

MINUTES
Legislative Education Study Committee
State Capitol, Senate Chambers
Santa Fe, New Mexico
November 17-19, 2021

Wednesday, November 17

The following voting and advisory committee members were present: Voting: Chair William P. Soules, Vice Chair G. Andrés Romero, Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, T. Ryan Lane, Christine Trujillo, and Representative Susan Herrera, and Senators Harold Pope Jr., and Senator Mimi Stewart.

Advisory: Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Natalie Figueroa, Joy Garratt, Tara Lujan and Roger Montoya, and Senators Craig Brandt, Linda M. Lopez, Michael Padilla and Shannon D. Pinto.

Representative Stefani Lord attended as a guest.

Call to Order and Introductions. Chair Soules called the meeting to order and facilitated introductions of LESC members.

Addressing Student Learning Needs: Assessments and Accelerated Learning.

Following a brief overview of assessments from LESC staff, Gwen Perea Warniment, Ph.D., deputy director, teaching, learning, and assessment, Public Education Department (PED); and Lynn Vazquez, director, assessment and learning management systems, PED, shared proficiency rates in reading and math from spring 2021 and talked about PED's balanced assessment structure that will require statewide administration of interim assessments this school year. Dr. Warniment and Jacqueline Costales, director, curriculum and instruction, PED, then provided a definition of accelerated learning and discussed its importance in fostering educational equity. PED staff concluded with considerations for the LESC that included prioritizing interim assessments and family involvement, researching innovative assessments, and salary increases for educators.

On a motion by Representative Trujillo and a second by Representative Baldonado, the committee approved the October minutes with no opposition. On a motion by Vice Chair Romero and a second by Representative Trujillo, the November agenda was also approved with no opposition.

Public Education Department Curriculum Update: Proposed Social Studies Standards.

Gwen Perea Warniment, Ph.D., deputy secretary of teaching, learning and assessment, Public Education Department (PED), discussed the department's responsibility in setting academic standards and school district's ability to tailor curriculum for their local communities. She emphasized PED's goal of collaboratively developing culturally

responsive social studies standards that use evidence-based practices, research, and data to ensure students are college, career, and civic ready.

Members asked for clarification on the process for developing the standards, examples of the materials students would be learning from, school district's obligations to adhere to the standards, the definition of group identity in the context of the standards, school districts' autonomy in selecting instructional materials, the ability of educators to adequately implement the large amount of new standards, and adding a global context to the standards.

School Mental Health Best Practices. Shayna Klassen, state behavioral health consultant, Department of Health, gave a behavioral health overview for New Mexico, including the number of youth suicides and attempted youth suicides in 2019, as well as impacts of Covid-19 on adolescent mental health. She then described national school mental health best practices and efforts that were needed to identify and support New Mexicans at risk of poor mental health. Leslie Kelly, behavioral health program coordinator, Public Education Department shared the departments school-based behavioral health initiatives and supports.

Career and Technical Education in Rural Communities. Bryan Dooley, executive director, Regional IX Education Cooperative (REC IX) discussed REC IX's efforts to support quality career technical education (CTE) programming in southeast New Mexico, including how REC IX administers and secures both federal and state funding to local school districts who might otherwise lack administrative bandwidth to secure such funds and develop CTE programs. Milo McMinn, career technical education director, Aztec Municipal Schools, described the development of the Bond Wilson Technical Center that serves students in the Central Consolidated School District and current efforts to develop robust CTE programming in the Aztec community.

Teacher Presentation on Legislative Priorities.

Samantha Waidler-Jaramillo, level 3 teacher, Dixon Elementary, Española Public Schools discussed her experience as a teacher, expressing the need to be proactive rather than reactive based on her situation as a teacher who teaches out of guilt based on being overworked, undervalued and underpaid in the age of Covid-19. Ms. Waidler-Jaramillo noted an environment of excessive work and a lack of professional development is not helpful, which may lead to burn out in the teaching profession. Ms. Waidler-Jaramillo also noted a request to consider how professional development provided by the Public Education Department (PED) impacts teachers and expressed a desire for greater autonomy showing trust and respect for teachers to improve student engagement. Ms. Waidler-Jaramillo also noted the importance of instructional assistants that are

not paid a living wage, much like teachers are underpaid by comparison to other college educated professionals.

Thursday, November 18

The following voting and advisory committee members were present: Voting: Chair William P. Soules, Vice Chair G. Andrés Romero, Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, T. Ryan Lane, Christine Trujillo, and Representative Susan Herrera, and Senators Harold Pope Jr., and Senator Mimi Stewart.

Advisory: Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Joy Garratt, Tara Lujan, Roger Montoya and Liz Thomson and Senators Craig Brandt, Linda M. Lopez Shannon D. Pinto and Siah Correa Hemphill.

Grow Your Own Programs: New Mexico State University Educators Rising. Stacey Duncan, Ph.D., director, Educators Rising Program, New Mexico State University, Crystal Chavez, program coordinator, Educators Rising, and Miskie Blanter, central regional coordinator, Educators Rising presented to the committee updates on the Educators Rising program. The presentation included information on the mission of the program, active Educators Rising chapters, and requested continued financial support for Educator's Rising Programs.

