1973) (and expanded in 2004); and the New Mexico Hispanic Education Act (2010).

The “crosswalk” document would be reviewed and edited by both the advisory group and constituents of each proposal to ensure fidelity to the various proposals and to build a constituency for the final plan.

Ongoing Conversations. To assess the viability of the policy options LPI develops and others that are included in the crosswalk described above—in terms of fit, conditions, and readiness—LPI will cultivate on-going conversations with New Mexico researchers, stakeholders, and broader community leaders, in and outside of government. These will occur through focus groups with some organizations (e.g. teacher, parent, administrator associations) and one-on-one interviews with other key policymakers, thought leaders, and New Mexico researchers.

LPI will tailor the process so that it can learn from stakeholders without limiting the plan when stakeholders lack vision and/or readiness to address needed changes. The hallmark of these conversations will be respectful listening, providing the data that matters most to New Mexicans, envisioning a bountiful and inclusive future for the state, and building a community of improvement-oriented colleagues that can be a resource for the plan as it is implemented. We will listen and share ideas strategically, taking input with a ‘grain of salt,’ considering the perspective from which ideas come and evaluating them as information about the policy environment, not as constraints.

With careful thought about what can be shared, when, and with whom, LPI will array different stakeholders’ responsiveness to ideas and proposals (and how they are expressed); thus, we will learn what solidly resonates with respondents and what waves “red flags” that indicate resistance or hostility. These conversations will inform “next steps” since they are clearly generative—suggesting midcourse adjustments and strategies without compromising core elements and values of the plan. LPI will incorporate feedback where needed, recognize the most salient elements of consensus and commitment, and figure out who can help remove barriers to important ideas moving forward. We know from experience that the process of building vision and creating a fit between important ideas and local values and contexts can be a challenge, and we have experience in cultivating policy ideas, relationships, messaging, and commitment from a diverse set of stakeholders.

Workplan and Timeline

Phase 1 – October & November – Design and data sources

- Work with Thornburg to select, appoint, and orient the project Advisory Group.
- Inventory relevant prior research and publicly available data in New Mexico.
- Develop “crosswalk” tool analyzing existing reform platforms and proposals.
- In consultation with Thornburg and the project Advisory Group, refine the research questions and develop a specific research and engagement plan that operationalizes the approach to the project described above considering available prior research and data.
- In consultation with Thornburg and the project Advisory Group, design and begin a process of collaboration and consensus building toward broad ownership of the plan.

Phase 2 – December & January – Analysis and new qualitative data collection

- Use existing research and publicly available data to illuminate how the current education system fails to meet the needs of the state and its children as well as where there are assets on which to build a new system.
- Use national data to identify proven policies and practices that meet the needs of low-performing students, understanding the state should not adopt a “cookie-cutter” list of policies and practices that fail to attend to the circumstances in New Mexico.
- Using the “crosswalk” as a prompt, solicit the analyses and recommendations of the many groups active in state education reform, incorporating only those recommendations about which there is considerable agreement and a solid evidence base.
- Perform cost and budget analyses to identify opportunities to shift current funding and identify funding gaps that must be closed to implement the recommendations.

Phase 3 – February & March – Plan development & consensus building

- Refine recommendations into a full multi-year strategic plan and budget, including goals and metrics for success, cost analyses, a roadmap of action steps, and timeline for adopting high-leverage policies, and ramping-up investments to implement them at scale.
- Continue development and review conversations with stakeholders and community groups to ensure that the plan will not be framed as a new plan that simply adds another (and outsider) voice to the cacophony of proposals that now exists, but as a “best evidence” synthesis of national and local knowledge and preference.
- Produce primary and collateral deliverables—a full report, policy briefs, presentation deck, data visualizations—and develop a schedule of briefings to the Advisory Group and key stakeholders.
- Engage “marketing,” communications, and community organizing strategies to explore the “framing” of the plan so that it especially avoids narrow or institutional labels such as “The Thornburg Plan,” or “The LPI Plan.” LPI has a strong communications capacity, though perhaps consider consultation with a highly qualified specialist messaging group.

LPI’s Qualifications

The Learning Policy Institute (learningpolicyinstitute.org) was created to respond to the acute need for independent, high-quality research and policy analysis to inform and guide systemic changes and create conditions for improved student outcomes. LPI aims to: (1) strengthen and communicate the evidence base for policies and approaches that foster a high-quality public education system, so all students learn deeply and thrive; and (2) work collaboratively with policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders to develop and implement policies and practices that can accomplish these goals.

Central to LPI’s work is our capacity to marshal and disseminate information in a manner that is accessible to policymakers and thought leaders. To this end, we produce policy-relevant materials that make issues clear for the general public and policymakers, communicating ideas and information via print, radio, television, and electronic media—highlighting the implications for evidence-based policies, and engaging in outreach and networking with other individuals and organizations pursuing a stronger education system to ensure that they have access to research and policy ideas that will support and encourage evidenced-based policy solutions.

