

Minutes
Belen, NM and Los Lunas, NM
May 15-17, 2024

Wednesday, May 15

The following voting and advisory members were present. Voting: Chair G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair William P. Soules, Representatives Brian G. Baca, Joy Garratt, Tanya Mirabal Moya, and Senators Craig W. Brandt, Harold Pope Jr., and Mimi Stewart.

Advisory: Representative Natalie Figueroa and Senator Linda Lopez.

Call to Order, Introductions, and Approval of December Minutes and January Agenda. Representative G. Andrés Romero, Chair, Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), called the meeting to order. Chair Romero facilitated introductions of the members of LESC, as well as LESC staff. In a motion by Senator Stewart, and a second by Representative Baca, the agenda for the May LESC meeting was approved. The meeting minutes for the January LESC hearing were also approved with a motion by Senator Stewart and a second by Representative Mirabal Moya.

Community Welcome - Belen Consolidated Schools. Lawrence Sanchez, Superintendent, Belen Consolidated Schools (BCS), Aubrey E. Tucker, Board President, BCS, and E. Renee Sanchez, Assistant Superintendent of Academics, BCS, presented to the committee their strategic plan and initiatives. Mr. Sanchez gave an overview of the district including the district's geographic size, student population, schools in the district, and enrollment trends. Overall enrollment has declined during the time period presented and is expected to continue to decline throughout the decade. The contracting population in Valencia County and falling birth rates are major contributors to this decline.

Mr. Sanchez discussed the challenges the district is faced with, student outcomes, services provided by the district, intended outcomes, and support systems. One of the challenges the district highlighted was the continuing funding challenges. The district stated the "unit value [is] not keeping pace with increased costs." The district also focused on their intervention efforts "to create motivated, expert learners." Mr. Sanchez also communicated the district is committed to allowing students the ability to make up for past performance or behavioral issues, and shared a reluctance to expel students, barring any safety concerns.

State Land Office and State Investment Council. Daniel Estupiñan, Senior Fiscal Analyst II, LESC; Sunalei Stewart, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, New Mexico State Land Office; Charles Wollmann, Director of Communications, Client, and Legislative Matters, New Mexico State Investment Council (SIC); and Dawn Iglesias, Investment Strategist, SIC, provided an overview of earnings and distributions from the land grant

permanent fund and the early childhood trust fund. Additional topics discussed during the presentation included earnings from the land maintenance fund, permanent fund growth outlooks, and recent legislative action related to the higher education trust fund and the severance tax permanent fund.

Members asked how the Legislature has historically incorporated fund distributions in its appropriation to public school support, how the Legislature could refine its approach to leveraging fund distributions for appropriation to public school support, historical comparisons between the SIC's fund returns and its institutional peers, and recent legislation that revised the state's reserve mechanisms.

Interim Calendar. Gwen Perea Warniment, Ph.D., Director, LESC, along with support from LESC staff analysts, presented the LESC work plan for the 2024 interim. The work plan includes the following topics: special education, principal preparation, teacher supports, data governance, defining Tribal education sovereignty, the status of homeless and foster students, family income index, cash balances, middle school initiatives, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) innovation network, universal school meals, school board member training and finance reporting, broadband and education technology, and school governance. Additionally, team projects will address solutions for mathematics, school safety, school attendance, and revisions of the state equalization guarantee (SEG). Program evaluations will also be conducted in the areas of literacy, educator clinical practice, learning time, and career and technical education. The LESC work plan is designed to focus on a number of issues that will result in committee-endorsed legislation and budget recommendations for the 2025 legislative session. In a motion by Senator Mimi Stewart, and a second by Senator Craig W. Brandt, the 2024 work plan and schedule for the 2024 interim was approved.

Representative Brian G. Baca expressed interest in looking further into how SEG appropriations flow, the breakdown of data to make more impactful recommendations for support and resources, unfunded mandates (focusing on SAT process and MLSS), how the at-risk index impacts fine arts, accountability for school board members, and connecting attendance with student engagement and opportunities.

Senator William P. Soules expressed concern about NMSU's teacher administration preparation lacking adverse childhood experiences, trauma-informed education and structured literacy. He suggested inviting NMSU to address these issues at an interim meeting, noting that Eastern New Mexico University, Western New Mexico University, and Highlands University are more proactive in these areas. Senator Soules also highlighted the importance of early childhood education, improving higher education outcomes, examining governance structures, and the

interconnectedness of secondary and higher education from grades 11 through 16 through technical education and dual credit programs.

