

Supplement to the Evaluation of the Public School Funding Formula: Component Briefs

A Joint Study –
Legislative Finance Committee
Legislative Education Study Committee

December 1, 2011

INTRODUCTION

The following is a supplement to the Evaluation of the Public School Funding Formula, a joint study by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) and Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC). The evaluation includes recommendations to modernize the state's funding formula that, if implemented, will make the formula more effective, fair, transparent, simpler to understand and administer, and less prone to manipulation by local decision-making.

New Mexico's funding formula has 24 components, the second most formula components of the 21 states that employ a foundation or base funding formula. The average base formula has 14 formula components. In addition to recommending that the legislature eliminate components that generate few units or are not funding statewide programs, the report recommends that the legislature make changes to the following formula components: Special education funding, bilingual units, size adjustment units, the at-risk index, and the training and experience index.

Additionally, the supplement includes a response from Lovington Municipal Schools.

COMPONENT BRIEF: SPECIAL EDUCATION

Background

Public schools in New Mexico must provide special education and related services appropriate to meet the needs of all children requiring special services. For funding and budgeting purposes, students identified with special needs are categorized into one of four classes: 1) A, representing those students requiring a minimal amount of special education, 2) B, representing those students requiring a moderate amount of special education, 3) C, representing those students requiring an extensive amount of special education, and 4) D, representing those students requiring a maximum amount of special education. Membership is also captured for developmentally disabled three and four year old students identified as class D. As students are identified for each class, the membership is multiplied by the class' cost differential to generate units in the funding formula.

Public schools also generate funding for the number of full time equivalent certified or licensed ancillary service and diagnostic service personnel. Each ancillary service provider generates 25 units, about \$90 thousand in FY12, the largest cost differential in the entire formula. The Public School Finance Act gives PED the responsibility to regulate the ratio of special education students to staff.

Component Issues

- ***PED does not specify the proper amount of services needed to classify class D special education students and has no guidance in Rule for any class of special education.*** PED's guidance is limited to an example Individualized Education Plan (IEP) found in special education guidance. In it, PED creates clear guidelines for designation of class A, B and C special education programs but leaves identification of class D special education programs vague, creating an inconsistent patchwork of classification criteria. Without proper guidance on how to properly classify a special education student, districts have begun to make their own thresholds for class D.
- ***The funding formula incentivizes districts to have high levels of class C or D special education programs.*** Class D students generate nearly three times more funding than a class A/B student and twice as much as a class C student. A class C student would generate 43 percent more funding than a class A/B student. Students in class C and D special education programs generate more funds for districts through higher cost multipliers.
- ***The share of special education students identified as class C or D varies greatly between districts and suggests inconsistent identification practices across the state.***
- ***PED guidance is not sufficiently clear regarding the definition of eligible ancillary service FTE to ensure that each district is counting eligible ancillary service FTE in the same manner and thus providing an equitable distribution of related services funding statewide.*** PED rules defining ancillary service providers can be interpreted to

include a number of positions not generally considered to be ancillary staff eligible for related services funding. This ambiguity results in districts that have similar special education student populations having significantly different levels of special education ancillary staff.

- ***PED does not have or enforce guidelines regulating the ratio of special education students to staff as allowed by state law.*** Statute provides that the state fund ancillary service and diagnostic FTE but does not provide eligibility or caseload criteria for claiming funding for these FTE. Licensed and certified ancillary service and diagnostic service FTE can be considered for related services funding at 25 units per FTE, or \$89,649 per FTE in FY12 dollars. Given the revenue generated by ancillary staff, concerns have been raised about excessive hiring practices that generate additional units and boost funding. PED has statutory authority to do create ratios that connect services to ancillary service FTE funding levels.
- ***PED allows districts to claim more than one ancillary service FTE per employee, generating more revenue for districts without offering additional services for students.*** Districts that hire ancillary staff to work longer than instructional staff (e.g. an 8-hour work day or 200 day contract), can count those staff as more than one FTE. For example, in FY11, Cobre Consolidated School District had many of their related services staff counted as 1.2 or 1.5 FTE, generating thousands of dollars in revenue through the public school funding formula, without offering additional services to students.

AIR Funding Formula Study

The AIR study found that, in 2005-2006, New Mexico had a pupil-weighted special education identification rate of approximately 15.8 percent, which was higher than the national average percent at that time (13.8 percent). The AIR study concluded that “The high identification rate and the large range could be attributed to multiple factors including high poverty levels in the state or fiscal incentives in the current state funding formula to identify students as needing special education services.” The report from AIR also noted that recent studies suggest that finance systems which provide additional special education funding contribute to increases in identification rates.

