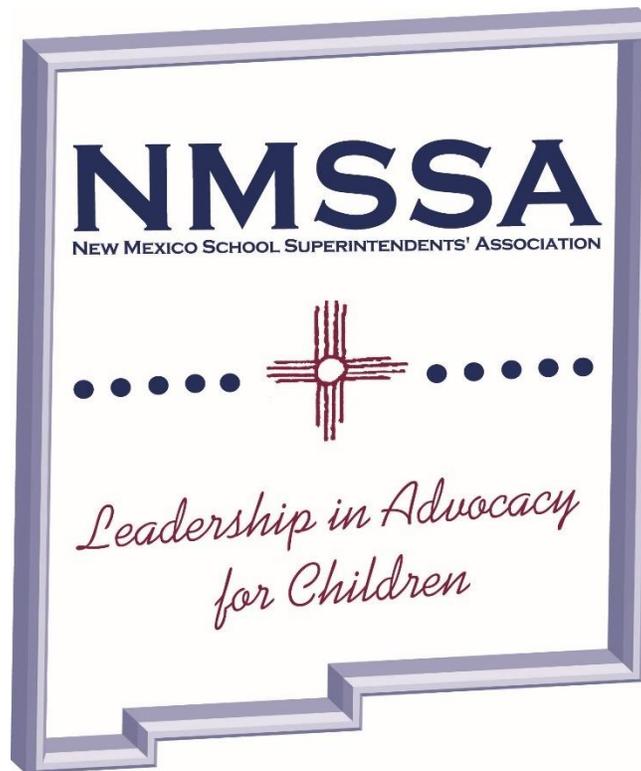


A Vision to Transform Education in New Mexico

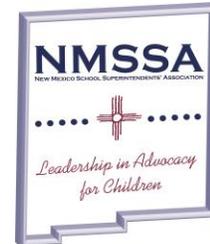
2019 Policy Recommendations for a Better Future

Presented by the New Mexico School Superintendents' Association



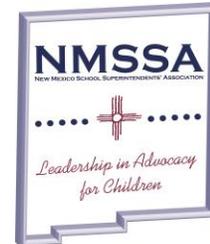
With gratitude to each superintendent who participated in the development of this platform.

Compiled and Prepared by Carrie Robin Brunder, Zia Strategies, LLC



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A Vision to Transform Education in New Mexico

The Commitment to our Children

A successful education system is one of shared commitments, where each stakeholder understands their responsibilities and takes seriously the work that must be done to reach the common goals of our collective society. The responsibilities of schools go beyond reading, writing and arithmetic. Schools are fundamental to our democracy.

To transform our education system, New Mexico needs true leadership – an educational leader will work with all education stakeholders and commit to our shared ideals for the betterment of our children.

The superintendents, through recommendations contained herein, commit to the future of our education system.

The superintendents commit to the responsibility to educate, care for and empower students across New Mexico.

The superintendents commit to articulate the resources we need to engage in the work expected of us.

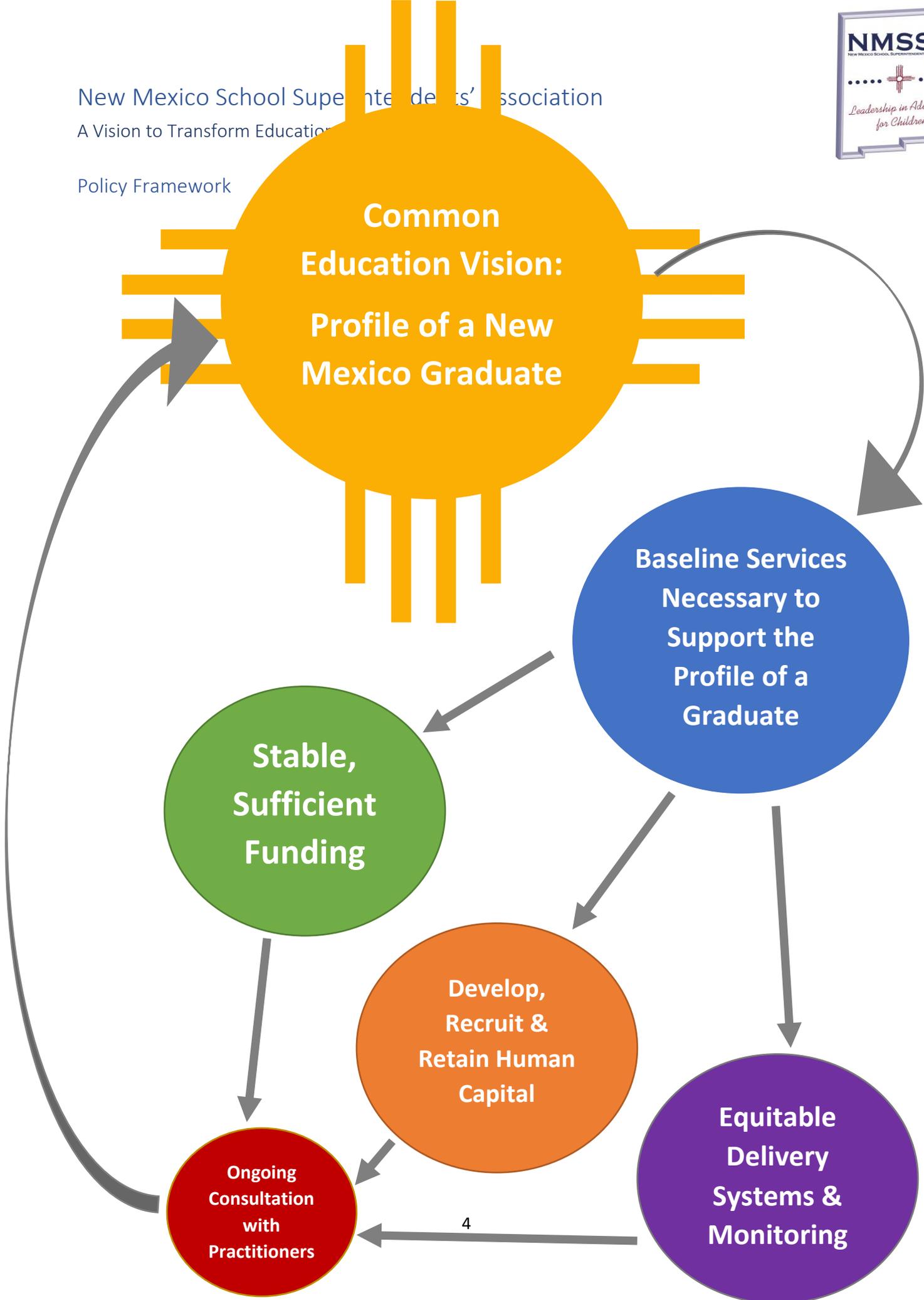
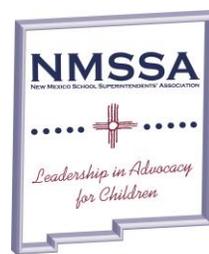
We ask that policymakers, business leaders and communities at large join us in our commitment, so we may work toward a brighter New Mexico future.