Representative Joy Garratt stressed the importance of realistic evaluations of special education outcomes, noting that most special education students take standardized tests. She advocated for culturally responsive menus in universal school meals, reflecting New Mexico's diverse communities. Representative Garratt expressed interest in exploring new forms of school governance and the importance of including math solutions in teacher preparation programs. Additionally, Representative Garratt highlighted the need to address salaries, high insurance costs, and the implications of state testing on decisions like the four-day school week.

Representative Natalie Figueroa highlighted the importance of special education crossover with teacher support, affecting student outcomes, teacher retention, and teacher recruitment. She noted an earlier timeline for literacy program evaluations and budget proposals, as December is too late for substantial inclusion. Representative Figueroa advocated for considering both alternative and traditional pathways for principal and teacher licensure in higher education training because some items are included in each not both. She also called for a broader investigation into teacher supports, including mentoring for new teachers, and emphasized the need for data on the effectiveness of residencies and clinical practice. Lastly, she suggested evaluating summer and outside class time learning programs for their results and budget impact.

Representative Tanya Mirabal Moya emphasized the importance of teacher support and managing class sizes while being mindful of mandates. She highlighted the significance of mentorship programs to support new teachers, suggesting that such initiatives can greatly enhance their development and retention.

Youth Suicide Prevention. Marit Andrews, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, introduced the panel and presented a staff brief that explained youth suicide and suicidal behavior is increasing in New Mexico and the United States. She provided an overview of New Mexico's approach to youth suicide prevention, and concluded with an overview of state policy options. Magdalena Saiz, Ph.D., Deputy Director of Safe and Healthy Schools, Public Education Department (PED) then presented on the state of suicide in New Mexico, the relevance of suicide prevention, current efforts of the PED and future direction, and legislative considerations. Deborah Baca, Health Services Coordinator, Belen Consolidated Schools (BCS), then explained the approach of youth suicide prevention in BCS. Finally, Cheri Brubaker, DNP, and Vicki Price, Senior Director of Counseling, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) concluded the panel presentation by explaining APS' procedural directive for student

suicide: prevention, intervention, and postvention. Committee members asked questions regarding whether the increase in student mental health challenges were due to the Covid-19 pandemic, how to recruit and retain more counselors and school nurses, and current training practices for staff to prevent youth suicide, among other topics.

Thursday, May 16

Community Welcome - Los Lunas Schools. Ryan Kettler, Ph.D., Superintendent, Los Lunas Schools (LLS); Susan Chavez, Chief Student Services Officer, LLS; and Jessica Montano, Interim Chief Academic Officer, LLS, presented to the committee the state of the district and their ongoing initiatives. Superintendent Kettler gave an overview of the district's facilities and services, student and educator demographics, 2024-25 budget, and NM Vistas data.

The panel from LLS discussed the construction of the new Peralta Elementary School expected to open at the beginning of the 2025-26 academic year and outlined efforts to unveil a strategic plan for the district later in summer 2024. LLS noted three schools in the district are recognized as Apple Distinguished Schools. Presenters also highlighted district participation in work-based learning Innovation Zones, LLS use of education technology in classroom instruction, the creation of a graduate profile with community input, district CTE programs, and the district's partnership with Meta to support science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education, particularly for female students.

Public Education Department - Secretary's Presentation. Arsenio Romero, Ph.D., Secretary, Public Education Department (PED), presented PED's 2024 interim priorities to committee members. Secretary Romero noted six priorities: 1) educator recruitment and retention; 2) culturally responsive education; 3) secondary education redesign; 4) literacy and math; 5) special education; and 6) data systems. For each of these priority areas, Secretary Romero noted specific PED initiatives underway and corresponding legislative considerations.