AIR recommended a census-based special education funding mechanism, in other words, adopting a single weight (1.723) to distribute funds for special education students. This recommendation would simplify the formula and eliminate the incentive to over-identify children as special education students. In addition, AIR also noted that a single overall weight would also minimize the fiscal incentive to identify students with higher weights (e.g., categories C and D). This option provides supplemental funds for each identified special education student, regardless of the student’s classification of need.

AIR recommended that the state set the fixed identification rate to 16 percent, which was the approximate statewide average identification rate in 2006-07. For example, a district with an

identification rate of 10 percent would still receive funding to support special education as if it had an identification rate of 16 percent, and similarly a district with an actual identification rate of 20 percent would be funded at an identification rate of 16 percent.

LFC/LESC Recommendation

The legislature should:

- Move to a census-based Special education funding model that funds districts for serving 16 percent of district students at a cost differential of two

In lieu of legislative action, PED should:

- Link the number of units generated by ancillary staff to the number of units generated by special education students.
- Regulate the ratio of ancillary FTE to special education students, as required by law. The department should establish and implement processes to validate ancillary service and diagnostic service provider FTE and special education student data and develop a review process to make certain ancillary FTE claimed for funding tie to appropriate caseloads.
- Establish procedures to audit ancillary service and diagnostic service FTE claimed for funding.
- Only allow ancillary FTE to be counted as one or fewer FTE in funding formula calculations.

COMPONENT BRIEF: TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE INDEX

Background

Current law provides that only instructional personnel are to be considered in the calculation of a school district's Training and Experience (T&E) index. In determining which employees are instructional staff, school districts are directed to count only those assigned to the district's instructional program; by law, principals, substitute teachers, instructional aides, secretaries, and clerks are to be excluded. In practice, the following categories of personnel are defined as instructional staff: teachers in grades 1-12, early childhood education, special education, and preschool; coordinators/subject matter specialists; library/media specialists; guidance counselors, registered nurses; diagnosticians; speech therapists; occupational therapists; physical therapists; psychologists; audiologists; interpreters; orientation and mobility specialists; and social workers.

The following matrix, which contains cost differential factors based on academic credentials and years of experience, also is contained in statute:

Table 1: T&E index

Academic Classification	Years of Experience				
	0 – 2	3 - 5	6 – 8	9 – 15	Over 15
Bachelor's degree or less	.75	.90	1.00	1.05	1.05
Bachelor's degree plus 15 credit hours	.80	.95	1.00	1.10	1.15
Master's degree or bachelor's degree plus 45 credit hours	.85	1.00	1.05	1.15	1.20
Master's degree plus 15 credit hours	.90	1.05	1.15	1.30	1.35
Post-master's degree or master's degree plus 45 credit hours	1.00	1.15	1.30	1.40	1.50

Source: PED

To use the matrix, a district places each full-time equivalent (FTE) in a cell based on that individual's level of academic training and years of instructional experience. Once determined, the numbers in each cell are multiplied by the cell value. Finally, the sum of the products is divided by the total number of FTE instructional personnel to obtain a single index for the district. That index is then multiplied by the district's total generated formula units. In FY11 almost \$200 million was allocated through the T&E index. Over the past three years, total T&E units have increased by 2.2 percent.

Component Issues

- ***The T&E index encourages higher education levels and more years of service, despite inconclusive evidence these factors increase student achievement.*** No clear body of research links higher education level or more years of service with better student

outcomes or achievement. A 2009 report from the Urban Institute states that characteristics such as graduate education and experience are at best weak predictors of a teacher's contribution to student achievement.

- ***State statute specifies instructional staff to be included in the T&E index calculation, however, the PED routinely includes other staff in the calculation, even those funded through other formula components.*** Instructional staff is defined as follows: “personnel assigned to the instructional program of the school district, excluding principals, substitute teachers, instructional aides, secretaries and clerks.” However, the personnel listed as eligible for inclusion in T&E guidance includes principals and positions that would typically be classified as related service, ancillary, or instructional support providers. Many of these positions are also defined in statute as being eligible for units as ancillary staff in special education, meaning that districts are compensated for these staff members in two different formula components.
- ***The funding formula's training and experience (T&E) index incentivizes district and charter policies requiring teachers to earn a master's degree despite uncertain impact on student achievement.*** At least five districts have developed policies requiring staff included in the T&E index to obtain a master's degree to keep their positions. The Lovington superintendent confirmed that such a policy was put in place to boost their district's T&E index. There is not a conclusive scientific body of research that links higher degree level to higher student achievement; at least two scientific studies link obtaining a master's degree as having negatively impacting student achievement.