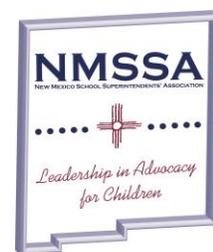
Successful education systems demand aligned structures of support for students, families and communities. Schools cannot be expected to, nor can they functionally, solve all of society's challenges. Schools take seriously their responsibility to prepare literate, civically-minded students who have a strong sense of identity and the skills necessary to succeed in college, career and life. However, schools can only be successful if they are provided the resources necessary to ensure basic human needs of students are met so they are ready to learn.

The unique experiences and challenges our students face require an equitable distribution of resources and aligned systems so we may capitalize on every student's individual potential and hopes and dreams for a better future.

Schools can meet the challenges our students face and shape those students into contributing members of our society if they are given the flexibility to provide local context to educational programs and make decisions that are best for their communities. Superintendents welcome oversight from the state that acknowledges local decision making, provides support to schools for continuous improvement, and measures the progress schools are making toward a common vision of education in New Mexico. Punitive frameworks create conflict between the state and districts and do little to create a collective movement to improve educational outcomes for students.

If we can establish a common vision, captured in the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, and establish the resources necessary to fulfil that vision, we can also build stable systems that develop the human capital we need and deliver public education to students equitably. We must trust the voice of our educators and empower their voice to continually guide us toward our vision – a vision that benefits our children.





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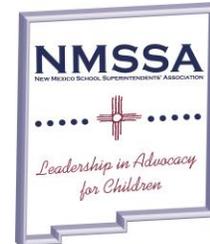
A Common Education Vision: The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*

There is shared agreement that a common vision, that includes education stakeholders and representatives from businesses and social support organizations, must be created so there is an understanding of the mission and goals needed to improve education. Development of this vision must:

- Recognize the current state of New Mexico's education system, overall child wellbeing, the state's economic condition and the need for coordination between systems to solve problems.
 - This recognition must include our collective failures and accomplishments, so we may have an honest conversation about where we are and where we need to go.
 - Solutions must understand and solve stress from economic uncertainty which is a major driver in failing to provide equitable opportunities to students.
 - Stakeholders in the vision must claim responsibility for our current state of affairs and commit to shaping a better future.
- Be transformative in nature so we may envision the preferred future for our children and ourselves.
- Result in collective buy-in from the Governor, Public Education Department, superintendents, practitioners, businesses, social support agencies and communities so the state can move in the same direction and have a common lens through which to make decisions and implement rules.
- Be grounded in continuous improvement of our schools and an environment that provides appropriate support to comply with the requirements, goals and mission that result from the implementation of the common vision.
- Solve problems in the context of economic uncertainty and long-term sustainability to ensure that schools continue to receive sufficient dollars through volatile budget cycles.

The vision for public education should provide specific recommendations and goals related to:

- The profile or portrait of a successful graduate from New Mexico Public Schools. The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* should articulate the knowledge, characteristics, traits and skills (both soft skills and hard skills) graduates need to possess to be successful in college or career once they leave the public school building.
 - This profile requires collaboration from industry leaders, institutions of higher education and communities to inform and define the type of individual our schools need to produce for later success in life.
 - This profile must be agreed to in a statewide context to provide a common expectation of what a diploma means in our state.
 - Importantly, this profile must be adapted to provide local context to communities so programs may be implemented based on local needs and values.
- This profile should be used to “back plan” the services and opportunities students have a right to receive during their time in the public schools. In depth recommendations of the services can be found in the “Baseline Services Necessary to Support the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*” section.
- The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* should capitalize on assets of communities, and the unique experiences and histories our students and families bring to our schools.



