




B i t e - S i z e

 Nearly 2,300 teachers in New Mexico hold alternative licenses, 11 percent of the current teacher workforce and a 400 percent increase in the number of alternatively licensed teachers since 2007. Those with alternative licenses typically have a bachelor's degree or higher in another field and go through a teacher preparation program for those without education degrees. Over a quarter of current alternatively licensed teachers are in special education, an area of teaching with high vacancies.

 The Public Education Department and the statewide coalition for community schools reviewed 111 applications – totaling over \$6 million in funding requests – for community school planning and implementation grants. The Legislature this year appropriated \$2 million to the department to support the development of community schools. Of the 32 award recipients, 26 schools received over \$1.1 million for planning and six schools received nearly \$900 thousand for implementation.

 Teacher candidates will be transitioning to a new licensing test starting in January. Currently, teacher candidates must pass the National Evaluation Series, affiliated with Pearson. From January through August, candidates will be able to choose between the NES and the Praxis assessments, developed by the Educational Testing Service, whose products include the English proficiency test for non-English speakers. The state will only offer the Praxis test starting September 1.



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Representative Christine Trujillo, Chair / Senator Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / December 2019

From the Chairwoman

Us

Nothing beats the winter holiday season in New Mexico. New Yorkers can keep their Macy's Thanksgiving parade, we have more than a hundred balloons softly glowing in the cold December nights of Red Rock Park near Gallup and a holiday parade in Carlsbad where the houses dress up and the parade-goers float by on the Pecos River. We have dozens of parades in towns and cities, with high school bands, the fire department, local businesses and local politicians, sometimes with the musicians and the fire trucks bedecked in lights if the parade is at night.

You can keep your elaborate holiday window displays, we've got snow dusting rounded adobe walls, the smell of piñon hanging in a brilliant sky, and luminarias lining our walks and our rooftops. We've got tamales and posole and biscochitos and the tastiest green chile in the world.

And, best of all, we've got New Mexicans, who don't always agree but are always willing to share a meal and a good story, who might argue about how to get the job done but rarely dispute that our most important job is taking care of our families and our children.

Throughout the year, we can get wrapped up in the things that make life hard, especially for children: violence, poverty, education policies and other public policies that don't always help and sometimes make things worse. The holiday season is a chance to take a breath and remember that, along with the bad, New Mexico has a lot of good. We have deep, strong traditions, beautiful natural spaces, and public servants who – even if they don't represent you or your point of view – are close to the people they work for and committed to making New Mexico a better place.

Shortly after the new year starts, New Mexico's lawmakers will head to Santa Fe for the 2020 legislative session. We'll debate taxes and likely legal marijuana and a host of other issues, but at the top of the list, again, will be education reform and child well-being. We will tweak and add to last year's reforms and continue our efforts to transform New Mexico's public schools. Throughout it all, while it might not always feel like it, these New Mexicans will be thinking about our New Mexico.



Boards, Administrators Pick CTE, Safety, Teachers

The organizations representing school boards and administrators have issued their priorities for the upcoming legislative session and overlap on several issues, but differ on the details.

The committee is scheduled to hear about the 2020 session wish lists at 1 p.m. on December 18. The list of potential speakers includes the presidents, executive directors, and other representatives of the New Mexico School Boards Association, New Mexico Coalition of Education Leaders, New Mexico School Superintendents' Association, National Education Association of New Mexico, American Federation of Teachers New Mexico, and New Mexico Parent Teacher Association.

While NMCEL and NMSSA take a more technical approach with their joint "legislative platform" – specifically listing laws they would like to amend – their joint list overlaps on many issues with that of NMSBA.

Both lists include efforts to improve educator recruitment and retention, make schools safer, and grow career and technical education.

Both also prioritize a broad increase in funding, with the

boards promoting "increased funding, resources, flexibility and the accountability necessary to comply with the *Martinez/Yazzie* Court Ruling" that found the state is not spending enough to provide a "sufficient" education to all New Mexico children.

