

The American Federation of Teachers New Mexico (AFT NM) and the Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF) advocates for proven, educator-driven school reforms that will improve education for New Mexico's 828 public schools. We strive to create the world-class educational system that New Mexico's children deserve. To this end, we advocate for aligning policies toward a unified vision that invests in and trusts teachers as professionals, along with a focus on equity.

We believe the following are essential in creating world-class schools. These are the school our students deserve.

1. Educate the Whole Child. Our state must invest to ensure that all schools have a well-rounded curriculum with classes in the Fine Arts in every school. Varied elective courses should be offered, including world languages. Every school should have a library—well-stocked with books from all areas and with the latest in technology equipment and material—and fully staffed with qualified librarians.

2. Help Students Get the Best Possible Start. Children need age-appropriate education in the early grades. Students should have access to quality pre-kindergarten programs. Numerous studies show that high-quality early childhood programs increase the likelihood that children, particularly those from disadvantaged, backgrounds, will become successful students and citizens.

3. Fully Fund Education. We believe that New Mexico has a moral and constitutional obligation to provide sufficient funding for public schools. There is no excuse for returning tax dollars to the most affluent while denying students the essential educational programs they deserve. This includes intervention programs to ensure success for all, as well as full funding for counselors, school nurses, social workers and therapists.

4. Teach ALL Students. We are committed to address any disparities in educational services and secure comprehensive, effective programs for English Language Learners and for students with special needs. Our focus must be on fulfilling our state's commitment to Bilingual Education.

5. Respect the Professionals. Educators need compensation that is comparable to others with similar education and experience levels. They need paid time to adequately plan lessons and collaborate with colleagues. Teachers and related services personnel need autonomy and shared decision-making in their schools. Their professional judgment must influence policies and practices at the district and state levels.

6. Establish Community Schools. Community schools focus on creating stable environments in which students can live and learn, and teachers can teach. They become the hub in the neighborhood linking medical, mental and social services to children and their families. Community schools are open outside the regular school day and offer programs and services such as daycare, tutoring, after school programs and adult education.

7. Address the issue of poverty. We work for excellent public schools, strong unions, comprehensive public services, livable wages, tax fairness, and social & economic justice. Real education reform fights poverty.

8. Understand That Lower Class Sizes Matter. We must significantly reduce class size. Numerous studies confirm what teachers know: large classes hinder a student's ability to learn and be successful.

