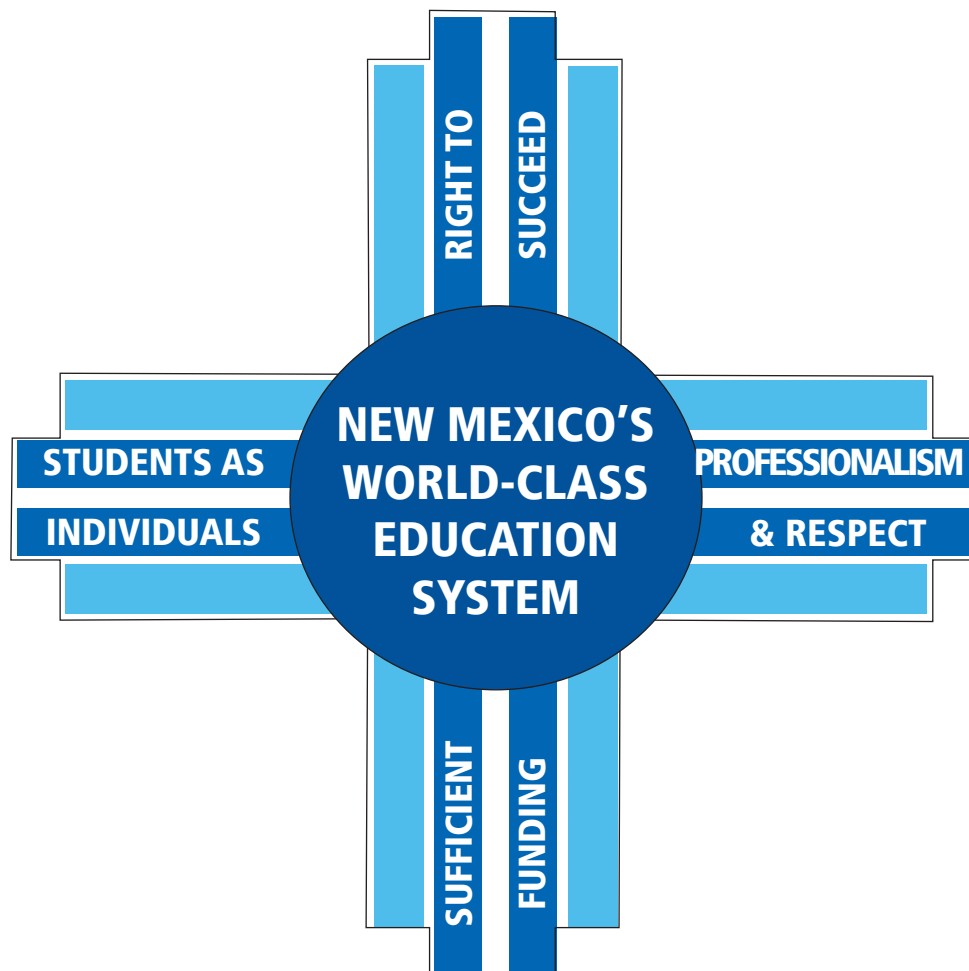




*A Union of Professionals*

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AFL • CIO  
**AFT New Mexico**



#### **FOUR PILLARS:**

Creating a World-Class Education System for New Mexico



## FOUR PILLARS:

### Creating a World-Class Education System for New Mexico

What does it mean to have a “world-class education system?” Decades ago, the United States was revered as an education leader among nations largely because of three factors: our focus on educating the whole child, our access to universal secondary education and our success in expanding higher education opportunities beyond the elite class.

Today, however, other countries are taking the lead. Education experts note that this is not because the U.S. education system has declined; rather, it is because our system has failed to evolve and respond to the challenges of our times.

Instead of asking how other nations have directed their resources to improve student outcomes, policy-makers in the US, including those in New Mexico, have focused on the common metric used to track outcomes – standardized and high-stakes testing. Policies aimed only at raising test scores without addressing the underlying issues of what students need to succeed are circular and are failing our students.

However, AFT New Mexico education advocates remain committed to a vision of a world-class education system that fosters democracy, recognizes the impact of poverty, advances society and promotes the rich cultural diversity of our state. We must sharpen our focus on a public school system that addresses poverty and truly leaves no child, family or community behind.

