**STATE OF NEW MEXICO**
# LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

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Shirley A. Tyler
Bob Wooley

State Capitol North, 325 Don Gaspar, Suite 200
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
Phone: (505) 986-4591 Fax: (505) 986-4338
http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lesc/lescdefault.aspx

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## LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Created in 1965 as a permanent bipartisan, bicameral interim committee of the New Mexico Legislature, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC):

- conducts a continuing study of all education in New Mexico, the laws governing such education and the policies and costs of the New Mexico educational system, including the training of certified teaching personnel in postsecondary institution
- recommends funding levels for public education;
- recommends changes in laws relating to education; and
- makes a full report of its findings and recommendations.

The LESC comprises 26 legislators (10 voting, 16 advisory) appointed to provide proportionate representation from both houses and both political parties. Assisted by a permanent staff, the committee meets regularly during the interim between legislative sessions to study education issues. To fulfill its statutory responsibilities, the LESC attempts to provide all legislators with objective information pertaining to New Mexico public schools as well as to state and national education trends.

## OPERATIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

**Work During the Interims:** During each interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) examines a wide range of education issues, both fiscal and programmatic, that affect the achievement and well-being of preschool, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary students in New Mexico. Issues are identified at the initiative of committee members, other legislators, or bills or memorials; and the LESC Interim Workplan establishes the framework for the committee's research, data collection, deliberations, and analysis.

The office of the LESC is located in Santa Fe, where the meetings are often held. The committee also regularly travels to other communities to meet in local schools and to invite wider public participation in LESC meetings. Typical meetings consist of reports by the LESC staff, supplemented by testimony from the Public Education Department, the Higher Education

Department, or other agencies, as well as testimony from various parties interested in a particular issue. This process ensures that committee meetings provide forums for school personnel and other citizens to present their opinions on education matters to legislators.

The LESC staff supports the committee by conducting research, preparing reports, and presenting findings and recommendations to the committee at its regularly scheduled meetings. Staff members also are available to assist individual legislators in obtaining information about education, analyzing potential legislation, and providing other related services.

Each year, the LESC provides the Legislature with a report of its activities, summarizing the findings of interim studies and the recommendations of the committee for action during the upcoming legislative session. Hard copies of the report are distributed to members of the Legislature, to other legislative offices, and to certain offices of the executive branch. In addition, education associations receive electronic copies, which they are encouraged to forward to their members; and the report is available on the LESC website, http://lesc.nmlegis.gov. Other information, such as agendas and minutes of meetings and staff reports, is also accessible on this website.

Finally, the office of the LESC serves as a resource to New Mexico citizens, particularly to public schools, as well as to other states and national organizations seeking information about education in New Mexico. Using local, state, and national resources, networks, and databases, the staff provides information to legislators, education policymakers, and local school districts and education agencies. Staff members also assist school personnel with their requests related to education.

**Work During Legislative Sessions:** The major responsibility of LESC staff during legislative sessions is to assist the education and finance committees of the two houses, as well as other committees, by providing analyses of public school-related legislation under consideration and by supplying technical support in the development of public school support appropriations. In this role, staff members prepare expository, statistical, and graphic analyses of both financial and programmatic aspects of the New Mexico educational system; staff members also assist individual legislators in the initial stages of drafting legislation and help legislators analyze potential advantages and disadvantages of measures under consideration.

**The LESC is currently staffed by:**

Frances Ramírez-Maestas, Director
LaNysha Adams, Research Analyst
Michael G. Bowers, Editor
David Craig, Senior Fiscal Analyst I
Travis Dulany, Senior Research Analyst I
R. Kevin Force, Senior Research Analyst I
Sarah Guzman, Fiscal Analyst
Ian Kleats, Fiscal Analyst
Alice S. Madrid, Office Manager
Mark Murphy, Fiscal Analyst
Kate B. Wagner, Secretary