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The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* must become the foundation for aligning systems across state agencies to provide necessary resources for schools to complete the work they must do to fulfill that profile. Engaging in meaningful vision work leads to vertical buy-in of our common goals and values. Students, families, teachers, school leaders, superintendents, business leaders, lawmakers and the executive must all make decisions guided by this vision so we work together on behalf of our children.

This *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* lays the groundwork to back plan our education system from our desired outcome. This planning must include, but may not be limited to:

- The true meaning of a high school diploma and the currency it holds in the market after graduation;
- Instructional standards pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade to culminate *the Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*;
- Curriculum and instructional materials;
- Assessments that appropriately measure the skills New Mexico Graduates are expected to master;
- Educational programs;
- The profile of highly qualified and well-trained teachers and school leaders;
- Measurable goals established by the state, in collaboration with education stakeholders, which would be operationalized by schools and monitored for progress; and
- The foundation for assistance and support provided by the state to reach common goals when schools may fall behind.

Policy Recommendations

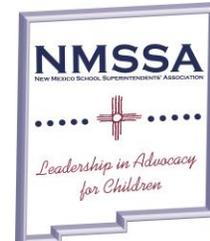
Creation of the Education Vision Taskforce: The work of this vision committee should be ongoing, codified in state law, and provide guiding principles to policy makers used to inform decisions that impact day-to-day operations of schools. The work of a statewide vision should build upon past work of education stakeholders and be a convening force to provide an opportunity for different agencies to work toward the same goals for the future. The taskforce would be responsible for:

- Creating the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*;
- Establishing baseline services necessary to support the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*;
- Providing oversight in the implementation of the vision and ongoing recommendations to align systems and monitor systems progress.

Similar work on a statewide vision of a Profile of a Graduate has been completed in Virginia and Iowa. Local school districts across the county, including districts in New Mexico, have engaged in this work as well. This work should be used as a model for the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*.

The vision committee should include:

- The Governor;
- Secretary of Public Education;
- Secretary of Higher Education;



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- Child Youth & Families Department;
- Health and Human Services;
- Workforce Solutions;
- Legislators;
- Tribal Leaders;
- Superintendents;
- Principals/School Leaders;
- Teacher Organizations;
- Charter Schools;
- Institutions of Higher Education;
- Families;
- Public Safety Personnel;
- Business Leaders;
- Faith-Based Organizations; and
- Education Non-Profits.

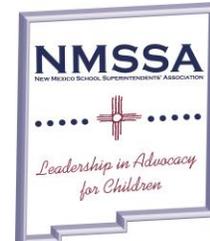
The actual plan and vision for public education should become the New Mexico State ESSA Plan so systems and dollars may be aligned for legal compliance.

Baseline Services Necessary to Support the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*

Determining what qualities, characteristics and skills are expected of a New Mexico graduate will require a new definition of what it means to provide sufficient services and resources to prepare New Mexico students. The *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* should be used to identify the services and opportunities students have a right to receive during their time in our public schools.

The Education Vision Taskforce, using the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, should articulate the baseline services students are entitled to receive so they have an equitable opportunity to actualize the profile in their own lives. These services must recognize both in-school and out-of-school challenges and may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing for basic human needs like food, shelter and safety.
- Support for sound mental, behavioral and emotional health.
- Support to improve and maintain physical health.
- The ability to read and comprehend written material.
- The ability to write in both technical and creative ways as a form of communication and understanding.
- The ability to understand mathematics necessary to perform career duties and further their knowledge base in higher education.
- The ability to understand the world around them as related to society, media, politics, etc.
- Resiliency and critical thinking skills to solve real world and personal challenges.
- Civic engagement and the role the student plays in their collective community.
- Personal identity rooted in their cultures, ethnic backgrounds and community values.



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- Knowledge necessary to be technologically literate.
- The skills necessary for a job or career in local and national industries.
- The skills necessary to successfully enter a higher education institution and complete course work without remediation.
- Demonstrating applied knowledge so the education they receive is relevant to their future.

Once baseline services and expectations of education are articulated, there must be a comprehensive cost and human capital analysis completed to correctly identify the resources and personnel necessary to deliver a basic education.

- This cost analysis must include sustainable funding sources so services are not reduced in times of budget shortfalls.
- Public schools may not be the appropriate agency to administer all baseline services, and if not, there must be a comprehensive conversation about social services and supports and how social services may coordinate with schools to serve children in New Mexico. Baseline services should include a strategic plan about different service delivery models used by school like out-of-school service, in-school service and community schools.
- Baseline services must also drive a conversation of valuable programs and the choice to fund programs universally or use a framework program review and approval to generate dollars from the funding formula.
- Baseline services must also consider opening the doors costs to school districts – with considerations made to “emergency supplemental” funds used to open the doors.

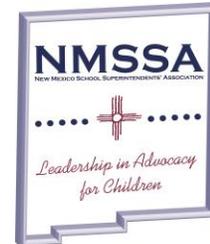
Issues of equity must drive additional services that must be granted to students, so our most at-risk students have equitable opportunities. Discussions of equity must involve students classified as “at-risk” particularly in response to the *Yazzie & Martinez v. State of New Mexico* lawsuit.