In a world-class education system, students learn how to:

- Work collaboratively;
- Think creatively;
- Incorporate higher-order thinking skills;
- Solve complex problems;
- Apply and analyze all forms of information, including current media and technology;
- Be skilled in listening and communicating across cultures; and
- Be aware of and able to evaluate the significance of world events and global dynamics.

If we are to understand what a world-class, globally competitive school system would look like, it is best to put aside many of the assumptions we now have about our current education system.

The recommendations of AFT New Mexico are crafted to move us closer to the policies and practices of internationally competitive

and successful countries. Top-performing countries in international comparisons (for example, Finland, Japan and Singapore) have developed strategies quite different from and opposite to strategies used in the United States. These successful countries have sought and accepted the advice of education experts, resisted the politicization of education policy; abandoned narrowly focused, test-driven reform, and created public school systems that engage students, educators and entire communities.

Commonalities among these countries include:

- Educational policies and funding that emphasize equality of opportunity—that is, an allocation of resources with an awareness of students who are most in need;
- A focused alignment and vision of competent, qualified and caring educators from early teacher preparation in college and graduate school through an ongoing career in education;
- Student assessment that allows flexibility for teachers to respond to individual student needs in an ongoing “formative” process between the teacher and student which emphasizes knowledge, not recitation, and is calibrated to measure student growth, not to rank teachers;
- Systems that balance centralization with decentralization;
- Trust in the professional experience of well-trained educators;
- Ongoing investment by society in the career-long professional development of teachers;
- Freedom of expression and voice among educators who are represented by employee organizations; all top-performing nations share the participation of strong teachers unions in educational environments that are free of anti-union rancor.

“Learning goes both ways. Other countries have learned a great deal from the United States, and now it is time for American educators to open their eyes to other nations’ globally-minded and future-focused practices, leverage existing assets, and create a truly world-class education system for this generation of students and generations to come.”

**VIVIEN STEWART**

A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION:  
LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL MODELS OF EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION



# 2014 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## A world-class education system stands on four pillars:

### Professionalism and Respect; Students as Individuals; the Right to Succeed; and, Sufficient Funding.

We must address each of these pillars to build the strong education system that will allow our students to achieve their potentials.

#### **Pillar 1: Professionalism and Respect**

- Strengthen the three-tiered career ladder to attract and retain highly qualified education professionals.
- Create a statewide evaluation system that gives districts flexibility, promotes collaboration within schools and gives teachers useful feedback for improving instruction. (See “Components of Effective Teacher Evaluation,” page 26.)
- Raise the bar for admittance into study programs for educators.
- Increase the base pay and create a career ladder for paraprofessionals and school-related service personnel.
- Fund and support mentoring programs.

#### **Pillar 2: Students as Individuals**

- Redirect time and resources spent on testing to student learning.
- Build upon the community school legislation passed in 2013 by funding coordinators to connect families with community agencies and social service providers.
- Fund school nurses and school counselors for all schools.
- Provide appropriate interventions at all grade levels.

- Expand the K-3 plus program to all schools in New Mexico.

#### **Pillar 3: The Right to Succeed: Birth Through Career**

- Provide funding to ensure affordable access to high-quality early childhood education.
- Increase access to vocational classes for high school students.
- Promote more time spent on instruction rather than classroom management by reducing class sizes to the limits already set in state statute.
- Fully fund the SEG formula to create a well-balanced curriculum.
- Improve access to affordable higher education opportunities. Safeguard the lottery scholarship by increasing state funding for higher education.
- Help create a student body that is ready to learn by opening up the lottery scholarship to students who take time between high school and college for work and family needs.

#### **Pillar 4: Sufficient Funds for Education**

- Restore funding for education back to pre-2008 levels.
- Fund statutory class-size mandates.
- Increase funding for instruction in higher education.



# FACTS: Professionalism and Respect

## Key for Success: A global perspective

In 2010, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the National Center on Education, and national and international leaders embarked on a comparative study to discover what makes education systems successful and what the U.S. can learn to improve outcomes for students. This study shows that a shared benchmark of high performing countries is that these countries have a high regard for educators as professionals and a culture of respect within their schools.

Teachers are trusted to approach curriculum with a great deal of autonomy; they also have opportunities for research, development and curriculum design. Professional wages are universal.



“I work in a living skills classroom. My students have low academic, language and social skills. Most have physical disabilities and are on medication. These wonderful children are not my biggest challenge. My **biggest challenge** is the **demonization of teachers** in our education system.

