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December 12, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Sharon Caballero, Kathleen Forrer, and Pamela Herman

RE: FINAL 2006 INTERIM REPORT: LESC WORK GROUP ON COLLEGE/WORKPLACE READINESS AND HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN

The final 2006 interim report of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) Work Group on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign includes a history of the work group; monthly summaries of the work group's input to the LESC (see Attachments 1, 2, and 3); and a list of work group members (see Attachment 4).

History of the Subcommittee

At almost every LESC meeting, the committee has been provided with data and other information indicating that upon graduation from high school, many New Mexico students are ill-prepared to enter the workplace or higher education. At the national level, numerous authorities have advocated for the improvement of high school curricula and the importance of a rigorous high school curriculum – particularly in English, mathematics, and science, which are critical to preparing students for postsecondary education and work. The ACT Policy Report *Courses Count: Preparing Students for Postsecondary Success* states that despite such warnings, high schools still have large numbers of students that do not participate in the most beneficial courses, and there is little evidence that the high school curriculum is rigorous enough to ensure that most students are adequately prepared for postsecondary success.

Recognizing the critical importance of adequately preparing New Mexico's students for life after high school, the LESC has devoted one day out of every meeting during the 2006 interim to the issue of College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign. In August 2006, the LESC,

in conjunction with the Public Education Department (PED), convened a work group, comprised of representatives from the public schools – superintendents, principals and teachers; representatives from PED and the Higher Education Department (HED); the tribal entities; two- and four-year postsecondary institutions; other educational organizations; and the business community. Charged with examining all aspects of College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign, this work group has worked closely with the LESC throughout the interim and has provided the following input based on presentations made to the LESC at each of the committee’s meetings. This input will be used by the LESC in developing recommendations for possible legislation.

**LESC Work Group
College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign
Consolidated Input from the September 14, 2006 Discussions**

During its September 2006 meeting, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard presentations on a number of issues concerning College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign, including the American Diploma Project (ADP), ACT's college and workplace readiness examination for high school students, early college high school initiatives, high school career clusters, and the hospitality and tourism education initiative. Following the presentations, members of the LESG Work Group on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign met in three subgroups to discuss the topics presented to the committee. The following input was derived from the separate discussions of all three subgroups:

Alignment of End-of-Course and Placement Tests: Current statute requires that high school curricula and end-of-course tests be aligned with the placements tests administered by New Mexico's postsecondary institutions and further requires that the Public Education Department and the Higher Education Department collaborate in order to achieve the mandated alignment. In order to accomplish this task, the work group makes the following recommendations:

- New Mexico's postsecondary institutions use different placement tests; there is a need to establish some consistency with regard to placement instruments and cut scores, with appropriate recognition of mission differentiation.
- Articulation could/should mean that to succeed in a commonly-numbered 100-level course, students need the same level of preparation regardless of institution.
- Early intervention by school personnel is necessary to ensure that students will not require remediation at the postsecondary level.
- Rather than "reinventing the wheel," the state should look into the possibility of using already-developed examinations to measure middle school and high school students' academic progress over time. Additionally, the state needs to make sure that competency exams have items that address college placement and workplace readiness.
- All students should have access to dual enrollment opportunities. The biggest barrier is cost; both the public school and the higher education funding formulas should be examined to see how the costs associated with dual enrollment can best be accommodated.
- Distance education ("virtual connections") is one means of allowing high school students in rural locations to access dual credit postsecondary courses, as is providing free transportation to and from a regional postsecondary institution. Another alternative is the Hagerman model in which high school teachers are granted adjunct status by a postsecondary institution, thus qualifying them to teach college courses on-site at the high school.
- To achieve alignment, most members of the work group agreed that the state should participate in the ADP. In electing to work with Achieve/ADP, members cited the value of holding to a schedule; using a process with demonstrated success; and recognizing business and industry expectations as part of the alignment process.

