

State of New Mexico
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**MINUTES
LESC MEETING
AUGUST 9, 2006**

Senator Cynthia Nava, Chair, called the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) meeting to order on August 9, 2006, at 9:45 a.m., Santa Fe Community College Board Room, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC members were present:

Senators Cynthia Nava, Chair and Mary Kay Papen; and Representative Mimi Stewart.

The following LESC advisory members were present:

Senator Mary Jane M. Garcia and Representatives Ray Begaye, William "Ed" Boykin, Kandy Cordova, Jimmie C. Hall, Harriet I. Ruiz, and Richard D. Vigil.

<> Approval of Agenda

Upon a motion by Senator Papen, seconded by Representative Stewart, and acting as a subcommittee in the absence of a quorum, the committee unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Senator Nava recognized Ms. Carole Brito, Chairperson of the Governing Board at Santa Fe Community College (SFCC), who welcomed the committee members and LESC staff. She thanked them for their continuing support of the college and solicited additional support of the Allied Health and Childhood Development Centers, which are presently in need. She elaborated somewhat on this request mentioning that in the allied health arena, it is growing rapidly together with the nursing program, which is preparing student candidates to pass the national nursing examination with higher grades than most test takers. Ms. Brito expressed appreciation to the committee and volunteered her services as well as the services of the college.

Following her remarks, Ms. Brito introduced the new president of SFCC, Dr. Sheila Ortego. A round of applause followed. Dr. Ortego thanked the committee members for their warm reception and welcomed them to the college. On behalf of the college officials and staff, as well as all of those students that have been helped by the college, she expressed appreciation, because without the support of the legislators, there would be no Santa Fe Community College. Dr. Ortego invited the committee and LESC staff to a luncheon prepared by students of the Culinary Arts Department, adding that more information would be provided on the Allied Health and Childhood Development Centers as a part of the scheduled tour planned after lunch.

On behalf of the committee, Chair Nava thanked Ms. Brito, Dr. Ortego, and SFCC, in general, for hosting this meeting and said they look forward to the scheduled tour.

Chair Nava expressed regret that because of several meeting conflicts for LESC members, attendance at this meeting was low.

FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Dr. David Harrell, LESC staff, introduced Dr. Veronica C. García, Secretary of Public Education, and Ms. Sally Wilkinson, Program Manager, Priority Schools Bureau, Public Education Department (PED), who provided an overview of the department's School Improvement Framework 2006-2007, identified some of the school improvement strategies being employed, discussed the Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional development, and explained the assistance that PED has provided to the priority schools. In addition, he introduced Dr. Linda Besett, Superintendent, Central Consolidated Schools, and Ms. Barbara Vigil-Lowder, Superintendent, Bernalillo Public Schools, who discussed the alternative governance plans that they are preparing for schools in their districts at the Restructuring I or Restructuring II stage in the school improvement cycle and the assistance that their respective districts have received from PED. In addition, Dr. Harrell called the committee's attention to a number of people in the audience whom the presenters will acknowledge for responding to questions as needed.

Dr. Harrell noted that the committee had heard a similar presentation during the 2005 interim that focused on an audit that the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) had conducted of PED's school improvement framework. The presentation this interim, Dr. Harrell continued, will update the school rankings under state and federal law, review the current school improvement framework, and discuss PED's efforts to assist schools in the school improvement cycle.

Dr. Harrell said that the PED School Improvement Framework for school year 2006-2007 is a refinement of previous frameworks to reflect a shift in focus from "identification, diagnostic assessment, and technical assistance to a broader scope of building capacity at the district level." The features of the framework include a number of interventions and mandates, a reward and advocacy program, and a RFP for a contractor to provide professional development services in support of the current PED School Improvement Framework. Another prominent feature of the School Improvement Framework for school year 2006-2007 is the Alternative Governance Contingency Plan, required by November 1, 2006 of every school at Restructuring I or Restructuring II. Using a template provided by PED, the district must develop a plan for implementing one of the following options:

1. replace all or most of the staff (which may include the principal) who are relevant to the failure to make AYP;

2. contract with an organization (but, pursuant to state law, not a private entity) with a demonstrated record of effectiveness to operate the school;
3. turn over the operation of the school to the state, if the state agrees; or
4. perform any other major restructuring of a school's governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms with the promise of enabling the school to make adequate yearly progress.

Dr. Harrell said that missing from this list is conversion to a charter school, which is one of the options authorized under both state and federal law. The reason, he said, is that, through amendments from the 2006 session scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2007, conversion charter schools will not be allowed after July 1.

Dr. Harrell reviewed the series of consequences, or sanctions, in both state law and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) for schools that fail to make AYP. He also noted that, on August 1, 2006, PED released the school rankings derived from data during school year 2005-2006. According to PED, a total of 433 public schools in New Mexico failed to make AYP, and of that total, 349 received designations as schools in the school improvement cycle. Dr. Harrell added that, in all cases but Restructuring I, the numbers have increased since school year 2004-2005, when a total of 416 schools failed to make AYP and 236 were placed at one point or another in the school improvement cycle. However, PED also reports that 10 schools made AYP for a second consecutive year, meaning that they have emerged from the school improvement cycle altogether. One of the 10, Dr. Harrell noted, was among the 80 priority schools that PED had identified as being in the greatest need for academic improvement.

Finally, Dr. Harrell noted the funds directed toward school improvement. From federal Title I funds, PED expects to receive more than originally anticipated – an award amount of nearly \$4.27 million. When that figure is combined with the two state appropriations – \$2.4 million for the Schools in Need of Improvement Fund and another \$6.0 million for the School Improvement Framework – PED will have more than \$12.6 million for school improvement efforts in school year 2006-2007.

Secretary García first thanked the Legislature and the committee for their support for implementation of the School Improvement Framework since the funding from the federal government fell short in meeting the needs for this initiative. She then introduced some of the PED key players in this endeavor who were available for questions: Ms. Mary Rose C de Baca, Assistant Secretary of Quality Assurance and Systems Integration, who oversees the program; Ms. Sheila Hyde, Bureau Chief of Quality Assurance; Dr. Denise Koscielniak, Program Director of Special Education; Mr. Sam Ornelas, Title I Program Manager; Dr. Lana Paolillo, Bureau Chief, Early Childhood Education Bureau - Program Manager of Reading First; Dr. Don E. Watson, Assistant Secretary of Assessment and Accountability; and Ms. Nancy Martine-Alonzo, Assistant Secretary of Indian Education. Secretary García said that the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) is at the heart of school improvement because it recognizes the special needs and special circumstances of the school that develops it. Academics, accountability, and federal requirements are the drivers of school improvement, Secretary García added. She also cited the benefits of the Baldrige System approach as implemented through the Strengthening Quality in Schools (SQS) initiative.

Citing some of the issues that make it difficult for schools to make AYP – poverty, language, rural isolation in some places, high staff turnover, and student mobility – Secretary García said that she would prefer to focus more on the percent of students who are making gains than the schools that miss AYP through any one of the 37 ways to fail. Secretary García also announced that later in August the department would release more meaningful data about closing the achievement gap.

Finally, Secretary García said that, at PED, school improvement is a department-wide effort involving multiple divisions and bureaus. The new math and science bureau, she added, should be particularly helpful in improving the math skills for students throughout New Mexico. And, alluding to a point that Dr. Harrell had made, she suggested that the *Charter Schools Act* might need reexamination in terms of the NCLB-related restructuring options.

After she recognized staff of the Priority Schools Bureau, Ms. Wilkinson called the committee's attention to a handout titled *Just the Facts: School Year 2006-2007*, which indicated that 45.9 percent of New Mexico's public schools made AYP in 2006. She added for school year 2005-2006 there were 235 schools in need of improvement compared to 349 for school year 2006-2007, an increase of 45 percent. She said that, of the 349 schools in need of improvement, 108 did not make AYP in reading or math or both in the All Students category; therefore, PED considers them priority schools.

Referring to a handout titled *School Improvement Framework*, Ms. Wilkinson explained the three categories in the PED framework designed to help schools improve: Building Capacity and Prevention, Monitoring and Sanctions, and Rewards and Advocacy. Under the first category, Ms. Wilkinson described several approaches that the department is taking to help districts build capacity. Among those approaches targeted to district leaders, principals, and teachers are statewide regional leadership training sessions in the Baldrige system of continuous improvement; professional development workshops in building educational systems and teams (BEST); regional professional development institutes; and the annual All Kids Can! Conference, which focuses on improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap. Other approaches include sending turnaround teams to 10 priority school districts (those with the highest number of schools in Corrective Action, Restructuring I, or Restructuring II); requiring districts to provide, perhaps through contracts, professional development in a number of designated areas; collaborating with the Teach for America Program, which has placed teachers in Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools and Zuni Public Schools; implementing the Voyager Literacy Program or the Navigator Math Program in selected schools; implementing an extended day or extended year program in selected schools; supporting school advisory councils and parental involvement; and supporting regional quality centers (two currently in operation and two more planned).

The chief feature of the Monitoring and Sanctions category, Ms. Wilkinson continued, is the alternative governance contingency plan required by November 1, 2006 of each school in Restructuring I or Restructuring II. This plan, she added, must address such issues as budgets, transportation, supplemental educational services, staffing, facilities, and parental and community involvement. Among other requirements, districts must decide whether to replace a school's principal or recommend that the principal remain on the job but receive intensive training.

The Rewards and Advocacy category is a way to recognize school quality or school improvement that, though encouraging, does not necessarily meet the AYP criteria. Ms. Wilkinson explained that schools are identified in one of three categories:

- Performing School, which (1) makes or exceeds the targeted 3.0 percent gain in both reading and mathematics; or (2) has already reached 75 percent proficiency in those subjects;

- Improving School, which makes some gain but not the targeted 3.0 percent gain in both subjects or 3.0 percent gain in only one subject (unless the school is at 75 percent proficiency); or
- Provisional School, which makes no gain in either subject (unless the school is at 75 percent proficiency).

As incentives, Performing Schools will receive a monetary award (as the budget allows) for their libraries and a certificate or plaque. Eligible for similar incentives are schools in yet another category, Schools on the Rise, which are those schools that have made AYP for two consecutive years and that have no NCLB designation. Likewise, school districts with no schools with NCLB designations receive Quality Districts Recognition (a certificate or plaque). Finally, to take note of schools and districts receiving recognition, the Priority Schools Bureau is publishing a quarterly newsletter called *Spotlight*.

Superintendent Besett said that seven schools in Central Consolidated Schools must develop an Alternative Governance Plan. She added that, even if the schools make AYP next year, they may implement the plan anyway if it is in the best interest of students. NCLB, she continued, leveled the playing field for schools in her district by helping to focus attention upon schools with high poverty and high minority enrollment. She also spoke about the need to “unpack” the data to allow proper focus on English Language Learners in particular because so many of the students in Central Consolidated Schools enter school without fluency in any language.

Attending to her handout, Superintendent Besett explained the steps involved in the alternative governance planning process. She said that step 1 requires all Restructuring I and Restructuring II schools, prior to August 31, to hold a parent and educator meeting to inform parents and the public of the school’s ranking and to elicit suggestions from parents and the public on how to improve the school’s performance, and to provide a written notice to parents and educators regarding the school designation prior to August 31, 2006. The school improvement plan (incorporating the EPSS) is developed as a result of this meeting and is submitted for board approval along with the alternative governance plan.

