



A Coalition of Professional Education Organizations

AFT New Mexico • Albuquerque Teachers Federation • NEA-New Mexico
New Mexico Coalition of Education Leaders • New Mexico PTA
New Mexico School Boards Association

2023-Sustaining and Going Deeper: Attracting, Retaining, and Supporting a Diverse Workforce

Overview

Last year in our Partners' recommendations we wrote, "Staffing shortages are our biggest collective educational crisis". We would be remiss if we didn't start out this year's conversation with gratitude for the actions taken last session to address the staffing shortages. Because of New Mexico's focus on adding educators, our state is making steady progress creating a more respectful environment for educators and offering quality public education for our students.

In spite of New Mexico's efforts last year, our districts and school sites are still laboring under the same kind of staffing shortages that we face nationally and that were recently analyzed in reports by [AFT](#) and [NEA](#). These shortages weren't created in a year, and they won't be solved in a year. Additionally, up to 50% of our current workforce is eligible to retire soon.

The focus of NM Education Partners 2023 is on **Sustaining and Going Deeper: Attracting, Retaining, and Supporting a Diverse Workforce.**

Sustaining and Going Deeper:

- One of the important components of a successful public education system is local control and flexibility in decision-making. Accordingly, we believe districts should be allowed to design and deploy the instructional program as best meets the needs of each community by ensuring that the SEG has sufficient funding for discretionary local priorities. Districts are still coping with decades of disinvestment in their schools. Each district should have the SEG funding and the flexibility to pay for local priorities and services that are essential to our students. Assure flexibility for local decision-making to align with each community's educational needs.
- With the passage of Constitutional Amendment 1, 40%, roughly \$100 million, in additional funding will be available for our public schools. We recommend earmarking a fair and equitable percentage for each district that will help ensure the money will always supplement, not supplant, current funding.
- Keep SEG base funding for instructional materials and fund increased costs of instructional materials through the Instructional Materials Fund.
- **Increase local flexibility** in deciding how to implement additional instructional hours.
- **Capital outlay** – rescind the offset, school safety, maintenance, CTE, reduce matching requirements.

- **Community Schools:** Community schools remove barriers to success. We recommend the State assure flexibility to fully implement the community school strategy (inclusive of locally determined expanded learning time) to all schools in which at least 80% of students come from low-income families.
- Protect district operating reserves.

Attracting a Diverse Workforce:

- Invest in substantial salary increases for all school personnel to remain regionally competitive.
- A mandatory minimum for educational assistants, secretaries, clerks, cafeteria staff, custodians, and bus drivers of at least \$30,000 with bold across-the-board increases. Investing in these essential workers will not only stabilize our workforce, it is a path to higher, more inclusive economic growth.
- Increased compensation for principals to \$80,000, \$90,000, and \$100,000 will also help to recruit and retain high quality educational leaders. For principals increase the multiplier by a factor of an additional 0.10 and increase funding for other administrators.
- Ensure funding flows to each district so equal raises and mandated minimum salaries are guaranteed for counselors, social workers, nurses, and all support personnel who are critical to meeting the priority needs of students.

Retaining a Diverse Workforce:

- Mitigating healthcare costs is critical to retaining and attracting a diverse workforce. It remains one of the top two concerns of education staff in NM in 2022. The state must fully fund 80/20 rule for all school employees which would reduce health insurance costs by half for thousands of NM educators.
- The SEG must support each district to pay a salary differential to educators who are band directors, coaches, speech and debate team leaders, department chairs, orchestra teachers, and many more educators who support our students.

Supporting a Diverse Workforce:

- **Dedicated and protected planning time.** Quality time with colleagues positively impacts both employee retention and student outcomes. A growing body of research shows that when teachers work more collaboratively, student outcomes can improve, teachers can be more satisfied in their jobs and teacher turnover can decrease. The educators must have more paid time to work with each other and create learning environments and opportunities that are culturally responsive and rich, equitable and engaging, and build on the cultural and linguistic abilities our students possess when they come to school.
- **Mental and behavioral health services** along with social emotional services must be prioritized and funded adequately for staff and students.