Policy Recommendations

A Sufficient Funding Formula: Articulation of baseline services necessary to create opportunities to fulfil the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* should become the working definition of “sufficiency” for public school funding. These services should be guaranteed to every New Mexican student. These services are the commitment New Mexico ought to make to its children.

In 2008, the A.I.R. study of the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) determined that the funding formula no longer reflected reality in the cost of public education. Recommendations from the A.I.R. study were not adopted in a comprehensive package, and therefore, it stands to reason that the funding formula continues to not reflect the real cost of public education. For example, fourth graders generate a multiplier of 1.0, or one unit, for basic services to a fourth grader. \$4,159.23 does not pay the bills of basic services necessary to educate a fourth-grade student.

Adopting baseline services as the definition of sufficiency necessitates a comprehensive cost-analysis to calculate the investments and monetary resources needed to provide these services. To ensure appropriate funding reaches schools for the delivery of services, the SEG must be reviewed and renewed so it reflects the reality of new associated costs of service.



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Specific recommendations of immediate improvements for a more stable and sufficient funding that can be made prior to a review of the funding formula can be found in the “Stable, Sufficient Funding” section of these recommendations.

Stable, Sufficient Funding

The state must accept its responsibility to appropriately, sufficiently and sustainably fund the public school system. New Mexico relies on funding streams that are reactive to oil markets and create peaks and valleys in funding cycles for all state supported programs. We must work together to create the most stable financial sources possible for our students. The state has made significant improvements in planning for economic crisis through the creation of the Tax Revenue Stabilization Fund as introduced in the 2017 Special Session. More work must be done. The state must allocate, and invest, dedicated dollars to be used specifically for education in the times of economic crisis as to ensure, to the best of its ability, that education can be held harmless for budget cuts.

Recognition of size variations of school districts requires that funding services and opportunities be met with guaranteed, minimum funding to provide these services. A required minimum appropriation to ensure small districts can provide meaningful services and comply with statutory mandates must be considered in all recommendations discussed in this platform.

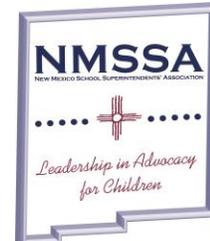
Program Review and Approval Framework

Funding must be reliable year to year and provided to districts on a formula basis. Special appropriations to the Public Education Department (PED) that are then granted to school districts and charter schools on a competitive basis are no longer an appropriate way to fund research-based, best practice programs. Special appropriations to the PED should only be used to pilot programs for an agreed upon, limited amount of time, and offered to districts in an equitable, objective fashion. Once the pilot is completed, if there is common agreement that the program is a best practice, that program must be funded using a formula framework. For example, reading coaches are a research-based, best practice for schools with low reading proficiency rates. The Reads to Lead pilot proved that. It is time for reading coaches to be funded through the SEG on a program approval basis.

The state should provide the opportunity for local school districts to opt in to a variety of programs that support students. The model for funding should be based on the program review and approval processes used for bilingual programs, elementary P.E. and fine arts, and, formerly, special education funds. These programs would be considered in addition to the baseline services every child has a right to receive as part of their public education. Districts wishing to administer these programs should be required to submit a program plan to the Public Education Department (PED) for review and approval. Upon approval from the PED, districts would generate units for the specific program as part of its overall SEG distribution. Districts would have the discretion to use those dollars as it deemed necessary to implement programs in response to local community needs.

Funding the At-Risk Index and Ancillary Service Providers

In addition to reliable, stable programs districts may opt into to provide equitable education services, superintendents support increasing at-risk funding through the SEG. These dollars should be directed



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toward services specifically meant for at-risk students and there should be more in-depth conversations about those dollars and the services provided during the budget review conducted by the PED.

It is no longer appropriate to isolate ancillary service providers, such as social workers and school psychologists, to special education students. All students in New Mexico need access to professional mental health workers and social workers to assist students and families in out-of-school challenges. Thinking creatively about ancillary service provider funding formula and the Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs) can help address funding challenges to providing these services immediately.

Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs)

RECs are an existing structure in New Mexico that assist districts in the delivery of educational services in an economically efficient way. The RECs should be leveraged to provide more services to districts throughout the state. The RECs must be adequately supported so they can hire the staff necessary to assist schools to implement the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*.

Technology Infrastructure

Every aspect of modern day schools requires functional, robust technological systems to deliver classroom instruction and run the day-to-day operations of a school. New Mexico must continue to expand broadband access across the state, so every student may have access to the internet both at home and at school. Also, the state must invest in 21st Century instruction delivery systems through up-to-date hardware and software in our schools.

Unfunded Mandates

Schools can provide numerous examples of unfunded mandates. Cost analysis should be completed with every official decision made that impacts the operations of schools. These official decisions are often amended or new statutes, regulations or guidance memos. Once a cost analysis is completed for proposed changes or new official decisions, appropriate funding must be provided for compliance with the decision.

Reimbursement Funding

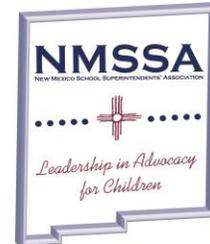
Large federal program budgets, like special education, currently operate on a reimbursement level. The PED reimburses districts after costs are incurred and the PED can change rules for expenditures after the expenditures have already been made. This creates a moving target for school districts and risks full reimbursement levels.