AIR Funding Formula Study

The AIR funding formula study recommended an Index of Staff Qualifications (ISQ), calibrated with the proposed formula to ensure that staff costs were not duplicated in other parts of the formula. Like the T&E index, the ISQ was designed as a multiplier for funding with the goal of providing adequate funding. The ISQ was designed to reflect the three-tiered licensure system. At the time the study was conducted, the ISQ was adjusted according to the percentage of the budget that school districts spent on ISQ-applicable staff.

LFC/LESC Recommendations

The Legislature should:

- Replace the T&E index with an “effective” teacher index that only multiplies grade-level program units with the following values corresponding to licensure: level 1 – 0.75, level 2 – 1, and level 3 – 1.25.

In lieu of legislative action, PED should:

- Only count instructional staff in the T&E index calculation as defined in the PED chart of accounts manual excluding all instructional support providers (related service and ancillary staff).

Background

At-risk units are provided through the funding formula to compensate districts for their at-risk populations and help those students meet their full academic potential. The component, which was added to the formula in 1997, is calculated through an index that takes into account English language learners (ELL), students in poverty and mobility rates; that index is then multiplied by the district's total student membership to determine the amount of units awarded in the formula. In FY11, Wagon Mound Public Schools had the highest at-risk index (0.159), and was awarded 12.3 units; Los Alamos had the lowest calculated at-risk index (0.011), and was awarded 37.12 units. In FY11, \$71 million were allocated through the at-risk index. Over the past three years, total at-risk units have declined by five percent.

Component Issues

- ***The at-risk index is a broken funding mechanism that is too complex and misallocates funds even when calculated accurately.*** Among the factors in the at-risk index is the mobility rate, but the PED does not calculate the mobility rate accurately, leading to a misallocation of at-risk funds. The mobility rate is currently calculated using seven enrollment codes, assigned to students based on enrollment status. However, due to federal requirements asking for more specific enrollment and withdrawal data, the PED requires districts to track student enrollment through one of 27 codes. Students with enrollment codes not used in the current mobility rate are not counted in the district's calculation, creating an inaccurate mobility rate used in the at-risk index. For example, a student who withdraws from school and whose whereabouts are unknown is counted under the current mobility formula, but a student who withdraws to attend a Bureau of Indian Education school or to pursue a general education degree or vocational program is not counted.
- ***Most other states allocate funds to at-risk students with more simple calculations that use federal data.*** Performing similar calculations could generate a similar number of units for New Mexico's funding formula while saving administrative time. In addition to mobility, the at-risk index incorporates the district's population of English language learners and students in poverty. Other states that distribute at-risk funds through a funding formula generally use one measure for determining at-risk students, most commonly a federal measure of poverty such as a free and reduced lunch or food stamp eligibility.
- ***States vary on the incremental dollars allocated for at-risk students, but comparatively, New Mexico allocates a relatively small amount to its most needy students.*** At-risk units generated \$71 million in 2011; on a per-student basis, this amounted to less than a 10 percent cost differential to New Mexico students that qualified for free and reduced-price lunch. Other states allocate per-student incremental funds ranging from five percent to 50 percent for students that qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

Table 2. Selected States' Incremental Funding for At-Risk Students

State	Additional Funding Provided per At-Risk Student
Minnesota	50%
Georgia	30%
Texas	25%
Vermont	25%
South Carolina	25%
Missouri	25%
Oregon	25%
Connecticut	25%
Maine	20%
Louisiana	19%
Michigan	12%
Hawaii	10%
New Mexico	10%
Mississippi	5%

Source; Verstegen and Jordan, 2009

AIR Funding Formula Study

The AIR funding formula study described the at-risk formula as “a relatively obscure at-risk index”. The study’s proposed formula breaks out the various components into three separate components that reflect pupil needs: poverty, ELL, and mobility.

LFC/LESC Recommendation

The legislature should

- Adjust the at-risk index to pay a cost differential of 0.15 for percentage of districts students identified as eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program;

COMPONENT BRIEF: Size Adjustments

Background

The funding formula currently has 5 different forms of size adjustments to aid small schools and districts in covering administrative costs that comprise a large percentage of their budgets.

