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December 12, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Legislative Education Study Committee

**FR:** Pamela Herman

**RE: STAFF BRIEF: RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FOR  
NEW MEXICO FIRST TOWN HALL ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

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The 2006 Interim Workplan of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) includes a presentation by the Implementation Team of the April 2006 New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education on major policy initiatives for the 2007 legislative session.

**Issues:**

- On April 20-22, 2006, New Mexico First convened a Town Hall in Santa Fe entitled *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce: A Town Hall on Higher Education*.
- Almost 200 people took part in the three-day event, with 122 active participants including representatives of public and private two- and four-year institutions of higher education; public and private K-12 schools; key business and industry groups; tribal, local and state government; and nonprofit organizations; as well as interested community members and high school and college students.
- The Town Hall process resulted in 18 consensus recommendations which the final report summarized and organized into the following five policy areas:
  1. increasing standards and collaboration;
  2. reforming New Mexico's system of higher education;
  3. linking education to economic and labor trends;
  4. funding; and
  5. programs to help students.

- Before the Town Hall began, New Mexico First identified two Implementation Team leaders: former Governor Gary Carruthers of New Mexico State University and Mr. Mike DeWitte of Sandia National Laboratories.
- In August 2006, representatives of New Mexico First and the Implementation Team for the Town Hall on Higher Education made a presentation to the LESC at which they outlined the Town Hall recommendations, including seven priorities based on the team’s analysis of current needs, potential benefit, and ability to be implemented, as follows:
  1. state funding for a major public-awareness campaign on the value of education;
  2. state funding for a system that enables the exchange of student data;
  3. adoption and implementation of college/career readiness standards;
  4. adoption and funding of a leading edge postsecondary financial aid program;
  5. education alignment with economic development priorities and opportunities;
  6. support and funding to use work-based assessment tools; and
  7. promotion of the development of state-of-the-art network infrastructure.
- At the August 2006 LESC meeting, the Town Hall Implementation Team representatives requested an opportunity to appear before the committee prior to the 2007 legislative session to make a presentation on proposed initiatives to implement these priorities (see Attachment).

**Background:**

- Established in 1986 by New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici, New Mexico First is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established “to effect positive change in our state by addressing fundamental policy issues through the Town Hall process, creating a statewide network of informed and caring citizens, and leading New Mexicans to take action.”
- New Mexico First has five stated goals:
  1. to identify fundamental policy issues;
  2. to find positive solutions to the problems posed by those issues;
  3. to effect solutions through the dissemination of information;
  4. to identify, inform, and motivate leaders for New Mexico; and
  5. to create a statewide network of informed and caring New Mexicans.
- New Mexico First conducts two types of Town Halls: customized Town Halls for clients on a variety of topics important to New Mexico and its own annual statewide Town Hall in the spring.
- According to New Mexico First, “the Town Hall model is a very specific consensus building process developed by Arizona Town Halls and modified by New Mexico First. Participants meet for two days in small groups, each led by a discussion leader and recorder trained by New Mexico First. As reports from the groups’ deliberations are collected during this period, they are synthesized by the master recorder” into a draft Consensus Report. At a final plenary session, Town Hall participants discuss, debate, and amend the draft document until consensus is reached. The Consensus Final Report is distributed widely as part of the implementation process.

**Presenters:**

Mr. Mike DeWitte, Co-chair, Implementation Team for New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education; and Ms. Heather Balas, President, New Mexico First, will describe the steps the team is taking to implement the recommendations of the New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education and will present the proposals of the Implementation Team for action by the 2007 Legislature to carry out those recommendations.

**Questions the committee may wish to consider:**

1. What progress has the Implementation Team for New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education made since its presentation to the committee in August, 2006?
2. What are the major initiatives proposed by the Implementation Team to carry out the Town Hall recommendations, and what legislative action, if any, will be required to implement them?
3. What activities does the Implementation team have planned for the 2007 interim to continue its work?
4. Will the Implementation Team be proposing any additional recommendations for the 2008 session?





**NEW MEXICO FIRST**

*People. Ideas. Progress. 20 Years.*

**Legislative Agenda**

**Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce:  
A Town Hall on Higher Education  
(Town Hall 34)**

New Mexico First convened its 34<sup>th</sup> statewide town hall in April 2006. The event, *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce: A Town Hall on Higher Education* brought together stakeholders in higher education and economic development from all parts of New Mexico. Almost 200 people took part in the event, with 122 active participants who remained for all three days of deliberations. These participants developed recommendations on preparing New Mexicans to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

After the town hall, an Implementation Team was established to advance the citizens' recommendations. In the months that followed, the team researched the recommendations, prioritized them, and developed the following priorities for the 2007 Legislative Session.