For educator recruitment and retention, Secretary Romero noted the department is working on implementing its Educator Fellows program, clinical practice experiences for future educators and school leaders, and school leader preparation programs. He asked the Legislature to work on requirements for educational leadership preparation programs and licensing. Addressing culturally responsive education, Secretary Romero noted a focus on numerous initiatives, including behavioral health, multi-layered system of supports, out of school time programs, community schools, health services/high-quality nutrition, student attendance, and bilingual multicultural education. The corresponding legislative considerations for culturally responsive education are to consider drug

counselors in high schools, reducing exclusionary practices, focusing on attendance initiatives, and updating the Community Schools Act. For secondary education redesign, Secretary Romero noted a focus on implementing the newly updated graduation requirements, career and technical education, Innovation Zones, and work-based learning. The corresponding legislative consideration is to expand summer internships and work-based learning. For literacy and math, Secretary Romero noted a focus on the Summer Reading Program, developing the newly proposed Literacy Institute, ongoing literacy professional development for educators (especially elementary and middle school), educator preparation program requirements related to literacy, math microcredentials, and algebra/math pathways. The corresponding legislative considerations are funding and requirements for high school literacy programs, additional math professional learning plans, and high school reading support. For special education, Secretary Romero noted the department is focused on supporting its newly created Office of Special Education. The corresponding legislative consideration is to require a common individualized education program template. For data systems, Secretary Romero noted a focus at PED on accountability, student information systems, Project Nova and its use as a data collection and reporting system, data warehousing, and data governance. The corresponding legislative consideration is to provide a common student information system for all schools.

Secretary Romero then summarized legislative considerations for FY26, reiterating the department's focus on initiatives including fully funding public school insurance, fully funding elementary physical education, additional funding for instructional materials, and supporting attendance initiatives.

Website Overview and Data Dashboard. Tim Bedeaux, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, presented updates to the LESC website and unveiled an LESC school district data dashboard. Staff has been working to update the LESC website to be more user friendly and to place a greater emphasis on LESC reports and work products. Later this year, the new website will have a better method to organize annual reports and post-session memos, and will have landing pages for educational topic aligned with the LESC work plan. The LESC data dashboard is a new tool available for LESC members and the general public with a wealth of school district data in one centralized location. The dashboard contains data on district-level enrollment and demographics, proficiency rates, graduation rates, budget and expenditures, teacher salary and qualifications, and facility conditions. Staff walked the committee through how the dashboard can be used to answer any number of basic education research questions: like what is the relationship between student poverty and proficiency rates, how has my district's math proficiency changed over time, or what is the achievement gap between English learners and native English speakers in my district? Currently, the dashboard only supports district-level

analytics, but staff plan to expand the dashboard's functionality to include school-level and statewide data, as well as additional metrics related to LESC's work during the interim.

Rules Review. John Sena, Deputy Director, LESC and Conor Hicks, Policy Analyst, LESC presented three Public Education Department (PED) rules; Universal Meals, which governs the implementation of providing free school meals to all students; School Instructional Time Requirements, which would require all school districts and charter schools to have a minimum of 180 instructional days; and Accreditation Procedures, which consolidates a number statutory and regulatory requirements into one accreditation process.

Multiple members expressed concern about the ability of school districts to comply with the requirements in the Universal School Meals rule, arguing the requirements were overly burdensome or are unfunded. They also questioned whether the rule was aligned to statutory provisions or was aligned to legislative intent.

Members expressed concern the School Instructional Time Requirements rule ignored legislative intent. They also expressed concerns about the rule impacts on school funding for the 2024-2025 school year. One member emphasized additional learning time could have positive impacts on student achievement. Another member noted the state has high chronic absenteeism and adding more days may not be effective if students do not attend.

Director's Report. Gwen Perea Warniment, Ph.D., Director, LESC, presented a director's report with a focus on two newly published LESC publications, introducing new personnel to LESC members, and providing an update on the LESC budget. Director Perea Warniment highlighted both the "Quick Guide" and LESC staff's Post-Session Review. The Quick Guide is a newly created document, designed for education stakeholders, to summarize outcomes from the legislative session. It is a shorter document with implementation considerations alongside concise explanations of legislative outcomes. The Post-Session Review is a more comprehensive summary of legislative outcomes related to the LESC research agenda.. Director Perea Warniment noted both documents are used to explain the legislative session and noted staff is open to feedback on each. Director Perea Warniment also introduced members to two new analysts: Conor Hicks, Policy Analyst, LESC, who will be covering educational supports, and Mark Montoya, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, who will be covering capital outlay and transportation. Both Mr. Hicks and Mr. Montoya also joined Director Perea Warniment to provide an introduction to the committee.

