

## MINUTES

### Legislative Education Study Committee Santa Fe, New Mexico November 13-15, 2024

Wednesday, November 13

The following voting, advisory, and guest members were present. Voting: Chair G. Andrés Romero, Representatives Brain G. Baca, Joy Garratt, Susan K. Herrera, Raymundo Lara, Tanya Mirabel Moya, and Senators Harold Pope Jr. and Mimi Stewart.

Advisory: Representatives John Block and Debra M. Sariñana, and Senators Linda M. Lopez and Shannon D. Pinto.

**Call to Order, Introductions, and Approval of September Minutes and November Agenda.** Representative G. Andrés Romero, Chair, Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), called the meeting to order. Chair Romero facilitated introductions of LESC members and staff. A quorum of voting members was not present at the start of the meeting. On November 14, a quorum was present. In a motion by Representative Joy Garratt, and a second by Representative Mirabal Moya, the agenda for the November LESC hearing was approved. The meeting minutes for the October LESC hearing were also approved with a motion by Representative Raymundo Lara and a second by Senator Harold Pope.

**Wired for Success: Statewide Education Network and Broadband Update.** Mark A. Montoya, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC; Drew Lovelace, Acting Director, Office of Broadband and Expansion (OBAE); Ovidiu Viorica, Broadband & Technology Manager, (OBAE); and John Chadwick, E-Rate and Ed Tech Coordinator Technology Manager, Public Education Department (PED) presented to committee members on the Statewide Education Network (SEN), an update on broadband, and an overview educational devices in New Mexico.

Mr. Montoya, Mr. Lovelace, Mr. Viorica, and Dr. Chadwick discussed the state of the SEN, state and federally sponsored broadband initiatives in New Mexico, digital devices, and the challenges associated with developing and maintaining the SEN. They also emphasized the growing need to update many of the digital devices used by students.

Mr. Montoya proposed several policy recommendations to the committee members, including the need for additional staff to support the development and maintenance of the SEN, the importance of a skilled workforce to sustain telecommunications and broadband networks, the enhancement of digital literacy, and the importance of a comprehensive statewide broadband system overseen by experts with in-depth knowledge of broadband technology and infrastructure.

**Teacher Clinical Practice Update.** Annie Armatage, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, presented an overview of New Mexico's teacher preparation

models, initial teacher residency outcomes, and a preliminary analysis of how teacher preparation may impact student growth. The report found New Mexico teacher residencies have high completion rates, but demand has not kept pace with fundings. Ms. Armatage explained New Mexico's teacher residents are more diverse than the state's current teacher workforce. Ms. Armatage concluded that strong program evaluations of teacher residency programs will require improved data collection and reporting practices from PED and educator preparation programs. Committee members asked for updates on the state's Educator Fellows, Grow Your Own, and Educators Rising programs.

**Director Interviews.** Chair Romero called the meeting to order and stated the committee was ready to begin the interview process for the LESC director position. LESC director candidates interviewed, in order of appearance, were: Jennifer Cole, Greg Frostad, and John Sena. After interviews were concluded, Chair Romero recessed the meeting and called the committee into executive session

**Director Hiring.** Chair Romero thanked all applicants for applying for the LESC director position. Senator Stewart nominated John Sena, Interim Director, LESC to be the director of LESC. Representative Mirabel Moya seconded the motion. There was no opposition noted to the motion and Chair Romero announced John Sena as the unanimous choice for the next LESC Director.

Thursday, November 14

The following voting, advisory, and guest members were present. Voting: Chair G. Andrés Romero, Representatives Brain G. Baca, Joy Garratt, Susan K. Herrera, Raymundo Lara, Tanya Mirabel Moya, and Senators Craig W. Brandt and Harold Pope Jr.

Advisory: Representatives John Block, Tara L. Lujan, and Debra M. Sariñana.