Career Clusters: On August 29, 2006, Governor Richardson held a press conference to announce the issuance of the *Work in New Mexico: New Mexico Career Clusters Guidebook*, which was created by the Governor’s Workforce Coordination and Oversight Committee. The new guidebook is structured around seven New Mexico specific career clusters: Arts and Entertainment; Business Services; Communications and Information; Energy and Environmental Technologies; Engineering, Construction and Manufacturing; Health and Biosciences; and Hospitality and Tourism. The implementation of career pathways has been a major focus of the LESC’s examination of College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign. With regard to the implementation of career clusters, the work group makes the following recommendations:

- New Mexico faces two barriers to implementing career pathways: hiring qualified staff and providing adequate facilities. “Chairs” endowed by industry might be one way to attract skilled teachers with industry experience. Other possibilities are having individuals “on loan” from industry to teach for a specific period of time and teaming a professional from industry with a regular classroom teacher.
- Students must start no later than early middle school to identify, explore, refine and adjust their career goals. Students need help to understand the implications of choices, and should have relevant curricular options that do not foreclose future opportunities.
- Because the ability of guidance counselors to assist students in choosing an appropriate career pathway may be limited, additional systems and programs are needed including:
 - giving every teacher responsibility for guidance for a few students;
 - implementing the Nebraska system with career guidance centers available to students and adults where a career inventory can be taken any time;
 - using the computer-based career pathways program such as that at Sandia Labs;
 - replicating the Farmington middle-school career labs, a 12-week course with modules that student rotate through to sample career options; and/or
 - offering internships, job shadowing opportunities, and independent study.
- High schools should become more flexible in order to meet the needs of all students. In order to provide in-depth instruction, it may be necessary for schools to extend the school year and/or the school day; to provide alternative schedules in which a student is in class for a portion of the week and in a work or an apprenticeship setting for the remainder of the week; and/or to make the last year of high school industry-related, allowing students to get a head start in pursuing a career.
- Not every high school needs to offer every career cluster. Smaller communities may wish to concentrate on a few that meet the needs of their geographic areas. Even large communities may wish to use the “magnet” model by having individual high schools specialize in one or two clusters or by having one high school offer all of the clusters for a group of feeder high schools. It may also be possible for local high schools to use state-of-the-art facilities located at a nearby postsecondary institution.

Funding: During all of the September work group discussions, the members stressed the need for sufficient funding at both the secondary and postsecondary levels for current and additional staff, facilities, equipment, professional development, and alternative course delivery systems. In particular, representatives from small and rural school districts cited the limited resources available to them to implement career pathways; to provide dual credit and Advanced Placement opportunities for their students; and to access online courses for their students and staff.

**LESC Work Group
College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign
Consolidated Input from the October 12, 2006 Discussions**

During its October 2006 meeting, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard presentations on a number of issues concerning College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign, including the preparation of pre-service teachers, accreditation of teacher preparation programs, in-service programs for teachers, teacher mentorship programs, and statewide professional development programs. Following the presentations, the members of the LESG Work Group on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign met in small groups to discuss the topics presented to the committee. The following input was derived from the separate discussions of all three subgroups:

Teacher Preparation Coursework: The subgroups made a number of recommendations regarding the content and pedagogy of coursework required of teacher preparation candidates, including consensus on the following:

- Ensure that all programs provide students with a strong understanding of state standards and benchmarks, including both the content knowledge required to deliver instruction and the ability to plan lessons that address standards.
- Ensure that all programs provide students with an understanding of how to develop formative assessments and how to use individual assessment data to drive instruction.
- Ensure that all programs and courses integrate effective instruction in teaching of reading based on current scientific research, and includes opportunities for candidates to practice and prove that they can use research-based reading methods.
- Ensure that faculty in teacher preparation programs understand the calculation of adequate yearly progress and its implications.
- Ensure that all programs prepare students to use educational technology effectively for instruction and assessment.
- Ensure that all programs impart to students an understanding of the social and cultural issues facing all New Mexico children, and that teacher candidates learn to communicate a love of learning and enthusiasm for subject matter.
- Consider conducting a statewide study to identify best practices in teacher preparation, and disseminate the results to improve consistency among programs.

