


New Mexico

Legislative Education Study Committee

1965-2015

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN STATUTE





Message from the Chair:

**Scandals Are the Exception,
Not the Rule**

Watching the evening news or reading your morning paper these days, you can't avoid it: stories of scandal and corruption in government and, even more troubling, in our public schools. The media rightly reminds us that no one is above the law, but despite these sensationalized news items, we must not forget about the vast majority of public servants who quietly go about their jobs, doing the right thing and making a difference in our lives and in the lives of our children.

Just a few years back, one northern New Mexico school business official was accused of embezzling public funds, but this one case doesn't mean that public funds are disappearing from every district. Guilty verdicts for a group of Atlanta teachers found to be manipulating test scores doesn't mean all classroom teachers sacrifice their integrity to inflate scores. And most recently, the actions of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Board of Education—buying out the contract of yet another superintendent—doesn't mean that all superintendents show poor judgment or that the school boards who employ them don't exercise due diligence in their hiring decisions. On the contrary, these cases are the exceptions, not the rule.

Yet even though we know it's not the norm, the feeling of frustration that results from such stories can tempt us to consider changing the rules so the same thing can't happen again. For instance, some have seen the APS buyouts as justification to call for one-year contracts for district superintendents. However, we must resist the temptation to enact policies as a knee-jerk reaction to a sensational story. School leaders need some job security to pursue reforms that will yield positive results, many of which take more than one year to come to fruition. In addition, such arbitrary contract limits may actually disincentivize potential school and district leaders from even entering the superintendency, depriving our schools of a new generation of leadership. Reacting with too much haste could ultimately make things worse for those doing things right.

So as we seek to identify ways in which to make our systems stronger and keep the bad actors out, we must remember the lesson I am reminded of every day as I step in and out of classrooms in my own school district: for every ONE mistake or crime that shows up in the paper, hundreds of educators and school officials are making good, honest decisions that benefit New Mexico's children. Their stories are the ones we should be reading about in the news every day.

Sincerely,

Representative Dennis J. Roch
Chair

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2015 LESC MEETING SCHEDULE

<p>June 25-26, 2015 Raton High School Raton</p> <p>July 21-22 Rio Rancho High School Rio Rancho</p> <p>August 27-28 Eastern NM University Roswell</p> <p>September 24-25 Western NM University Silver City</p>	<p>October 28-30 State Capitol, Room 307 Santa Fe</p> <p>November 18-20 State Capitol, Room 307 Santa Fe</p> <p>December 16-18 State Capitol, Room 307 Santa Fe</p> <p>January 18, 2016 State Capitol, TBA Santa Fe</p>
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ROSWELL MEETING TESTIMONY

Teacher Evaluations: Public Education Department (PED) staff presented testimony to the LESC on teacher evaluations, including year one and year two data comparison, appeals process and results, and licensure advancement and renewal. Regarding the approved applicants who used NMTEACH summative evaluation results for licensure advancement, PED staff explained that in FY 15, 229 teachers advanced to Level 2 and 349 teachers advanced to Level 3.

Regarding the appeals process and results, the presenter stated the process began on May 8 and ended on June 8, but it was extended to June 19 based on requests from school districts for additional time. Queries were provided at the district level, which meant school districts established a local process and designee for submitting queries. The districts would submit a query in the Educator Effectiveness System. PED would assign each query to a liaison who in turn would research the query and provide clarification and submit for review. Prior to finalization, all queries were reviewed by two staff members. In the end, the queries were all finalized by PED's Director of the Educator Quality Division.

Regarding the most common queries, PED staff noted that missing data were approximately 95 percent of all queries. The following were also common:

- discrepancy in Accuroster/Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System data and numbers on the NMTEACH report;
- tags and groups;
- levels (elementary, middle, and high schools);
- new teacher data; and
- attendance.

Continued testimony indicated that the following policy updates have occurred based on the query process:

- group measures will be removed from new teachers; and
- group measures will be limited to one year of data, which means certain teachers can have no more 25 percent of their summative report based on group student achievement measures.

Finally, referring to a PED handout, the presenter noted that the following is a comparison between 2014 and 2015 for state-wide **overall** summative ratings:

Year	Ineffective	Minimally Effective	Effective	Highly Effective	Exemplary
2014	2.2 %	19.5 %	56.5 %	20.2 %	1.5 %
2015	3.6 %	22.6 %	47.1 %	24.2 %	2.5 %

CS/CS/HB 144, *Teacher & School Leader Effectiveness Act*: Representative James E. Smith presented an overview of CS/CS/HB 144, *Teacher & School Leader Effectiveness Act*, from the 2015 legislative session, and LESC staff presented the bill analysis.

