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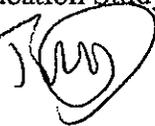
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September 18, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Travis Dulany 

**RE: STAFF REPORT: EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS: SALARY COMPARISONS
NATIONWIDE**

INTRODUCTION

Since at least 2001, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) has considered issues regarding educational assistant (EA) licensure and salaries. For school year 2001-2002, the Public Education Department (PED) reported that the average salary for an EA was \$12,550; in school year 2002-2003 the average reported salary for an EA was \$13,162. Many full-time EAs at the time were receiving annual salaries below \$10,000.

As a consequence of the increased requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), coupled with low levels of compensation for EAs, the LESL endorsed and the 2003 Legislature passed House Joint Memorial (HJM) 35, which requested that PED, in cooperation with the Commission on Higher Education (CHE, now the Higher Education Department), study the needs and resources related to improving the knowledge, skills, and status of EAs and substitute teachers. In response to the memorial, LESL staff were directed to establish the HJM 35 Work Group.

In January 2004, the LESL endorsed legislation based upon the final recommendations of the HJM 35 Work Group. Subsequently, during the 2004 legislative session, legislation was enacted to create a career advancement initiative for EAs that resulted in provisions in current law that outline the role, licensing framework, and minimum salaries for EAs:

- *Role:* EAs are considered to be all persons who perform services as EAs in public schools or special state-supported schools within state agencies. These persons are assigned and serve as assistants to school staff licensed by PED. The statute further states that, while there may be brief periods when EAs are alone with and in control of a classroom of students, their primary role is to work alongside or under the direct supervision of licensed staff.
- *Licensing Framework:* In 2004, PED was required to develop appropriate rules to institute a licensure system for EAs. The legislation further required that the highest level of EA licensure meet the standard for *paraprofessionals* established in federal statute and regulation for employment in a Title I program.
- *Minimum salaries:* The minimum annual salary established in statute is \$12,000 – a requirement that took effect during school year 2004-2005. School districts were required to implement a career salary framework that supports the PED licensure system in FY 05.

For the committee's information, this staff report includes information on:

- educational assistant salaries nationwide;
- New Mexico public school educational assistant salaries;
- federal law;
- current rule; and
- background.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT SALARIES NATIONWIDE

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) maintains data for EAs, with the most recent update in May of 2012. It may be important to note that, although elementary and secondary school EAs comprise the overwhelming majority of EAs across the country, the data also include EAs at child day care service centers and some higher education institutions (graduate teaching assistants are not included in the data).

Average Annual Salary

- According to BLS data, New Mexico employs 8,340 EAs across the fields mentioned above (i.e. elementary and secondary schools, child day care service centers, and some higher education institutions), with an average annual wage of \$21,670.
- The nationwide average annual wage among the 1,185,700 EAs employed in all fields is \$25,310.
- The nationwide average annual wage among the 940,000 EAs employed in elementary and secondary schools specifically is \$25,550.
- BLS data indicate that the highest average annual salaries are in Alaska, Nevada, Delaware, Maine, and Washington, which are shown in comparison with New Mexico in the table below:

State	Number of EAs	Average Annual Wage
Alaska	4,040	\$33,510
Nevada	4,580	\$32,300
Delaware	3,310	\$30,590
Maine	7,900	\$30,160
Washington	33,360	\$30,120
New Mexico	8,340	\$21,670

- Higher average annual wages tend to be in the northeastern and western portions of the country, meanwhile the southern and southwestern states appear to have lower average annual wages (see **Attachment 1**, *Annual mean wage of teacher assistants, by state, May 2012*).

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT SALARIES

After adjusting for certain outliers, **Attachment 2**, *Average Annual Salary for Educational Assistants by School District and Charter School*, shows a breakdown of average EA salaries by district or charter school for school year 2012-2013.

Regarding this EA salary data, it is important to note that data from the BLS contain different components than data maintained by PED. These PED data indicate a lower average annual salary than what was reported by BLS, further explained below:

- Certain outliers exist in the PED data. Upon further research, it appears that these outliers were caused by one of three situations:
 1. coding errors when submitting data to the Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System;
 2. additional stipends paid to EAs for duties such as coaching a sports team or grant writing; or
 3. where EA salaries are reported below the \$12,000 minimum established in state law, it appears that EAs in certain districts were either:
 - part time;
 - not employed for the full year; or
 - transferred to a different position or assigned to perform a different function part of the time and thus only listed as a part-time EA (e.g. an individual who serves as an administrative assistant as well as an EA).