<b>Proposed Legislative Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Key Supporters</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Town Hall Recommendation</b>
<p><b>A) Fund a public awareness campaign on the value of college.</b></p>	<p>If funded, this multi-faceted campaign will create a sense of urgency about completing high school and entering college – be that a university, community college, or trade school. Town Hall participants believe that such a campaign will help parents and students realize the practical benefits of college.</p> <p>The campaign, which will be run through the state Higher Education Department, and will target people of all ages about continuing their education. It will include significant market research, and an assessment of existing marketing materials being used at our state colleges and universities. Drawing on the market research, the statewide campaign will select the most effective outreach tools, which may include television, radio, movie theater, and printed promotions. The campaign will be planned by a coordinating team of state, tribal, local, national, business, nonprofit, and student partners.</p> <p>National and local sponsors will be sought to help support creative production of the campaign and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Department (HED)</li> <li>• College Success Network</li> <li>• Gaining Early Awareness &amp; Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)</li> <li>• Engaging Latino Communities For Education (ENLACE)</li> <li>• NM Student Loans</li> <li>• NM MESA*<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<p>\$3 million legislative appropriation to HED (leveraged with contributions from national and local sponsors)</p>	<p><b>TH Rec #16:</b> The Governor, tribal leaders, and business leaders should conduct a major public awareness campaign on the value of education.</p>

<sup>1</sup> NM Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement

Proposed Legislative Initiative	Description	Key Supporters	Cost	Town Hall Recommendation
<p><b>B) Align high school graduation requirements with college placement exams.</b></p>	<p>When New Mexico students complete high school, one would expect that their graduation requirements match up with the entrance expectations of New Mexico colleges. That is not the case, as town hall participants repeatedly pointed out. Currently New Mexico experiences 42% remediation of students entering colleges.</p> <p>To address this issue, the Town Hall 34 Implementation Team supports the recommendation of the HED/PED Alignment Task force to replace the NM High School Competency Exam with a new exam that adheres to New Mexico standards for curricula and also serves as a college placement test.</p> <p>The new test will contain benchmarks that are comparable to those in other states and industrialized nations, helping New Mexicans better prepare to compete nationally and internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HED/PED Alignment Task Force</li> <li>• Association for Commerce and Industry (ACI)</li> <li>• NM Business Roundtable for Educational Excellence (NMBREE)</li> </ul>	<p>\$1 million</p>	<p><b>TH Rec #2:</b> HED and PED should establish <i>one</i> educational vision (with K-12 standards that align with higher ed).</p> <p><b>TH Rec #1:</b> Raise P-20 standards so NM students can compete with students from other places and meet needs of employers.</p>
<p><b>C) Provide more funding for the College Affordability Act.</b></p>	<p>The town hall participants strongly support increased financial aid for college students.</p> <p>The College Affordability Act was established in 2005 to encourage New Mexico students with financial need, who do not qualify for other state grants or scholarships, to attend and complete educational programs at a New Mexico public college or university. In 2006, the Act was funded in the amount of \$49 million toward an endowment goal of \$250 million. At its current level, the fund provides up to \$1,000 per semester. Currently, a minimum of 1,000 needy students will receive the award, while approximately 11,500 New Mexicans are eligible. The Town Hall 34 Implementation Team encourages the legislature to allocate additional dollars to the existing College Affordability Act in the amount of \$50 million.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACI</li> <li>• HED</li> <li>• NMBREE</li> </ul>	<p>\$50 million to CAA fund</p>	<p><b>TH Rec #11:</b> Increase financial aid for college students.</p>
<p><b>D) Fund a study to project future job growth in NM so students can make informed choices.</b></p>	<p>Town hall participants recognized that New Mexico must provide better information to prospective employers on specific worker availability and to job seekers, students and educators on career opportunities. To address this problem the implementation team recommends developing a <b>workforce forecast model</b> which matches the projected future demand for workers with the expected number of job seekers from educational programs and other sources. With Albuquerque and Las Cruces as pilots, data from these hubs will be grouped by occupation, skill, career cluster and education to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM Office of Workforce Training And Development</li> <li>• NMBREE</li> <li>• HED</li> </ul>	<p>\$500,000 for pilot study, with matching funds to be provided from the private sector</p>	<p><b>TH Rec #8:</b> Use long-term labor force projections to encourage students to follow career pathways that will meet projected labor needs and fill high-value jobs</p>

Proposed Legislative Initiative	Description	Key Supporters	Cost	Town Hall Recommendation
	<p>determine potential imbalances that need to be addressed. Additionally, data collections and procedures will be developed in such a way that many can be applied to other areas of New Mexico with minimal time and cost. The project will build on existing forecast model data and incorporate the WorkKeys skill assessment system. It will result in program recommendations for planners and an internet based career information delivery system for students, counselors and job seekers.</p>			<p>of the future.</p>
<p><b>E) Funding for IDEAL-NM</b></p>	<p>IDEAL-NM would create a statewide eLearning support program for students and employees in New Mexico. The New Mexico Learning Network (NMLN) will coordinate this program with a primary goal of creating Cyber Academy services for middle and high school students. The initial focus will bring rural schools access to eLearning courses taught by highly qualified teachers; however within five years all students graduating from New Mexico high schools should have experience with at least one eLearning course. The program will also support new methods for dual credit delivery to help address academic alignment between high school and higher education. The program will create new educational opportunities for learners by minimizing geographic, scheduling, and administrative barriers. It will provide professional development for teachers that minimizes expensive travel requirements. This initiative will implement a shared web-based software infrastructure that utilizes the existing statewide network. Any other initiatives to expand and improve statewide high-speed digital network connectivity will benefit this initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PED</li> <li>• HED</li> <li>• The NM Office of the Chief Information Officer (NMOCIO)</li> <li>• The Laptop Learning Initiative</li> <li>• NMBREE</li> </ul>	<p>\$10.8 million to HED/PED for NMLN to implement</p>	<p><b>TH Rec #14:</b> Statewide digital education network that expands access to educational resources and career information.</p>

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