Step 2 calls for an alternative governance input meeting to be held no later than September 7, 2006 with parents and educators. The purposes at this meeting are to review and analyze reading data and math data by total group and disaggregated subgroups and to discuss options for an alternative governance plan.

Superintendent Besett concluded with steps 3, 4, and 5, which outline the submission schedule for a draft alternative governance plan, leading to approval at the October meeting of the school board.

Ms. Pandora Mike, Principal, Mesa Elementary School, Central Consolidated Schools, began by describing the disappointment that the staff and students at Mesa Elementary School felt over not making AYP when they had expected that they would. Notwithstanding this disappointment, however, she said that the staff is newly energized and focused and committed to a continuous improvement approach though not necessarily the Baldrige model. While the staff has bought into this approach completely, the school lacks student and parent buy-in, largely because of the limited education of many parents. Therefore, the school is working on community and parental involvement through a parent university and the Plan to Do, Study, Act (PDSA) – the PED improvement plan.

Ms. Mike then outlined some of the school's plans for improvement. She said that Mesa Elementary School has future plans to continue reading and math blocks, reading programs, short-cycle assessments, and an individual education plan for each student, monthly school progress reports to parents, and a curriculum guide in language arts and mathematics. Other plans include lowering the student-teacher ratio by hiring two additional teachers in 4 and 5 grades; implementation of a new mathematics textbook program; entering reading/mathematics contracts that require students who are not proficient in reading or mathematics to participate in after-school tutoring; curriculum mapping of language arts and mathematics standards; providing of after-school tutoring with significant library usage; usage of Reading Mastery Plus; modification of physical education to build more instructional time; an adjusted library schedule to include after-school program; and usage of underlying Diné principles. The strength of the school, Ms. Mike said, is that 100 percent of the staff is endorsed in Teaching English as a Second Language, a qualification needed by 85 percent of the students.

Regarding an alternative governance plan, Ms. Mike said that the school is considering extended-year schooling and a school-within-a-school concept consisting of three or four "interest pods." These pods might include such activities as extended learning opportunities (from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.), science coaches, special classes like physical education and music outside the core instructional hours, and a family education plan that could include a paid package to visit a college with a child.

Superintendent Vigil-Lowder introduced Mr. John Ryan, Executive Director for Human Resources/Accountability, Bernalillo Public Schools, and Co-Principals Mr. Richard Torralba and Mr. Gilbert Bryan Garcia, of Santo Domingo Middle School, Bernalillo Public Schools, who were available for questions.

Ms. Vigil-Lowder said that the watchwords for Santo Domingo Middle School are Knowledge, Excellence, Wisdom, and Action (KEWA). With a population that is 100 percent Native American, SDMS is a school-wide Title I site, in which all students are on the free or reduced-fee lunch program, and 98 percent of the students are identified as English Language Learners.

Calling attention to the school's accountability profile in the handout, Mr. Ryan said that the data tell the story, beginning with probationary status in school year 2000-2001, continuing through the cycles of School Improvement, Corrective Action, and Restructuring, and leading to meeting AYP for school year 2006-2007 and a designation of Restructuring II – Delay. Speaking of this year in particular, Mr. Ryan said that in reading 31.54 percent of the students tested proficient, with 144 students tested, and in mathematics 14.62 percent of the students tested proficient with 145 students tested. Even though these scores fall slightly below the statewide goal, they represent improvement that results from systematic processes that the school hopes will produce continued improvement.

Mr. Torralba said that the school vision is that of a learning community continuously committed to KEWA. Its mission, he added, is "to promote a safe collaborative learning community where high expectations, innovation, and life-long learning through continuous improvement are the norm and diversity is respected and celebrated." In terms of the EPSS, Mr. Torralba identified the goals for reading, mathematics, and writing. In reading, the percentage will increase by 6.0 percent and in mathematics the percentage will increase by 10 percent as measured by the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment. In writing, the percentage will increase by 5.0 percent as measured by the School-Wide Writing Rubric.

Identifying leadership as the most important component, Ms. Vigil-Lowder said that, without the district's proactive approach to remedy this situation in 2004, these changes would never have occurred. She said school reform to support alternative governance includes restructuring of school leadership framework and the staff organizational chart, a focus on EPSS and standards-based instruction in all areas, implementation of the systems approach to continuous improvement framework, and implementation of a short-cycle assessment framework to drive instruction and facilitate a data-driven decision-making process to provide academic interventions for students.

Alluding to the two appendices in the handout, which illustrated the leadership framework and the organizational chart, Mr. Garcia said that effective leadership, both through school and the tribe, has made an impact. In particular, he cited the displays of student achievement data posted all around the "war room," the data binders provided to students and teachers, and the hour each day allotted for staff collaboration. Results of this leadership are seen, Mr. Garcia continued, in the Schools on the Rise banner hung in the data room and the receipt by the Santo Domingo Middle School of a 21st Century Award from the Southwestern Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) as one of the most promising programs in the arts.

To conclude, Ms. Vigil-Lowder noted that the efforts of many people – students, staff, and the community – are necessary for school success. She gave particular credit to the cooperation among school administrators, board members, and tribal leaders, citing as one example the memorandum of agreement that allows Keres (Pueblo Language) to be taught at Santo Domingo Middle School. She also attributed some of the school's success to services provided by institutions of higher education and professional development providers.

Chair Nava then asked for comments from the audience.

- Ms. Karen White, Superintendent, Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools, described the difficulty of meeting AYP and said that her district, too, has been trying to implement the things that Bernalillo Public Schools is doing to improve its schools. As a part of this effort, Superintendent White said that the district made a DVD in the Navajo language and sent it out to parents to explain to them the need for collaboration and parental involvement. She said that the classroom teacher has the most important role of all in preparing students to be proficient so that schools can meet AYP. Finally, Superintendent White thanked Secretary García for visiting 11 of the Gallup schools to see for herself what the school district issues are, and she thanked the committee for what it has done for education and students in New Mexico.
- Mr. James Fawver, on behalf of SQS, spoke in favor of a systems approach, as his findings indicate success with special education students and English as a Second Language learner using this approach.
- Mr. Carlos Atencio, Executive Director, Northern New Mexico Network, said that there are interesting success stories; as well as serious challenges. What is needed, he said, is not support of a school for one year but continuous support over time.
- Dr. Mel Morgan, Associate Superintendent, Santa Fe Public Schools, said that 17 schools in his district had not made AYP, including five for the first year and two others that were in Restructuring and consequently preparing alternative governance plans. He added, however, that two other schools had made AYP for the first time in several years.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question about the status of Newcomb Elementary School, in Central Consolidated Schools, Superintendent Bessett said that, except for a test security issue, the school would have made AYP because its student participation and proficiency rates met the targets. She would like, in fact, to replicate that school's strategies in other schools throughout the district because Newcomb Elementary School has shown continuous improvement.

In response to a committee member's question whether there is some means of assessing and addressing student performance in terms of external factors such as long bus rides, troubled homes, poverty, and teacher's credentials, Secretary García said that PED's new data collection system, Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS), may be able to answer some of those questions but not all. She added that the experience of Newcomb Elementary School is a good example of how misleading AYP can be and that education reforms take time to produce results.

In response to a committee member's question whether school districts can afford the cost of busing of students in rural school settings, Secretary García said the money for an extended school day is budgeted in the school transportation line item.

Crediting PED's leadership, a committee member said that in spite of all of the complaints about the requirements of NCLB, New Mexico is making progress thanks to interested, innovative teachers like those at Santo Domingo Middle School and Newcomb Elementary School. He is particularly pleased to hear about the emphasis on parental involvement as a part of the reform initiative. Senator Nava said that the LESC would hear more about parental involvement programs as a part of a presentation on the *Family and Youth Resource Act* scheduled for September.

In response to a committee member's question whether the NCLB requirement of 100 percent student proficiency by 2014 is a realistic goal, Secretary García said that the goal is at least admirable, if not realistic, using the expression, "If you shoot for the moon you at least land in the stars." Noting that NCLB is due for reauthorization in 2007, she added that the law still needs some tweaking.

Representative Stewart requested that PED provide a list of the 108 priority schools for school year 2006-2007 that shows the reading programs in use at each school and that indicates which schools applied for Reading First grants.

Senator Nava requested that PED identify the schools participating in the Rural Revitalization Initiative and indicate the AYP status of each school.

Senator Nava requested that PED provide a list of the 10 priority school districts for school year 2006-2007.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

c Correspondence

Dr. Rindone reported the following documents in the committee notebooks under correspondence:

- memo to LESC from LESC staff regarding the committee request: Public Education Department plan for Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP professional development for school year 2006-2007;
- plan for AP and Pre-AP Professional Development for 2006-2007 Request for Proposal: \$542,000;
- Senate Public Affairs Committee Substitute for HB 61, as amended, Chapter 115, Laws 2005, 47th Legislature, First Session;
- copy of Albuquerque Journal Article titled *B+ for N.M. School Junk Food Policy*; and
- School Foods Report Card by the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

d. Written Report: Medicaid in the Schools

Directing the committee to a July 25, 2006 letter from Cabinet Secretary Pam Hyde, Human Services Department (HSD), Dr. Rindone explained that on behalf of the committee, she wrote a letter to Ms. Hyde requesting a written report relating to the Medicaid in the Schools program; more specifically, whether program funds are available for use by schools and other agencies for drug abuse prevention programs for school-age children. Dr. Rindone noted that Ms. Kari Armijo, Director, Medicaid School Health Office, HSD, was in the audience to provide testimony and to respond to questions.

Ms. Armijo reported that the HSD provides Medicaid funding to schools through two key programs: (1) the Medicaid School-Based Services (formerly called Medicaid in the Schools) that reimburses schools for key health and health-related services for Medicaid-eligible children who receive services under the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*; and (2) School-Based Health Centers which are partnerships created by schools and community health organizations to provide onsite primary, preventative and behavioral health services to students. She emphasized that there is nothing to preclude the use of Medicaid School-Based Services funds for drug abuse prevention programs and services for school-age children; however, each school district determines how these funds are spent at the local level. With regard to the School-Based Health Centers, she said that most of these centers offer behavioral health services and programs that most often include drug and alcohol abuse screening, counseling, education, and prevention services. She noted that while Medicaid funds may be used to reimburse these centers for direct services to students, they may also be used to augment education and prevention efforts in schools.

After lunch, the committee toured the Allied Health Center at the Santa Fe Community College.

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN OTHER STATE AGENCIES

Ms. Frances Maestas, LESC staff, recognized Ms. Dorian Dodson, Cabinet Secretary Designate, Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), who introduced Mr. Roger Gillespie, Director, Juvenile Justice Services, CYFD, and Ms. Jean Davidson, Superintendent of

Education, CYFD, for a discussion of issues related to the education of school-age children in CYFD facilities statewide. Ms. Dodson reported that CYFD Deputy Secretaries, Mr. Danny Sandoval and Ms. Marisol Atkins, were also in attendance to respond to committee questions.