FEDERAL LAW

NCLB requires that all educational assistants have at least a high school diploma, and that educational assistants serving in schools that receive Title I funds meet one of the following qualifications upon hire after January 8, 2002, or by January 8, 2006, if already working as an educational assistant:

- have completed at least two years of postsecondary study; or
- have obtained an associate or higher degree; or
- have met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics.

CURRENT RULE

PED rules for EAs include three levels:

- *Level 1:* EAs licensed under Level 1 must:
 - hold a high school diploma or equivalent;
 - be 18 years of age or older; and
 - receive certification by the public school superintendent, state-supported school superintendent, charter school administrator, or private school official that the EA has completed an orientation session pertinent to the assignment.
- *Level 2:* In addition to the requirements for Level 1, Level 2 EAs must receive certification by the public school superintendent, state-supported school superintendent, charter school administrator, or private school official that the EA has satisfactorily demonstrated PED's educational assistant competencies.
- *Level 3/paraprofessional requirements:* All EAs who are assigned to work in a Title I targeted assistance program or in a Title I school-wide program must hold Level 3 licensure. In addition to the requirements for levels 1 and 2, level 3 EAs must complete one of the following:
 - Earn an associate degree or complete 48 semester hours of academic credit. The coursework for either the associate degree or 48 hours of academic credit must include at least 15 semester hours of non-remedial degree coursework as follows:
 - ✓ three hours of language arts/reading or language arts/reading pedagogy;
 - ✓ three hours of writing or writing pedagogy;
 - ✓ three hours of mathematics or mathematics pedagogy; and
 - ✓ six hours of:
 - reading, writing, and mathematics readiness;
 - professional education;
 - classroom management;
 - teaching assistance; or
 - special education.
 - Achieve a passing score of at least 70 percent on a test developed or obtained by a local school district for the purpose of determining if an EA/paraprofessional has demonstrated the knowledge and ability to assist in instruction of certain subjects. This test must be approved by PED.

PED rule further specifies that Level 1 licenses are issued for a maximum of three years and may not be renewed. Level 2 and 3 licenses are issued for nine years and can be renewed at the end of that term based upon verification by the appropriate school administrator that the license holder has demonstrated PED's educational assistance competencies. EAs may also achieve Level 3 licensure without previously holding a level 1 or 2 license.

