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Agency 993

## Innovative Public School Staffing

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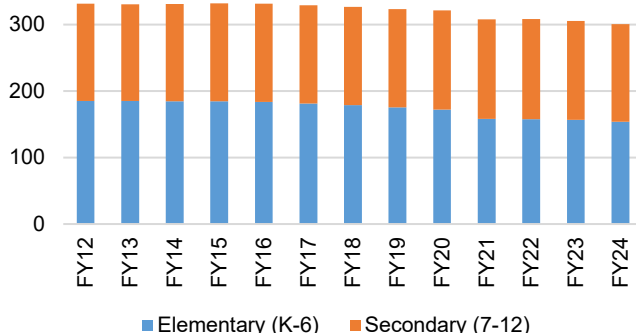
### Teacher compensation has increased, but turnover remains high.

- Since the *Martinez-Yazzie* ruling in 2019, New Mexico has increased public school funding by \$1.6 billion, or 58 percent. Over 60 percent of the total increase (\$984 million) was for educator compensation and benefits.
- Average teacher pay increased from \$47.8 thousand (NEA national rank 49) in 2019 to \$63.6 thousand (rank 22) in 2023.
- New Mexico had 21.2 thousand teacher FTE and 644 teacher vacancies in FY19 and 20.8 thousand teacher FTE and 751 teacher vacancies in FY23.
- PED identified 22 thousand teachers in New Mexico public schools in FY21. By FY23 only 15 thousand of these teachers were still in the same district and only 13 thousand teachers were still in the same school—a turnover rate of over 15 percent annually.

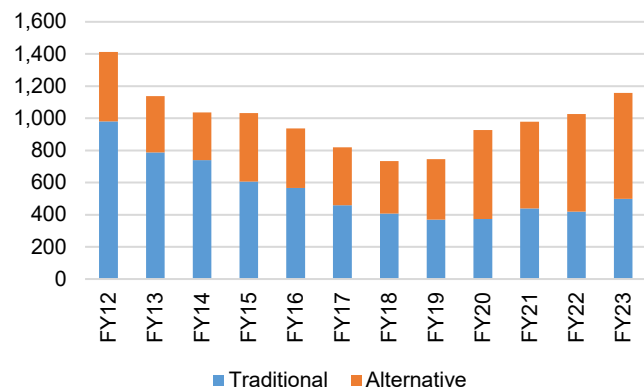
### Student enrollment is declining, while teacher candidates are rebounding.

- Since its peak in FY16, school enrollment has dropped 9.5 percent, or 31.5 thousand students. New Mexico’s enrollment is projected to decline by 15 percent over the next decade, compared to the U.S. projected decline of 5.5 percent.

**Public School Enrollment**  
(in thousands)



**Teacher Prep Program Completers**



Sources: SOAR, USDE, PED

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- According to the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), in the last five years, the number of teachers completing a New Mexico preparation program has increased by 66 percent, compared to a 4 percent increase nationally.
  - LPI notes New Mexico’s average pupil-to-teacher ratio of 14.6-to-1 is slightly below the national average ratio of 15.4-to-1. On average, statewide class sizes remain below statutory maximums in all grade levels.

### **New Mexico lacks a system for recognizing or leveraging high quality teachers.**

- New Mexico has not reported on statewide teacher effectiveness nor teacher performance measures since 2019.
- It is unclear if and how schools are using data to support inexperienced or struggling teachers. Likewise, it is unclear whether the state is retaining its best teachers.
- The responsibility of monitoring and improving instructional quality is mostly placed on principals, who are also responsible for other administrative and operational tasks.
- The three-tiered licensure system is used by teachers primarily for pay increases, particularly in districts with significant salary compaction. The state is not tracking whether higher license levels are associated with more professional responsibilities or better student outcomes.
- The quality of instruction typically varies by classroom, especially in settings that rely on a single teacher of record. This structure typically limits student access to high-quality instruction and promotes siloing of educator talent rather than force multiplication.

### **Innovative staffing strategies may be an option to use existing operational capacity to extend the reach of highly effective teachers.**

- Pandemic-related disruptions and high teacher turnover rates have renewed interest in innovative staffing strategies to retain highly effective teachers.
- Innovative staffing models typically aim to increase class sizes to more effectively leverage team teaching or differentiated instructional structures, provide teachers with job-embedded professional development and collaboration opportunities, increase student access to highly-effective teachers, and create professional advancement opportunities.
- National research suggests these models have small to medium effect sizes on student reading and math achievement and may also reduce teacher vacancies and attrition rates.
- Preliminary results in FY24 from Carlsbad Municipal Schools were promising for student academic growth in a middle school that implemented an Opportunity Culture innovative staffing strategy.