**Long-Term and Strategic Educational Planning.** Nathan Driskell, Chief Policy Officer, National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) opened the panel presentation by sharing information about the core skills needed among today's students, how states across the country are creating systems for long-term educational and economic planning focused on education reform and strategy alignment, and an overview of states that NCEE works with (Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, and Montana, among others) to develop such structures and plans. Mr. Driskell noted long-term educational planning is particularly important to centralize bipartisan, bicameral, and cross-agency structures to allow states to better set visions, link education to economic goals, learn from high-performing education systems, and focus on both short- and long-term prosperity for states.

John Sena, Director, LESC, presented on how this national lens connects to New Mexico's context by offering a review of the *Martinez-Yazzie*

lawsuit, the state's efforts to improve education to date, and barriers to improvement that may be impacting educational efforts.

Jessica Hathaway, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, built on Mr. Sena's remarks by sharing a crosswalk of strategic plans, roadmaps, recommendations, and analyses that have been created in New Mexico to both address the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit and provide for long-term educational planning. Mr. Sena and Ms. Hathaway closed with recommendations on a potential planning and implementation process to solidify long-term educational planning in New Mexico.

Committee members asked questions to clarify how planning processes would fit into current educational efforts, how the committee might develop structures to support a commission or other study group, and how local initiatives would be incorporated into a statewide vision.

**Fostering Comprehensive School Safety.** Conor L. Hicks, Policy Analyst I, LESC; Darron Walter, Safety and Security Consultant, Poms and Associates Insurance Brokers; Joleene Starr, Principal, Raton High School; and Desi Garcia, Director of Safety and Security, Los Lunas Schools presented to committee members on strategies to improve school safety in New Mexico.

Mr. Walter, Principal Starr, and Director Garcia all spoke about efforts around the state to center relationship-building in school safety approaches. Mr. Walter and Principal Starr discussed restorative practices and their role in school safety, while Director Garcia's presentation highlighted the way in which Los Lunas Schools' school resource officers act as mentors and positive role models for students.

Finally, Mr. Hicks offered the committee policy recommendations to provide additional funding for school safety initiatives in New Mexico schools and further safeguard the rights of students in school settings.

**Improving Data Quality through Data Governance.** Tim Bedeaux, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, introduced the panel presenters and thanked PED for providing LESC data throughout the year. Mr. Bedeaux described hallmarks of high-quality educational data and provided examples of ways PED-provided data has not met these requirements, which constricted LESC's workplan. Data quality issues have prevented LESC staff from conducting valid, reliable analyses of educational programs. Data governance, including internal PED policies as well as interagency data governance structures, can meaningfully reduce data quality issues. Mr. Bedeaux provided the committee with a range of data governance options to consider for the 2025 legislative session.

Paige Kowalski, Executive Vice President, Data Quality Campaign, presented ways states can create and leverage effective data systems to support student success. The presentation included five key recommendations for New Mexico to accomplish this, including implementing cross-agency data governance.

Michael Smith, Director, New Mexico Institute for Mining and Technology (New Mexico Tech) Institute for Complex Additive Systems Analysis (ICASA) and Stephanie Maez, Data Governance Project Manager, New Mexico Tech ICASA, presented preliminary findings from stakeholder interviews and asset mapping through the statewide data governance project. Findings included data siloed by policy area, under-resourced agencies, limited data management protocols, and use of varied software vendors. The project will continue to gather data through surveys and focus groups through 2025, culminating in a report to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) that year. That phase will be followed by implementation, dependent upon funding, in 2025 with a final report presented to LFC in 2026.

Committee members expressed support for an independent data agency and asked how digital accessibility is being incorporated into data governance planning, as well as what the statewide data governance project's phase two technical application is.

Friday, November 15

The following voting, advisory, and guest members were present. Voting: Chair G. Andrés Romero, Representatives Brain G. Baca, Joy Garratt, Susan K. Herrera, Raymundo Lara, Tanya Mirabel Moya, and Senators Craig W. Brandt and Harold Pope Jr.

Advisory: Representatives John Block, Tara L. Lujan, and Willie D. Madrid.