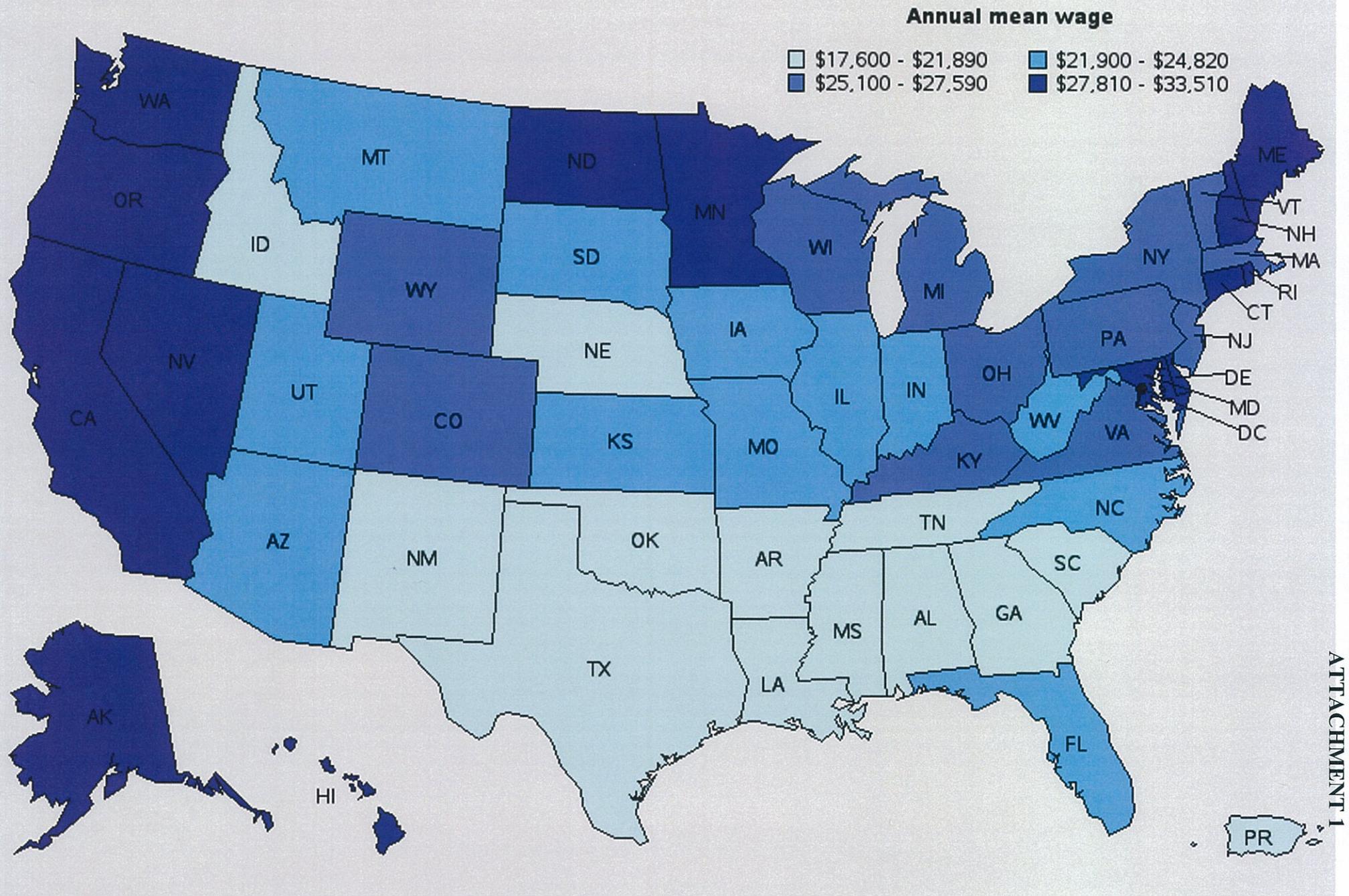
BACKGROUND

- During the 2001 interim, the LESC established the Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Education Reform to retain momentum for education reform that had been developed by the Education Initiatives and Accountability Task Force during its two years of operation (1998-2000). The subcommittee's original intent was to amend and reintroduce the education reform bill passed by the 2001 Legislature, which was vetoed by the Governor at the time. Among the reforms considered by the subcommittee was alignment with the requirements of NCLB regarding the qualifications for and preparation of highly qualified teachers and educational assistants.
- In 2003 the Legislature passed HJM 35, *Study Educational Assistant Education*, which requested PED, in cooperation with CHE, to study the needs and resources related to improving the knowledge, skills, and status of EAs and substitute teachers. The memorial recognized that "the role of educational assistants in the public school classroom is an important aspect of a child's education and educational assistants are considered paraprofessionals who must possess the training and expertise required to perform their jobs in a quality manner." HJM 35 was endorsed by the LESC.
- The committee directed LESC staff to establish a HJM 35 Work Group that included representatives from PED, CHE, the Albuquerque Educational Assistants Association, Albuquerque Public Schools, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, and the Office of Education Accountability. In December 2003, the LESC heard the group's recommendations, and in January 2004, the LESC endorsed legislation based upon those recommendations.
- As noted in the "Introduction" section of this report, the 2004 Legislature enacted a career advancement initiative for educational assistants that:
 - required PED to institute a licensure system through regulation for EAs;
 - established a \$12,000 minimum annual salary for licensed EAs beginning in FY 05, but authorizes the Secretary of Public Education to adjust the minimum salary in accordance with appropriations for that purpose in each school year; and
 - required school districts to initiate in FY 05 the implementation of a career salary framework that supports the licensure framework.
- Because the final version of the legislation passed by the 2004 Legislature differed significantly from the legislation originally endorsed by the LESC, the committee requested that staff continue to study the issue. In July 2004, the Educational Assistants' Career Ladder Work Group was reconstituted from the original HJM 35 Work Group with additional representation. The work group participants recommended four licensure

levels with accompanying minimum salaries of \$11,000, \$14,000, \$17,000, and \$20,000, respectively.