Friday, May 17

Principal Preparation Programs, Work, and Policy Considerations. Annie Armatage, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, shared lessons learned from an LESC staff trip to visit Chicago Public Schools and the University of Chicago - Illinois. Illinois has received national recognition for school leader improvement and Chicago has driven much of this work. Illinois credits their success to six research-based features of effective principal preparation programs: deliberate recruitment and selection, close university district partnerships, cohort structure with mentoring, coherent curriculum aligned to standards, robust clinical experience, and data tracking of graduates. Implementing these features over the past 20 years resulted in promising outcomes in Chicago, including more prepared principals, increased student growth, higher high school graduation rates, and lower drop-out rates.

Michael Weinberg, Ph.D., Senior Education Policy Officer, Thornburg Foundation, presented an update on the Deans and Directors Leadership work group on principal preparation, including the ongoing community of practice. The community of practice produced a set of recommendations for New Mexico to bring principal preparation in line with best practices. Major priorities include enacting new administrator preparation program approval standards, requiring year-long paid residencies, strong partnerships between districts and universities, and increasing capacity at PED to support and oversee the work. Over this interim, the working group will examine establishing different school leader licenses or endorsements for principals, assistant principals, and superintendents.

Phoebe Walendziak, Assistant Division Director of Educator Quality, PED, provided the Committee information on how PED spent the \$2 million legislative appropriation for principal residencies in FY24. PED focused on planning and building capacity at administrator preparation programs, spending \$1.7 million on development, recruitment, and planning to support principal, counselor, and social residencies for FY25. PED spent another \$116 thousand on evaluation, coaching, and mentoring training. PED released a request for applications (RFA) to fund principal residency implementation in FY25, which is closely aligned with the six key features of effective administrator preparation programs. In FY27, PED hopes to require all administrators complete a residency.

Representative Baca noted the LESC must address salary compaction for school administrators, following much-needed teacher salary raises. Representative Mirabel Moya emphasized the importance of having experienced teachers in principalships in order to gain trust from teachers. Representative Garratt, who also attended the visit to Chicago, expressed support for pursuing braided funding strategies in New Mexico. Senator Stewart emphasized that structured literacy must be part of

administrator preparation programs. Senator Lopez expressed concern that administrator preparation programs do not adequately prepare principals to support student with disabilities. Representative Figueroa reiterated the importance of collecting data from educator preparation programs. Senator Soules asked why New Mexico has tasked educator preparation programs with driving this change, while in Chicago a school district led the change. LESC staff replied while urban Chicago was well positioned to lead this work, New Mexico is looking to drive statewide change and to better support rural districts do not have a preparation program nearby.

Landscape Review of Middle School Research. Jessica Hathaway, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC presented a landscape review of middle school education, which includes serving children aged 10 to 14 years old. Middle school often evokes a negative perception, but it is also a time for crucial growth, intervention, and youth development. Student outcomes in New Mexico, reflecting national trends, begin to take a negative turn in middle school, making it a crucial time to intervene. LESC staff noted a large body of research demonstrates students at this stage of development have specific and nuanced needs in physical development, cognitive development, social emotional development, and psychological development. LESC staff identified a common set of six key features of schools that foster academic achievement, social-emotional development, and positive youth outcomes. These features include developmental responsiveness by designing middle schools around adolescent development; interdisciplinary instruction and team teaching; advisory programs and personalized support; flexible scheduling and engaged learning experiences; positive school climates; and engaging extracurricular activities and career exploration. Over the 2024 interim, LESC staff will convene a study group to collect and analyze New Mexico middle school data, explore comprehensive structuring of middle school models, and consider research-based options that are responsive to New Mexico's young adolescents. LESC staff will produce a final report, anticipated by October 2024.

Representative Baca stressed the importance of studying the needs of middle schoolers and supporting them with appropriate policy and funding. National research around ideal structural makeup of grades in schools is inconclusive, thus, the working group will examine the situation in New Mexico. Representative Mirabal Moya asked about student performance differences between different middle school grade levels. Representative Mirabal Moya also suggested the Legislature should consider whether to require additional physical education courses to meet the physical needs of students at this phase of development. Senator Lopez asked the study group to consider how middle schools can better meet the needs of exceptional students. Representative Garratt emphasized the need for social workers and counselors in middle schools. Representative Figueroa requested LESC

staff to examine interdisciplinary licensing for middle school teachers in New Mexico. Senator Soules discouraged mandating a particular middle school model for districts, but rather being knowledgeable about the needs of middle schoolers, ensuring schools and districts are well-informed and funded, and ensuring colleges of education are fully training teachers for middle school instruction.