



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

### **New Mexico Education Partners 2019 Joint Legislative Goals**

The New Mexico Education Partners are committed to continuously improving our public schools and student outcomes. Each of the partners have created policy and funding recommendations that overlap. We all have similar strategies for moving our public education system forward. Collectively, our goals herein focus on avoiding past problems and creating systems and supports that each NM educator, parent and student deserve.

(1) **Stable Funding** - Public Education is insufficiently funded in the State of New Mexico. It is imperative that the Legislature establishes a diversified revenue stream to overcome the state's over reliance on any one source. Oil and gas have been, and is likely to continue to be, a volatile source of revenue for the state. A plan must be created and enacted that anticipates this volatility; to ensure that the education of our students is steady, we urge the Legislature to use a variety of revenue sources. We recommend the following:

- As a measure of protection against future revenues downturns, the Legislature should pass a statute requiring that fiscal year 2020 recurring general fund revenue levels be protected. The statute should require that if, in the future, the December recurring general fund revenues are projected to be less than fiscal year 2020 revenues, on January 1, prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, reverse triggers are automatically enacted such as, but are not limited to:
  - Changing personal income tax brackets and rates;
  - Changing corporate income tax brackets;
  - Changing capital gains tax rates.

These methods would be progressively applied until the recurring revenue projection was equal to the fiscal 2020 recurring general fund revenue and remain in effect until revenues are projected to exceed fiscal year 2020 levels.

- The Legislature should pass a resolution placing a constitutional amendment on the 2020 general election ballot to amend Article 12, Section 7 of the New Mexico Constitution to:
  - Permanently restore the annual distribution to beneficiaries of the School Permanent Fund from 5% to a minimum of 5.8%.
  - In addition, once we define an adequate per-student amount that number, the foundation of the SEG, must be maintained. A reverse trigger (a failsafe) using the fund should be

established if the state dips below that level of sufficient funding.

- New appropriations for public education should be allocated to Districts “above the line” through the State Equalization Guarantee. This provides for appropriate local decision-making, is in accord with legislative intent and abides by the constitutional guarantee: to provide all students in the state with a free and fair public education. (Article XII, Section 1: “Free Public Schools: A uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained.”)
- (2) **Early Childhood** - In addition to maintaining and enhancing K-12 funding, we support new funding for Pre-K Education for three and four-year-old children statewide. Whenever possible, these services should be provided by New Mexico Public School Districts. If not provided by public school districts, other qualified in-state providers should provide services. Pre-K education programs need to be high quality instruction and delivered by highly trained and appropriately certified professional educators.
- (3) **Salaries** - To attract and retain the competent, qualified, and caring educators our students deserve, we must:
- Commit to increasing the teacher 3-Tiered minimums to \$50,000, \$60,000 and \$70,000 over no more than the next three years. For example:
    - 2019-2020: \$40,000; \$50,000; and \$60,000 minimums.
    - 2020-2021: \$45,000; \$55,000; and \$65,000 minimums.
    - 2021-2022: \$50,000; \$60,000; and \$70,000 minimums.
  - These minimums should increase by the consumer price index in subsequent years.
  - Enough funding for equivalent raises for all Support and Related Services such as counselors, nurses and therapists must be included.
  - All school employees should receive at least a 10% salary increase in school year 2019-2020 and at least a **cost-of-living** increase in subsequent years.
  - Building-level instructional leadership is vital to continued success for our public schools. Steps must be taken to retain competent, qualified, and caring principals through enhanced compensation and ongoing enhancements commensurate to the job responsibilities. Salary minimums should be increased to \$80,000; \$90,000; and \$100,000 over three years.
  - Classified employees such as bus drivers, cooks, educational assistants and all those who ensure our schools run well and our students are taken care of must earn a minimum of \$16.00 an hour (which is the equivalent of about \$20,000 a year).
  - Cost-of-living increases must be provided for all education employees.
- (4) **Local Decision-Making** - Local decision-making and flexibility are two of the most important components of a successful public education system. They must be preserved and, when possible, expanded allowing school leaders, administrators, teachers and parents to create schools that reflect the community’s beliefs and values. Who better than community representatives to shoulder the responsibility of preparing children to live productive and satisfying lives? We must curb the expansion of state and federal intrusions into local public education systems that have been found to negatively impact local policymaking by imposing unnecessary rules, conditions and restrictions, as well as significant costs on local school governing bodies.

(5) **Partnerships and Student Academic Achievement are Closely Linked** - Years of research show that involving families and the community contributes to children's academic and social success. From early childhood through high school, families make key contributions to student learning. School improvement programs are much more effective when schools enlist families in the process. Regardless of income level or education background, all families can - and do - support their children's success. When parents become involved in school, they tend to become more active in the community. Legislation to encourage and fund well-planned family learning and support activities should be passed. Such legislation would tend to increase self-confidence, so parents and family members go on to pursue a high school diploma, additional job training and higher education. The more the relationship between families and the school is a real partnership, the more student achievement increases. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, students make greater gains. When families are engaged in positive ways, rather than labeled as problems, schools can be transformed

- (6) **Accountability** - Create accountability systems that are fair and valid. Including but not limited to:
- Reciprocal accountability systems that ensure when there is an expectation from the state, there is accompanying funding from the state. No more unfunded mandates. Funding should accompany all mandates currently in law, i.e. beginning teacher mentoring.
  - A teacher and principal evaluation system that is valid, reliable, and transparent; sophisticated enough to assess quality across the continuum of development, from novice to expert and accompanied by useful feedback.
  - Support, not sanctions, for schools identified as struggling under Every Student Succeeds Act.
- (7) **Ensuring Equitable Student Opportunity** - The state of New Mexico must meet the requirements of the judicial decree in Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico. All students need the opportunity to learn and perform to their full potential. We must remove barriers to learning.

Support culturally and linguistically appropriate programs (as identified in the Hispanic Education Act and the Indian Education Act) to educate the whole child and create robust K-12 Ethnic Studies programs that support all students to think critically about prevailing societal norms and knowledge about human differences and interconnectedness as a basic requirement for active citizenship in a diverse, pluralistic and equitable society.

Maintain appropriate support for students with priority needs, such as special education, gifted, and English Language Learners. Provide for more fine arts, physical education and vocational programs taught by qualified licensed instructors.

(8) **School Safety and Security**

We encourage the State Legislature to join with New Mexico school districts to insure every one of our schools is safe for all students. We ask the Legislature to prioritize school safety within its budget to include funding for:

- School safety and security systems and security officers;
- Collaborative threat assessment, crisis planning and scenario training;
- Counselors, mental health staff, psychologists and social workers to identify and diagnose students with severe behavioral issues in a timely manner.