- The major difference between the recommendations of the HJM 35 Work Group in 2003 and those of the Educational Assistants' Career Ladder Work Group in 2004 is that the new recommendations included two licensure levels, Level 1 and Level 2, that were designed for EAs employed in positions that do not require them to meet NCLB requirements. The recommendations of the Educational Assistants' Career Ladder Work Group were not adopted in law.

Annual mean wage of teacher assistants, by state, May 2012



Blank areas indicate data not available.

ATTACHMENT 2

Average Annual Salary for Educational Assistants by School District and Charter School

District/Charter School	Average of Total Annual Salary
1 ABQ SIGN LANGUAGE ACADEMY (Charter)	\$ 18,655.67
2 ALAMOGORDO	\$ 15,328.68
3 ALBUQUERQUE	\$ 16,026.88
4 ALBUQUERQUE INSTITUTE OF MATH & SCIENCE (Charter)	\$ 30,000.00
5 ALDO LEOPOLD CHARTER (Charter)	\$ 13,157.00
6 AMY BIEHL CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL (Charter)	\$ 18,040.00
7 ANIMAS	\$ 14,103.80
8 ARTESIA	\$ 18,402.73
9 AZTEC	\$ 14,661.63
10 BELEN	\$ 14,790.58
11 BERNALILLO	\$ 20,504.03
12 BLOOMFIELD	\$ 14,564.13
13 CAPITAN	\$ 15,873.67
14 CARLSBAD	\$ 19,209.46
15 CARRIZOZO	\$ 17,050.00
16 CENTRAL CONS.	\$ 19,731.71
17 CESAR CHAVEZ COMMUNITY SCHOOL (Charter)	\$ 28,044.50
18 CHAMA	\$ 14,442.63
19 CIEN AGUAS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (Charter)	\$ 16,066.67
20 CIMARRON	\$ 20,830.00
21 CLAYTON	\$ 19,875.44
22 CLOUDCROFT	\$ 15,850.29
23 CLOVIS	\$ 15,151.37
24 COBRE CONS.	\$ 14,548.00
25 CORONA	\$ 14,752.67
26 CREATIVE ED PREP #1 (Charter)	\$ 24,233.00
27 CUBA	\$ 17,652.27
28 DEMING	\$ 16,582.66
29 DES MOINES	\$ 11,660.33
30 DEXTER	\$ 19,771.10
31 DORA	\$ 15,275.33
32 DULCE	\$ 18,960.53
33 EAST MTN HIGH SCHOOL (Charter)	\$ 19,437.00
34 ELIDA	\$ 12,895.09
35 ESPANOLA	\$ 15,437.49
36 ESTANCIA	\$ 15,594.21
37 ESTANCIA VALLEY CLASSICAL ACADEMY (Charter)	\$ 13,029.00
38 EUNICE	\$ 12,371.47
39 FARMINGTON	\$ 14,998.03
40 FLOYD	\$ 17,469.00
41 FT SUMNER	\$ 18,069.20
42 GADSDEN	\$ 16,432.27
43 GALLUP	\$ 15,978.10

Salary values equaling zero removed from calculated average.
Salaries for locally-chartered charter schools included within district salary data.

Average Annual Salary for Educational Assistants by School District and Charter School

