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PRESENTATION TO THE LESL

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

The Executive Board of New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NMCEL) and the Executive Council of the NM School Superintendents' Association (NMSSA) collaborate to develop a Legislative Platform. For the past couple of years, the NM School Boards Association has also supported the platform. While in the past, the organizations have listed several items or requests, this year we are instead asking to be included, not only in identifying issues and problems but in developing solutions. We believe as many others do, that we are better and stronger when we collaborate and work together. We want to stand together as leaders not to ask for a handout but instead to request that we work together to seek solutions to strengthen our schools and in turn build the economy of our state.

The details of the 2015 Legislative Platform are presented by:

Erik Bose, President of the NMCEL Board, Executive Director of the ABQ Charter Academy

Kirk Carpenter, President of NMSSA, Superintendent-Aztec Schools

Dr. Gloria O. Rendon, Executive Director, NMCEL, NMSSA

**NMCEL/NMSSA
2016 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM**

Every Child in New Mexico Career and College Ready!

The Educational Leaders of New Mexico are eager to assist in growing and improving New Mexico's economy which can and will happen when we invest in preparing EVERY CHILD for their future in college and careers. A robust economy is the result of strong, effective public schools preparing EVERY CHILD for college and careers.

Educational Leaders are problem solvers and can help with solutions. They want to and can be part of the solution. The improvement of our schools and our economy is everyone's business and responsibility. Schools are responsible for improvement if they are sufficiently funded and with support from both their school community and the larger community of the state of New Mexico. Positive economic development and great schools go hand in hand; and well funded schools can be one solution to Economic Growth.

Educational Leaders request a seat at the table to contribute their expertise and ideas to improve both our schools and New Mexico's economy. Our leaders request they be part of the team to examine the points below and to work on a solutions-based plan to successfully prepare students and build a strong economy.

Our constitution requires that we provide a sufficient education for each child in New Mexico.

What is the true cost of this goal? What is meant by "sufficient"? Does it or should it mean...

- A Certified/highly qualified teacher in every classroom?
- A nurse in every school?
- A counselor in every school?
- A certified/highly qualified principal in every school
- Maximum class sizes?
- Minimum salary requirements?
- Pre-K programs for all children?
- Intervention programs?
- Funding for timely instructional materials?

Until we know what is meant by "sufficient" we cannot know how to fund pre-K 12 education.

- Currently, the state allocates funding for education based on a set unit value.

What is not widely known or understood is. . .

- True per pupil allocation differs from district to district.
- Fixed costs (insurance, utility costs, etc.) reduce the per pupil allocation
- Lack of timeliness in providing reimbursements to districts means districts are not receiving all the money to which they are entitled; thus, state funds are used for federal programs, creating a cash flow problem.

The true per pupil allocation must be determined to assure that students are treated equitably.

We encourage the Legislature to consider the following requests for the immediate future and during the 2016 Legislative session:

- **Funding**

- New Mexico's educational leaders request that of any new funding available for the 2016-17 school year, 50% be appropriated for K-12 public education.
- Educational Leaders request that **All** new money allocated to public education be placed "above the line".
 - Money placed below the line does not fund education for all children. Although funding is provided for some children, the effect further disequalizes the per pupil allocation in our schools.
 - Districts and school communities are held accountable for student performance, and districts should be trusted to make the best decisions for their students.
 - Place a moratorium on any new schools
 - Districts continue to see reductions based on the T & E factor
 - Should every child in New Mexico have access to technology in their school and classrooms? If so, what is the true cost of such a goal? Initiatives like the Education Superhighway will support this goal.

- **The Teacher and Leader Shortage is a Reality**—we must work together to recruit and retain Highly Qualified Teachers and Leaders to provide an excellent education to every child in New Mexico.

How can this be accomplished? Quality requires sufficient funding!

- Salary base for most teachers has been in place for ten + years; other than minimal increases for beginning teachers, salaries have remained stagnant for many years.
- Salaries must be competitive with other professions. Entry level positions in other professions are more lucrative and are luring away many of our best and brightest candidates.
- Salaries must be competitive with neighboring states; otherwise, our teachers will simply cross state lines to earn more money.
- Novel strategies are necessary to recruit and retain the best people to become teachers and principals. Competitive salaries, quality mentor programs and appropriate classroom support and resources contribute to increased student achievement.
- Effective mentoring programs. Fund effective mentoring programs and appropriate professional development programs to provide support while new teachers are learning and gaining confidence in their ability to provide effective instruction.