

## B i t e - S i z e

🍏 Data from the federal office of Career, Technical and Adult Education confirms in the 2022-2023 school year, there were 69.9 thousand CTE participants and 22.2 thousand concentrators in New Mexico. In the 2021-2022 school year, there were 67.8 thousand CTE participants and 39.1 thousand concentrators.

🍏 PED was awarded another Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), nearly \$60 million over five years. This funding will be used to develop and implement evidence-based literacy interventions and supports to help students achieve literacy milestones.

🍏 ED announced over \$11 million in grants to recruit and retain multilingual educators in New Mexico. Two Native American Languages Program grants were awarded: \$260.8 thousand to Dziłth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community School and \$284.1 thousand to Navajo Preparatory School.



# i n f o r m E D

a publication of the Legislative Education Study Committee

Representative G. Andrés Romero, Chair / Senator William P. Soules, Vice Chair / John Sena, Interim Director / October 2024

### From the Chair

This past week we held parent-teacher conferences at my school. Parent-teacher conferences are a time for teachers to explain their practice, to justify their student's grades, and answer questions from rightfully concerned parents. It has been my experience that parents who come to chat have students with varying grades, but are united by their interest in the success of their student. Those parents are very receptive to teachers' practice and the intricacies of what we as educators do on a daily basis.

We educators know how much planning goes into a day's lesson and how that lesson fits into a whole semester's learning objective. We understand the purpose behind the assessments we give our students and how their performance guides our future lessons. All of this happens while simultaneously managing a classroom, helping multiple students at a time, and getting absent students caught up. In class, time is spent implementing the lesson prepared before the day begins, based on previous lessons that were analyzed (graded). This process is complicated, and time consuming. This is the process we explain to our students' parents and parents get it and are partners in this work.

Educators have a difficult balancing act. The time spent away from students, lesson planning, collaborating, grading, and analyzing data is equally as important as the time with students. Parent-teacher conferences are a time to reflect on our practice, but also justify this complex practice to parents who see the effects of this practice on their students. This is what bonds teachers with parents. Parents are sympathetic because they see the positive impact teachers are having on the lives of their students and understand the care that goes into their students' classroom experiences.

This is to encourage folks who have been away from education the past few years to contact your local school and see if you can shadow an educator to get a sense of what educators and parents experience on a consistent basis. This could be a powerful way for everyone to understand the intricacies that make education what it is today.

## Study Group Proposes Funding Formula Changes

In its final meeting on October 3, a legislatively requested working group agreed to proposed changes to the state's school funding formula, formally known as the state equalization guarantee (SEG).

The group, resulting from House Memorial 51 (HM51) from the 2023 legislative session, was gathered by LESC staff to improve the responsiveness, accuracy, and adequacy of the formula's methodology. Its final recommendations include improving and simplifying how the state identifies poverty in schools, creating a funding factor specifically for English learners, and increasing funding for secondary students.

The group included representation from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) and the Public Education Department, as well as school district officials and other education stakeholders, representing communities from around the entire state.

The SEG was created in 1974 to equalize funding using differentials to determine the funding each school district and charter school is entitled to. Since its creation, the SEG has been modified more than 80 times. However, in 2018, the First Judicial District

Court's ruling in the *Martinez-Yazzie* education sufficiency lawsuit indicated the need for further revision, pointing to funding shortfalls, as well as noting that grant funding outside of the public school funding formula tended to disqualify public school funding and divert resources away from core educational needs.

The group's work built on the court's findings, as well as on those from a 2008 American Institutes for Research (AIR) study that called for additional funding, and previous legislative evaluations conducted jointly by LESC and LFC finding a need to revise how the formula funds at-risk students and English learners.

Since the 2008 AIR study, the Legislature has made significant revisions to the SEG including increasing the SEG allocation from \$2.4 billion in FY08 to \$4.2 billion in FY25 (an increase of \$1.8 billion, or 75 percent), more than tripling the at-risk index, and eliminating credits taken for Impact Aid, forest reserve funds, and the half-mill levy.

Still, as the Legislature has continued to prioritize flexibility and equity in its funding of public schools, HM51 pointed to the need

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# Evaluating the Impact of Structured Literacy Support Models

Literacy is a foundational skill, but most students in New Mexico cannot read or write proficiently. However, overall student proficiency in reading has been growing recently, from 34 percent of students in the 2021-2022 school year to 39 percent in the 2023-2024 school year as measured by the New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) for English Language Arts. New Mexico embarked on a strategic path to ensure all literacy instruction is evidence-based at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year when the Legislature passed, and the governor signed, Interventions for Students Displaying Characteristics of Dyslexia, codified in Section 22-13-32 NMSA 1978.