Colleges of Arts and Sciences: At least two subgroups stated that colleges of arts and sciences have a role to play in teacher preparation, including the following recommendations:

- Faculty in content disciplines should align their instruction with state standards and benchmarks.
- Faculty in content disciplines should model best teaching practices for teacher preparation candidates.
- Teacher candidates need better preparation in language arts in college.

Institutions of Higher Education: The subgroups also had recommendations regarding the responsibilities of institutions of higher education (IHEs) for the effectiveness of teacher preparation, including the following:

- Ensure that teacher preparation programs/colleges of education receive their fair share of higher education funding, including funding for facilities and equipment.
- Raise the salaries of faculty in teacher preparation programs to a more competitive level.
- For accountability purposes, require IHEs to use the uniform student identification number assigned by PED for postsecondary students.

Field Experiences: The subgroups agreed that the extent and quality of field experiences offered by teacher preparation programs in partnership with school districts is critical to qualify new teachers, keep postsecondary faculty current on conditions, issues and practices in the field, and ensure the connection between research and practice. The subgroups recommended the following:

- Field experiences, including student teaching, should be expanded to occupy a greater role in the teacher preparation, starting during the 64-credit undergraduate lower division teacher preparation module.
- Student teaching needs to occupy at least a full semester, if not a full year, and should include an opportunity to take full responsibility for the classroom with regular, meaningful feedback from a well-trained supervisor or faculty member.
- Professional development schools, or lab schools, offer a good model for faculty and classroom teachers to work in partnership to prepare new teachers.
- Student teaching should reinforce skills such as use of data to drive instruction and use of scientifically based reading methods. Cooperating teachers need to be skilled in these areas and trained to model and reinforce these skills.
- Find ways to encourage more dialogue between public schools and teacher preparation programs.
- One group recommended that students receive a stipend for student teaching.

Mentoring: The subgroups agreed that mentoring is the best way to continue professional development of new teachers once they are in their own classrooms. At least two groups recommended that new teachers have a year of internship or residency after completing their coursework, with structured supervision and feedback. Other recommendations included the following:

- Mentoring programs are good opportunities for teacher preparation programs to partner with school districts, including the use of distance learning where appropriate.
- Mentoring requires well-trained supervisors and adequate time and financial resources.
- Mentoring is part of the job description of Level 3-A teachers and shouldn't always entail a stipend.
- Mentoring for secondary teachers often requires supervision from a colleague in the same discipline.
- Most new teachers need lots of help with classroom management.
- Consider separate monthly support groups for mentors and for supervisors.

Ongoing Teacher Professional Development: All the subgroups agreed strongly that teacher professional development must be delivered in a sustained, structured, ongoing process that continues throughout the careers of teachers at all tiers in the licensure system. The subgroups made the following recommendations:

- Adequate time must be devoted to professional development, during summers and during the school day and year. What is learned in a workshop or training needs to be reinforced in practice.
- Teacher professional development should be differentiated and tied to student achievement.
- Statewide, professional development needs to be more focused to address system-wide priorities (identified to include applying math standards and benchmarks; implementing scientific research-based reading instruction; use of assessments and data to drive instruction; differentiating instruction; and use of technology) where they intersect with the identified needs of individual districts, schools, and teachers.
- Many teachers need continuing professional development in content areas. Such education might be an appropriate requirement for moving from Level 2 to Level 3-A.
- Instructional coaches, like mentors, may need training in adult education.
- Consider again a requirement for continuing education credits for licensure.
- Consider advanced placement training as a way to improve the rigor of all high school courses.

Other recommendations:

- Two subgroups emphasized the importance of good leadership in school improvement. Higher education and public education should work together to develop effective ways to attract and train educational leaders.
- School principals need to be more fairly compensated to attract well-qualified leaders.
- Regional Education Cooperatives are an important player in providing teacher professional development, and need adequate funding to be effective.
- To attract mid- and late-career professionals into teaching, teacher preparation programs should develop curricula to train workers with strong content knowledge but little or no experience in delivering it to public school students, and then should partner with the business sector for recruitment.

**LESC Work Group
College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign
Consolidated Input from the November 14, 2006 Discussions**

During its November 2006 meeting, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard presentations on a number of issues concerning College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign, including high school diploma options, graduation requirements for public schools, a systems-wide approach to redesigning high schools, and factors influencing student success. Following the presentations, members of the LESG Work Group on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign met in three subgroups to discuss the topics presented to the committee. The following input was derived from the separate discussion of all three subgroups.

