

2020-2021 NMSSA Legislative Platform

Our priority is meeting the needs of NM students via financial solvency

- Ensure operational and transportation funding stability. Temporary provisions (hold harmless) to offset loss of MEM must account for historical trends on a 3 year average for the next 2 fiscal years, as well as controlling for future growth units.
- Provide adequate funding for current programs, plus any new mandates or requirements
- Protect operational reserves* to help districts navigate unforeseen challenges

Other important financial needs include:

Invest at least \$10M in emergency supplemental to protect against isolated shortfalls in COVID

Land Grant Permanent Fund- The solvency of the fund is important. If the fund is tapped, distributions should be preserved for use by K-12 institutions to address PreK expansion, Yazzie/Martinez, etc, and should include a sunset or regular review of drawdown levels (to ensure long-term fund solvency)

Partner with LEAs in covering any increases to the employer and employee cost of equitable health care for school personnel

Impact Aid- If credits change, all districts must be held harmless from any resulting SEG reduction

Call for a streamlined application process for systems-based investments in Broadband & HVAC systems

Restore SEG funds credited from prior CARES Act funding and protect future federal funding

Make sufficient investments (both via program cost AND categorical funding) for instructional materials, including those needed to deliver instruction remotely and to offer dual credit coursework

Fully fund the cost of transporting eligible bus riders to and from school

Establish systems that support behavioral health

Assure flexibility for local decision-making to align with each community's educational needs

- Designing instructional calendars, including options for additional time
- Temporary flexibility for demonstration of competency needed for graduation, especially for the Classes of 2021 & 2022
- Revise Attendance for Success Act- delay implementation, including disenrollment actions, reporting/goal setting, consistency challenges in various learning models (remote, hybrid)

Other important educational student needs include:

Temporary re-calculation of graduation rates to allow extended time for required course completion and allow GED completers to count as graduates

Allow local districts to determine which course sequence will satisfy each individual student's requirement to successfully pass 4 years of math, and revise 22-13-1.1(J)2 to codify this change

Restraint & Seclusion- needs more study before the delicate compromise in statute is revisited

Tools for recruiting and retaining quality educational personnel

- Support districts' ability to retain and compete for school personnel with other states in our region
- Consider ERB to enhance opportunities for:
 - alternative retirement options (should SEG be reduced)- provided that an employee taking these options cannot RTW without completing full retirement
 - return to work (extend sunset, as well as remove penalties OR require employers to pay any penalty)
- Ensure liability protections for LEAs and school personnel related to both COVID and any proposed new constitutional cause of actions

***NM School Superintendents Association
Statement on the Need to
PROTECT OPERATIONAL RESERVES**

Even as the legislature seeks to address budget shortfalls, school operational reserves must be protected in order to help districts navigate unforeseen challenges. Key reasons include but are not limited to:

- Districts are required to make expenditures on federal and categorical grants and must wait on reimbursements, thus causing cash flow issues to cover payroll and other mandatory expenses;
- In some districts, operational reserves are not entirely comprised of state operational funds, therefore non-operational state dollars should not be subject to cash sweeps;
- Select districts have saved money for capital expenditures, thus a sweep will cause undue hardship;
- The fact that bond ratings are negatively impacted by low operational reserves;
- Districts opening new schools rely upon operational reserves to fund initial start-up costs;
- All districts recognize that operational reserves are a prudent business practice to ensure a district can monetarily cover emergency costs and cover payroll in unexpected circumstances as was experienced in the 2008-2012 recession period.