

National Education Association-New Mexico 2016 Legislative Goals

1. Less regulations—more local decisions

A. **Creating a Tax Structure to Guarantee Future Education Funding:** The legislature must address the issues of making our state tax structure fair by closing loopholes and leveling the playing field for big and small businesses in our state. These principles must guide efforts to identify new funding streams to help sufficiently invest in our public schools.

B. **Adequately Funding Fixed Costs:** We advocate funding increases to provide for built-in fixed costs as well as to provide flexibility at the local school district level so that employees and school districts working together, using collective bargaining, may determine local priorities.

C. **Returning State Policy Regarding Public Schools to the Voters:** We support a constitutional amendment to place the authority currently placed in the Appointed Secretary of Education in an elected State Board of Education, and a Superintendent of Public Instruction hired by that Board, who must be a New Mexico licensed qualified professional educator.

2. More learning—less testing

A. **Reforming Student Assessments:** Varied performance assessments, including, but not limited to, a statewide criterion-referenced test, must be authentic and actually assess whether rigorous standards for student learning are being met. The development of curricular standards and their accompanying assessment system is a legitimate State priority, funded through legislative appropriation. A single high-stakes standardized norm-referenced exam must not be a part of this accountability system but may be used for benchmarking our education system with national standards. These assessments should be used for diagnosis of student needs, improvement of instruction, and not for staff evaluation. Assessments that purport to measure change in performance over time within a student cohort group must be designed to measure the progress of the same students from year to year, not simply the students who happen to be in each grade level at a given school, whether or not they were a part of the cohort the preceding year. Student

assessment is about diagnosing and implementing instructional change, not about evaluating school employees.

3. More funding—less mandates

A. **Prioritize Education Funding:** The legislature must meet its constitutional responsibility to sufficiently fund New Mexico's public schools so we are able to increase student success by meeting our students' many and diverse academic, behavioral, cultural, and social needs. To meet this responsibility, the legislature commit the necessary revenue sources. Funding distribution must be fair among all school districts; the best way to accomplish this is to move all funding through the Public School Equalization Guarantee.

B. **Preserving Public Funding.** The legislature must continue to resist schemes to privatize the education of any public school students. Privatization is an abdication of public accountability which cannot be tolerated. The schools must remain under the control of entities governed by and for the people. Legislation must prevent ceding control of student's education to private, for-profit providers whether the programs are delivered on-site or through virtual technology.

C. **Preventing Vouchers, Tax Credits, Public Scholarships or Other Schemes to Privatize Public Schools.** The New Mexico State Constitution requires a system of free uniform public schools. The limited financial educational resources of the state must be directed toward fulfillment of this constitutional mandate. We oppose any attempts to use public funds for private school vouchers, tuition tax credits for attendance at a private school, home school, or for-profit management of public schools. 1. **Creating a tax structure to Guarantee Future Education Funding**

D. **Guaranteeing Adequate Recurring Revenues:** Over the last ten years, the percentage of general fund revenues allocated to public schools has decreased. Public schools and higher education must receive their traditional share of general fund revenues. The Legislature must consider the recurring revenues provided by the state's extractive industries as available for education expenditures. We support increases in funding to provide an adequately funded public education for every New Mexico student.

E. **Preventing Revenue Reductions:** We oppose any precipitous reduction in revenues from any source unless there are compensating adjustments to protect education funding. **Guaranteeing Adequate Recurring Revenues**

F. **Providing Public Education a Fair Share of Any Surplus:** Public schools and higher education must receive a proportion of any state surplus equal to, or higher than, the pre-existing portion of the general fund. To do less is to move farther from the constitutionally mandated requirement the legislature sufficiently fund the public schools.

G. Building Higher Education Funding Equity: Higher Education funding must be determined by a statutorily defined formula similar to that contained in the School Finance Act for Public Schools. Creation of this formula should not adversely affect the funding of any institution.