Ms. Maestas explained that CYFD was selected to represent four agencies (CYFD, the Department of Health, the Corrections Department, and the Commission for the Blind) that since 2004, have been provided with an appropriation in the compensation section of the *General Appropriation Act* to provide teachers employed by the agencies with the same salary increase provided for public school teachers. In 2006, she noted, the Legislature included additional language in the *General Appropriation Act*, which provided dollars for statutory minimum salaries for Level 3-A teachers in FY 07. The 2006 Legislature, she added, also appropriated \$12,500 to the Higher Education Department (HED) for the New Mexico School for the Deaf for Level 3-A minimum salaries in FY 07.

Ms. Maestas further explained that at the request of the committee, LESC staff reviewed current state and federal law and the state's accountability plan, approved by the US Department of Education, to determine whether:

1. all state agencies that employ licensed teachers have been included in appropriations for teacher compensation, including three-tier minimum salaries;
2. the evaluation of teachers is consistent among the state agencies and complies with the requirements in current law for public school teachers;
3. these teachers, as state employees, are subject to the provisions of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), including the requirement to be "highly qualified" in the core subjects that they teach; and
4. the students and the state institutions themselves must make adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Referring the committee to the staff brief and its attachment, Ms. Maestas noted that based on the definition of a state agency in the *School Personnel Act* and on the Public Education Department's (PEDs) state accountability plan, two state-supported residential schools were not included in the appropriations for salary increases and three-tier minimum salaries: the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) and Mimbres School-Children's Psychiatric Center (Mimbres). She noted that according to staff from the New Mexico School for the Deaf, while the agency received \$12,500 to provide salary minimums for its Level 3-A teachers in FY 07, the agency had requested an appropriation of \$55,000. Ms. Maestas reported that data from these two state agencies that were not included in the compensation and salary minimum appropriation, but included in the state's accountability plan for AYP purposes, indicate that:

- NMSBVI employs 16 licensed teachers for 180 contract days and evaluates these teachers using an evaluation component that complies with the requirements in current law for public school teachers; and
- Mimbres employs eight licensed teachers (two current vacancies) for 260 contract days. Since these teachers are considered University of New Mexico hospital employees, these teachers are assessed on essential job functions required for a hospital setting. With regard to AYP, Mimbres staff report that school-age children are tested for AYP purposes if they reside in the facility on a testing date; however, as the average length of stay of a school-age child is 23 days, the results are reported to the student's home district.

Mr. Gillespie described the Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) population as students with low skills and high risk. He indicated that the majority of the population consists of special needs or special education students who have very little time to catch up to their peers or to earn a high school diploma or its equivalent, GED. Referring to the handout provided to the committee, Mr. Gillespie indicated that the current JJS student population is mostly male, between 16 and 18 years of age, at a 9th grade proficiency level. Approximately 74 percent of the student population, he noted, is of Hispanic origin.

Using a handout provided to the committee, Ms. Davidson provided an overview of the JJS educational services saying that it is comprised of four high schools widely separated in location: the Mountainview High School in Springer; Foothills High School (Youth Diagnostic and Development Center) in Albuquerque; Sierra Blanca High School (Camp Sierra Blanca) in Ft. Stanton, and Aztec Youth Academy (J. Paul Taylor Center) in Las Cruces. She said each school utilizes common program elements including evidence-based educational programming, technology-based instruction, and positive behavioral support. She said evidence shows that what works with their student population is intensive, prescriptive programming for remediation, with students age 18 and under, totally focused on academics. Ms. Davidson said that students are given two hours per day of reading, math, and writing, which provides an intensive catch-up over a short period of time to increase scores, adding that technology and computers are keys in providing prescriptive reading, math, and writing programming.

Ms. Davidson reported that JJS students are assessed using teacher-created assessments on a daily, weekly, or semester basis and through New Mexico Standards Based assessments and the New Mexico High School Competency Exam. The JJS program, she added, used the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) as an additional outcome measure of reading, math, language arts levels at intake and exit from CYFD facilities.

In response to a request by Senator Nava for comments from the audience, Mr. Ronald Stern (using an interpreter), Superintendent, New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD), said he appreciated the opportunity to address the committee with regard to AYP. He reported that the NMSD student assessment component includes the New Mexico Standards-based Assessment, the New Mexico Alternate Assessment, the New Mexico High School Competency Exam, and the Stanford Achievement Test, which is a standard model for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and that a variety of developmental profiles in the early childhood programs are used as authentic assessment to ascertain progress throughout the school year. Other short-cycle assessments in the primary through high school grades, he stated, include: Accelerated Reader, the Developmental Reading Assessment, and the STAR Math Assessment. He emphasized that while NMSD wants to be held accountable, its students will never meet AYP standards, primarily because of the tests that are required to be administered. He expressed hope that PED would allow NMSD to assess its students in an equitable and fair way to meet NCLB requirements.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question as to whether the female population in JJS facilities is served in the same manner as the male population, Ms. Davidson responded in the affirmative.

In response to a committee member's question relating to staff turnover in JJS facilities statewide, Mr. Gillespie reported a turnover rate of approximately 11 to 13 percent.

In response to a committee member's question as to whether New Mexico assessments can be modified for hearing impaired students to help them meet AYP, Dr. Don Watson, Assistant Secretary for Assessment and Accountability, PED, indicated that he is fairly certain that New Mexico would be penalized if the state established its own assessment standards to assist hearing impaired children for AYP purposes. He stated that while alternative assessments are limited to students with severe disabilities, the US Secretary of Education has announced that up to 2.0 percent of all students who have less severe academic disabilities, such as hearing impairments, will be allowed to take alternative assessments based on modified achievement standards; however, the US Department of Education has not yet published final regulations governing those assessments.

In response to a committee member's question as to what would happen to a school, such as the School for the Deaf, if it continually fails to make AYP and goes into restructuring, Dr. Catherine Cross Maple, Deputy Secretary, Learning and Accountability, PED, stated that PED staff is required to evaluate the school's instructional program and Educational Plan for Student Success and employ a methodology, tailored to the school's needs, to assist the school in moving out of restructuring.

In response to a committee member's question relating to funding for the NMSBVI and Mimbres School since the agencies were excluded from the teacher compensation and salary minimum appropriation and for the shortfall in funding to the School for the Deaf for FY 07 salary minimums, Mr. Paul Aguilar, Legislative Finance Committee budget analyst, stated that supplemental funds could be requested to provide these agencies with required funding if an oversight had occurred in the appropriation process.

Senator Nava requested LESC staff to submit a supplemental request for any shortfall in funding to the School for the Deaf for the FY 07 salary minimum of its level three-A teachers, if necessary.

Senator Papen requested LESC staff to determine what happens to a student after their release from the Mimbres School.

EVALUATION AND SALARIES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Ms. Frances Maestas, LESC staff, introduced Dr. Catherine Cross Maple, Deputy Secretary, Learning and Accountability, Public Education Department (PED); Dr. MaLu Gonzales, Contractor, Regents Professor, and Executive Director, Center for Border and Indigenous Educational Leadership (CeBIEEL); Ms. Joyce Aranda, Principal, Oñate High School, Las Cruces Public Schools; and Mr. Tom Sullivan, Executive Director, New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators, to discuss the implementation of minimum annual salaries and the design of a new evaluation component for school principals and assistant principals in school districts statewide.

As background, Ms. Maestas explained that in 2003, the Legislature implemented minimum annual salaries for Level 3-B school principals to be effective in school year 2005-2006. She said that based on school size, the salary minimum ranged from \$58,000 for principals in schools with 200 or fewer students, to \$68,000 for principals in schools with more than 1,000 students; however, concerns over tying the salary minimums to the size of the school led the LESC to include this topic in its 2004 Interim Workplan and to establish a work group to examine current law and to develop recommendations for consideration prior to the 2005 legislative session.

In 2005 and 2006, Ms. Maestas said that, the LESC endorsed legislation which did not pass, to implement a two-year phase-in of minimum annual salaries for school principals, including assistant principals, based upon a responsibility factor by school level, which would have become effective in school year 2006-2007. The legislation also included a provision to require PED to adopt an evaluation component and rules for the implementation of these minimum annual salaries. Instead, legislation was enacted to delay the implementation of the minimum salaries until school year 2007-2008.

Referring the committee to the staff brief, Ms. Maestas presented two scenarios of preliminary cost estimates for school year 2007-2008. Ms. Maestas reported that based on school size, approximately \$4.3 million would be required in FY 08 to provide salary minimums for school principals and assistant principals. However, she added, assistant principals are not included in current law, and the law would need to be amended if the Legislature decided to include them. Based on a responsibility factor by school level, she indicated approximately \$4.2 million would be required in FY 08 to provide the salary minimums that were proposed in the 2006 failed legislation.

Dr. Cross Maple reported that using \$150,000 from the Teacher Professional Development Fund and an additional \$60,000 from a Wallace Foundation Grant to the Office of Education Accountability, PED entered into a contract with the CeBIEL, New Mexico State University, to begin the design of a new evaluation system that reflects the increased role and responsibility of a school principal in evaluating and developing teachers and improving student performance. During the 2006 interim, she stated, CeBIEL facilitated a work group that examined the current competencies, roles, and responsibilities of school principals. While the group did not specifically discuss the recommendations of the LESC 2004 interim work group that led to LESC-endorsed legislation in 2005 and 2006, she emphasized that if the legislation to base salary minimums for principals on school-level responsibilities is enacted, PED will move quickly to incorporate these factors into the design of the new evaluation system and to amend current PED rule.

Dr. Gonzáles explained that in the development of the new system, a design work group was formed that included 34 principals, three assistant principals, 19 superintendents and other central office administration, six staff members from PED, and eight professional associates. The work group, she stated, met on four occasions during spring of 2006 to develop a set of guiding principles, a statement of philosophy, essential themes, the structure of the evaluation process, and the training needed for effective implementation. She said that the foundation of the project is to support leaders' learning and growth so that they may in turn support learning in their schools and communities.

Over the last 10 years, Ms. Aranda stated the role of a principal has evolved from a building manager to an instructional leader. As a member of the CeBIEL work group, she reported that input from principals and other education partners included information on the current evaluation process to determine if the administrative competencies in current PED rule reflect their role and responsibility, what impact the current evaluation process has on their work, and how the evaluation process can be enhanced.

Mr. Sullivan summarized the testimony from school principals and organizations representing school administrators and superintendents that was provided to the 2004 interim LESC work group. He said the discussion of the work group centered on the following issues: salary minimums based solely on school size do not consider the varying roles and responsibilities of school principals according to the level of the school; such factors as the complexity of

instruction, the number and kind of after-school events, and the community expectations should be considered in a principal's salary; assistant principals should be included in the minimum salary requirements; and the minimum salary of a school principal and assistant principal in a school district should not be less than the minimum salary required for a Level 3-A teacher.

With the permission of the chair, Mr. Sullivan introduced the following individuals who voiced support for the implementation of minimum salaries for school principals and assistant principals based on a responsibility factor by school level: Ms. Yvonne Garcia, former Eldorado High School principal and now principal of the planned North West High School, Albuquerque Public Schools; Mr. Phil Kasper, Legislative Designee for the New Mexico Association of Elementary School Principals and Principal at Eva B. Stokely Elementary School, Central Consolidated Schools; Dr. Viola E. Florez, Dean, College of Education, University of New Mexico; Mr. Charles Bowyer, Public Affairs and Program Director, National Education Association – New Mexico; Dr. Peter Winograd, Director, Office of Education Accountability, Department of Finance and Administration; Mr. Manuel F. Valdez, Superintendent, Chama Valley Independent Schools; and Ms. Karen White, Superintendent, Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question as to how principal vacancies are advertised, Mr. Sullivan said that most school districts have a standard posting or their vacancy is sent to the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators to be posted on their website.