LESC staff evaluated how, and in what ways, student growth in reading is impacted by the types of structured literacy support received by schools. In

addition to general structured literacy supports received by all elementary schools in the state, more recently, since the 2022-2023 school year, PED has facilitated an application process to select model and support schools, which receive additional structured literacy supports and training. LESL staff analyzed whether the state's investments in structured literacy have led to meaningful changes in school-level proficiency rates or student growth over time, and whether those changes varied between model, support, and other elementary schools.

Analysis of school-level proficiency and student growth trajectories have indicated New Mexico is beginning to see the impact of structured literacy. LESL staff analysis found statewide increases in proficiency may be partially due to the statewide implementation of structured literacy, but isolated declines

in proficiency, particularly for third grade students, may indicate the state is experiencing "growing pains" as it transitions to structured literacy.

While model schools, which tend to serve a higher percentage of disadvantaged students, may be showing some evidence of "closing the achievement gap" with other schools statewide, additional years of data will be necessary to show whether the trends in achievement will continue. Staff plan to use qualitative analysis to investigate further, and plan to conduct case studies of schools that significantly outperformed the statewide trend to learn more about the conditions that led to successful implementation of the structured literacy model.

LESL staff will present the details of this staff review of structured literacy support models to the committee on Wednesday, October 16.

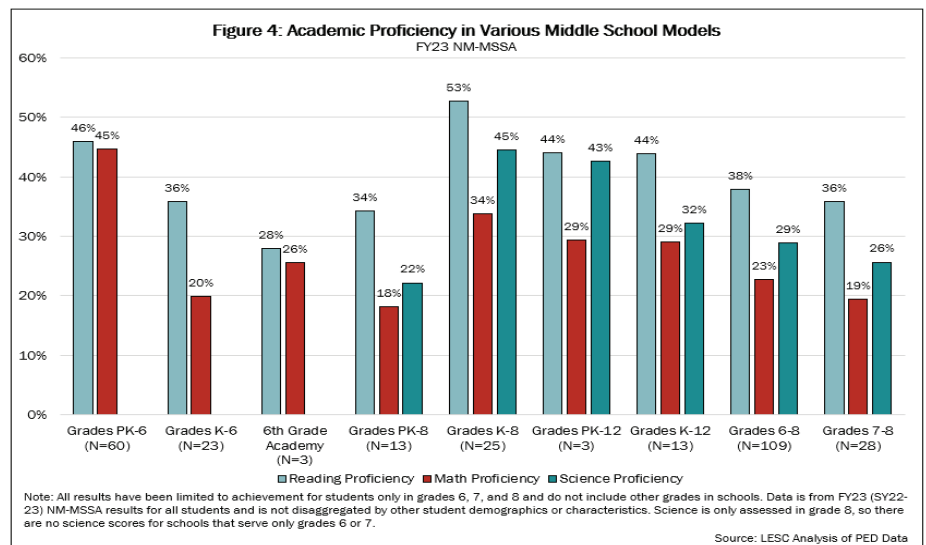
## Revising the SEG

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for a more comprehensive analysis of the public school funding formula. The working group met several times during 2023, with LESL staff presenting a preliminary report in December 2023.

The final recommendations form the foundation for LESL's current staff proposal and will be presented to the LESL at its October interim meeting in Silver City on October 17.

## Middle School Academic Proficiency Varies by Model



LESL staff studied middle school this interim, including forming a taskforce, as a result of House Memorial 4 (HM4).

Analysis of New Mexico data shows differences in math, reading, and science achievement for students in grades six through eight in varying grade configurations found statewide. As shown in the figure above, math proficiency was found to be highest in schools serving pre-kindergarten through sixth grade (45 percent) and reading achievement was found to be highest in schools serving grades kindergarten through eighth grade (53 percent). The most common configuration of grades, however, a standalone middle school serving grades six through eight, had scores most like statewide averages.

These outcomes likely reflect a combination of structural factors, instructional focus, and the challenges inherent to math and science education found nationwide. Learn more on October 16 when LESL staff present a final HM4 report.

## i n f o r m E D

October 2024

Published monthly in the interim by the  
Legislative Education Study Committee  
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<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LESL/Default>

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