School Expansion

A robust conversation should take place to identify the cost of school expansion, particularly expansion of charter schools. Appropriate mechanisms should be in the (SEG) to fund expansion of schools so that the expansion does not negatively impact sufficient funding of traditional school districts and schools.

Policy Recommendations

Rainy Day or Revenue Stabilization Fund for Education: Establish, fund and invest in a dedicated “rainy day” or revenue stabilization fund for public education which could be used to stabilize education appropriations in times of economic crisis.



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Approval and Review for Voluntary Program Funding: The public school budget should focus on stable, formula funded, non-competitive ways to fund programs that are research based and proven best practice. The model for funding should be based on the program review and approval processes used for bilingual programs, elementary P.E. and fine arts, and, formerly, special education funds. Programs that should be immediately considered for program review and approved formula funding include:

- Pre-K;
- K-3/K-5 PLUS;
- Reads to Lead;
- Principals Pursuing Excellence;
- Teachers Pursuing Excellence; and
- Truancy/Attendance Coaches.

At-Risk Funding: Phase in, over several years, an increase to the At-Risk multiplier that matches national averages. Significant funding should be directed toward at-risk students to satisfy concerns outlined in the *Yazzie & Martinez v. State of New Mexico*. Additional considerations should be made to calculate the At-Risk Index using a three-year average of Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) eligible students rather than the Title I census to provide more timely and accurate numbers of students who live in poverty. The At-Risk Index would continue to also calculate English Language Learners and mobility for the other two components of the At-Risk Index.

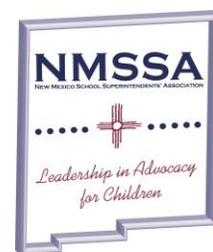
Ancillary Service Providers: Every school must have access to professional mental health services. Every school must have access to social workers to support struggling families and ensure alignment of social services. Work of mental health providers and social workers cannot be isolated to students with disabilities. We must provide all students with access to these professionals.

Regional Education Cooperatives: Fully fund the ten RECs by providing a substantially larger operating budget. Create a plan to transform the RECs into Regional Education Service Centers, so they may collaborate with districts and the Public Education Department to provide support necessary to fulfill the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*.

Technology Infrastructure: Continue support of broadband access initiatives, particularly those in rural areas of the state. Continue investments through PSCOC to address school broadband deficiencies. Explore avenues to fund technologically appropriate materials in classrooms.

Unfunded Mandates: Ongoing, codified advisory by practitioners to the Secretary of Education may assist in understanding unfunded mandates and how they impact the daily budgeting process of school districts. Additional duties of this advisory committee can be found in the "Ongoing Consultation from Education Practitioners" section of these recommendations. Examples of current unfunded mandates that require immediate consideration and appropriate funding include:

- Transportation;
- Special Education;
- Instructional materials;
- Requirements of the New Mexico State Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan;



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- Development and implementation of school safety plans;
- Teacher Cost Index; and
- Teacher salary increases.

Introduce legislation that would prohibit laws or regulations from being enacted and enforced until funding is appropriated by the State.

Reimbursement Fund: Create a mechanism through which the State of New Mexico could ensure districts receive reimbursement for federal programs while awaiting federal reimbursements. Incentivize efficient and timely reimbursements for federal program expenditures.

Develop, Recruit and Retain Human Capital

Public schools, unequivocally, rise and fall on the expertise, collective buy in and support of its personnel. School leaders, teachers, instructional support staff, and other individuals who work in school buildings must be supported, trained and treated as professionals. A significant majority of public school budgets are invested in personnel, and those individuals must be adequately prepared to walk through public school doors and deliver world-class instruction. Strong school staffs are the way we actualize the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*.

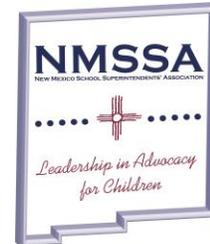
New Mexico's reality is that teachers and school leaders willing to work in the public education system are in short supply. As a system, we have consistently neglected opportunities to train and prepare staffs to deliver instruction in the way communities demand. We must treat highly qualified teaching professionals with the trust they deserve and empower them in their classrooms. School staffs must be paid a professional, regionally competitive salary. New Mexico must do more to recruit and retain school staffs.

Base and Incentive Pay

The number one way we can attract teachers to the profession is by increasing base pay so it is regionally competitive. Above and beyond a base pay increase, there should be thoughtful discussion about incentive pay for obtaining specific teacher endorsements and for teaching in schools with large at-risk student populations, teaching hard to fill subject areas and teaching in rural areas. Local districts and schools should be given maximum flexibility in establishing salary schedules and stipend pay. Local districts should supported in their decisions to can pay teachers more than minimum salaries based on the classes those teachers teach and the qualifications they bring to the table.

Any increases in teacher base pay and incentive pay must be made with appropriate and proportional increases to school principal base pay. Strong instructional leaders are critical to the overall success of a school. Just as alarming as the shortage of qualified and willing teachers is the shortage of qualified and willing school principals.

Any increases in teacher and principal base pay must be met with proportional increases in pay for all school support staffs.