Higher Education Department: Teacher Workforce Financial Aid, Loan Repayment. Stephanie Rodriguez, secretary, Higher Education Department and Harry Rommel, Ph.D., director, Higher Education Department, presented to the committee on financial aid programs for teachers in New Mexico. Secretary Rodriguez discussed financial aid programs targeted at teachers including: The Teacher Loan Repayment Program, which is estimated to provide \$3.4 million in awards for student debt relief in FY22; the Teacher Preparation Affordability Scholarship which provided \$4.9 million in scholarships in FY21; and the Grow Your Own Teachers Scholarship program which awarded \$111.7 thousand in scholarships in FY21. Secretary Rodriguez highlighted challenges with the Teacher Loan-For-Service Program noting 67 percent of students receiving loans under the program defaulted between FY09 and FY20. Finally, Secretary Rodriguez also discussed the department's goal to ensure college affordability for all students in New Mexico, highlighting the Opportunity Scholarship and Lottery Scholarship.

Middle School Experiences.

Avery Roser, Milagro Middle School and Dahlia Orozco, Ortiz Middle School both eighth grade students from Santa Fe Public Schools, answered guided questions followed by member questions. They each described their favorite classes, teachers and how the pandemic has impacted their education this past year. They elaborated on unforeseen stressors and challenges the pandemic presented to their learning. Explaining that the transition to face to face learning was welcomed and much needed. They also expressed their support and requested the need to prioritize the mental health of students most of all with regards to the challenges that the pandemic has presented. They both praised teachers and staff

for making greater time to listen to students. Marking the school's efforts to deal with the pandemic induced stress by showing greater patience and providing opportunities for student's to dialogue their issues. They ended by describing the impact of the teacher shortage on their learning quality and outcomes.

Outdoor Classroom Task Force. Siah Correa Hemphill, State Senator, District 28, provided an overview of Senate Memorial 1 from the 2021 legislative session that directed the development of an outdoor classroom task force and accompanying report. Yadiel Concepcion and Eliana Renteria, students, Monte Vista Elementary, Las Cruces Public Schools shared their firsthand experiences learning in outdoor classroom environments and research about how outdoor classrooms impact students. David Certain, program support bureau chief, State Parks Division, Economic Development Department and Eileen Everett, executive director, Environmental Education New Mexico shared findings from the outdoor classroom task force report including three recommendations: 1) establishing an outdoor classroom program at the Public Education Department 2) creating a synopsis of funding opportunities for outdoor classrooms and outdoor learning; and 3) supporting continued work of the outdoor classroom task force.

Public Education Budget Overview. Joseph Simon, principal analyst, LESC provided an overview of the public education budget process.

Committee Discussion: LESC Budget Priorities. Chairman Soules lead a discussion on 2022 LESC budget priorities. Topics of interest were 1) educator compensation 2) health insurance 3) teacher residency programs.

Potential Committee Endorsed Legislation. Vanessa Hawker, Ph.D., acting director, LESC lead a discussion on potential committee endorsed legislation for the 2022 legislative session. The committee asked staff to work on three bills for possible consideration: a bill to increase the employer's share of health insurance premiums; a bill to increase state matching payments under the Public School Capital Improvements Act (SB9), similar to a bill passed in the 2020 legislative session that was later repealed due to concerns over revenue shortfalls; and a bill to require public school transportation distribution be based on data from FY19 and FY20.

Friday, November 19

The following voting and advisory committee members were present: Voting: Chair William P. Soules, Representatives Alonzo Baldonado, T. Ryan Lane, Christine Trujillo and Susan Herrera, and Senators Harold Pope Jr., and Senator Mimi Stewart.

Advisory: Representatives Joanne J. Ferrary, Joy Garratt, Tara Lujan and Liz Thomson and Senators Craig Brandt, Linda M. Lopez and Shannon D. Pinto.

Statewide Input on Extended Learning Opportunities Cody Skinner, assistant superintendent, Artesia Public Schools; Arturo Lujan Lopez, teacher, Santa Fe Public Schools; LaVerne Martinez, principal, Cobre Consolidated School District; Cathie Williams, principal, Gadsden Public Schools; Dana Maes, teacher, Pojoaque Public Schools; Renee Russ, superintendent, Clovis Municipal Schools; Antonio Gonzales, Ph.D., associate superintendent for leadership and learning, Albuquerque Public Schools; Jennifer Griego, principal, Grants Cibola County Schools, participated in a panel to gather statewide input on experiences with programs that extend learning time and advice for the state regarding scenarios for moving forward.

Members asked about educator moral and teacher pay.

Senator Stewart suggested putting a pause on several state mandates and focusing on increasing educator pay.

Acting Director's Report. Vanessa Hawker, acting director, LESC, noted the next LESC interim meeting would be held either December 16-17, 2021 or January 6-7, 2022, depending on when the special session for redistricting adjourned.