4. More graduates—less drop outs

A. Addressing Poverty Issues and Supporting a Living Wage. Poverty effects student growth as a vital part of the communities encompassing schools. We believe legislation should be passed to help address issues pertaining to poverty and quality of life for students, parents and the community as a whole including but not limited to increasing the minimum wage to living wage based on community standards, providing access to early education, and increasing student health and well-being.

B. Class size limit: Restore class size limitations in statue by ending blanket waivers. Restore staff and the funding needed to honor current statutory class size and students load requirements.

C. Ensuring Student Opportunity: Systems must be in place to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and perform to their full potential. New Mexico must resist efforts to reduce support for students with priority needs, such as special education, gifted, and English Language Learners. We support programs that educate the whole child. These include physical education, fine arts and vocational programs taught by licensed, highly-qualified teachers.

D. Providing Adequate High Quality Health Care. All New Mexicans deserve access to affordable, high-quality health care. We must make health care more affordable for all New Mexicans, including those who are already covered. Any real solution to making health care more affordable for everybody must start with the commitment that all New Mexicans should have health care coverage.

5. More respect—less blame

A. Building an Appropriate School Employee Evaluation System: The quality of the education work force is paramount to student success. School employees want to be accountable, and the public rightly demands this, too. We support fair evaluation systems to appropriately measure teacher impact on student achievement. Standardized test scores cannot provide this measure. The evaluation system may include voluntary peer interventions and/or observations that do not contribute to summative evaluations. Only trained and certified administrators should evaluate school employees. Guidance, support and opportunities for continuing professional development and growth must be at the core of the evaluative process. Evaluations should be fair and impartial and should be based on multiple objective evaluations. Licensure advancement must be fair and

transparent and equally available to all licensed employees. It should not be a subterfuge for merit pay schemes.

B. Induction and Mentoring: The legislature must restore dedicated resources for programs of induction and mentoring for all public education employees. Colleges of education should be encouraged and funded to collaborate with and provide support for teacher induction and mentoring in public schools. State mandates for District provided mentor programs need to be funded.

C. Due Process and Just Cause. All education employees must be protected from adverse job actions through a statutory due process procedure that guarantees just cause for all discipline and job related decisions of educational management. NEA-NM will work to preserve and enhance current protections and extend them to employees in higher education and supervisory employees.

D. Sustaining Collective Bargaining. To ensure all education employees have the right to negotiate the terms and conditions of their employment, we must maintain and enhance New Mexico's Public Employee Bargaining Act. The ability of all employees to have fair access to the benefits of collective bargaining is an important way to combat poverty. Therefore, we oppose "so-called" Right-to-Work legislation and any other efforts to diminish the influence of Unions in the workplace.

E. Protecting Retiree Health Care. Annual funding must be sufficient to maintain the commitment made on behalf of the citizens of New Mexico to public employees. When the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority (NMRHCA) was created, it was not a pre-funded retirement benefits program. We will support modest increases in employee and employer withholdings to improve the solvency of the system.

F. Safeguarding School Employee Retirement. Retirement credit is an important part of the compensation school employees earn. It is not a "gift" from the taxpayers! All education employees should be afforded the full benefits of retirement, without offsets for other pension plans. New Mexico's educational retirement plan must remain a fully funded defined benefit plan. The legislature must insure the financial security of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Association through proposals that have the input and support of the various stakeholder groups comprising the ERB membership.

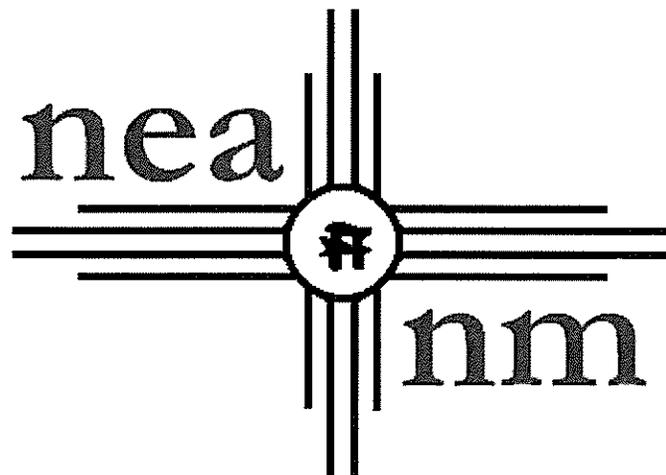
G. Providing Affordable Health Insurance for Education Employees. Escalating health insurance premiums and/or benefit decreases have decreased overall compensation of education employees. Providing appropriate health care options must be provided for by the legislature. The statutory