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Professional Development and Collaboration Time

As important as additional instructional time is additional professional development and collaboration time for teachers. Additional contract days, with appropriate pay increases for the additional work, should be incentivized in all districts and embedded throughout the school year. Local districts should make decisions regarding when specific professional development days would occur so long as it was approved as part of their school calendar.

Additional professional development and collaboration time contributes to a high-quality teaching workforce that is able to meet the demands of its student populations. The state should invest in instructional coaches who work in real-time to problem solve with and empower teachers when delivering instruction.

Licensure

A comprehensive review of the NM licensure system should take place. Tier I licenses are inappropriate for highly qualified, non-traditional or second career teachers. Alternative licenses have mixed results in terms of successful teachers. Career and technical education and hard to fill teaching vacancies must have highly qualified teachers but may need additional flexibility for licensing requirements. More and more teachers are voicing the desire to advancement through the licensure levels using multiple pathways, not just the dossier. Renewal of licenses, terms of licenses, and penalties for licensure expiration must all be examined so we can maximize employment and salary opportunities of teachers.

Immediately reviewing the licensure system is of greater importance due to changes made in the 2018 Legislative Session to amend the Teaching and Experience Index into the Teacher Cost Index. Schools largely generate dollars based on license level. Ensuring a teacher has an appropriate license based on her qualifications streamlines salary schedules at the local level with revenue from the state.

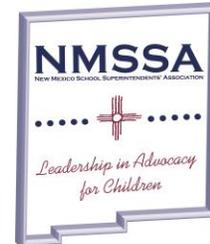
Teacher Induction and Mentorship

Research proves that new teachers who do not receive support from a well-trained, highly qualified mentor teacher in the first two years of teaching tend to leave the profession at higher rates and struggle to deliver instruction to the best of their ability. New Mexico has consistently underprioritized mentorship of new teachers.

Additionally, states across the country have tackled teacher shortages and mentorship challenges in creative ways. Residency programs for meaningful teacher induction are a research based, best practice for teacher preparation. Some states, like Alaska, have deliberately created pathways for non-traditional teachers to enter the field through apprenticeships. These state's use the Journeyman model to provide on the job training to new, non-traditional teacher candidates to provide the skills necessary for a teacher to succeed. New Mexico should explore every tool in its toolbox to recruit teachers. Creative alternative pathways are one strategy to fill the immediate need of teachers in hard to fill areas like career and technical education, science and mathematics.

Tuition Reimbursements, Stipends and Loan Forgiveness Programs

As modeled by other industries facing personnel shortages, the state could implement robust tuition reimbursement programs and stipends during a student's time in a teacher preparation program. The



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state must embrace loan forgiveness for students dedicating a number of years of teaching in New Mexico.

These programs must be implemented as a strategy to grow the early education workforce. This workforce will be the greatest need in coming years as policymakers seem more likely to answer urgent demands to expand preschool.

Policy Recommendations

Base Pay: Increase minimum salaries for Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 licensed teachers to \$45,000, \$55,000 and \$65,000 respectively. Incentivize and recognize movement to school leadership positions by increasing minimum salaries for elementary, middle and high school principals to \$80,000, \$85,000 and \$95,000 respectively. Minimum salaries should be based upon statewide minimum contract hours.

Increases to minimum salaries of teachers and principals must be paired with proportional increases to all school support staff, including, but not limited to, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, nurses, counselors and other administrative staff. Salaries should also proportionately increase in district administrative offices.

Base pay should consistently cover cost of living increases to appropriately fund increased benefits costs.

Formula Funded Incentive Pay: The state should determine how it could formula fund incentive pay for obtaining specific teacher endorsements and for teaching in schools with large at-risk student populations, teaching hard to fill subject areas, and teaching in rural areas.

Ongoing Professional Development: Superintendents support, as a condition of increased minimum salaries of school staffs, ten additional contract days to that would embed professional development and collaboration time throughout the school year.

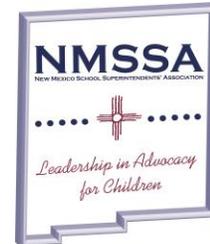
Instructional coaches provide immediate feedback and support to teachers when they struggle in our classrooms. Significant investments in instructional coaches would provide a tactical support team committed to continuous improvement and professional growth of our teachers within the walls of our school buildings.

Ongoing professional development must include dedicated collaboration time between teachers.

Licensure Review Workgroup: Codify the need for a licensure review workgroup, made up of current practitioners, to review licensure requirements and advancement. Aligning licensure requirements and advancement must be done considering recent implementation of the Teacher Cost Index.

Alternative licensure pathways, including apprenticeship pathways, should be considered for hard to fill subject areas.

Teacher Induction and Mentorship Programs: The state must adopt robust residency and mentorship programs for teachers when they first enter the workforce and fully fund those programs.



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Tuition Reimbursement, Stipends and Loan Forgiveness: Fully fund the teacher loan forgiveness program in New Mexico. Work with institutions of higher education for tuition structures that alleviate financial costs of students entering teacher preparation programs.

