



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

## 2025: Stability and Progress

### Overview

Our partnership goals for 2025 focus on ensuring **stability and progress** in our public education system. Both are imperative. Both are possible.

### Challenges to stability:

- Approximately 15% of New Mexico's public school budget comes from **federal funding**—higher than most states. This crucial funding source is at risk, threatening overall stability.
- Even with recent efforts, current salaries don't keep pace with the **cost of living**. A [recent EdWeek Research Center survey](#) indicated that "(s)alary increases that exceed increases in the cost of living" would entice 60% of teachers to stay in the teaching profession long term. This is more critical in some localities because the cost of [housing often prices teachers out of a particular labor market](#); salaries and cost of housing also affect the diversity of the workforce, [as teachers of color and early career teachers are affected disproportionately](#).
- Our students, families, and schools must prepare for the possible destabilizing effects of mass deportation—which would exacerbate the attendance and truancy issues that are already so prevalent in our schools. New Mexico's lawmakers, districts, and Boards of Education should enact measures to protect all learners, regardless of citizenship.
- An important responsibility of local school districts is to adopt a school calendar that meets the unique needs of each community as expressed by staff, students, families, and community members. This responsibility should remain in the hands of local officials who are best equipped to make this important decision.

### Our plan for stability and progress for every student in New Mexico

#### **SEG Sufficiency and Stability Funding**

Allow districts to imagine, design, and deploy the instructional program that best meets the needs of each community by ensuring that the **SEG has sufficient funding for discretionary local priorities**. Ensure sufficient SEG funding to address local priorities, including salary differentials for roles such as band directors, coaches, and department chairs.

- Support the proposal by the Funding Formula Task Force to **increase the secondary student funding factor** to assist with increasing program costs and increase at-risk funding by making adjustments to the funding calculation process.
- **Recurring revenue for Residency Programs** and the expansion of this successful alternative preparation model to principals, counselors, and social workers. Residency Programs are working to fill our classrooms with teachers. We can take the next step to ensure we have the school leadership and social-emotional supports students need.
- **Capital outlay**—Invest in school safety, maintenance, and CTE programs by reducing districts' matching requirements. Modernize school buildings with renewable energy solutions like solar panels, which pay for themselves through utility savings. With rising temperatures, upgrading HVAC systems is essential to ensure students and teachers have the learning conditions they need to succeed.
- Protect districts' **operating reserves**. Move away from "spend it or lose it" policies, enabling districts to respond to emerging challenges.

- **Increase instructional materials budgets** to meet rising costs, particularly for technology-integrated learning.
- **Transportation:** Addressing the inadequacy of funding for student transportation to ensure every district can provide student transportation.

### Salaries

- Set a minimum salary of **\$30,000 for Educational Assistants**, and work towards fixing the minimum rate of pay for these positions to 75% of the minimum for a Level I teacher.
- Provide a sufficient appropriation for an **average 10% wage increase** for all educational personnel and increase the current 3-Tiered minimum salaries to \$55,000, \$65,000, and \$75,000. Ensure funding reaches every district to guarantee equal raises and mandated minimum salaries for counselors, social workers, nurses, and all support personnel essential to addressing students' priority needs.
- Advocate for **significant raises for classified staff** to reflect their essential contributions to our schools. Ensure all critical support personnel, including secretaries, clerks, custodians, food service workers, bus drivers, and instructional assistants, receive equitable and competitive compensation.
- Increase salaries for **principals** to attract and retain experienced, effective leaders who foster positive school cultures and meaningful 2-way communication with families. Well-compensated principals are better equipped to support educators, reduce turnover, and create stable, thriving learning environments that benefit students, families, and staff alike.

### Attendance, Social & Emotional Learning, & Behavioral Supports and Resources

- Invest in **paid time for educators to collaborate**, improving job satisfaction, student outcomes, and teacher retention.
- **Embed equity in pedagogy** to foster inclusive environments where students and families feel valued and engaged. An emphasis on engagement over compliance will result in increased attendance.
- Prioritize **funding for social-emotional learning**, youth mentoring, and restorative practices to build students' life skills and improve behavior.
- Enhance funding for **At-Risk, Indian Education Act, Hispanic Education Act, Bilingual, Multicultural Education, PE, Fine Arts, CTE, and Community Schools**. These programs are essential to provide resources and to engage students. These programs are key to keeping our students in school, as New Mexico saw a 119% increase in chronic absenteeism between 2019 and 2023 – the largest increase in the country.

### Governance

The current governance structure leaves education progress vulnerable to political shifts. To ensure stability, we advocate for reinstating the **State Board of Education**. This elected body would offer continuity, transparency, and accountability compared to the Governor-appointed Secretary system, which has seen five leadership changes under the current administration.

### Elevating Middle School Education

Adolescence (ages 10–14) is a period of rapid development, second only to infancy. During this stage, students experience significant hormonal, emotional, and social changes, making them particularly vulnerable to anxiety, low self-esteem, and risk-taking behaviors.

We propose the following actions:

- Reaffirm a developmentally responsive, challenging, and equitable middle school experience. Support **staffing ratios** for middle schools so that they can create interdisciplinary teams also known as families or small learning communities.
- Establish a **specialized license for middle school educators**, emphasizing expertise in early adolescent development to better support students and families through this critical stage.