“Administrators, parents, government agencies and even our very own students seem bent on **blaming teachers** for the social and economic failure all around us. We teach anti-bullying in the classroom, but we cannot seem to **stop the bullying** the we suffer as teachers.”

**MAGGIE REEDER**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
VADO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
VADO, NM

## International examples

### Finland

In Finland, ranked high in science and reading according to international standards, it is an honor to be teacher. Educators are given a highly regarded status in society and teaching is considered Finland's most respected profession and sought after career. Such status is not happenstance. In the 1980s, Finland deliberately created policies to make education an appealing profession. Finland created high standards and rigorous studies for aspiring teachers. In the classroom, Finnish teachers have a great deal of autonomy. Pay is not high compared to other European countries but is comparable with other professions. Over 90 percent of Finnish educators remain in the profession for the duration of their working life.

### Canada

Ontario (Canada) places importance on culture, leadership, and shared purpose, rather than on accountability and incentives. Canada did experience a period of “teacher bashing.” Policy-makers found this detrimental to school performance and made a concerted effort to end that era. Collaboration, teamwork and school-based innovation have since been key to developing solutions to improve education outcomes for diverse student populations.

### South Korea, Singapore and Japan

In Japan, teachers are by law some of the highest paid civil servants. But pay is not what attracts people to the profession; rather it is the status of being an educator.

Similarly in South Korea, teachers are well-regarded as “nation builders.” Japan as well as South Korea and Singapore value mentorship for new teachers. In Japan, new teachers receive a full year of mentoring from an experienced teacher. That experienced teacher spends the whole year side by side with the new teacher.

#### Sources

- “Lessons from PISA for the United States” (2011), (<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/46623978.pdf>)
- Teacher and Principal Quality, Center on International Education Benchmarking, (<http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/finland-over-view/finland-teacher-and-principal-quality/>)
- Sam Dillon, U.S. is Urged to Raise Teacher Status, New York Times, March 16, 2011



## FIRST PILLAR Professionalism and Respect

A world-class education system centers on a core value of respect.

One thing that successful school systems around the globe have in common is that they have elevated the place of education in their societies and recognized the professional status of educators. These countries have kept educator pay competitive, provided mentoring for new educators and focused on improving student learning through collaboration between educational professionals.

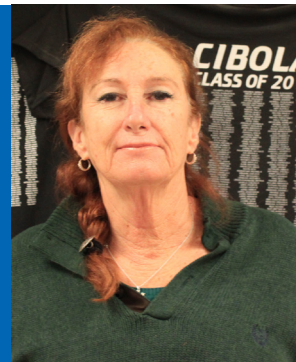
New Mexico educators feel they have lost a say in what happens in their classrooms. Educators and administrators who employ different strategies and models to their students, many of whom come from poverty and face adversity in their home life, clash with the ever increasing requirements of standardized testing and even "standardized classrooms."

### Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards hold the promise of allowing teachers and schools to design their own curriculum reflecting their students' academic, cultural and linguistic needs while maintaining common benchmarks. The promise has been undermined by denying teachers the time and resources to develop their programs while simultaneously increasing the stakes of standardized tests for students and teachers alike.

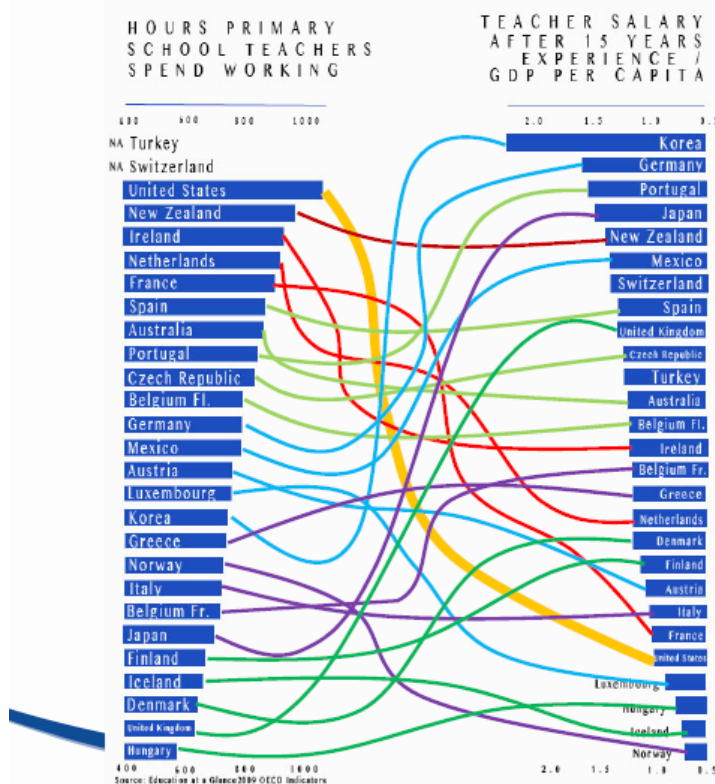
*A survey of educators administered in the fall of 2013 found that less than 25 percent of New Mexico educators felt they were adequately trained in the Common Core State Standards. Over 90 percent identified that there has not been enough training given by school districts or time for implementation.*

