

**BUILDING A STRONG, STABLE, AND DIVERSE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE IN NEW MEXICO
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A strong educator workforce is foundational to the success of New Mexico’s public education system. A significant body of research demonstrates that teacher experience, preparation, and qualifications influence student achievement, especially with respect to the achievement of students of color and those from low-income families.² Principals are also a crucial school-level factor associated with student achievement—second only to teachers’ classroom instruction.³ Additionally, a growing research base points to the importance of a racially and linguistically diverse educator workforce for all students, and especially students of color. For example, studies have found that teachers of color boost outcomes for students of color, including increased test scores, improved graduation rates, increased aspirations to attend college, fewer unexcused absences and lower likelihoods of chronic absenteeism and suspension.⁴

However, in many states, teacher quality is in short supply and inequitably distributed.⁵ Contributing to this problem, 9 of 10 teacher vacancies each year are the result of teachers leaving the profession, many of them because they were underprepared and undersupported.⁶ New Mexico is among those states that faces significant challenges in staffing all schools with a well-prepared, stable, and diverse educator workforce.

- Of New Mexico’s 21,514 teachers in 2017-18, shortages affected 9% of teaching positions. This includes 1,302 underprepared teachers and 644 unfilled vacancies.⁷
- These shortages are driven by a dramatic decline in teacher preparation enrollment (down 69% from 2011 to 2017) and completion (down 45% during the same period),⁸ as well as teacher attrition, which accounts for nearly 9 of 10 annual vacancies.⁹
- Declines in teacher availability have been far larger than declines in student enrollments.¹⁰
- A greater percentage of new teachers are entering through alternative route programs, in which candidates are typically teaching in the classroom as teacher of record while they are completing coursework and rarely have the benefit of student teaching as part of their training. Many studies find this challenging path to entry produces lower levels of effectiveness and higher rates of attrition, contributing to churn in the teaching force.¹¹
- Finally, the state’s teaching workforce does not match the racial and ethnic diversity of New Mexico students. While 75% of students in the state identify as students of color, only 36% of teachers identify as teachers of color.¹²

Successful strategies for addressing shortages include policies that address teachers’ costs of entry and quality of preparation and support in ways that improve both entry and retention in teaching. These policies include subsidies for high-quality training tied to service in the profession; mentoring and opportunities for collaboration and professional learning. Compensation also matters (in various forms, ranging from wages and benefits to loan forgiveness and housing costs).¹³ Research finds that preparation, supports, and compensation also matter for recruiting and retaining principals.¹⁴ The same strategies are particularly important in recruiting and retaining teachers and school leaders of color.¹⁵

In recent years, New Mexico has passed important legislation to strengthen its educator workforce, including teacher loan forgiveness and scholarships, a statewide beginning teacher mentoring requirement, a grow-your own teacher pathway for educational assistants, and statewide teacher salary increases. However, a number of these programs have not yet been designed and funded in ways that enable them to go to scale with effectiveness, and in some areas, there is not yet a strategy in place. In order to ensure that New Mexico has a well-prepared, stable, and diverse educator workforce and that every New Mexico public school student has access to excellent teaching and school leadership, a more comprehensive policy and investment approach is needed.

If properly designed and funded, these strategies could end the state's teaching shortages within only a few years, bringing a more diverse cadre of well-prepared and supported teachers into the state's schools and ending the churn that produces much of the shortage problem.

Based on national and New Mexico research, we recommend 7 strategies to strengthen New Mexico's educator workforce, which can be pursued through both short-term and long-term policy options and scaled to provide significant benefits to all New Mexico students:

1. Fund mentoring & induction for all novice teachers to improve teacher effectiveness and reduce early attrition from the profession.
2. Expand high-retention pathways into teaching, including well-designed teacher residencies and grow-your-own (GYO) programs to recruit and retain well-prepared candidates for high-need fields and locations. These could include:
 - Creating a state-funded teacher residency program in which teachers apprentice in the classrooms of expert mentors while completing an interwoven credentialing program (with preferences to programs that partner with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) or tribal colleges and universities).
 - Expanding and studying the [GYO Teachers Act](#) (Educational Assistants to Teachers).
 - Piloting grants to community colleges and 4 year institutions of higher education to strengthen course articulation agreements, MOUs, and transfer and support programs for cohorts of teacher candidates.
 - Expanding Career Technical Education, Educators Rising and dual enrollment programs to support high school students to enter the field of education, especially those who have obtained the state seal of bilingualism-biliteracy.
3. Redesign and expand funding for existing service scholarship and teacher loan repayment programs to increase their reach and effectiveness and to ensure all shortage fields and locations are covered;
4. Fund professional learning supports to support teachers' development of instructional skills in literacy, mathematics, and science; culturally-responsive practices, pedagogy, and curriculum; social-emotional learning and restorative practices
5. Leverage ESSA's 3% optional set aside to expand the existing Principals Pursuing Excellence program and/or reinvest in a New Mexico School Leadership Institute

6. Create a task force/working group to study and make recommendations regarding teacher preparation, licensing, accountability, and continuous improvement
7. To more equitably distribute teaching expertise, expand the number of expert teachers recognized through the National Board Certification process serving in high-poverty schools and taking on leadership roles there.

¹ The Learning Policy Institute (LPI) conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, LPI connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system and support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. LPI's research in New Mexico is supported by core operating support provided by the Sandler Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Ford Foundation, and by a grant from the Thornburg Foundation.

² Kini, T., & Podolsky, A. (2016). Does teaching experience increase teacher effectiveness? A Review of the research. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute; Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2010). Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects. *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(3), 655–681; Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(6), 673–682. Richard Ingersoll, Lisa Merrill and Henry May, What Are the Effects of Teacher Education and Preparation on Beginning Teacher Attrition?, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania, CPRE Report (#RR-82) (2014).

³ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation; Seashore Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L., & Anderson, S. E. (2010). Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf>.

⁴ Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

⁵ Goldhaber, D., Quince, V., & Theobald, R. (2018). *Has it always been this way? Tracing the evolution of teacher quality gaps in U.S. public schools*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 55(1), 171–201; Ladd, H. F., & Sorensen, L. C. (2017). Returns to teacher experience: Student achievement and motivation in middle school. *Education Finance and Policy*, 12(2), 241–279; Xu, Z., Ozek, U., & Hansen, M. (2015). Teacher performance trajectories in high- and lower-poverty schools. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis*, 37(4), 458–477.

⁶ Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

⁷ Unfortunately, data limitations restrict the ability to present data from a single year. This estimate is meant to provide a reasonable estimate of the size of teacher shortages in recent years. LPI analysis of United States Department of Education. (n.d.). Higher Education Act: National Teacher Preparation Data, State Highlights Academic Year 2016-17; New Mexico State University College of Education Southwest Outreach Academic Research (SOAR) Evaluation & Policy Center. (2019, October). 2019 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report. Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico State University College of Education Southwest Outreach Academic Research Lab.

⁸ LPI analysis of United States Department of Education. (n.d.). Higher Education Act: National Teacher Preparation Data, State Highlights. United States Department of Education. <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/StateHome.aspx> (accessed 10/4/19).

⁹ Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover*.

¹⁰ Although New Mexico has seen a 20% decline in birthrates over the past 9 years and a 14% decline in public school kindergarten enrollment over the last 6 years, the decline in teacher supply has been even more dramatic. New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee. (2019). Program Evaluation: The Department of

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¹¹ Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2010). Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects. *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(3), 655–681; Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(6), 673–682; Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Heilig, J. V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13(42), 51; Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2006). How changes in entry requirements alter the teacher workforce and affect student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 1(2), 176–216.

¹² Ochoa. Legislative Education Study Committee. (2019, June 28). Notice of Proposed Rulemaking: 5.7.5 NMAC, Teacher Loan Repayment Program. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Legislative Education Study Committee.

¹³ Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute; Espinoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the profession*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

¹⁴ Levin, S & Bradley, K. (2019). *Understanding and addressing principal turnover: A review of the research*. Palo Alto, Learning Policy Institute.

¹⁵ Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession*.