In response to a committee member's question as to whether these advertisements have a standard statewide job description, Mr. Sullivan stated job descriptions may be different from school district to school district.

In response to a committee member's question to Ms. Aranda as to whether her job description accurately reflects her current duties, she indicated that the district's current description possibly reflects only about 10 percent of her responsibilities as a high school principal.

AREA SUPERINTENDENTS AND COMMUNITY INPUT

Mr. Salomon Molina, Account Manager, and Mr. Rob McNeely, District Manager, Scientific Learning, addressed the committee on a computer-driven program designed to develop a child's cognitive skills to enhance teacher efficiency for the student in the classroom.

Mr. McNeely said that on the suggestion of Senator Pete Campos, he had contacted Dr. Rindone to request a brief presentation to the committee to discuss his company's work in the area of brain plasticity and neuroscience-based approaches to rapidly accelerate reading, language acquisition, and core cognitive learning skills.

Mr. McNeely said that scientific breakthroughs in neuroscience are now being seriously considered nationwide as part of a solution for addressing the following challenges: learning, language development, and reading, as well as challenges faced by students with limited English proficiency. He said that neuroscience-based interventions work by directly enhancing the brain's functionality, and that results from the use of neuroscience based interventions continue to show student gains of one to three years in oral language and reading skills after only four to 12 weeks – gains that have a rapid, measurable impact on overall academic performance in struggling learners.

Mr. McNeely closed by saying that he would like to address the committee again in the future when there is more time to demonstrate and present the efficacy of neuroscience-based interventions. He said that as the committee continues to discuss ways to improve education in New Mexico and to strive for excellence in all parts of the state with all student populations, it is his hope that the committee will consider Scientific Learning as a resource.

In response to a committee member's question relating to the cost of the program, Mr. Molina said that it can be as low as \$10,000, or as high as \$80,000, depending on the program chosen and on the tools used.

Senator Nava thanked the presenters.

On behalf of the committee, Senator Nava thanked the college for hosting this meeting and for all of the amenities provided.

There being no further business and with the consensus of the committee, Senator Nava called a recess at 5:55 p.m.

MINUTES LESC MEETING AUGUST 10, 2006

Senator Cynthia Nava, Chair, called the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) meeting to order on August 10, 2006, at 9:43 a.m., State Capitol, Room 322, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC members were present:

Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Kay Papen; and Representatives Rick Miera and Mimi Stewart.

The following LESC advisory members were present:

Senator Mary Jane M. Garcia; and Representatives Ray Begaye, William "Ed" Boykin, Roberto "Bobby" J. Gonzales, Jimmie C. Hall, John A. Heaton, Harriet I. Ruiz, and Richard D. Vigil.

Additional legislator present:

Senator Bernadette M. Sanchez, Albuquerque, New Mexico, was also in attendance.

COLLEGE/WORKPLACE READINESS AND HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN

a. Introduction

Senator Nava recognized Dr. D. Pauline Rindone, LESC Director, and Secretary of Public Education Veronica C. García, who provided an introduction to the day's hearing on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign. Dr. Rindone reminded the committee of their agreement to work throughout the interim on this topic and to create a work group,

together with the Public Education Secretary, that would participate in discussions at each meeting. She called the committee's attention to a list of the work group members and said that the (HED), (PED) and the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators had provided nominees and input as to the composition of the work group. She said the work group includes representatives from the public schools – superintendents, principals and teachers; representatives from the PED and HED; the tribal entities; two- and four-year institutions; other educational organizations; and the business community. She said the first three rows of the audience seating are reserved for the work group.

By way of introduction, Dr. Rindone said that at almost every LESC meeting the committee has been provided with data and other information indicating that upon graduation from high school, many of our New Mexico students are ill-prepared to enter the workplace or higher education. At the national level, she said that 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. To emphasize the gravity of the issue, Dr. Rindone said that 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.

Because the committee has heard that lack of reading proficiency of students is one of the major reasons that so many New Mexico schools did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), Dr. Rindone said it was only appropriate that the work group should start this series of hearings with several literacy presentations. She said that the LESC has focused on literacy in the primary grades because research points out that giving young children a head start is most beneficial in terms of better performance in the later grades, better attendance, better participation in postsecondary education, as well as curbing the dropout rates. She said that this momentum must be sustained as students move in the education system, and teachers in the middle and secondary levels also need to be aware that many students who have not had the benefits of all the improvements in the primary grades will need additional help with their literacy skills. Consequently, Dr. Rindone said that today's presentations would provide a brief background on research-based reading instruction, followed by a community-based literacy program supported by volunteer tutors from the business community and then segue into the third presentation on literacy instruction at the middle and secondary levels.

Dr. Rindone concluded her remarks by saying that national experts and education advocates are raising alarms about the reading comprehension skills of middle and high school students, particularly, the persistent gaps in reading achievement based on economic and minority status.

Dr. García named some of the initiatives that the PED and the Executive believe would be good points for the work group to include in their discussions:

1. development of a gold standard diploma, which would consist of completion of four advanced placement courses, ending with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.75;
2. increasing the dropout age from 17 to 18;
3. increasing graduation requirements, with something for everyone by including several options, such as dual enrollment and advanced placement online;
4. creation of a statewide cyber academy;

5. increasing funds for technical high schools and for advanced placement (AP) courses and training for teachers;
6. increasing funds for pre-AP, programs like AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), as many middle school students do not see themselves as college material;
7. funding for the senior year to help senior students have an exciting 12th grade;
8. eliminating the 10th Grade High School Competency Examination – a task force is working on this issue; and
9. promoting summer institutes to bring together a high school proposal.

Secretary García said she is excited to work collaboratively with the LESC on this major policy initiative and to help create the rigor that has been missing in the education of students.

Committee Discussion:

Committee members raised several issues related to the initiatives that PED and the Executive suggested as good points to consider in the deliberations of the work group:

- regarding increasing the dropout age from 17 to 18, a committee member stated that many students do not drop out because of academic problems, but instead they drop out because they want to take their GED (General Educational Development) examination and enter college. He said the state needs to find a way that these students can qualify for lottery and dual enrollment;
- regarding increased graduation requirements with something for everyone, a committee member expressed concern that the vocational curriculum in high school is missing from the graduation equation and that no matter what trade a student chooses, whether it be mining or construction, these jobs are becoming very technical in nature and being able to read and calculate math equations are essential. He was of the opinion that the high school curriculum should include equal preparation of students regardless of whether the student enters college or the workplace; and
- regarding increased funds for pre-AP programs which strive to increase the self-esteem of students and helps them to see themselves as being successful whether in the college setting or in the business community, a committee member expressed the need for communication to students of career choices available in the business workplace and gave an example of the growing aviation industry which will need highly qualified mechanics. Dr. Rindone said that career pathways and career clusters should provide some of the information regarding the preparation of high school students.

Senator Nava asked the members of the work group to introduce themselves. She complimented the membership as being impressive and said she looked forward to hearing their comments and recommendations.

b. Research-based Reading Instruction

Senator Nava recognized Representative Mimi Stewart who presented on research-based reading instruction. She began her presentation by asking two questions: What do you know about research on reading? And, what would you like to know? Representative Stewart said she would begin her presentation with the end in mind, since the ultimate goal of reading instruction is helping children acquire the skills and knowledge they need to comprehend text at a level consistent with their general intellectual ability in order for them to read fluently and enjoy reading.

Representative Stewart said that teaching reading is a national priority because there are too many students that are not proficient, and up to 70 percent of children in high poverty schools are reading below the basic level. She said this problem is preventable if research-based reading instruction starts early, in preK and Kindergarten to grade 1. She said that poor readers in the 1st grade are at very significant risk for long term academic difficulty, with an 88 percent probability of being a poor reader in the 4th grade if you were a poor reader in the 1st grade. Representative Stewart said that poor readers at the end of 1st grade are likely to require intensive instructional support to reach 3rd grade reading outcomes.

Presenting findings from the 2000 National Reading Panel, Representative Stewart said that for children to be good readers, they must be taught:

1. phonemic awareness skills – the ability to manipulate the sounds that make up spoken language;
2. phonics skills – the understanding that there are relationships between letters and sounds;
3. the ability to read fluently with accuracy, speed, and expression; and
4. to apply reading comprehension strategies, including vocabulary knowledge, to enhance understanding and enjoyment of what they read.

Representative Stewart said that the “new research” on reading is different because it is much more extensive; it has been better funded; it has been of higher quality; and it has involved a convergence of findings from both basic science on the nature of reading and from instructional studies that implement those findings. She said that the components of scientifically based reading research must demonstrate that results are replicated, findings can be generalized, the scientific method is used, rigorous standards are met, convergent findings are compatible, and findings are longitudinal.

Representative Stewart explained that research in reading has made tremendous leaps and said that one example is that it is now possible to examine how the brain processes reading. She provided several examples of how a child processes reading beginning with recognition and formation of letters to becoming a successful and proficient reader.

Continuing with an explanation of what it takes to manage successful interventions, Representative Stewart said that a school must have:

1. well trained teachers who understand the process of learning to read and how to identify children lagging behind in development;
2. systematic and reliable assessments to monitor the growth of critical reading skills;
3. leadership within the school to allocate intervention resources appropriately, and to monitor the use of those resources;
4. appropriate materials available to help structure the interventions and provide instruction and practice activities at the appropriate level of difficulty; and
5. personnel to assist the classroom teacher in providing intensive interventions to the students most in need.

Representative Stewart said that schools must do three basic things in order to teach reading:

1. increase the consistency with which high quality instruction is delivered in every K-3 classroom;

2. continuously assess growth in critical reading skills beginning in kindergarten to identify children lagging behind; and
3. provide supplemental, individualized interventions for children who are struggling to learn to read.

Representative Stewart said that research has provided a body of scientific knowledge about reading and reading instruction that can help teachers, principals, and schools be more effective in teaching to all children and is also very helpful in establishing the focus of assessment and instruction. In conclusion, Representative Stewart repeated her opening remarks of beginning with the end in mind: the ultimate goal of reading instruction is to help children acquire the skills and knowledge they need to comprehend text at a level consistent with their general intellectual ability in order to read fluently and to enjoy reading.

Committee Discussion:

A committee member stated that for 12 years there has been quite a bit of solid research on teaching reading including neuroscience and how the brain works—consequently, he was surprised that we now call it “new research.” In response, Representative Stewart stated that the new research of the National Reading Panel is much more extensive and better funded. She said that the three identified areas of the brain are the most significant findings of the research which was derived from research on autistic children. She said that now reading teachers know what must be done to teach students to read which includes teaching phonemic awareness and phonics.

Dr. Viola E. Florez, Dean, College of Education, University of New Mexico (UNM), and member of the work group, said she enjoyed the presentation. However, she said that UNM faculty has discovered that the National Reading Panel (NRP) did not include studies of second language learners which are necessary, particularly in New Mexico, because bilingual and trilingual children process reading very differently from predominantly English-speaking children. Representative Stewart said that other studies have shown that the processes used to teach reading do not change and perhaps more time is required, but the most important distinction is that this omission does not change the ultimate goal of learning to read.