“Most teachers I know have second jobs because they cannot afford to provide food for their families and pay bills without another income coming in. It is a shame NM does not value its teachers enough to pay decent wages with regular pay hikes that beat inflation. We are losing 25% of our staff this year, basically because they are not paid enough and due to the stress over evaluations.”



**LINDA KELLY**  
ECONOMICS TEACHER, CIBOLA HIGH SCHOOL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

### WHO PAYS TEACHERS BEST FOR THEIR TIME?



# FACTS: The Real Story on Wages

Educational employees are not attracted to the profession for the money. Compared to fields requiring the same years of education, educators earn tens of thousands less than their counterparts in the private sector. That equates to hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars lost over a lifetime. The loss is made up for by the value of the work: making a difference in the lives of students. But, that does not mean that educators do not worry about paying their mortgages, putting food on their tables and saving for their futures.

Real wages for educators are on the decline. The final increase in the three-tier licensure system went into effect in 2007. Last year's 1% wage increase was offset by the subsequent increases to health insurance premiums. And, the minimum wage for educational assistants has been stagnant since 2004-2005.

## Poverty among school employees

Poverty in New Mexico is on the rise. In 2012, 29.3% of New Mexico children came from families living below the poverty line. Many of these children are the children of school employees. School employees such as cooks, security guards and educational assistants earn wages that put them well under the poverty line. In most school districts across New Mexico, the majority of educational assistants earn between \$14,000 and \$20,000 a year. Employees with enough college credit for a bachelor's degree may earn \$15,000 after several years of service and \$20,000 after decades.

## 2013 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Household size	100%	133%	150%	200%	300%	400%
1	\$11,490	\$15,282	\$17,235	\$22,980	\$34,470	\$45,960
2	\$15,510	\$20,628	\$23,265	\$31,020	\$46,530	\$62,040
3	\$19,530	\$25,975	\$29,295	\$39,060	\$58,590	\$78,120
4	\$23,550	\$31,322	\$35,325	\$47,100		

## Wages for certified staff lag behind

Many government programs recognize that families earning above the poverty line still struggle and raise the threshold for assistance to 200%. According to the Economic Policy Institute's Basic Family Budget Calculator, the cost of raising a family in Albuquerque, NM as a single parent with one child is \$33,256<sup>1</sup>, not including the annual cost of health care. For a two-parent family with two kids, the cost is \$43,729, not including the cost of health care.

New Mexico teachers earn around \$30,000 in their first several years of teaching and \$40,000 to \$50,000 after that. That means many teachers are not able to make ends meet on their wages. And, actual wages have fallen as wages have remained stagnant as the cost of benefits has increased.

After pension, retiree health care contributions and insurance premiums, a tier-II teacher can take home less than \$500 per week.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 2013 data used by EPI



## Professional growth and development

Opportunities for professional growth are key to a world-class education system. Our world is constantly evolving. Educators, including paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, should have opportunities to learn about new tools and new developments.

Mentorship is also a key part of professional development. Countries with high performing school systems put a high emphasis on mentorship for new teachers. Also, teacher evaluation plays a meaningful role in a professional environment. When done correctly, teacher evaluations offer professionals the opportunity for feedback and reflection on their work.