**School Attendance: Children, Youth and Families Department Update.**

Jessica Hathaway, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC, introduced the panel noting that Corey Adams, Deputy Director of Director of Juvenile Justice Field Services, Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) would be presenting about CYFD's process for referrals about school attendance. Ms. Hathaway noted LESC members have been studying attendance and the implementation of the state's Attendance for Success Act (AFSA) for several years and have noted the need for more information about what happens to students referred to CYFD structures at the tier four level of the AFSA. Mr. Adams shared CYFD's absenteeism referral form, its school checklist and follow-up request, as well as truancy and absenteeism referrals numbers by county for fiscal years 2023 (FY23) and FY24. Mr. Adams noted CYFD does not have the authority to implement any follow-up interventions for students referred to the agency for attendance issues unless CYFD finds greater child welfare concerns while investigating, and instead, CYFD is there to help schools solve how to support student attendance.

Committee members clarified the reporting process with Mr. Adams and asked if additional actions for CYFD to intervene, such as fees or penalties for students or families, would be helpful to the agency. Mr.

Adams noted most families need supports when referred to CYFD, but the agency would implement any statutory requirements directed by the AFSA.

**Special Education State Plan.** Marit Andrews, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC provided context for the presentation, explaining the executive order that established the Office of Special Education also required the development of an annually updated state plan that establishes statewide special education standards and goals to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Next, Margaret Cage, Ed.D., Deputy Secretary of Special Education, presented on the work of the Office of Special Education since the executive order, including the development of strategic priorities and a five-year plan. Deputy Secretary Cage explained that the state plan was developed based on research and best practices from other state plans, and that the Office of Special Education engaged stakeholders in the development of the five-year plan.

Committee members asked questions including, but not limited to, the budget request for the Office of Special Education for the upcoming legislative session, delays in the release of federal funds for students with disabilities, updates on special education teacher differentials, and the increase in the percentage of students receiving special education services statewide.

**Foundations for Learning: Public School Facility Authority (PSFA) Update.** Mark A. Montoya, Senior Policy Analyst II, LESC; and Iris Romero, Executive Director, Public School Facility Authority (PSFA) presented to committee members on public school capital outlay and an overview of PSFA and the programs the Authority administers.

Mr. Montoya and Ms. Romero discussed public school capital outlay in New Mexico which included a historical review, litigation, statutory acts, and public school infrastructure funding sources and uses in New Mexico. Ms. Romero provided an overview of the PSFA, Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) members, applications received from schools for project funding, and construction phase awards and other PSCOC approved projects.

Mr. Montoya updated the committee members on the work conducted by LESC, LFC, and PSFA staff to address issues with the state and local match formula. Mr. Montoya also outlined potential legislation to be presented for endorsement at the December meeting, including an extension of temporary local match reductions and revisions to the local match waiver criteria.

**PED Rules Review.** Conor L. Hicks, Policy Analyst I, LESC, presented to the committee on a proposed amendment to NMAC 6.29.1 General Provisions. This proposed change is intended to align PED rule with laws passed by the Legislature during the 2024 legislative session.

The proposed changes to general provisions included amendments to high school graduation requirements, school board and charter school

governing body training requirements, and revisions to special education modified diploma options.

**Director's Report.** John Sena, Director, LESC, presented the LESC newsletter to committee members and expressed his gratitude to the LESC staff for their hard work during the interim. He also recognized the LESC office manager for ensuring a flawless annual audit.

Committee members congratulated Director Sena on his new position and extended their appreciation to the LESC team. Committee members further emphasized the importance of obtaining data to support school districts' efforts and requested a list of committee-endorsed legislation for the December hearing. Director Sena confirmed that the December hearing would include a budget proposal for review, such as the annual high-level budget, as well as presentations from PED and other education partners regarding their budgets. Additionally, the meeting will feature a list of proposed legislation for committee review.

Committee members also inquired about the salary of the State Lottery Director in relation to a forthcoming bill.