In response to a committee member’s question on whether gender matters in learning to read and in the reading program used, Representative Stewart stated that while girls pick up language skills faster and sooner, boys catch up, and they all must go through the same process – there is very little evidence that gender matters.

In response to a committee member’s questions of when and why schools stopped teaching phonics, Representative Stewart stated that the education community has debated the topic of whole language versus phonics for years; however, research has converged and found phonics to be necessary to decode words. Unfortunately, she said, there are teachers who went to college during the “whole language” phase that don’t realize the importance that language awareness plays in decoding words.

In response to a committee member’s question whether the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) district uses the same reading program in all the schools, Representative Stewart said that although they have been trying to ensure that all elementary schools use the same program, there are too many choices in the reading adoption materials, and schools are free to choose their own program. She added that two of the best reading programs used most often in APS and throughout the country are Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt.

c. Albuquerque Reads: A Community-based Literacy Program

Dr. Kathleen Forrer, LESC staff, introduced Ms. Lynda Espinoza-Idle, Principal, Bel Air Elementary School, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS); and Ms. Sally Giannini, Site Coordinator for the Albuquerque Reads program, to discuss the implementation of the program at three APS elementary schools, the impact that the program has had on student achievement, and the efforts being made by APS to expand the program to other schools. Dr. Forrer also introduced Mr. Pat Dee, Committee Chair of Albuquerque Reads, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the Chamber's role in the creation and continued implementation of the program. Dr. Forrer then noted that Senator Bernadette M. Sanchez, Albuquerque, and Mr. Michael Gaylord, Vice President for Leadership and *Albuquerque Reads*, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, were also available to answer questions.

The presenters provided the committee with the following documents: a brochure entitled *Become an Albuquerque Reads Tutor Today*; the *Albuquerque Reads: Training and Resource Manual*; a set of "Reading, Writing and Skills Task Cards"; a one-page handout with a summary entitled "Expected Budget per School" on one side and a table providing by-school reading performance data for school year 2005-2006 on the other; and a blank form used to track the progress of the students in the program.

To begin the presentation, Ms. Giannini showed the committee a short film produced by the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce that details how Albuquerque Reads is constructed and the impact that the program has on both the children and the tutors who work with them.

Emphasizing that Albuquerque Reads is a partnership between APS and the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Espinoza-Idle explained that the program incorporates the work of volunteer tutors from the business community into the APS kindergarten literacy curriculum. She noted that the Albuquerque program is modeled after Columbus Reads, which was begun in 1998 to assist low-income, ethnically diverse students in the Columbus, Ohio public schools. As in Ohio, Albuquerque's program, she continued, is aimed at "high poverty" schools in which 85 percent or more of the students qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program. She noted that Albuquerque Reads, which is supported by Title I funding, is currently in three APS schools: Bel Air Elementary, Atrisco Elementary, and Wherry Elementary. However, she said, because of the program's success—APS kindergarten students who participate in Albuquerque Reads are able to read at or above grade level by the end of the school year—APS hopes to expand the program to all elementary schools identified as high poverty within the next six years.

Mr. Dee said that the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce works together with area businesses on this program because both recognize the importance of children learning how to read. Noting that the main role of the Chamber is to recruit volunteers to tutor students, he said that during school year 2005-2006 there were about 91 different businesses involved in Albuquerque Reads. Mr. Dee stated that after completing a three-hour initial training session, tutors commit approximately 70 minutes a week to the program; each 70-minute segment consists of a 10-minute training period provided to tutors by the site-based program coordinator followed by two 30-minute sessions in which tutors work one-on-one with students in the program. He said that he has seen first hand the tremendous progress made this year, adding that the beauty of the program is that it addresses the individual needs of the child, looks at how the child is progressing, and tailors the instruction to the individual child's needs.

Ms. Giannini stated that the training provided to the tutors incorporates findings from the NRP. She said that, in response to a Congressional mandate, the NRP had reviewed research on reading in kindergarten through third grade and, in the year 2000, had issued a report identifying five methods of reading instruction that lead to success in reading: phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle/phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five methods, she explained, form the cornerstone of the national Reading First program, part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. New Mexico's Reading First program, Ms. Giannini stated, has added a sixth component—oral language—to more clearly emphasize the importance of the spoken word as an underlying necessity in dealing with the written word.

Calling the committee's attention to the "Albuquerque Reads: Training and Resource Manual," Ms. Giannini stated that the document includes, among a number of resources, examples of activities tied to scientifically based reading instruction, a description of the stages children go through while learning to read, a sample lesson, a sample lesson plan, and a list of the accomplishments that can be expected of kindergarten students. Ms. Giannini also noted that, in order to ensure that the Albuquerque Reads tutors are reinforcing what the reading teachers are doing in the classroom, she, as the site coordinator, meets with the teachers on a weekly basis to develop the weekly lesson plan that the tutors will follow.

Ms. Espinoza-Idle then discussed the Albuquerque Reads tracking form, which lists the criteria for each assessment that is done. She explained that at the end of the year, data is collected for the three schools that have been implementing Albuquerque Reads: Bel-Air Elementary, Atrisco Elementary, and Wherry Elementary. She described the progress that has been made in assisting students to achieve proficiency, noting that before the program was implemented, only 35 percent of the students at Bel Air Elementary were reading at or above grade level but that after the program was implemented, the percentage of students reading at or above grade level jumped to 77 percent. At the end of school year 2005-2006, she added, 87 percent of the students at Bel Air were proficient.

Referring to the expected budget per school, Ms. Espinoza-Idle explained that although there is no state money available for Albuquerque Reads, participating schools set aside some of their Title I allotment to support the program. She stated that the cost of starting a program at an individual school site is approximately \$47,500, which includes salaries and benefits, materials, and maintenance. In addition to monetary needs, she said, the schools that are involved must also provide collaboration time for the teachers to look at the data and to assess the students' progress.

Senator Sanchez explained that, as the Volunteer Programs Coordinator for APS, she is very familiar with Albuquerque Reads. She noted that out of all of the volunteer programs at APS, Albuquerque Reads is the largest and one of the most successful with 940 tutors participating at the three schools currently providing the program. She said that she has a great commitment to this program because of the results, adding that the budget has been a barrier because the schools have no additional dollars to fund this program.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question regarding which test data were included in the By-school Table, Ms. Giannini stated that the results shown were from the KDPR (Kindergarten Developmental Progress Review). The committee member noted that the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) scores for two of the three schools listed were lower

and cautioned that presenting only one set of scores might be misleading. Ms. Giannini explained that although the DIBELS scores for the schools to which the committee member referred were low at the beginning of the year, by the end of the year the scores were much better.

In response to this same committee member's question regarding which reading programs are being used in the three Albuquerque Reads schools, Ms. Espinoza-Idle said that Atrisco Elementary is a Reading First school, Bel Air Elementary has adopted the Harcourt reading program, and Wherry Elementary is using a balanced literacy approach; she added that reading programs selected by the schools are aligned to district and state expectations and standards on an annual basis.

In response to a committee member's question regarding why the three participant schools did not make AYP, Ms. Giannini stated that the schools failed to make AYP because they did not meet the required 95 percent participation rate. The committee member then asked if the students in Albuquerque Reads learn the "code" that will enable them to read. Answering in the affirmative, Ms. Giannini explained that at the beginning of the year, phonemic awareness is stressed by both the classroom teachers and the tutors. Ms. Espinoza-Idle added that the training program for tutors stresses the six principles of Reading First.

In response to a committee member's question regarding commitment a prospective tutor is required to make, Mr. Dee said that although tutors are required to commit to fill one 70-minute slot per week, two people may pair up to fill that slot. On average, he said, each student may see two to three different tutors per week.

d. Literacy Instruction at the Middle and Secondary Levels

Ms. Pamela Herman, LESC staff, introduced Dr. Judy Coddling, President/CEO, America's Choice, and Dr. Susan Sclafani, Co-director, State Alliance for High Performance, who provided a description of the America's Choice Ramp Up Literacy program for middle and high schools; and Dr. Walter G. Gibson, Superintendent, Los Lunas Public Schools, who described the efforts in his school district to improve literacy achievement.

Ms. Herman said that, recognizing that reading is an educational keystone, the LESC has heard presentations on early literacy during every interim since 2001 and has endorsed and sponsored successful legislation to provide resources for literacy in early and primary grades.

According to Ms. Herman, despite recent gains in reading achievement among students in the primary grades, national researchers and education advocates are raising alarms about the reading comprehension skills of middle and high school students, and especially about persistent gaps in reading achievement based on economic and minority status. She said that at the national level, the search for strategies to address these concerns about adolescent literacy has recently spurred the publication of several studies that summarize existing research on effective strategies and policies to improve the reading skills of adolescents.

In particular, Ms. Herman directed the committee's attention to the 2004 publication *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* by the Alliance for Excellent Education for the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Ms. Herman said that this report points out that no single intervention or program will meet the needs of all struggling readers and writers; instead, the report lists 15 interventions and states that there is a need for

better dissemination, evaluation, and comparison of programs that select from among these strategies including, at a minimum, appropriate and ongoing professional development and summative and formative assessment.

Dr. Sclafani said that as co-director of the State Alliance for High Performance, she notes that while New Mexico may compare itself to other states, none of the states is in fact high performing. She said there is a national literacy crisis, and cited statistics showing that there are eight million struggling readers in grades 4-12; 70 percent of 9th graders enter high school reading below grade level; 60 percent of 12th graders read below grade level; and 70 percent of middle and high school students need differentiated reading instruction. With these outcomes, she said, clearly schools are not meeting the needs of industry, where the 25 fastest growing professions require above-average reading skills adequate to tackle technical manuals, for example, that are harder to read than *War and Peace*.

Dr. Coddling said the research findings indicate that instruction and infrastructure changes – such as extended time for literacy, professional development for teacher teams and leadership personnel, and on-going evaluation of students and programs – are needed in order to improve instruction. She said that America's Choice sees that the problem is that students enter middle and high schools unable to read the textbooks required for their courses. Middle and high school English teachers generally do not know how to teach reading to students who are two or more years behind; the longer these students stay in school, the more they lose ground; and in classes designed for remediation they often become disengaged.

To find a solution for these problems, Dr. Coddling said that America's Choice began looking for a secondary reading program that could solve this adolescent reading problem. They studied military programs for new recruits who needed literacy skills, the Boys Town approach, and what was available from publishers across the country. However, she said, none of these programs was exactly what was needed, so they convened a large meeting of experts from across the country and around the world to find out how to address the problem of low adolescent reading levels. Based on this research, America's Choice embarked on a two-year development effort in the year 2000 to create a program, Ramp-Up Literacy that would prepare teachers to accelerate student literacy and engage students in learning at the middle and high school levels. With the advent of the *Reading Next* report and additional research into reading comprehension, Dr. Coddling said that they undertook another revision of the program and began implementation of this new, improved version in the year 2005.