Diploma Options and Graduation Requirements: The main focus of all subgroups was whether to change the graduation requirements and diploma options for New Mexico high school students to increase the rigor of the high school program to ensure college/workplace readiness. The groups agreed that aligning the current standards with the high school curriculum, specifically math and English, and increasing rigor would increase the knowledge and skills of high school graduates to be college and workplace ready. The focus on rigor tended to be in three areas: standards, the teaching of mathematics, and appropriate funding:

- New Mexico should align standards with high school graduation requirements and course content.
- The subgroups made several suggestions regarding math, including that Algebra I be offered no later than 8th grade so that students are better prepared to succeed in high school, and that Algebra II, or an equivalent, as well as a fourth year of math, be required of students to earn a high school diploma.
- The subgroups agreed that all mandates to improve high school graduation requirements or options must be funded appropriately.

Systems-wide Approach to Redesigning High School: Discussions on a systems-wide approach to redesigning high schools also led to discussions on the need for collaborations and partnerships and student and teacher support systems if new graduation requirements or options were implemented.

- Systems-wide approach
 - Strong, but not unanimous, support was indicated for making the college prep program the default curriculum for high school students since data suggest that workplace preparation and college readiness require the same level of skills.
 - In order to prepare students to succeed in high school and decrease the 9th grade dropout rate, the emphasis on increasing rigor should begin with the middle schools and with the development of a better “road to AP” (advanced placement).

- Summer bridge programs, as a way to prepare middle school students for success in high school, should be offered between grades 8 and 9, and be fully funded for all school districts.
 - Facilities need to be developed that meet the increasing needs of the 21st century to accommodate more flexible schedules that respond to new technologies and distance learning.
 - PED should be responsible for the data collection and dissemination of “best practices” in New Mexico schools to improve teaching and learning.
- Collaborations and partnerships
 - Collaborative regional networks in partnership with the Public Education Department (PED) and the New Mexico Business Roundtable for Educational Excellence (NMBREE) as recommended by NMBREE, could be more effectively implemented if assigned to the Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs) which are already established. This suggestion would expand the role of the RECs, and make more efficient use of a system already in place that would address the need to provide students in rural areas an equitable education.
- Student and Teacher support systems
 - Students should be given earlier assessments and the 10th grade assessment test should be eliminated and replaced with a 9th grade test so that students can have enough time to address any necessary remediation.
 - Internships and apprenticeships for students in career preparation programs such as career clusters that offer real world applications should be expanded to offer students more opportunities to be workplace ready.
 - Professional development programs need to be expanded, need to be sequential, and need to be monitored by PED to improve teacher quality and student learning.
 - The current pool for math and science teachers is inadequate, both in terms of the number of individuals available and in terms of the academic backgrounds of those individuals. One way of addressing this problem is to partner with the business sector and the national labs to recruit mid- and late-career professionals into teaching and to develop teacher preparation programs designed specifically for professionals with strong content knowledge but little or no teaching experience.
 - The use of technology, for innovative programs, dual enrollment, more rigorous courses, teacher in-service, partnerships, career and workplace preparation, should be expanded with appropriate funding.
 - PED should define distance education and answer questions regarding attendance, cost-sharing, counseling, and extra curricular activities.
 - A mechanism for standardizing funding for dual enrollment, the practice of students receiving both high school and college credit for the same course, needs to be studied and implemented so that all students have an equal opportunity to this important resource.
 - State mandated mentoring programs for Tier I teachers should be funded and extended in all districts through year three to help improve the quality of teaching and preparing highly qualified teachers.

Funding: Committee and workgroup members all stressed the necessity for appropriate funding if any changes in the high school diploma requirements were to be mandated. Such mandates might require additional funding for staff, facilities, professional development activities, technological needs, alternative course delivery systems, collaborations or partnerships.

**LESC WORK GROUP
COLLEGE/WORKPLACE READINESS AND HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN
2006 INTERIM**

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