




B i t e - S i z e

 New Mexico school revenue growth of 4.2 percent in FY19 was bigger than that in most states. The U.S. Census Bureau annual survey of school district finances for FY19 shows more than half the states had increases of less than 3.6 percent. Total revenue was \$752 billion, an increase of \$33 billion over FY18, or a national increase of 4.5 percent. New Mexico per-student spending on operations increased by 6.2 percent, compared with 5 percent nationally. However, New Mexico ranked 39th on per-student spending.

 April 2021 revenues transferred to the lottery scholarship fund totaled just over \$4.1 million, comparable with March 2021 revenues of nearly \$4.2 million. To date, FY21 proceeds total around \$39 million, compared with nearly \$30.1 million in the same period last year, an increase of nearly 30 percent. News reports indicate the 2021-2022 school year will be the first time since 2015 the scholarship covers the full cost of tuition.

 The Public Education Department has signed a \$342 thousand emergency contract for legal help defending its disparity analysis related to Impact Aid litigation. The calculation of the differences in per-student spending is key to whether federal regulators allow the state to take credit for certain federal funds to local public schools. The credit was removed from the funding formula during the legislative session earlier this year, but litigation is ongoing on the use of the credit in past years.



i n f o r m E D

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Senator William P. Soules, Chair / Representative G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / June 2021

From the Chairman

Wringing Out Results

Everybody already knows New Mexico ranks low on many measures. So, what are we going to do about it?

Are we going to put our energy into discussing our failures or are we going to roll up our sleeves, take a hard look at what we are doing now, and figure out what we can do differently.

I vote for the latter.

It's not always easy to get a complete picture of where we are now. Recently a report found just half of teacher preparation program graduates were prepared for a bilingual classroom or certified in teaching English as a second language, far fewer than needed. However, the report provided no insights into what's being done to recruit or retain such teachers, despite a recommendation to do so in the Public Education Department's 2020 annual report on bilingual and multicultural education.

And it's not always easy to figure out what we can do differently. Instincts about what's good for high school students and educational trends sometimes lead to decisions about course requirements that have little to do with what research tells us will help students develop the strategic thinking skills that will serve them well, whether they go on to the workforce or college.

But if we critically examine our systems, looking as much at the methods as the results, and stick to the research, we will make progress. Revamping graduation requirements? Ask how well New Mexico's high school curriculum aligns with the courses identified by the policy research Center for American Progress as contributing to long-term critical thinking skills. Building a better teacher workforce: Look to the National Conference of State Legislatures report *No Time to Lose*, which highlights teacher preparation, professional supports, and working conditions in the best international school systems.

We've become particularly adept at wringing our hands, but we owe our children and our communities more. When we stop focusing on where we've been and pay more attention to where we want to be, we can actually start moving toward educational change.

NM High Schools Hit, Miss Best Practices

New Mexico's statutory requirement for high school coursework aligns well with research on best practices, LESC analysis suggests, but the state falls short on career and technical education and other practices.

In a brief prepared for a day of hearings on high school preparation and workforce needs scheduled for June 24, staff indicates research supports New Mexico's requirements for four years of math, including algebra 2, and three years of science as a requirement for all students, no matter whether they are continuing to college or career; but New Mexico's programs for career and technical education are haphazard.

A 2018 audit and study of nationwide high school graduation requirements by the Center for American Progress, a policy institute, concludes all students, no matter their post-graduate plans, can benefit from a 15-credit "college-ready curriculum" that includes four years of English, three years of math that includes algebra 2, three years of science, three years of history and other social sciences, and two years of a single foreign language.

New Mexico's standards meet

or exceed those requirements, although the statute allows for alternatives to two years of a foreign language.

The center further recommends supports for students and an additional "career-readiness" diploma for students who are not planning on attending college.

The benefits of a rigorous high school curriculum are echoed in a report by the National School Boards Associations' Center for Public Education, which also recommends high school student have access to career and technical education focused on building knowledge and skills in specific labor markets.

Robust career and technical education is also identified as a key element of a successful education system in the National Conference of State Legislatures' international study of high-performing education systems, *No Time to Lose*.

In countries with successful education systems, career and technical education is used to boost local and national economies and is well-funded, academically challenging, and aligned with workforce needs.