Dr. Coddling said that over the past five years, Ramp-Up Literacy has been adopted and implemented in over 400 middle and high schools in Rochester, New York; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Hartford, Connecticut; and Chicago, Illinois. The program has been implemented statewide in Mississippi, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Georgia, and Hawaii. She said that students who are far behind in reading need accelerated instruction, not remedial classes that leave them disengaged and falling further behind, and that Ramp-Up Literacy offers a comprehensive acceleration system which includes 90-minute classes that include advanced phonics, assessment tools to enable teachers to tailor instruction to students' individual needs, and a high quality teacher training program. Dr. Coddling concluded by stating that Ramp-Up Literacy moves striving readers from phonics to fluency, teaches comprehension explicitly, engages striving readers in learning, and works well for English Language Learners and other special populations.

Dr. Gibson said in the Los Lunas High School, the problems are typical of elsewhere in New Mexico; students have failing years in 6th and 9th grade, decline from there, and the result is a graduation rate of only 55 percent. It was with this in mind that the district went searching for a catch-up program for middle and high school students that followed the recommendations of

the National Reading Panel, and settled upon the Scholastic Read 180 Program. He explained that because of this crisis, the district has invested in intensive staff development, both locally and nationally, including a two-week summer institute. He said that Ramp-Up Literacy was not selected because America's Choice did not have a presence in New Mexico; Read 180 from Scholastic was the best option with in-state support, and the district began placing its low-achieving reading students into this program last year. He said that because well-trained teachers are difficult to find, the district looked at the capacity of training their own teachers with the skills necessary to ensure that Los Lunas can graduate competent, proficient readers.

Referring to graphs that were provided to the committee, Dr. Gibson said that in school year 2005-2006, where the program was not implemented with fidelity in Los Lunas, there were few gains. Where the district saw the greatest gains, he said, was in a well defined program in the 4th and 5th grades at Desert View Intermediate School. He said over the course of the year Los Lunas saw 4th graders in the Read 180 group make average gains in reading 50 percent greater than those not in Read 180, and 5th graders made average gains in reading roughly 300 percent greater than those not in the program.

In conclusion, Dr. Gibson said that in order to tackle the reading problems of low-achieving students, New Mexico needs a uniform statewide approach that provides schools with information about what students should know and be able to do, direction on how schools can reach students that are having difficulty staying engaged, and a strong professional development component that helps content level teachers teach reading skills to middle and high school students.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question regarding a unified state approach for reading instruction, Dr. Gibson said that New Mexico is a state of limited resources, and training of teachers is expensive; however, at the risk of challenging local control he is suggesting that the state look at ways to maximize teacher training and instructional materials dollars.

In response to a committee member's question about organization, Dr. Coddling said America's Choice is a not-for-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. and is one of the partners of the State Alliance for High Performance which is the coordinating organization for states' joint efforts to conceptualize and implement a world-class education that is benchmarked against international models with a globally competitive edge. She added that America's Choice brings to the Alliance an extraordinary record of helping states, districts, and schools raise student achievement using its own unique strategies.

In response to a committee member's question regarding literacy instruction for second language learners, Dr. Sclafani replied that if a student learns to read in her first language, she can translate those skills to another language. In middle and high school, where students presumably have had extensive exposure to the English language, it is generally best to focus on learning to read in English, but with accommodations.

In response to a committee member's question on what instructional changes happened in schools to precipitate the low reading levels in New Mexico and the nation, Dr. Sclafani said that about 15 years ago, instruction in reading and writing including comprehension strategies was required through grade 8—then these requisites were dropped which left students without support to develop strategies necessary to read complex material in the content areas, which spelled “disaster.”

In response to a committee member's question whether any schools in New Mexico are using materials from America's Choice, Dr. Coddling said that Dr. Gibson in Los Lunas has the America's Choice Ramp Up math program, but not the literacy piece. She added that if a school is in need of everything (math, literacy, and science) it would be useful to acquire the entire package offered through America's Choice. Dr. Cross Maple said that PED has held a series of meetings with representatives of school districts and staff from the LESC and Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) to introduce them to the State Alliance for High Performance, of which America's Choice is a program. She added that after August 16, PED will be making some decisions as to whether the America's Choice programs will be adopted as part of the School Improvement Framework for Priority Schools.

A committee member asked whether textbooks would be aligned to math standards, since school year 2007-2008 will be the instructional material adoption year for math. Dr. Cross Maple said that in the instructional materials adoption process, the Instructional Material Review Committee submitted all the material for math and that none of the materials were rated good for alignment with math standards. For example, at the elementary level, none of the seven or eight submissions was within 90 percent of alignment to standards; at middle school level, about 12 textbooks were recommended and only one met the 90 percent alignment criterion; at the high school level more texts met the criterion, but were not particularly good. She stated that New Mexico has good standards and a very strong accountability and assessment system, but lacks high quality material for classroom use.

In response to a committee member's question whether instruction is driven by textbooks, Dr. Gibson answered in the affirmative. Dr. Coddling added that instructional material is very troublesome in this country because publishing companies must cater to diverse standards across the entire nation, whereas in other countries textbooks must meet unified national standards that are much more controlled.

In response to a committee member's question regarding what teacher preparation programs are doing to prepare teachers for middle and high school endorsements, Dr. Michael Sitton, a member of the work group, stated that there has been a lot of unproductive division between the Colleges of Education and Arts and Science faculties. The Arts and Science faculty is narrowly focused on content, but there is some movement in the direction of addressing issues related to training teachers to teach that content. Dr. Gibson stated that in his experience, it is the mid and late career teachers that need retraining; he finds that young teachers coming out of the teacher preparation programs are, on the whole, well-prepared.

e. Alignment of High School End-of-Course Tests with Higher Education Placement Tests

Dr. Rindone gave a brief presentation on the alignment of high school curricula and end-of-course tests with higher education placement tests. She said that in 2003, the LESC endorsed and the Legislature passed HB 212, *Public School Reforms*, to restructure and reform the New Mexico system of public education. She said that one key provision in HB 212 as well as separate legislation in the House and Senate was a new section in the *Public School Code* requiring that high school curricula and end-of-course tests be aligned with the placement tests administered by two- and four-year public postsecondary institutions in New Mexico. She said the LESC has included progress reports from the Public Education Department (PED) and the Higher Education Department (HED) on the implementation of this law in every LESC Interim Workplan since 2003 when the law was enacted. Dr. Rindone stated that at the June meeting HED had presented a report which was geared to a more global perspective of alignment of the K-20 system; consequently, the LESC had requested staff to work on this part of the alignment

process which deals specifically with current law on alignment of high school tests and college placement tests. She stated that this presentation would explain to the committee the importance of alignment; the progress made in carrying out the current law; and options for the committee to consider to give the staff direction on how to proceed with accomplishing the task of implementing the law.

Dr. Rindone introduced LESC staff members Dr. Sharon Caballero and Ms. Pamela Herman who provided a more detailed presentation.

Dr. Caballero explained that the 2003 legislation mentioned by Dr. Rindone was endorsed and proposed by the LESC based on testimony urging such a measure from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and others during the 2001 interim. Dr. Caballero explained that alignment is one step in the standards-based reform movement to develop a streamlined P-20 educational system; it is the process of matching high school content standards with college admission and placement requirements as well as employer expectations, so that students will be ready to take college-level coursework or meet workplace requirements.

Dr. Caballero reported that, according to testimony from the Center for Educational Policy Research to the LESC regarding the Standards for Success project, alignment can reduce or eliminate the number of students who need remediation in college, help students better prepare for success in college-level coursework or the workplace, and increase the value of test results from high schools.

Dr. Caballero cited the Measuring Up 2004 Report that shows New Mexico to be one of the lowest performing states in the percentage of young people earning a higher education credential, losing many students at every juncture in the “educational pipeline”:

- for every 100 students who enter grade 9, about 60 are likely to earn a high school diploma;
- of those 60 students who are graduated from high school, about 33 are likely to enroll in college within one year;
- of those 33 enrolling in college, 24 persist through the first year; and
- of those 24, only 11 graduate with an associate degree in three years or bachelor’s degree in six years.

Explaining how New Mexico can achieve high school to college alignment, Dr. Caballero said that authorities on the subject such as Achieve, Inc. and the Center for Educational Policy Research recommend a three-step process to align standards:

1. conduct an external review of state high school content standards using as a yardstick a national model such as those promulgated by the College Board, American Diploma Project, or ACT, Inc. PED provided the LESC with documentation in the 2004 interim from the College Board illustrating substantial alignment in standards for math and English;
2. convene cross-sector teams by discipline to clarify the performance standards expected of exiting 12th graders, and then expand grade 12 standards to align fully with postsecondary success standards; and
3. discuss and reach consensus on a set of 12th grade performance standards that ensure that all students are ready for college level coursework and the workplace. The policy decision may lead to differentiated graduation standards.

Once standards have been aligned, then high school courses and assessments can be aligned with college placement requirements.

In summarizing the progress the state has made toward meeting the requirements of current law, Dr. Caballero called the committee's attention to Attachment 1 of the staff brief, which illustrated substantial alignment between New Mexico standards for math and English and the "Standards for Success" developed by the Center for Educational Policy Research and endorsed by the Association of American Universities and the College Board. Dr. Caballero said that the other task already accomplished was outlined in Attachment 2, which documented that higher education faculty in math and English had reviewed the competencies included in the Standards for Success and determined which should be taught by high school and which should be taught in college.

Ms. Herman reviewed the approaches other states are taking to establish college/workplace-readiness measures in high school to determine the alignment of high school exit standards coursework and assessments with college entrance standards. These assessments are usually designed to provide students with timely warning if they will need remedial work before starting college or technical training. Ms. Herman referred the committee to Attachment 3 of the staff brief that listed what some states have done to implement a college/workplace readiness test at the high school level either through legislation or administrative policy. The measures include voluntary additions to state 11th grade standards-based assessments; establishment of college/workplace readiness cut scores in the mandatory 11th grade standards-based assessments themselves; mandatory administration of the ACT or SAT test in 11th grade; and mandatory administration of pre-ACT or pre-SAT tests in earlier grades. Ms. Herman said that according to ACT, in Illinois and Colorado the strategy of requiring the ACT test for all 11th graders has contributed to significantly increased in-state college enrollment, particularly among low-income and minority students. ACT also reports that after the test became mandatory, more students in Colorado achieved scores at least at the low end of college readiness.

Ms. Herman said that several New Mexico postsecondary institutions provide high school students with opportunities to take college placement assessments such as the Accuplacer or Compass and meet with students and their families to counsel them regarding what high school or dual enrollment coursework a student needs to become college-ready. She said that PED had issued a Request for Proposals that includes a PSAT pilot project to identify student who should be counseled to take AP classes. She said the pilot project will include all 10th grade students in 14 school districts. She said that the PSAT is a predictor of the score a student will receive on the SAT and could be used as a college-readiness indicator; however, in New Mexico most students take the ACT.