Table 3. Funding Formula Size Adjustment Criteria and Formulas

Size Adjustment	Eligibility Size (based on Student Membership)	Size Adjustment Formula
Elementary-Junior High	< 200	$\frac{(200-MEM)}{200} \times 1.0 \times MEM = \text{Units}$
Senior High	< 200	$\frac{(200-MEM)}{200} \times 2.0 \times MEM = \text{Units}$
Senior High	200-400	$\frac{(400-MEM)}{400} \times 1.6 \times MEM = \text{Units}$
District	< 4000	$\frac{(4000-MEM)}{4000} \times 1.0 \times MEM = \text{Units}$
Rural Isolation*	>10,000	$\frac{(4000-MEM)}{\# \text{ of High Schools}} \times 1.0 \times MEM = \text{Units}$

*Additional criteria that the ratio of student membership to high schools is less than 4000:1

Source: NMSA 22-8-23

Preliminary estimates for FY12 indicate that over 25,000 size adjustment units will be awarded to districts and charters. Senior high size adjustment units make up over half of the total units (13,437 units). Elementary/junior high and districts size units account for approximately 6,800 and 4,900 units, respectively. There were no rural isolation units awarded in FY11, and none are anticipated to be awarded in FY12.

Component Issues

- ***School districts make inefficient school structure decisions that allow them to gain size adjustment units.*** For example, Lovington Municipal Schools built a new wing of their high school to become a new freshman academy. The Lovington Freshman Academy operates on the high school’s campus and is considered a separate school from Lovington High School, despite sharing administration and grounds with the high school.
- ***The PED has approved schools to qualify for size adjustments even though they share facilities and administrative personnel.*** Past LFC reports found that both Bernalillo and West Las Vegas school districts, with PED approval, classify kindergarten to eighth grade schools as two separate schools - one elementary and one middle school. However, the schools operate under one administration and in a single building. If the schools were appropriately classified as one school by the PED they would not qualify for small school size adjustment units under the funding formula. This classification appears to conflict with the statutory definition of a public school.
- ***PED does not have a process in place to approve new schools for funding formula purposes.*** New schools must be approved by PED. The process by which PED currently

approves new schools does not include a formalized review to determine whether the school is necessary and what the fiscal impacts would be for the district.

- ***In FY10, charter schools generated about \$24.1 million in additional formula funding because of their small size.*** About 35 percent, or 24 charter schools, rely on size adjustment formula funding for over 30 percent of their program cost. As more small charter schools are authorized the amount of small-school funding increases, in addition to any changes to the unit value.
- ***It is not clear that size adjustment units in the funding formula are meant to apply to charter schools.*** Charter schools are envisioned as smaller school sites by choice, and are often in urban areas where traditional public schools have available space for students. The Public School Finance Act recognizes this unique status, stating, “Separate schools established to provide special programs, including but not limited to vocational and alternative education, shall not be classified as public schools for purposes of generating size adjustment program units.” For example, alternative high schools and district magnet schools do not receive size adjustment units.

AIR Funding Formula Study

The 2008 AIR funding formula study did not include size adjustments as part of the formula, but instead modified finalized formula amounts based on size.

LFC/LESC Recommendation

The Legislature should:

- Repeal all current size adjustment components of the formula and create a new district size adjustment that institutes a new formula using the current total size unit allocation to districts

In lieu of legislative action, PED should:

- Create a system for approving schools in the funding formula that takes into account whether a new school is needed.

Background

School districts generate bilingual education program funding based on membership in one-, two- and three-hour programs. The number of units awarded is based on applying a cost differential of 0.5 to the number of hours students receive program instruction as follows: one hour is one-sixth of the 0.5; two hours is one-third of the 0.5; and three hours is one-half of the 0.5. Participation in the bilingual education program is optional for districts and charters and requires an application for initial approval by PED and ongoing program evaluation and renewal. School districts are allowed to choose from five research based program models. In FY11, Albuquerque Public Schools generated the highest number of bilingual units (2535.575 units) and Lake Arthur Municipal Schools generated the fewest (2.5 units). In FY11, \$36 million was allocated through the bilingual program. Over the past three years, total bilingual program units have declined by 3.6 percent.