The administrator organizations support "adequate/stable" funding to "cover present salaries and any future increases to ensure that districts can be regionally competitive."

NMCEL and NMSSA also prioritize **the creation** of a funding formula factor for career and technical education – NMSBA prioritizes "funding and legislation" for CTE – and revisions in the school transportation formula to address "systemic shortfalls" for some school districts.

The administrator organizations also highlight amending state law to give districts greater flexibility in determining high school graduation requirements.

While NMSBA lists salary increases for teachers and other public school employees as a priority, NMCEL and NMSSA focus on a tax credit to encourage teachers to move to rural or

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Outcomes, not Inputs, Should Be School Board Focus

School boards fall short when they focus on finding the best tools for their schools without making sure those tools are working to help kids succeed, a Texas state school official told the committee in November.

Testifying at a hearing on how to improve school board governance, A.J. Crabill, deputy commissioner for governance with the Texas Education Agency, said boards are too focused on inputs, when they should be focused on outcomes.

“I’m not proud to say my first two

years (as a Kansas City Public Schools board member) were a master class on input focus. I was absolutely certain that if we had the right type of keyboard, if everybody had the right type of computer, if the jelly was grape enough and peanut butter was crunchy enough then that was going to be great for our kids,” he told the members.

But, he added, “I couldn’t give you any meaningful information on how my students were performing. We didn’t see significant change because it wasn’t our focus.”

He said school boards need to have a goal in mind before they decide where they want to focus a district’s energy and resources. While meaningful inputs are important, they should align with what they hope to accomplish.

He said board’s often make thoughtful choices about inputs – selecting programs backed by evidence of success in other places – but neglect “the second half of the cycle.”

It’s the role of a local board to pick goals aligned with what’s important to its community, he said. School boards represent the “vision and values” of their districts, he said, and need to “own the responsibility” of setting goals. “It’s problematic when a board divorces itself from the vision.”

In Texas, the state helps boards identify whether they are spending enough time setting goals and provides members with training and coaches to develop “SMART” goals – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (that can be accomplished within a reasonable time).

Research shows effective school boards can improve student success but student outcomes can’t improve until board members change.

Proposal Includes K-5 Plus Fixes

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tribal schools and better retirement benefits, although the administrator organizations also support increased employer and employee contributions to the pension fund.

The boards association’s workforce-related priorities also include expansion of teacher preparation programs and a program that helps teacher assistants get teacher credentials and revision of state law to allow education retirees to return to work immediately.

On safer schools, both priority lists include support for greater cybersecurity. The school boards then add staff training and mental health services, while the administrators list specific changes to state laws and procedures related to funding public school capital outlay.

The school boards association rounds out its list of priorities with support for prekindergarten and other early childhood programs.

“NMSBA fully understands the need for and supports a comprehensive, well-aligned education system that begins with early childhood education

and prepares students for success in higher education or in a career pathway. NMSBA supports full funding for all day preschool, half-day preschool for 3-year-olds, and K-3 Plus initiatives,” the organization says.

NMSSA and NMCEL’s list recommends the Legislature reconsider how it provides services for students at risk of failure because of income, English proficiency, and transience, suggesting the state take steps to increase student access to ancillary services.

State Invests in Supports for At-Risk Students

Funding for programs aimed at helping struggling students succeed more than doubled this budget year, although much of the money was left on the table.

In addition to creating a new extended learning time program, legislators increased the funding formula for students at risk of failing because of income, English proficiency and transience and approved a four-fold expansion of the K-3 Plus extended school year program to more grades and all qualifying schools.

However, many school districts and charter schools used the increase in formula dollars to prioritize salary increases and few applied for the K-5 Plus dollars, saying they had too little time to plan properly.

The Legislature appropriated \$62.5 million to fund extended learning time programs for 124 thousand students, and school districts and charter schools

applied for \$42.3 million. Similarly, the public school appropriation included \$120 million for K-5 Plus but schools are using just \$29 million this year. The Public Education Department projects participation in those programs will double in FY21.

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