In conclusion, Ms. Herman gave several options the committee may wish to consider, alone or in combination, to speed up the alignment process:

1. recommend a requirement that all 8th and/or 10th grade students take pre-college placement tests such as EXPLORE and/or PLAN to provide data for students and high schools on college-readiness so that necessary remediation can be provided, and make an appropriation for the estimated per-pupil cost of tests;
2. require that public two- and four-year postsecondary institutions expand administration of Accuplacer, Compass, or other college placement tests to all 11th grade students in New Mexico as being done by Central New Mexico Community College, Eastern New Mexico University, and others and make an appropriation for the estimated per-pupil cost of tests. However, alignment of these placement tests with high school standards would need to be established;

3. require that all New Mexico 11th grade students take the ACT or another college admissions test, and make an appropriation for the estimated per-pupil cost of tests;
4. recommend an appropriation to expand the PED PSAT pilot study to include all New Mexico 10th graders so a college-readiness indicator is embedded at the high school level to predict student achievement on the SAT and provide direction for students and high schools about necessary remediation; however, New Mexico is an ACT state;
5. endorse the PED proposal to use the 11th grade New Mexico Standards Based Assessment both as a graduation test and an indicator of college readiness;
6. join the American Diploma Project Network, which would enable New Mexico to participate in Achieve's alignment initiative. This formal alignment process provides an initial side-by-side comparison of the state's high school standards with the American Diploma Project (ADP) benchmarks in English and mathematics. The comparison is used to identify gaps between expectations for high school and for college and work. Achieve is currently assessing interest in a third cohort among states for school year 2006-2007. Achieve's priority is to respond to the needs of the 22 states that are members of the ADP network. Non-member states may participate as space permits. This alignment process would take 10 to 15 months.

In conclusion, Dr. Rindone said that a decision by the committee on which options it wished to pursue would help the staff in developing the agenda for the September meeting and would ensure continuation of the discussion on alignment.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question on the reason why PED is using the PSAT, Dr. Don Watson, Assistant Secretary, Assessment and Accountability, PED, said the idea was to look at both the PSAT and the PLAN, a pre-ACT test. Ms. Herman said that the reason may possibly be because of claims that the PSAT predicts student success in advanced placement. An audience member also pointed out that the PSAT is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Examination.

Ms. Terri Cole, Director, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce and member of the work group, said that the Chamber has been involved with education reform for many years and the business community believes there should be no difference in the preparation of a student who plans to attend college and a student who plans to go into the workforce. For clarification, Ms. Cole explained that businesses are ready to hire people in jobs and to train them to do anything; however, students coming out of high school need the employability skills – to be on-time, dependable, loyal, honest, resourceful, and hard-working. She said that in addition, students who wished to make the honorable choice to pursue a trade or certificate need high level literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills. Ms. Cole emphasized that it is very important that there be an alignment of high school end-of-course tests with workplace expectations as well as higher education placement tests.

Ms. Nancy Stewart, Associate Vice President, Central New Mexico Community College and work group member, noted that Arkansas and Oklahoma have implemented the ACT Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), which includes the EXPLORE in grade 8 or 9 and the PLAN in grade 10, both fully aligned with the ACT, as well as a strong soft-skills battery known as WorkKeys. WorkKeys is tied to career analyses, job profiling, exit level skills information, and curricular recommendations all based on measures of workplace-ready skills and competencies.

Dr. William Flores, Vice President and Provost, New Mexico State University and member of the work group, agreed with Ms. Cole that it is imperative that students be ready for work whether they plan on college or not. He cautioned against using the state 11th grade standards-based assessment as a graduation test until alignment with college placement expectations is established. He encouraged the alignment of high school end-of-course tests with higher education placement tests on a course-by-course, competency-by-competency basis, and cautioned that there still may be a gap. Dr. Flores encouraged the LESC to endorse a proposal to fund participation in the ADP to complete the alignment process. He said that even in the case of advanced placement students, competencies are not always aligned.

In response to a committee member's question regarding how that can be accomplished, Dr. Flores replied that the discipline groups at both levels had to be convened to reach common expectations. Dr. Flores also indicated that all New Mexico institutions of higher education use the ACT, which they feel is a better indicator of readiness than the SAT. In response to a follow-up question, he indicated that the ACT is not generally used for placement, precisely, but rather to determine whether a freshman needs to take a placement test, just as low high school grades might indicate the same.

Ms. Rebecca Belletto, Education Policy and Program Analyst, HED, reported on the \$3.0 million grant for 18 districts with new Gear-Up funding which should assist in improving high school completion rates, and said that it was her understanding that both Secretary McClure and Secretary García had expressed interest in participating in the ADP.

In response to committee members' questions regarding the cost of participating in the project, Dr. Rindone explained that the staff from Achieve, Inc., have stated that there is no charge to join the ADP, but that it would cost approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000 for New Mexico teams to attend the institutes that would assist in the alignment process.

Based on the discussion, Senator Nava with consensus from the committee agreed that the staff should arrange to bring more detailed information on the first, second, and sixth options. She said that representatives of the American Diploma Project Network and the Southwest Regional Office of ACT, Inc. will address the committee and the College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign Work Group at its September meeting, and more information on these two options will be forthcoming.

Ms. Leah Gutierrez-Wier, member of the work group, said she has been listening to the experts, and they say learning begins with parents first and then preK. She praised the content standards of New Mexico and said that the Ford Foundation has rated them high. She agreed that the alignment issue is important and focus is needed on the whole system and the economic indicators, as well as what has already been promised.

Senator Nava requested that PED and HED identify funding to participate in the ADP, with possible contributions from the institutions of higher education, and identify staff to support this effort prior to the 2007 legislative session.

There being no further business and with the consensus of the committee, Senator Nava called a recess at 5:10 p.m.

**MINUTES
LESC MEETING
AUGUST 11, 2006**

Senator Cynthia Nava, Chair, called the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) meeting to order on August 10, 2006, at 9:23 a.m., State Capitol, Room 322, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The following LESC members were present:

Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Kay Papen; and Representative Rick Miera.

The following LESC advisory members were present:

Representatives Ray Begaye, William “Ed” Boykin, Roberto “Bobby” J. Gonzales, Jimmie C. Hall, John A. Heaton, Harriet I. Ruiz, and Richard D. Vigil.

RURAL EDUCATION REVITALIZATION

Dr. Kathleen Forrer, LESC staff, introduced Mr. T. J. Parks, Superintendent of the Tatum Municipal Schools, to present a short film detailing Tatum’s rural revitalization activities; and Dr. Jim Holloway, Assistant Superintendent for Rural Education, Public Education Department (PED), to discuss PED’s new regulation regarding rural education and the Rural Education Division’s efforts to spur school-centered community revitalization. Dr. Forrer explained to the committee that Ms. Kelly Green, Program Manager, Microsoft Corporation’s Partners in Learning (PiL) Initiative, had been delayed but would arrive shortly, at which time she would describe New Mexico’s PiL initiative with regard to rural schools and communities.

Calling the committee members’ attention to PED’s proposed regulation, subtitled “Flexibility for Rural School Districts” (Attachment 1 to the staff brief), Dr. Forrer said that on June 19, 2006, PED had conducted a public hearing in Santa Fe on the proposed rule that includes a definition of “rural local education agency” that corresponds with the federal definition used to determine eligibility for awards under the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) component of the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP). She said that one of the issues that had arisen during the 2005 legislative session was that PED’s definition of a rural school district differed from the federal definition governing eligibility for SRSA funding and that the federal definition itself excluded a number of districts in New Mexico that, on the basis of relatively sparse population centers, appeared to many legislators and educators to be rural in nature. However, in April 2006, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) issued new, more specific locality codes, thereby increasing the classifications for rural schools and school districts from two to three. As a consequence, she noted, an additional five school districts in New Mexico are now classified by NCES as rural: Central Consolidated Schools, Cobre Consolidated Schools, Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools, Los Alamos Public Schools, and Pojoaque Valley Public Schools. However, she added, because the old NCES codes are specifically included in the legislation governing SRSA and REAP, it is unclear what impact, if any, the new NCES codes will have on district eligibility for federal funding directed toward rural schools and rural school districts.

Noting that Tatum Municipal Schools is one of the school districts initially selected for PED's New Mexico Rural Revitalization Initiative (NMRRI), Mr. Parks presented a short film entitled "Saddles to Satellites," documenting the importance of Tatum's rural revitalization activities, which were begun in the spring of 2006, to the overall economic and social health of the community.

Included in the film was mention of the Coyote Ranch Western Resource Center, which the school district and the community envision as an economic development opportunity operated by the school district, the city, state agencies, and private entrepreneurs. The purpose of the proposed resource center is to attract tourism by highlighting the history of southeastern New Mexico and by providing employment and educational opportunities for students and other members of the community. At the conclusion of the film, Dr. Forrer called the committee's attention to Attachment 5 to the staff brief, entitled "Coyote Ranch Western Resource Center, Plan of Action and Scope of Project," which provides a detailed description of the project.

To begin his presentation, Dr. Holloway referred the committee members to a handout entitled "Rural Education Revitalization," which was included in their notebooks. He explained that the responsibilities of the Rural Education Division include rural education, educational technology, place based literacy, and parent involvement. Focusing on the rural education component, he said that the vision of the division's Rural Education Bureau is to have vibrant, productive rural school districts and communities.

In discussing rural vitalization, Dr. Holloway said that rural school/community revitalization is a partnership between rural schools and their communities focused on academic and economic improvement. He stated that in small rural communities, schools can play a major role in revitalizing the local economy and creating renewed hope for the future because in rural communities schools touch the lives of everyone, contribute significantly to the local economy, are most often the largest employer, and have a variety of facilities available for school and community use. Dr. Holloway then discussed some of the activities of the six school districts involved in NMRRI during the school year 2005-2006: Cimarron Municipal Schools, Jemez Valley Public Schools, Jemez Mountain Public Schools, Loving Municipal Schools, Maxwell Municipal Schools, and Tatum Municipal Schools. He reported that seven school districts have been added to the original six for school year 2006-2007: Central Consolidated Schools (Newcomb High School), Dexter Consolidated Schools, Fort Sumner Municipal Schools, Gadsden Independent Schools (Anthony Elementary School), Pecos Independent Schools, Reserve Independent Schools, and Springer Municipal Schools.

In conclusion, Dr. Holloway announced that Dr. George Otero, co-founder and co-director of the Center for Relational Learning, was in the audience. Noting that the Center for Relational Learning is a partner in NMRRI, Dr. Holloway explained that in June 2005, the Center had arranged for staff members from PED, along with personnel from six rural school districts (Jemez Mountain Public Schools, Jemez Valley Public Schools, Cimarron Municipal Schools, Maxwell Municipal Schools, Loving Municipal Schools, and Tatum Municipal Schools), to visit South Australia to see first-hand examples of holistic community development in that country. At the request of Senator Nava, Dr. Otero reviewed the 2006-2007 focus areas of each of the 13 NMRRI school districts, explaining that the school districts had played a major role in identifying the focus areas for each of their school-led revitalization projects.

Referring to a handout entitled "US Partners in Learning," Ms. Green stated that Microsoft has established five-year public/private partnerships with six states, including New Mexico, to provide investment funding for innovative solutions that have yet to be developed or deployed by

states. Microsoft's goal, she said, is to support a broad and diverse set of long-term strategic models that can serve as blueprints for other educators or schools across the United States. She said that the three goals of the partnership are digital literacy for all students; an educated, competitive workforce; and greater quality of life for citizens.