44	GILBERT L SENA CHARTER HS (Charter)	\$	23,687.94	44
45	GRADY	\$	13,230.00	45
46	GRANTS	\$	15,267.18	46
47	HAGERMAN	\$	15,374.90	47
48	HATCH	\$	17,489.70	48
49	HOBBS	\$	13,080.37	49
50	HONDO	\$	18,182.67	50
51	HORIZON ACADEMY WEST (Charter)	\$	15,090.00	51
52	HOUSE	\$	14,238.75	52
53	INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL AT MESA DEL SOL (Charter)	\$	11,439.00	53
54	J PAUL TAYLOR ACADEMY (Charter)	\$	20,000.00	54
55	JAL	\$	14,178.25	55
56	JEMEZ MOUNTAIN	\$	14,722.60	56
57	JEMEZ VALLEY	\$	20,885.59	57
58	LA PROMESA EARLY LEARNING (Charter)	\$	16,500.43	58
59	LA RESOLANA LEADERSHIP (Charter)	\$	15,600.00	59
60	LA TIERRA MONTESSORI SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	16,666.67	60
61	LAKE ARTHUR	\$	13,999.00	61
62	LAS CRUCES	\$	16,381.83	62
63	LAS VEGAS CITY	\$	15,683.71	63
64	LOGAN	\$	14,333.40	64
65	LORDSBURG	\$	16,442.09	65
66	LOS ALAMOS	\$	15,114.61	66
67	LOS LUNAS	\$	14,909.37	67
68	LOVING	\$	17,015.00	68
69	LOVINGTON	\$	15,074.81	69
70	MAGDALENA	\$	16,860.73	70
71	MAXWELL	\$	18,081.00	71
72	MCCURDY CHARTER SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	14,500.00	72
73	MEDIA ARTS CHARTER (Charter)	\$	21,840.00	73
74	MELROSE	\$	21,139.50	74
75	MESA VISTA	\$	17,995.71	75
76	MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	17,515.88	76
77	MORA	\$	15,387.25	77
78	MORIARTY-EDGEWOOD	\$	14,970.31	78
79	MOSQUERO	\$	14,306.00	79
80	MOUNTAINAIR	\$	15,602.60	80
81	NEW MEXICO INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	19,107.33	81
82	NM SCHOOL FOR ARTS (Charter)	\$	31,385.00	82
83	NORTH VALLEY CHARTER (Charter)	\$	19,427.38	83
84	PECOS	\$	22,444.33	84
85	PENASCO	\$	17,540.17	85
86	POJOAQUE	\$	15,951.44	86
87	PORTALES	\$	15,812.07	87
88	QUEMADO	\$	13,567.17	88
89	QUESTA	\$	21,199.60	89
90	RALPH J BUNCHE ACADEMY (Charter)	\$	14,974.50	90

Salary values equaling zero removed from calculated average.
Salaries for locally-chartered charter schools included within district salary data.

Average Annual Salary for Educational Assistants by School District and Charter School

91	RATON	\$	16,000.33	91
92	RESERVE	\$	17,227.33	92
93	RIO RANCHO	\$	14,113.16	93
94	ROSWELL	\$	15,386.90	94
95	ROY	\$	14,952.00	95
96	RUIDOSO	\$	17,142.68	96
97	SAGE MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	22,210.38	97
98	SAN JON	\$	14,903.17	98
99	SANTA FE	\$	15,483.87	99
100	SANTA ROSA	\$	18,169.70	100
101	SCHOOL OF DREAMS ACADEMY (Charter)	\$	20,391.00	101
102	SILVER CITY	\$	15,722.20	102
103	SOCORRO	\$	16,151.17	103
104	SOUTH VALLEY PREP (Charter)	\$	25,500.00	104
105	SOUTHWEST INTERMEDIATE LEARNING CENTER (Charter)	\$	17,156.00	105
106	SOUTHWEST PRIMARY LEARNING CENTER (Charter)	\$	16,605.00	106
107	SOUTHWEST SECONDARY LEARNING CENTER (Charter)	\$	21,656.67	107
108	SPRINGER	\$	22,947.50	108
109	SW AERONAUTICS MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE (Charter)	\$	17,131.00	109
110	TAOS	\$	16,797.37	110
111	TAOS ACADEMY (Charter)	\$	15,826.00	111
112	TAOS INTEGRATED SCHOOL OF THE ARTS (Charter)	\$	14,025.00	112
113	TATUM	\$	22,202.33	113
114	TEXICO	\$	16,387.36	114
115	THE LEARNING COMMUNITY (Charter)	\$	22,000.00	115
116	TIERRA ADENTRO (Charter)	\$	30,110.04	116
117	TRUTH OR CONS.	\$	19,137.88	117
118	TUCUMCARI	\$	16,811.70	118
119	TULAROSA	\$	17,402.15	119
120	UPLIFT COMMUNITY SCHOOL (Charter)	\$	20,366.67	120
121	VAUGHN	\$	20,267.75	121
122	VILLAGE ACADEMY (Charter)	\$	21,788.00	122
123	WAGON MOUND	\$	14,312.50	123
124	WALATOWA CHARTER HIGH (Charter)	\$	19,441.00	124
125	WEST LAS VEGAS	\$	18,799.92	125
126	ZUNI	\$	22,614.51	126
127	Statewide Average	\$	16,089.43	127

Salary values equaling zero removed from calculated average.
Salaries for locally-chartered charter schools included within district salary data.