Alluding to his motivations for carrying the bill, Representative Smith informed the committee that at the beginning of his teaching career, the assistant principal assessed

his classroom for a short period and had stated he was conducting the Representative's observation. Representative Smith indicated that he did not feel this was an adequate amount of time for an observation or that he could benefit from it in such a short amount of time. Highlighting that many of the bill's features came as the result of collaboration with superintendents, legislators, and other stakeholders, Representative Smith stated that several notable provisions of the bill would:

- identify populations in certain teaching fields to assist;
- reduce the overall amount for student achievement from 50 percent to a lower amount;
- explain how Group B teachers will be evaluated with student achievement growth data; and
- provide an appeal process for the local superintendent and principals.

To conclude, LESC staff provided testimony regarding some technical issues that may be addressed in a future version of the bill.

2015 Teacher of the Year: The LESC recognized Mrs. Debra S. Minyard, a music educator and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) teacher at the Pojoaque Valley High School, Pojoaque Valley Public Schools, as the 2015 New Mexico Teacher of the Year. On behalf of the committee, the Chair and Senator Kernan presented Mrs. Minyard with certificates from the House and Senate in recognition of her achievements and 13 years of service as a distinguished public school teacher in New Mexico.



L-R: Senator Gay G. Kernan, Mrs. Debra S. Minyard, and LESC Chairman, Representative Dennis J. Roch.

New Mexico Youth ChalleNGe Academy (NMYCA): The Lead Recruiter for NMYCA presented on the National Guard Youth program in Roswell, New Mexico. The voluntary program targets 16-18 year-olds at risk for dropping out of school and provides life skills training and educational attainment opportunities in a structured military environment at no cost to the cadet.

Teacher Evaluation Observation Protocol Training:

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) staff presented an abbreviated training for school personnel to become certified observers in the NMTEACH observation process, which included information on how to:

- review the NMTEACH observation training resources;
- identify how the NMTEACH rubric can be used to better support teachers;
- compare the systems used in other states including Tennessee, Louisiana, and Ohio; and
- practice identifying strengths and areas of improvement using the NMTEACH rubric.

SREB staff provided an overview of the trainings for year one, two, and three. In regards to year three, the training was provided to administrators in the summer of 2015. All administrators had four required sessions, including: understanding value-added models (VAM); using value-added scores (VAS) and student achievement measures to drive school decisions; updates to the NMTEACH rubric; and calibration. The self-directed sessions for the training included: VAS 201 and VAS 301; domains 1 and 4; special education strategies; English language learners strategies; data for differentiated instruction; and moving instruction forward.

Year three training highlights include:

- understanding VAS and VAM;
- determining how the NMTEACH rubric updates support all of New Mexico’s diverse learners;
- showcasing schools that are using the NMTEACH rubric system to support improvement; and
- providing support and feedback to teachers.

Lastly, the presenter provided an in-depth overview and discussion of the NMTEACH rubric domains 1, 2, 3, and 4, along with each domain’s elements, scoring, and specific indicators.

Student Growth Measures in Teacher Evaluations: The Chief of Staff and former Director of Assessment, Analysis, and Research at Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS), provided a presentation on the use of student growth measures in teacher evaluations.

Proficiency growth rather than using a single test score, he explained, provided context by measuring current or future achievement against previous scores, which accounts for certain demographic or socioeconomic conditions facing students. This recognizes that, even if some students are not able to reach grade level proficiency, all students have a capacity to grow.

With respect to the use of student achievement data for teacher evaluation purposes, the Chief of Staff suggested that many teacher evaluation initiatives across the country were based on the work of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project. Among the MET Project findings he cited was

a framework for improvement-focused teacher evaluation systems based on measuring effective teaching, ensuring high-quality data, and investing in improvement.

Explaining the model employed by New Mexico, which he suggested was superior to some of the alternative approaches, the Chief of Staff stated that data from students were grouped together based on previous assessment scores so that growth was only compared between students with similar starting points. The model measures the difference between a student’s actual growth in proficiency with the estimated growth from the student’s cohort, he continued. Finally, the difference is translated into a standard deviation, which can be compared across student proficiency groups.