LPI has done extensive work in supporting states as they implement the cornerstone federal education law: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). LPI has been deeply involved in helping to develop ESSA plans in California, New York, and West Virginia, and we have helped develop specific aspects of state plans in Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. This work has required LPI to conduct analyses of state needs and opportunities that include:

- developing accountability and assessment plans using multiple indicators of student learning and progress
- equalizing resources and closing opportunity and achievement gaps
- providing access to certified, effective, and experienced teachers and leaders
- identifying and supporting schools that are struggling to serve their students well, and
- creating improvement strategies for both statewide application and for low-performing schools.

LPI staff works closely with state education agencies, boards, legislators, and key stakeholders to learn about the most salient (if not always apparent at first) aspects of the state’s policy context. During this work, we develop numerous resources that provide policymakers, policy influencers, media and others with evidence for effective accountability, investment, and intervention strategies. These resources include policy briefs, webinars, data visualizations, model policy language, and more.

LPI has deep experience in going beyond extant “data bases,” and reaches out to stakeholders. Examples include face-to-face meetings with governors’ aides, legislators, chiefs, and state education department staff; meetings sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), National Governors Association (NGA), National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), and the School Superintendents Association (AASA); a webinar series on which we have partnered with CCSSO; and publications that have been widely shared through our own dissemination, articles in *Education Week*, and the work of our advocacy partners in the civil rights community and the education community.

LPI’s report, [*Advancing Educational Equity for Underserved Youth*](#), was widely used by civil rights and advocacy groups that have worked on equity issues, as well as by state agencies in developing their plans. This report has been followed by the recently released [*Making ESSA’s Equity Promise Real: State Strategies to Close the Opportunity Gap*](#). LPI’s report, [*Encouraging Social and Emotional Learning in the Context of New Accountability*](#), laid out a framework for the productive uses of school climate and social-emotional learning indicators in new state systems of accountability and continuous improvement that are emerging under ESSA. LPI also recently released a report on community schools based on a review of 143 studies ([*Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy*](#)), which finds that well-implemented community schools lead to improvements in student outcomes and help meet the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools. In collaboration with a wide range of partner organizations, LPI has created a [*Community Schools Playbook*](#) that outlines the policy and implementation strategies that states and localities can use to develop strong, effective community schools. LPI’s School Finance Research Network, which includes 30 leading scholars and litigators, along with policymaker organizations and civil rights groups, is producing and disseminating a 50-state review of education resource allocation strategies and the degree of inequality that results from those finance strategies and an analysis of the return on investment from successful school finance investments. LPI’s expertise in early childhood education is evidenced in its 4-state case study (reported in a book published by Teachers College Press in June, [*On the Road to High-Quality Early Learning: Changing Children’s Lives*](#)), as well as our [*deep work on California’s system*](#) and work to advise gubernatorial candidates, including developing a costing-out calculator for states.

LPI's work on educator quality focuses on improving educator capacity and addressing teacher shortages through evidence-based investments in preparing, recruiting, retaining, and developing teachers for the fields and schools where they are most needed, and (2) educator preparation and professional learning programs that better prepare educators to teach and lead for the kind of learning needed for 21st century success with all children, including those who are historically underserved. Our policy work in these areas has been extensive at both the federal and state levels.

Since the September 2016 release of our series of reports on the national teacher shortage, LPI has become the go-to expert for state-facing organizations. For example, LPI staff have been invited to present our research findings and policy recommendations at recent conferences and meetings of CCSSO, Education Commission of the States, NGA, NCSL, and the National Association of State Boards of Education. These opportunities allow us to connect directly with legislators, governors, and their staff, as well as policy makers from state departments of education and state boards of education. We have served as expert advisor to CCSSO's Diverse and Learner-Ready Teachers Network, which is focused on policies to recruit and retain teachers of color. State-level data included in our [50-state interactive website tool](#) have proven particularly useful to policymakers and advocates.

We have worked directly with chiefs, governors, legislators, and system leaders in states including California, Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, and West Virginia. In these states, we have helped policymakers reconceptualize their overall approach to the teaching profession, in terms of compensation, working conditions, preparation, and ongoing professional learning—all of which influence recruitment and retention, teacher effectiveness, and the equitable distribution of teachers. LPI's research findings have been frequently cited in legislative committee bill analyses, and LPI researchers have been invited to testify before legislative committees in many states and have helped policymakers draft legislation that enables evidence-based approaches to improve teaching.

For example, informed by LPI's research and outreach to policymakers, California legislators introduced more than a dozen bills during the 2017 legislative session to address the state's growing teacher shortage and passed legislation providing \$130 million in supports for teacher residencies for math, science, special education, and bilingual teachers; training for early childhood educators; and local solutions grants. Advised by LPI researchers, Washington state passed a major salary increase with professional development supports, and LPI has been asked to submit a proposal for how we might provide ongoing support to Washington state as it develops a multi-faceted approach to improve teaching over the coming years. Delaware, Indiana, New York, and Oklahoma have also used LPI's work in considering a range of laws to address teacher shortages and rectify inequalities.