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Members Question Oversight of Teacher Prep

While the Legislature has established general course requirements for education preparation programs, most of the specifics and oversight of the programs are left to the Public Education Department, LESC staff reports in a [brief](#) prepared for a committee hearing in May.

During the hearing on educator preparation programs, committee members raised concerns with the department's oversight, asking why the state abandon national accreditation as the standard for colleges of education.

John Sena, policy director of PED, said the previous administration adopted rules that created the approach of grad-

ing educator preparation programs based on the performance of the teachers who graduated from them.

The current administration, which has revamped the teacher assessment program, has reversed some of the those rules and is using site visits to assess educator preparation programs, he said. However, he provided little detail on how the process works, noting only that the site visit team might include faculty from other colleges and includes follow up because the department is interested in improving the quality of programs, not shutting them down.

LESC staff reported three programs

have been through the review process, some virtually, in the three years since the new administration took over.

Committee members also questioned why the department has yet to update the Educator Accountability Reporting System report, which provides data on educator preparation programs at public and private colleges and universities throughout the state.

The most recent report, published in March 2020, provided data on the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Sena said the department is working on an update but the one person assigned to the task recently resigned.

State statute requires those in traditional colleges of education to take courses in teaching reading in addition to the core courses required of most bachelor's degrees. PED sets the rules for what other teacher preparation courses students must take.

State law also provides for licensure through alternative licensing, primarily for those who already have bachelor's degrees, with PED setting the rules for alternative pathways.

State law requires all licensed teachers to pass licensure exams.

NM High Schools Hit, Miss Best Practices

continued from front

Similar to the findings in *No Time to Lose*, the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Education Policy has reported career and technical education in other counties is far more robust than that in the United States, with educational programs often linked to larger economic goals.

While many New Mexico school districts and charter schools offer career and technical education courses and program, these programs have historically been disconnected from labor market needs, vary greatly, and lack elements that would make them effective, the staff brief says.

The U.S. Department of Education's Perkins Collaborative Research Network reports 65 thousand high school students and nearly 50 thousand college students took CTE courses in New Mexico during the 2019-2020 school year. The federal Carl D. Perkins

Career and Technical Education Act is a primary source of funding for CTE programs in New Mexico.

Funding for New Mexico career and technical education is the highest it has been in over a decade, the staff brief says, with \$9.7 million expected from the federal government for FY21 and \$4.5 million available through the state Next Gen career and technical education pilot.

Transportation Funding Formula Inconsistent

New Mexico's piecemeal approach to amending the public school transportation funding formula has created a fragmented and complicated formula that treats school districts differently based on their characteristics and charter schools differently than school districts.

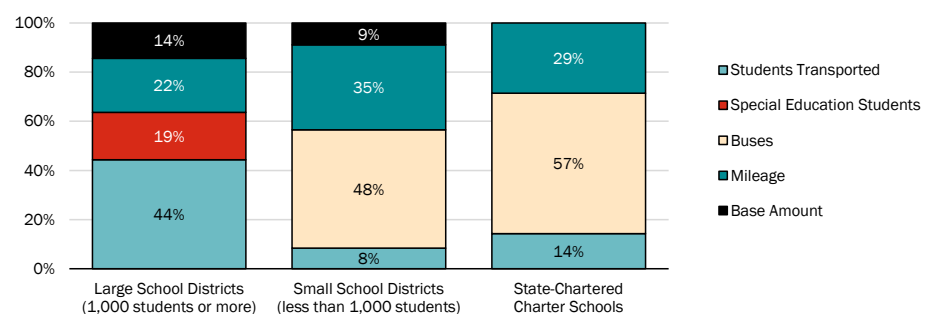
While the number of special education students, who often need special transportation, is a factor in the transportation formula for larger school districts, it's not a consideration in the distribution of funds to other school districts and charter schools. Similarly, while the

number of buses is a factor in the formula for smaller school districts and charter schools, the formula for bigger districts doesn't consider buses.

The formulas are broadly described in state statute, but the law gives the Public Education Department broad discretion to select which factors will be funded in any year and how the factors will be weighted.

LESC created a subcommittee to study transportation issues in 2012 but few of its recommendations have been implemented.

FY 22 Contribution of Transportation Formula Factors to Transportation Allocations



Source: LESC Analysis of PED Data

informed

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