Among the district-level examinations that have been performed by LCPS using student growth data, the Chief of Staff highlighted analysis of:

- the distribution of students as mapped between achievement growth and initial proficiency level to identify possibly successful practices or interventions; and
- whether the college of education teacher attended influenced the achievement of students.

In conclusion, he suggested that the educational community was only in the beginning stages of how student assessment data can be analyzed to inform district-, school-, and classroom-level decisions. Going forward, the Chief of Staff noted the need for improved data validation and expressed hope that Accuroster, being implemented by the Public Education Department, would help.

Reading Intervention in Rural Public Schools: Representatives from Capitan Municipal Schools, Lake Arthur Municipal Schools, Artesia Public Schools, Central Regional Education Cooperative (REC) #5, and REC #9 discussed uses of Reads to Lead! (RTL) funding at the local level in rural schools.

For FY 15 and FY 16, it was reported that RTL funding supported various forms of professional development; the purchase of research-based intervention instructional materials and/or programs; and reading coaches and consultants to support teachers through modeling and feedback on effective reading strategies based on the New Mexico Common Core State Standards.

In regards to RTL funding, RECs reported that their role is to help support and guide teachers in rural districts by strengthening their craft as they work toward increasing student learning; advancing teacher knowledge in literacy development; influencing instructional practices by analyzing individual student data; and reading achievement for all students. Each REC supports at least five rural districts or more in their specific region.

Referring to district challenges, district staff noted that as a result of a high turnover rate for qualified teachers or difficulty finding qualified staff for core teaching areas in rural areas, the professional development return rate is difficult to maintain.

ROSWELL MEETING TESTIMONY

Community and Superintendent Input: The Executive Director for New Mexico Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement, Inc. (NM MESA) discussed the outcome results of their Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education program, noting that among high school graduates, approximately:

- 82 percent of NM MESA graduates attend college compared to 67 percent of US graduates and 47 percent of New Mexico graduates; and
- 50 percent of NM MESA graduates go on to earn bachelor's degrees or higher compared to 41 percent of US graduates and 39 percent of New Mexico graduates.

He also introduced a board member, a regional coordinator, and an advisor from NM MESA who noted that the program:

- encourages students to take STEM courses, which allows many of them to do things they never imagined;
- has a track record of success based on consistency, which in turn allows for measurement; and
- has always responded to the needs of the community.

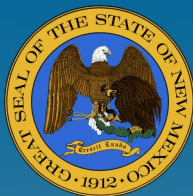
SEPTEMBER AGENDA TOPICS

- **Western New Mexico University (WNMU) - Strategic Initiatives for Remediation:** The President of WNMU will discuss what the university is doing to reduce the need for remediation and create positive outcomes when remediation is required.
- **New Mexico State University (NMSU) College of Education:** The new Dean of the NMSU College of Education will inform the committee on his goals and vision for the K-12 teaching program.
- **Approaches and Solutions for At-risk and Habitually Truant Students:** Representatives from the courts system and the Juvenile Probation Office at the Children, Youth and Families Department will present on supports in the juvenile justice system; and related legislation from the 2015 session will also be discussed.
- **2015 National Spanish Spelling Bee Champion:** The LESC will honor the National Spanish Spelling Bee Champion, a student from the Gadsden Independent School District (GISD), who will be accompanied by district staff.
- **Early College High School Update:** The superintendent and staff from Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) and GISD will provide a progress report on the Early College High School in each of their districts.
- **Higher Education in New Mexico:** The outgoing President of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education will provide the committee with his insights on the status of higher education in New Mexico.
- **New Mexico Assessment Inventory - District Experiences:** In response to concerns that students are required to take too many tests, the Legislature has required all school districts to create an inventory of their assessments using an audit tool administered by the Public Education Department. School district staff from Silver Consolidated Schools and Animas Public Schools will inform the committee on how the inventory process is working.
- **Options to Reduce Assessment Loads:** LESC advisory member Representative G. Andrés Romero will discuss the bill he submitted in the 2015 regular session to eliminate certain assessments in grades 9 and 10.
- **Legislative Lottery Scholarship Update:** The Financial Aid Director from the Higher Education Department (HED) will provide the committee with a status report on the solvency of the scholarship fund.
- **Affordability of New Mexico Colleges:** The HED Cabinet Secretary will brief the LESC on tuition rates and other related costs to attend Institutions of Higher Education in New Mexico.

Legislative Education Study Committee

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