limit for employer paid insurance premiums subsidies must be increased and funded to maintain benefit levels and hold employees harmless for premium increases.

H. Providing Pay Equity and a Living Wage for All School Employees: Educational assistants must have appropriate minimum salaries tied to a tiered licensure system. The system must assure adequate compensation, professional development, and assistance to meet the requirements of federal law and provide career and professional advancement for paraprofessionals.

I. Legislation should be enacted and funded to direct Educational employers to provide salary schedules to promote career advancement and advanced training for educational support professionals/paraprofessionals. Licensed and/or certified skilled trades employees in public schools must receive pay commensurate to private sector licensed or certified professionals. .

J. Funding must be provided to allow institutions of higher education to prioritize faculty and staff salary increases over higher education capital outlay. Higher education funding should be a state priority and not rely on ever-increasing tuition or other local revenue raising requirements. New permanent fund distributions must free up operational funds to provide staff and faculty salary increases.



STUDENTS ARE AT THE CENTER
2016 NEA-NM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT

STUDENT SUCCESS: Good Education Inspires Students' Natural Curiosity and Builds Their Desire to Learn

Good education inspires students' natural curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn. No bubble test can measure a student's curiosity or the benefit of the inspiration fostered by education employees. Schools that nurture these values today are growing New Mexico's future inventors, thinkers, artists and leaders. So much happens at school that shapes our children's tomorrows, and therefore we must instill a love of learning, foster creativity, and teach critical thinking skills. Of all the things we teach our children, the most important is love of learning. Too much focus on teacher evaluations tied to student scores on standardized tests warps school priorities.

OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS: All Students, Regardless of Their Zip Code, Deserve the Support, Tools and Time to Learn

The chances your child has for success should not depend on living in the right zip code. If we're serious about every child's future, let's get serious about doing what works. The research is clear: sufficient funding is needed to provide learning opportunities that begin by age 4, safe schools, class small enough for one-on-one attention, modern textbooks, well-resourced teachers and community support services like nutrition and health for children who need it. We must sufficiently and equitably fund our schools!

QUALITY: Ensure Every Student Has a Caring, Qualified, Committed Teacher

Opportunity for all New Mexico students means teacher pay that attracts and helps retain the best people for the job. All New Mexico public school employees must receive a pay raise this year. At minimum, raises should keep pace with the cost of living each year. Low pay and unfair financial awards to only a few educators, are driving quality teachers and other employees away from working with the schools.

OPPORTUNITY: Every Student Gains When Teachers and Others Advance

Policies that help retain quality teachers and other education employees, and help them advance professionally, serve our students well. Educators value professional development; the Legislature must, once again, fully fund New Mexico's statutorily required teacher mentoring. Educators value fair evaluations and support from administrators without dictation from bureaucrats in Santa Fe interfering in that professional relationship. When teachers are heard in the policy-making arena, as well as at the work place, students thrive. Representation rights for employees must be protected. This means supporting maintenance of due process and all collective bargaining rights.

OPPORTUNITY: When Parents and the Community Thrive, Student Success Improves

Poverty effects student growth and limits opportunities. Legislation to help end poverty and improve the quality of life for students, parents and the community as a whole should be supported. This means maintaining all Union organizing rights (opposing so-called "Right to Work"); increasing the minimum wage to a living wage based on community standards; and providing access to quality public early education, and community support services like health and nutrition.