Implementing Equitable Delivery Systems and Progress Monitoring

Once we define our common vision, and the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, schools must be held accountable to that common vision. A statewide planning tool must be provided to assist districts in providing local context to goals. This planning tool should allow local districts to engage their local communities, institutions of higher education and business leaders to provide local context to the statewide profile. The programs that each district chooses to reach these goals will be different, and the specific skill set demand may be different in many communities – we celebrate that diversity. The delivery systems should not be the same throughout the state in providing services to our students, but the baseline education must be guaranteed to every child, equitable opportunities must be available and graduates must be able to apply their knowledge on an ongoing basis. Statewide planning tools and accountability systems should be used to ensure schools are making appropriate decisions and implementing appropriate programs so schools may continue to make progress toward the *New Mexico Profile of a Graduate*. These systems must be a continuous improvement framework to address challenges when they arise.

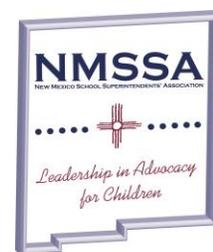
Application of Knowledge for College and Career Readiness

The goal of public education is to actualize a student's potential and equip the student with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their next stage of life. After a common vision is established and there is a common understanding of the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, high school graduation credit and competency requirements will need to be reviewed and possibly altered. There is most interest in determining competency through knowledge application projects, apprenticeships and portfolios of work. Customizing credit opportunities based on student interests is a goal, though one we far from reaching.

Most important is that our students can apply their knowledge to real life scenarios, so education is relevant to them and our communities. This application of knowledge must be shown throughout all grades of school. All methods a student uses to prove they are competent to graduate must be of equal value and rigor, eliminating the system of primary and alternative pathways to competency. All students, regardless of the choice they make after graduation, need high skills so they have options later in life.

There must be a renewed focus on meaningful career and technical education (CTE) opportunities for students. Embracing CTE programs requires collaboration between schools and industry leaders so expectations of graduates are clearly articulated. CTE programs require a new investment in facilities, and flexibility in licensure requirements so districts have the ability to set salary schedules to attract CTE teachers.

Meaningful CTE programs are a way to reengage students, teach them resiliency and keep them in school. We must prove to our students why they should stay in school when they are presented with



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the option of taking an entry level industry job at the age of eighteen. Relevant educational programs that lead to a career path is one way we can set them on a trajectory to success.

Technological advancements in our society demand that schools prepare students to be technologically literate in an ever changing technological landscape. Basic human experiences require that students understand the technological world around them and schools play a key part in developing responsible citizens who understand this technology. Our schools must be supported in this venture.

Early Childhood

For stable and predictable funding year to year, four-year-old preschool programs must be funded through the SEG. Initially, implementation of preschool programs should continue to be on a voluntary basis by school districts. The model for funding should be based on program review and approval processes. Districts wishing to administer preschool programs should be required to submit a program plan to the PED for review and approval. Upon approval from the PED, districts would generate units for preschool students as part of its overall SEG distribution. Districts would have the discretion to use those dollars as it deemed necessary to implement a preschool program in response to local community needs. This flexibility to districts would necessitate the ability for a district to enter into contracts with private providers for preschool programs if it did not have the capacity to run the program itself. Those contracts should be subject to approval by the PED for funding from the SEG.

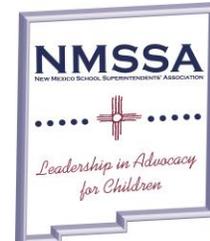
For successful, comprehensive early childhood programs, the state must embark on aligning early education systems and braiding different funding systems for adequate delivery. Braiding funding systems allows the state to maximize federal dollars through head start, child find in IDEA, and other federal subsidies to capture the greatest number of students possible.

A wise investment in early childhood programs does not end with dollars in the SEG. Access to preschool requires an increased investment in transportation funds. Increased ridership on buses due to increased attendance in public preschools must be appropriately awarded and tracked in the transportation funding formula and additional appropriations must meet increased costs of that ridership. Rural districts and districts with large areas of tribal land may need to rely on satellite campuses to avoid preschool children from riding on buses for extended periods of time.

Additionally, expansion of early childhood programs places new demands on facilities. Adequacy standards established by the Public School Capital Outlay Council are insufficient to timely fund facilities to expand programs. Preschool expansion demands special set-aside funds dedicated directly to preschool classrooms. These investments would need to outpace prior investments in preschool facilities in a significant way.

As funding becomes reliable and transportation and facilities challenges are solved, more and more four-year-old students should be able to take advantage of public preschool.

Currently, there is an inadequate number of teachers available to teach expanding preschool programs. There must be structures put in place, and appropriately funded, to provide tuition reimbursements and stipends for individuals pursuing an early childhood endorsement or degree.



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Alternative pathways to licensure must also be discussed to allow the current privately-operated early childhood workforce to maintain their positions in a growing public school environment. Policy makers must also consider educational assistants and their credentialing requirements for preschool programs.

Expansion of four-year-old programs must be matched and align with growing access to three-year old programs and infant and toddler care in communities.

Additional Learning Time

Discussing extended learning time in the context of the K-3 PLUS program is too narrow. K-3 PLUS provides twenty-five additional school days to students in kindergarten through third grade at schools that qualify based on their academic performance and at-risk student population.

Providing additional school time to at-risk students is an issue of equity, and a practice schools must continue. However, schools must provide additional learning time to all students in New Mexico if we are to gain ground in national performance and to jumpstart our economic opportunities.