Component Issues

- ***Fewer than half of all districts and charters currently receive state funding to support language-related services.*** The majority of districts and charters receive no state funding directed to support other language and multicultural education programs. Some districts have sizable ELL populations and do not participate in bilingual programs and therefore, do not receive bilingual units. For example, in 2009-2010, Jal Public Schools had 15.7 percent of their student population classified as ELL but did not receive any bilingual program units. The American Institutes for Research (AIR) funding formula study suggested providing state funding to support language related services by providing a cost differential for ELL students.
- ***Other states fund English language learners as a separate category based on ELL district population.*** Thirty-seven states provide additional funds for ELL students. The weight given to the ELL students varies greatly among the states; Maine funds up to an additional 60 percent for ELL students. Texas and Arizona provide an additional 10 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively. The 2008 AIR funding formula study recommended that New Mexico discard the overly-complex at-risk index and fund ELL students as a separate funding formula category. The AIR recommended an incremental funding percentage of 9.4 percent.
- ***Home language surveys used among districts differ in ways that impact both the validity and reliability of the survey.*** The purpose of the home language survey is to identify children with a first, home, or heritage language other than English. The PED does not standardize the home language survey but does offer templates in the Bilingual Multicultural Education Bureau technical assistance manual. This results in differences in the home language surveys among districts, which could lead to differences in identification. Over-identification potentially added to the \$36 million spent on bilingual programs in FY11. Under-identification can also be very costly because a student who

needs but is not receiving ELL services could impact that student’s success and outcomes. Additionally, district surveys can vary in the way the surveys are administered, the number of questions they include, and who they are administered to. Differences in surveys leave the potential for unreliable identification across districts and charters.

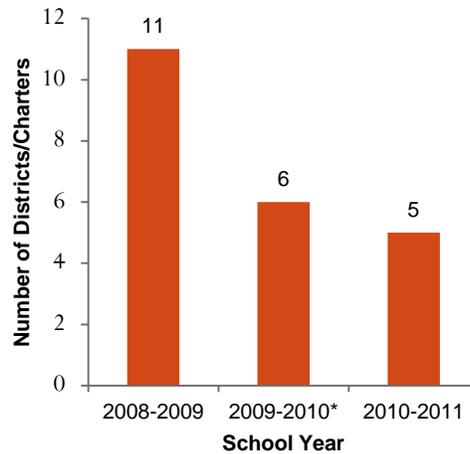
Table 4. Selected Home Language Survey Element Differences

District/Charter	Number of Items	Item Examples
Lovington Municipal Schools	4	Is a language other than English spoken in your home?
Taos Municipal Schools	9	What was the primary (first) language the child learned when she/he first began to talk?
Cariños De Los Niños	4	What language(s) does the child listen to?
Taos Academy	7	What language or languages does your child understand?

Source: Selected Home Language Surveys

The PED does not have a sufficient program audit function to ensure that districts’ bilingual programs are consistent with rule and statute. For example, the current rate of the PED bilingual audits will reach each district and charter once every 17 years. The PED has procedures in place to audit districts’ and charters’ bilingual programs, however, the frequency of audits is insufficient, geographically limited, and declining. For FY11, 84 charters and districts were implementing bilingual programs and five charters and districts (0.06 percent) were targets of focus monitoring visits by PED.

Chart 1. Districts/Charter Bilingual Programs Audited



Source: PED
 *Included a partial audit of APS (10 schools)

AIR Funding Formula Study

AIR proposed to count the number of English language learners as an indicator of the need for language related services for students. In the AIR formula the proportion of English language learners was multiplied by 0.099. This factor was one of seven that was considered in the general formula which included a base per-pupil cost.

LFC/LESC Recommendations

The Legislature should:

- Change bilingual funding to direct a cost differential of 0.15 towards ELL students statewide

The PED should:

- Develop a reliable and valid survey instrument for identifying primary home language other than English (PHLOTE).
- Implement a home language survey for use by all districts and charters that is valid, reliable, and developed in accordance with state and federal guidelines;
- Require that districts and charters develop and describe specific procedures to ensure that all students who have a PHLOTE are identified at each school. These procedures should
 - Ensure appropriate home language surveys (HLSs) are distributed in a language and mode of communication appropriate for the parents (i.e., use of the available translated forms or documented oral translation);
 - Describe any other methods used by the district to effectively identify PHLOTE students (i.e. teacher surveys or recommendations);
 - Identify the procedures for distributing, collecting, maintaining and reviewing the HLS forms; and
 - Provide training to staff on distributing and processing such forms to accurately identify PHLOTE students.

