



TRANSFORM
EDUCATION
NM

Transform Education NM Priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session

New Mexico must address long-standing inequities and insufficient resources in our education system, as ordered by the Yazzie/Martinez court ruling. The state must make critical investments to implement a comprehensive and transformative plan for New Mexico's public school system that provides a multicultural and multilingual framework for education, and the programs, services and resources necessary to ensure equity for Native Americans, English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students.

Provide a Multicultural and Multilingual Education: At the core of a sufficient and equitable education system is multicultural and multilingual learning that embraces the cultures, languages, and heritages of our students. Three quarters of our students are Hispanic or Native American and over 1/3 speak a language other than English at home - strengths that should be invested in. Existing state laws provide standards for educating our children that is culturally and linguistically relevant (CLR) to meet their needs - statutes that should be fully implemented.

New Mexico must develop, implement, and fund a multicultural and multilingual framework to: 1) Strengthen PED capacity and aligns the Hispanic Education Act, Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, and Indian Education Act, to address the unique cultural and linguistic assets of students; 2) Ensure CLR curriculum and instructional materials, including a biliteracy framework for reading; 3) Increase funding for bilingual programs and language programs; and 4) Develop a diverse and well-prepared teacher workforce, including professional development in culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.





Build Teacher Capacity and Workforce for NM's Diverse Students: An education system that sufficiently meets the educational needs of students requires a robust and well-trained teacher workforce. In 2020, there were 571 teacher vacancies and 318 educator positions (instructional support/ancillary providers and other staff) that remained unfilled. Recruitment and retention of teachers in rural and tribal areas, teachers in special education, science, English as a Second Language (TESOL) and bilingual education is a challenge.

New Mexico must invest resources to develop a high quality and fully staffed educator workforce of indigenous teachers, bilingual education, special education and early childhood education, including: 1) Increase funding for all educators to receive appropriate training and professional development to provide individualized and appropriate education for students with disabilities and English language learners; 2) Revamp and expand teacher professional development and training to ensure teachers are well-prepared for the classroom; and 3) Develop a comprehensive teacher pipeline plan to address dire teacher shortages and increase the number of bilingual or Teach TESOL endorsed teachers.

Support Native American Student Funding and Community-Based Education:

The State is required to provide a constitutionally sufficient education to Native American students by complying with the New Mexico Indian Education Act (IEA). Native American students comprise 10% of NM's student population.

The State must support Native American students' success by allocating sufficient and sustained funding for full implementation of the IEA, including: 1) Increase tribal education sovereignty by making tribal education departments (TED) eligible for recurring SEG funding and creating a pipeline for Native professionals by partnering with Native higher education institutions; 2) Establish Native technical assistance centers to support TEDs, LEAs, and schools; 3) Fund tribal libraries or community education centers to provide summer and after school, extended learning, technology access and career and support services; 3) Support community-based student support services and early education programs; 4) Provide permanent funding for community-based Native language programs and indigenous curriculum development centers; and 5) Invest in a pipeline for Native teachers, staff, and educational leaders, ensure pay equity for Native language teachers, and develop and implement trauma informed practices and indigenous justice models to keep Native students in school.

Support Special Education: School districts do not have the necessary resources to provide students with disabilities with a sufficient education and the State lacks adequate accountability measures and adequate expertise to ensure students receive the education to which they are entitled. The State must: 1) Expand overall funding for special education services; 2) Build PED capacity for special education including to ensure adequate guidance is given to districts, students receive timely evaluations, teacher and administrators are well-trained, and families have access to transition services and parental supports; and 3) Increase workforce of special education professionals to meet the needs of all students in New Mexico who require special education and related services.

Expand Health & Social Services and Community Schools: High-performing schools have strong non-academic supports, including counselors, social workers, nurses, and health clinics.

Although health and social services are necessary for students to do well in school, there is no dedicated funding stream for school districts to provide these support services to all children. To address this important need, the State must map social services assets and needs statewide, develop locally responsive solutions, and provide the funding necessary to ensure all students have access to these services as part of a basic, sufficient education system. The State should also provide sufficient funding to significantly expand the Community Schools model that effectively engages parents and the larger community as partners in education, coordinates resources, and ensures students' social, economic and health needs are met.

Expand Pre-K and Extended Learning (K-5 Plus): The efficacy of Pre-K has been recognized, but not all students have access to a quality, full-day program because it is inadequately funded. The State must provide sufficient funding to expand full-day Pre-K and early childhood programs for all four year-old children. The State should support efforts to re-vamp the K-5 Plus summer program to remove stringent requirements and ensure culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and enrichment activities.

Ensure Funding Sufficiency: The current appropriation for New Mexico's public education system is insufficient to support and sustain programs and services necessary to provide a sufficient education to students. The State must increase funding for school districts to have sufficient funding for educational expenses, teacher salaries, bilingual education, technology, transportation, instructional materials, and funding for at-risk students through the school funding formula.

Student Priorities in School Decision-Making: Students in our schools are directly impacted by decisions about the public schools, and must be deeply engaged in shaping priorities for the education system. Young people should be able to vote in school board elections and our state should adopt a Student Bill of Rights that lays a foundation for decision-making.



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