Funding and the local option to extend the school year must be provided through the SEG. Increasing the number of minimum hours of instruction would increase school time but the state must continue to provide flexibility to school districts so it may choose its individual school day and school year calendar. Additional school days is a serious consideration for at-risk students. Should local districts determine additional days are necessary to provide equitable opportunity for at-risk students, particularly those in elementary school, it should have an opportunity to apply for additional SEG distributions to fund those days on using a program review and approval framework. Upon approval of additional school days, attendance to school must be mandatory for all students attending that school under the compulsory school attendance law.

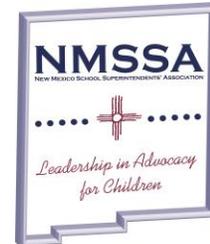
Proportional increases to the transportation fund are necessary transport students for additional school days.

Policy Recommendations

Require Districts to Contextualize the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* to Its Local Community: The state should develop a planning tool that would assist districts in creating local profiles of a graduate rooted in the common vision. The state must then require every district to articulate the local decisions it has made to reach the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, including goals and action plans for a five-year period. This planning tool, and an accompanying accountability system, should be used to ensure schools are making appropriate progress toward local and state goals and that the district implements its plan with fidelity. This planning tool must become a critical component to budget and program reviews conducted by the Public Education Department.

These systems must use a continuous improvement framework to address challenges when they arise or when inadequate progress is being made.

Graduation Requirements: Credit requirements for high school graduation must be reviewed and amended using the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*. Increased flexibility of courses that may count toward core credit, so long as the standards are taught, should be allowed for student customized learning plans.



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Maintaining the requirement for four years of math, but amending the mandate of Algebra II as a requirement for graduation, provides schools the flexibility they need to provide relevant math courses to high school seniors based on the student's Next Step Plan.

Primary versus alternative pathways to prove competency must be eliminated. Balancing rigor of the diploma with customized learning opportunities create the need for just pathways to a diploma. All pathways and ways of learning are of equal value and all have high expectations.

Career and Technical Education: Fully invest in career and technical education programs, apprenticeship opportunities and internships for students. Codify and institutionalize collaboration between schools and employers. Continue collaboration between the Public Education Department and Workforce Solutions.

Require collaboration between industry leaders and school districts as part of the local profile of a graduate.

Consider tax incentives for businesses that provide internships and apprenticeships for students.

Technologically Literate Students: Recognize and fund programs, curriculum, instructional materials, staff training and delivery systems that ensure students are technologically literate so they may leverage the transformational power of technology.

Early Childhood Education: Formula fund four-year-old preschool programs through the SEG using a program review and approval framework. Provide additional funding for access to four-year-old program slots over five years. Allow school districts to contract with private providers to implement preschool programs. Allow school districts to serve preschool students through satellite campuses when appropriate. Braid federal and local dollars available for preschool to maximize delivery systems.

Match any increases in the SEG for four-year-old programs with proportional increases in funding for three-year-old programs using the current PED/CYFD model.

Fully fund facilities requirements for growing preschool programs.

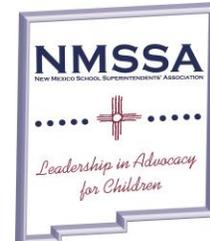
Fully fund human capital development for early childhood programs as discussed in the "Developing, Recruiting and Retaining Human Capital" section of these recommendations.

Fully fund transportation needs to transport three- and four-year-olds to publicly funded preschool programs.

Extended Learning Time: Allow a local option to increase the minimum number of instructional hours and appropriately fund that local option for additional hours through the SEG. Allow maximum flexibility to school districts to establish a school calendar and school day that is responsive to local community needs and values.

Ongoing Consultation from Education Practitioners

Completing the work of a *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* is pointless if the vision, mission and goals are not contextualized in the day-to-day work of practitioners and policy makers. To ensure the



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statewide vision is meaningful and operationalized, there must be ongoing communication between schools and the Public Education Department. Schools cannot be expected to implement a common vision if rules and regulations are established counter to that common vision.

The Secretary of Education should be required, by law, to convene an advisory council, consisting of representatives of an appropriate cross-section all schools in the state, to ensure collaboration on official plans and actions that would affect the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*, education policy decisions, operations of local schools and public school budgets. This council must be led by practitioners and have the authority to review rules prior to adoption, provide ongoing feedback about best practices from the field, and ensure there are aligned visions between schools, the executive and the legislature.

If effectively utilized, the advisory council would collect information and provide feedback on each of the pillars of these policy recommendations to ensure decisions are made to achieve the goals of the *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate*.

Policy Recommendations

Education Practitioner Advisory Council: Pass legislation creating and granting authority to the Education Practitioner Advisory Council. The advisory council should be appointed by the Executive and the Legislature – an even balance of the two branches of government. Advisory members would include current practitioners of the following groups:

- Superintendents;
- Principals;
- Other Educational Leaders;
- Charter School Leaders;
- School Board Members;
- Tribal Education Leaders;
- Teacher;
- Parents; and
- Students.

The advisory council should have the authority to:

- Ensure alignment to and continued improvement of the Common Vision and *Profile of a New Mexico Graduate* including next steps once the profile is created;
- Review new or amended rules prior to being published in the New Mexico Register; and
- Request cost analysis on any official decisions and rule changes made by the PED.