Because of our research, action at the national and state levels has centered around the distribution and shortfalls for teachers of different subject areas, types of communities, and states. Our work has pointed out the greater benefits—and lower long-term costs—of creating attractions to teaching and investing in high-retention pathways that bring teachers into the profession with strong preparation and support that keeps them in the profession. LPI has developed an [attrition cost calculator](#) that demonstrates the savings states and districts realize by stemming high attrition from the profession and suggests uses of those resources that can improve teacher effectiveness and retention. Doing both things in ways that equalize resources across rich and poor communities can also help solve shortages in high-need communities over the long run.

Last year, LPI released a major new study on [Effective Professional Development](#) which reviewed 35 rigorous research studies of professional development models that have shown a positive impact on student learning. It identifies seven core features they share, and several states, professional development organizations, and districts have taken up these findings to redesign their professional development funding and supports.

We have also undertaken a research and policy network focused on leadership development and last year released a report, [Supporting Principals' Learning: Key Features of Effective Programs](#), that synthesizes the research about principal preparation and professional development programs and identifies the key attributes of effective programs for principals. LPI has [examined the training and professional development needs of California principals](#). We are currently planning a state survey of principals in North Carolina as well as a national survey of principals. In addition, LPI is currently completing a study of Leadership Preparation for Deeper Learning. This study aims to deepen the field's knowledge of leadership preparation practices that support leaders in building systems and supporting teachers in delivering 21st century learning outcomes for students in ways that strengthen equity as well as opportunity to learn.

In 2015, LPI launched the [Racial Equity Leadership Network](#) in partnership with the Southern Education Foundation, National Equity Project, and Healthy Schools Campaign. This initiative will provide training and resources and cultivate a professional learning community to equip district leaders to advance racial equity in their school systems. To support this work, LPI has developed a conceptual framework identifying key domains that districts need to be attuned to when considering the work of racial equity. The conceptual framework has guided the development of the curriculum for the fellowship and the selection of a sites for a case studies and will be used to develop an equity assessment tool.

In New Mexico, Linda Darling-Hammond has spent time with legislators and stakeholders convened by Senator Stewart to provide wide-ranging advice on teacher policy. Jeannie Oakes has used LPI research reports and briefs in her work with New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee's and the Legislative Education Study Committee's efforts to develop stronger policies in the state related to expanded learning time and community schools, as well as on efforts to expand access to high-quality pre-k in the state. With a gubernatorial election in November, the Legislature is eager to strengthen teacher preparation, reduce teacher shortages and high rates of turnover (especially in rural schools), and replace the current punitive teacher evaluation process, and LPI has offered to continue its assistance as this work continues.

The New Mexico project proposed here will be co-directed by Drs. Linda Darling-Hammond and Jeannie Oakes (bios for project staff are attached). Dr. Darling-Hammond, President of LPI, has produced an extensive body of research and policy work at the federal and state levels, dealing with issues ranging from school finance, the training and equitable distribution of teachers and school leaders, and assessment and accountability systems. She has helped developed policy plans in many states that have been put into effect. A number of these have had measurable positive effects on educational equity and student achievement gains. She will take responsibility for designing the research and policy strategies that inform the action plan.

Dr. Jeannie Oakes, Professor Emeritus of Education at UCLA and LPI Senior Fellow, will serve as co-director (and the on-site project manager in New Mexico). Dr. Oakes, a New Mexico resident, has considerable national education research and policy experience, as well as knowledge of New Mexico education policy and good working relationships with many of the state's key policymakers and stakeholders. Drs. Darling-Hammond and Oakes will be assisted by Tara Kini, who co-leads LPI's Educator Quality team. A lawyer, Ms. Kini serves as LPI's director of state policy and has significant experience crafting legislation to address teacher shortages and as

well as other areas of state policy bearing on children’s opportunities to learn, as well as engaging local organizations and activists in supporting policy development and adoption.

A team of LPI researchers and policy analysts will support this work, and LPI will tap its senior fellows and its school finance fellows (see attached list) for specific aspects of the research and policy development.

Finally, we humbly submit that LPI brings an independence, authority, and reputation as bold, tough, and inclusive—qualities we believe to be essential to the success of the New Mexico project. This capacity and credibility may be enhanced by the fact that Drs. Darling-Hammond and Oakes are recognized authorities on how to prepare students for the future and lifelong advocates for public education as the anvil upon which democracy is forged. The entire LPI team has a deep commitment to equity and education as a public good and recognizes the challenges and opportunities a rapidly evolving world creates and how they must be responded to.