After entering into discussions with the Secretary of Public Education and the Governor's Office, Ms. Green said, a decision was made that the New Mexico Partners in Learning Project (NMPiL) would work with the PED Rural Education Division on New Mexico rural revitalization. Ms. Green stated that meetings with PED, the Governor's Office, legislators, and other agency staff have produced a state plan designed to engage communities in establishing alliances that create economic engines to expand job opportunities in the community and catalyze shifts in the school culture, curriculum, and instruction to ready students for 21st Century jobs in their communities and beyond. Ms. Green presented the following scenario of how the NMPiL initiative could potentially work in a rural school district:

A rural district in New Mexico has 75 students in grades preK-12 and covers 50 square miles. The area's industry is largely tourism from the nearby national park. The 'big idea' is to go after a contract with the national parks to provide electronic kiosks that orient visitors to the site, and to replicate such interactivity on the parks' website.

The implementation of this contract would entail involvement from:

- the school district in gearing up its web development, graphic design, and multimedia classes, using both district teachers and those with needed expertise through online support and instruction;
- the local artists using technologies to collaborate with artists across the state, brainstorming potential projects;
- the local guides using technologies to consult with historians across the state as they are considering historical sites to be included; and
- the community alliance exploring the feasibility of borrowing startup funds, and the business community making an empty building available to locate the small company. (The community is also working with NextGen leaders to tap into the company's simulation and game industry work to enhance the community's proposal to the National Parks.)

Senator Nava asked if any representatives of the communities participating in NMRRI would like to comment. Ms. Patti Scott, Principal, Fort Sumner Middle and High Schools, Fort Sumner Municipal Schools, said that visiting schools in Australia had been very enlightening; Australian communities, too, have problems and victories, but have learned to apply community resources to improve their schools and to use their schools to help make their communities better. She said that interacting with community members in Australia helped her form ideas for her community. Noting that Fort Sumner is a farming/ranching community in decline and with a dwindling workforce, Ms. Scott said that the community and the school district are trying to do a number of things to reverse the trend, including attracting retirees to relocate to the community and providing opportunities for students to work in the community throughout the school year. Senator Nava asked how many students attend Fort Sumner schools. Ms. Scott stated that there are approximately 147 students in the middle and high schools combined and about the same number at the elementary school.

Dr. Kaye Peery, former Superintendent of the Maxwell Municipal Schools and new Superintendent of the Zuni Public Schools, said that the trip to Australia had been a remarkable experience, noting that there are many Australian communities as tiny as Maxwell. Dr. Peery

said that Maxwell is looking forward to utilizing what the participants learned in Australia and thanked the committee for its support of education. Stating that she intends to apply the knowledge she has gained to her new district, Dr. Peery noted that she has already begun to discuss possible revitalization efforts with the people of Zuni.

Dr. Otero thanked the committee for its support and said that New Mexico now has everything it needs to create its own success stories in the rural communities.

Committee Discussion:

Noting that she has known Ms. Scott since Ms. Scott was a little girl, Senator Papen asked her about the possibility of establishing telecommuting opportunities in the community. Right now, Ms. Scott said, all seventh graders in the district have laptops that are connected to the internet by means of a small wireless network that is not suitable for telecommuting activities. However, she noted, she would like to see the network expanded in order to accomplish two goals: (1) to allow telecommuters to live in Fort Sumner and “work” anywhere and (2) to provide wireless communication capability to more people as they travel through the community, especially during the summer months.

Expressing concern that Zuni Public Schools is not on PED’s list of rural school districts, a committee member asked about the possibility of extending internet connectivity and distance learning to this and other rural school districts. Dr. Holloway stated that there are two projects underway to help solve these problems: Microsoft’s NMPiL and the proposed cyber program settlement with Qwest, which includes \$15.0 million that would flow through PED to improve internet access in 21 low performing schools in 17 districts. Dr. Holloway added that until there is uniformity of access to the internet, there can be no uniformity of access to distance learning.

A committee member expressed concern regarding teacher shortages in rural school districts, noting that because many teachers who teach in rural schools live in larger communities and commute to work, the rising cost of gasoline is having an impact on the ability of rural districts to recruit teachers. Dr. Peery commented that, in addition, small districts, such as Zuni, often lose teachers to schools that can pay a bonus to attract teachers. Senator Nava stated that the three-tiered licensure system was designed to help take care of this problem by improving teachers’ salaries in all school districts.

In response to a committee member’s question if legislation would be needed to solve any liability problems for school districts resulting from rural revitalization efforts, such as increased use by the community of school facilities or students participating in internships or apprenticeships in local businesses during the school day, Dr. Holloway said that at this point he did not know because PED did not yet have a clear directive from the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA) regarding this issue. With regard to internships and apprenticeships, Dr. Holloway stressed the value to both students and community of having students forge close ties to local businesses. He added that one of the strong points of schools in Australia was the use of talented people from the community to augment the available school curriculum and to ease the teacher shortage in rural areas.

Several committee members expressed their appreciation of the presentation, expressing support for the concept of having the community focus on what it has rather than on what it lacks.

Prior to the next item on the agenda, Senator Nava announced to the committee that the location of the September LESC meeting has been changed from Socorro to Santa Fe because of another convention scheduled to take place in Socorro at the same time. She stated that the regular committee meeting will begin at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 12, and end on Friday, September 15; the committee will meet at the State Capitol for the first three days and at the Santa Fe Indian School on Friday, beginning with a breakfast at 8:30 a.m. She noted that the meeting of the LESC Subcommittee on the High School for the Arts has also been changed and will now be held in Santa Fe on Tuesday morning before the full committee meets.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: MOVEMENT, PERFORMANCE, AND LEARNING

Senator Nava recognized Ms. Loie Fecteau, Executive Director, and Ms. Ann Weisman, Arts Education Coordinator, both from New Mexico Arts; and available for questions, Ms. Anne Green-Romig, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Cultural Affairs, and her 11-year-old daughter Anna.

Ms. Fecteau explained that New Mexico Arts received a \$50,000 grant from the Dana Foundation to fund a two-year pilot project called Making Connections: Movement Performance, and Learning. She said that the project will fund a professional development institute for educators and teaching artists working in rural New Mexico schools. She explained the “filling in the gaps” strategy that is used in this program and shared some of the workshop topics that will be covered at the institute such as current research in neuroscience, especially pertaining to brain development and how children learn and the relationship between developmental movement and brain maturation. She also named the FY 06 faculty and participants for the institute. Ms. Fecteau said that Ms. Weisman used the grant money to develop these institutes and to train the teachers.

Ms. Weisman said that for many years there was the theory of right and left brain approach; however, now they have the whole brain approach. She called the committee’s attention to the bottom of the handout which listed FY 2006 Participants’ comments to the institute, which praised the workshops.

NEW MEXICO FIRST TOWN HALL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. Pamela Herman, LESC staff, introduced Mr. Mike DeWitte, Chair, New Mexico Business Round Table, Senior Manager, Sandia National Laboratories and Co-chair, Implementation Team for the New Mexico First Town Hall on Higher Education; and Ms. Heather Balas, Associate Director and President-designee of New Mexico First to present the recommendations of the Town Hall.

Ms. Balas said that New Mexico First was co-founded in 1986 by New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization to engage citizens in the democratic process. She said the primary purpose of the organization is to effect positive change in the state by addressing fundamental policy issues through the Town Hall process, creating a statewide network of informed and caring citizens that can help lead New Mexicans in implementing positive recommendations identified during the process. Ms. Balas said that New Mexico First has a 40 member board that is representative of the state. From the audience, she introduced Mr. Bill Garcia, Board Chair, Ms. Susan McGuire, and Ms. Sayuri Yamada, members of the board.

Ms. Balas said that 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. She said that the topic for this Town Hall was selected based on a statewide survey and feedback from leading stakeholders. She said that 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. She said that materials were distributed as widely as possible, and the Town Hall was open to members of the public to observe.

Ms. Balas said that the following five "big ideas" unify the 18 recommendations of the Town Hall on Higher Education:

1. increasing standards and collaboration;
2. reforming systems of higher education in New Mexico;
3. linking education to economic and labor trends;
4. higher education funding; and
5. programs to help students and use technology smartly.

Mr. DeWitte said that the Town Hall on Higher Education implementation team consists of 43 citizens with good representation from business, education, and government, co-chaired by him and former Governor Garrey Carruthers. Mr. DeWitte said that of the 18 final recommendations, the implementation team has identified 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.

Mr. Garcia said that each of the seven priorities could be a town hall of its own. He said what is really needed is to get policymakers to fund a major public awareness campaign on the value of education, to fund a system that enables the exchange of student data, and to adopt and implement college/career readiness standards.

Committee Discussion:

In response to a committee member's question regarding outreach to involve as many New Mexicans as possible, Mr. Garcia said that New Mexico First has extended outreach into communities throughout the state and goes into communities to make presentations and get input whenever invited.

In response to a committee member's question regarding what universities are doing to attract and keep top students in the state, Mr. DeWitte said that the Town Hall participants recognized immediately that higher education had to be addressed in a P-20 context. One aspect of that is the question of creating a P-20 database so it is known where students go. Another quality issue is to make certain that New Mexico's four-year colleges are top-notch. Currently, the University

of New Mexico and New Mexico State University are among only 48 top tier research universities in the country. Mr. DeWitte mentioned that one suggestion has been to recruit New Mexico Merit finalists to in-state schools. Ms. Balas brought up the recommendation for coordination better among institutions of higher education to reduce duplication of programs and better focus limited state resources. Mr. Garcia noted his understanding that the standards need to be improved at all of the universities, adding that remediation and the high cost of education are connected. He said New Mexico needs to develop its own student base, nurturing its own math and science students so New Mexico can maintain the leading and competitive edge that it has begun to lose.

Committee members and the presenters discussed the higher education funding formula and proposals for incentive funding for colleges and universities based on student retention and completion of degrees, rather than the number of students who enroll on the first day of classes. Senator Nava suggested that incentives need to be built all along the pipeline starting in K-12 so that New Mexico students are graduated college-ready, with credits already earned through dual enrollment.

Senator Nava stated that alignment is a number one priority, and she noted that the LESC Work Group on College/Workplace Readiness and High School Redesign would gather again at the September LESC meeting to hear a presentation from Achieve, Inc. on the American Diploma Project Network that focuses on the alignment of standards and tests between high schools and postsecondary institutions.

A committee member said that the state needs to find a way to communicate to students the importance of vocational training and career choices. Mr. DeWitte and Mr. Garcia agreed that students need to know, for example, what a graduate of a two-year manufacturing technician program can earn at Intel. They added that, while there may once have been a stigma attached to choosing vocational careers, that is no longer the case – such careers are highly productive and well compensated. Ms. Balas recalled the high priority the implementation team placed on a major public relations campaign, so that people understand the various paths available. Not all the choices in a P-20 system involve 20 years in school, she said.

In response to a committee member's question whether the implementation team expected that any legislation would be needed in the 2007 legislative session to further the Town Hall recommendations, Mr. DeWitte said that the team will be making decisions this fall on major initiatives and asked to be placed on the LESC December agenda to bring those initiatives to the committee for consideration.

Representative Miera requested that the Higher Education Department provide data on the number of Presidential Scholarships awarded annually in New Mexico.

There being no further business, Senator Nava thanked LESC staff and, with the consensus of the committee, adjourned the LESC meeting at 12:20 p.m.

_____ Chairperson

_____ Date