



**American Federation of Teachers New Mexico  
530 Jefferson Street NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87108**

---

**2024 Legislative Priorities for AFT NM & ATF**  
*Priorities based on current and forthcoming legislation (as of 12.11.23)*

**Adjunct Pay Parity: HB 417 (2023) (Garratt)**

The establishment of a minimum salary of \$60,000 for all educators teaching at New Mexico's 4-year public colleges and universities and \$55,000 for those teaching a nine-month contract at our 2-year institutions would dramatically improve the lives of adjunct faculty. 42% of the faculty at New Mexico's public colleges and universities work as adjuncts. Adjunct faculty possess the same credentials as their full-time colleagues, teach at all levels of their institutions, in all formats, and are essential to fulfilling New Mexico's higher education's mission of supporting at-risk, first-generation students. Though New Mexico's public colleges and universities could not fulfill their mission to New Mexico without these essential public educators, New Mexico's public colleges and universities systematically disrespect adjunct educators by providing them no pathway to job security and paying them poverty wages.

In fact, on average, adjunct faculty at New Mexico's public 2- and 4-year institutions earn \$27,300 and \$31,300 respectively, based on data from 2021. As a result of these poverty wages, some adjunct faculty experience food and housing insecurity, while others must work second and third jobs just to support their families. The establishment of a comparable minimum salary to K-12's existing 3 Tier structure for public educators at New Mexico's colleges and universities will achieve parity among the state's public educators and ensure New Mexico's public colleges and universities will be able to recruit and retain talented faculty who are committed to mentoring and educating New Mexico's future scholars and leaders.

***COST: According to 2023 FIR – approx. \$30M recurring across New Mexico Higher Education institutions. NM HED Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez has voiced her support for her department to work on this concept to quantify costs more accurately, which are expected to be lower than the 2023 FIR due to Legislature-provided compensation increases.***

**Retiree Healthcare Financial Security: HB 150/SB 193 (Figueroa/Stewart; 2023)**

We support efforts to shore up the Retiree Healthcare fund which would help to ensure that this critical fund is more financially stable for current and future recipients. HB 150/SB 193 would increase contributions by 0.5%, with a split between employees and employers of 0.17% and 0.33%, respectively. Without action, New Mexico would begin deficit spending in 8-9 years.

***COST: According to 2023 FIR - \$18M recurring across eligible retirees.***

**Ancillary Educator Salary Alignment: HB 39 (Thomson; 2023)**

House Bill 39 would align dual-licensed instructional support provides to the existing 3-Tier system of funding currently applied to Level I, II, or III teachers and Level III Counselors.

HB 39 would not reduce/override union-negotiated bargaining agreements, but rather establish minimum rates of pay for this critical group of educators. HB 39 also does not institute a cap in earnings for these educators.

***COST: According to 2023 FIR - \$3-6.5M recurring across eligible educators.***

**Student Borrowers Bill of Rights: HB 82 (Chandler; 2023)**

Legislation like HB 82 would regulate student loan servicers and private education lenders that extend private education loans. The legislation charges the director of the Financial Institutions Division (FID) of the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD) with issuing licenses to student loan servicers and private education lenders. The bill also establishes criteria for licensing and outlines, in detail, the responsibilities, requirements, and expectations of FID to carry out the proposed requirements of the Student Loan Bill of Rights Act.

***COST: According to 2023 FIR - \$446,000 recurring, which represents 4 FTEs, and based on estimated licensing fees, this legislation could generate approximately \$175,000/year to offset the cost of implementation.***

**No Public Educator Earning Less than \$25,000 in Our Schools: (GA Romero; 2024)**

Similar to 2023's House Bill 127, which instituted a \$25,000 minimum salary for Educational Assistants, there are still public school educators who make less than \$25,000/year. Many of these positions include secretaries, clerks, bookkeepers, food service workers, attendants, and others who serve vital roles, but earn low wages.

We support legislation which ensures that no one working in our public schools makes less than \$25,000/year when working full time.

***COST: LESC has calculated this to cost \$2.1M-\$3M, recurring.***

**Recognizing the Talents of Our Educators:**

The NM Legislature recognizes that additional credentialing, and providing a differential for educators holding those certifications, has value. Advocates for the groundbreaking *Martinez/Yazzie* lawsuit believe additional credentials such as TESOL, Bilingual, and Reading Endorsements are also worthy of such differentials.

Building on our 3-Tiered Licensure system with credential differentials communicates the value we place on a highly credentialed workforce and an acknowledgment for the educators who

serve our districts, schools, and students. Importantly, credential differentials build the internal capacity of our schools and districts to positively impact student achievement.

### **Modernizing the State Equalization Guarantee**

Since its inception, the SEG has funded state mandates, like class sizes, and the operational money needed for local programs and priorities. It has been a roller coaster ride of boom and bust. When oil and gas revenue was high, we had money for raises and programs. When it was low, we flatlined funding for both.

Over the past few years, even though state funding has been increasing, money for local priorities and programs has remained very low. Why? State mandates. Most of the additional dollars that have been invested in public education are already earmarked for particular programs or wage increases with little or no money left over for local priorities like increasing salary differentials to educators who are band directors, coaches, speech and debate team leaders, department chairs, orchestra teachers, and many more. These are long-standing priorities for our union.

Each district should have discretionary funding through the SEG and the flexibility to fund local priorities and services that are essential to our students. With a record revenue surplus, our goal is to make sure a sizeable portion of that money makes its way to the classroom and the people who make our schools function through the SEG.