DISTRICT RESPONSE: LOVINGTON MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

STEVEN L. O'QUINN
SUPERINTENDENT

LEANNE ELLIS
ASST. SUPERINTENDENT

NEVA BYRD
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS

IVAN DEANDA
COORDINATOR OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

IRENE LIVINGSTON
COORDINATOR OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS
November 14, 2011

Lovington Municipal Schools

18 West Washington - Lovington, New Mexico 88260
Telephone: (575) 739-2200
Facsimile: (575) 739-2205

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Dear Mr. Pahl, Members of the Legislative Finance Committee, and Members of the Legislative Education Study Committee:

Following is the response of the Lovington Municipal Schools to the draft report in which our district was named. Please consider these points as you review the final report.

The inclusion of ancillary and related staff into the T&E index calculation can boost the T&E index's value. Ancillary and related staff provide significant contributions to the educational outcomes of students. All of the staff identified in the report work directly with students and provide valuable services that positively impact student achievement. Many of these staff members do hold level 3 licenses due to the definitive nature of their services. All of these employees provide required services to students. The ability of a district to employ ancillary and related staff enables it to readily access valuable services for students. Small districts have the opportunity to share employees through RECs or independently with other districts. In order to meet the needs of students many districts, both large and small, must contract out for ancillary and related services personnel due to the shortage of qualified specialty service providers.

Districts make decisions to create unnecessary small schools that result in junior high and high school size adjustment units. Lovington Municipal Schools conducted an in-depth needs assessment in 2004. One of the outcomes of this effort involving community, business and school representatives was that the building that housed the eighth and ninth grade students was significantly overcrowded. The overwhelming consensus was that a Freshman Academy should be constructed which would specifically address the unique needs of ninth graders. The Academy is a separate transitional program for students in their first year of high school. They are placed with small interdisciplinary teams of four teachers who share the same students and have a common planning time, during which time teachers meet to standardize expectations and procedures, develop cross-curriculum assignments, identify problems and discuss solutions, and confer with students and/or parents. The building has its own entrance, science labs, principal, secretary and counselor and is exclusive to ninth grade students. The administrator and teacher teams have received training and employ an organized transition for students to be prepared for the high school environment. The Academy has a strong focus on helping students develop the knowledge and skills necessary for doing high school level work. They address issues of helping students improve their study skills, set academic and career goals, monitor their achievement progress, increase attendance, and reduce disciplinary referrals. These actions combine to achieve the primary goal of the Freshman Academy—increase student success and prevent drop-outs. Our community would be appalled to know that the Freshman Academy is considered unnecessary.

The funding formula's Training and Experience (T&E) index incentivizes district and charter policies requiring teachers to earn a master's degree despite uncertain impact on student achievement. A major premise the No Child Left Behind legislation is to improve content area knowledge of teachers. Teachers are required to be Highly Qualified in the content areas in which they teach—no exceptions. The T&E enables school districts to further the education of their teachers and, therefore, comply with the mandates of NCLB. Furthermore, this insures equity in teacher placement for all students in the district. The T&E index allows schools to increase teachers' qualifications in order for all students to receive instruction from a highly qualified teacher, regardless of the economic status of the students attending that school. Lovington Municipal Schools invests heavily in the education of its teachers. We have a tuition reimbursement policy to encourage teachers to acquire multiple endorsements or further their knowledge in their content area. We also incur the expense of testing for teachers to allow them to become highly qualified. Furthering teachers' education is considered a professional development activity, which is also recognized as valuable by NCLB. Please cite the "scientific studies which have linked obtaining a master's degree as having a significantly negative impact on student achievement." The tenets of the No Child Left Behind legislation contradict this statement. A number of studies have shown the benefit to students who are taught by teachers with advanced degrees and longer instructional experience. While these studies have demonstrated the value of increased academic knowledge on the part of their teachers, the attainment of enhanced pedagogical skills and techniques further increase instructional efficacy and student learning (Nye, B., *et al*, "How Large Are Teacher Effects"; Harris, D. N. and Sass, T.R. "Teacher Training, Teacher Quality, and Student Achievement"; Hill, H. C., *et al*, "Effects of Teachers' Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching on Student Achievement"; Clotfeiter, C. T., *et al*, "How and Why Do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement" and "Teacher Credentials and Student Achievement in High School: A Cross-Subject Analysis with Student Fixed Effects"). In addition to LMS requirements that its teachers receive advanced degrees, the district provides numerous professional development opportunities that enhance teachers' pedagogical techniques and skills. As teachers acquire new skills and enhance existing ones, they become more committed to the delivery of quality and effective instruction. By earning advanced degrees they further demonstrate that commitment to their profession and our students.

Please thoughtfully consider any actions that will impact school funding.

Sincerely,



Steven L. O'Quinn
Superintendent
Lovington Municipal Schools