## Professional compensation

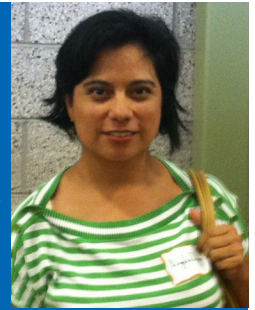
A professional environment requires fair compensation. We know that if we want to attract the best and brightest to the field of education, we must offer adequate salaries and a meaningful career ladder. In New Mexico, salaries and benefits for educators do not compete with the opportunities that potential educators could find in the education private sector or in other career fields.

New Mexico teacher pay still starts at \$30,000/year which, after benefit payments and taxes, can leave an educator with take home pay of roughly \$1,500 a month. Salaries have not increased in five years and few educators earn significantly more than \$45,000.

Classified staff in New Mexico earn far below a living wage. In fact, the majority of educational assistants and other classified employees who work in New Mexico schools earn well under the federal poverty line of \$19,530 for a family of three. Classified staff play a critical role in our educational system. They are an integral part of our special education system and contribute to the academic success and physical safety of every student.

On wages often of less than \$16,000 a year, many of these school employees collect food stamps and cannot afford the school system's health insurance plans. Their children are among the large percentage of New Mexico's young people who are impoverished.

“As an educational assistant in an elementary school classroom, I help educate and manage a large group of five-year-olds. I help them with one-on-one instruction in reading and math. I love my job, but the pay makes it very difficult to continue. After six years, I earn less than \$16,000 a year.”

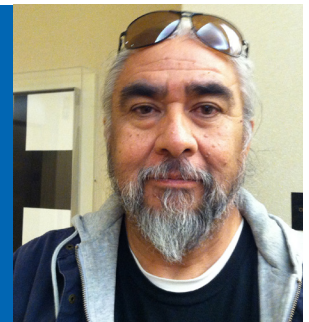


**ANGELICA RODRIGUEZ**  
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT  
SANTA TERESA ELEMENTARY  
GADSDEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

“I have been teaching for 13 years. I love my job! I bring home \$990 every two weeks. I lost my house this year because I could not afford the mortgage of \$826 as a single mother. I became a teacher because I wanted to help students and I will keep doing it as long as I possibility can but educators need to get some relief soon.”

**CYNDIE PATRICK**  
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER  
HODGIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

“I’ve been working with Santa Fe Public Schools for the last five years. It is discouraging that my 19-year-old daughter just started working part time and is making more than I am. I don’t even make enough to send my kids to college. Custodians take care of the schools.



We clean the classrooms, bathrooms, and hallways. We keep the schools safe, and sanitary. Our jobs can be dangerous at times, especially during the winter, because we are the ones who have to be at the schools before anyone else during and after a snow storm to shovel, scrape, and salt the sidewalks. The drive to the school during these times can be extremely hazardous! And not all of us have all-wheel drive vehicles! For all the things we do for the district, it’s down right appalling what we take home to our families. It’s so hard to make ends meet, and our families end up struggling”

**ANTHONY L. RETA**  
CUSTODIAN  
SANTA FE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

# FACTS: Merit pay is not the answer

Individual merit pay does not raise student achievement and actually undermines the collegial atmosphere necessary for a school team to work effectively. Merit pay systems, like any test-based accountability system, distort professional practices. Merit pay has been tried many times in the private and public sectors, and yet seldomly persists.

## ■ Merit Pay Doesn't Raise Student Achievement

- In a major study by the National Center on Performance Incentives and the RAND Corporation, an experimental pay for performance program in the Nashville Public Schools showed no significant difference between students whose teachers received merit pay and those who did not. Based on survey responses, more than 80 percent of teachers agreed that merit pay “has not affected my work, because I was already working as effectively as I could.”—*Mathew Springer, et al., Teacher Pay for Performance: Experimental Evidence from the Project on Incentives in Teaching (2010)*.
- Another study analyzed a “school-based randomized trial in over 200 New York City public schools” to assess the impact of teacher incentives on achievement. It found “no evidence that teacher incentives increase student performance, attendance, or graduation” or “any evidence that the incentives change student or teacher behavior.”—*Roland Fryer, Teacher Incentives and Student Achievement: Evidence from New York City Public Schools (2011)*, available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16850>.

## ■ Merit Pay May Undermine the Collegial Atmosphere Necessary for a School Team to Work Effectively

- This paper reviews research that notes that merit pay may not be compatible with “the inherent nature of the educational process.

Education involves multiple stakeholders, disparate and conflicting goals, complex and multi-task jobs, team production, uncertain inputs, and idiosyncratic elements contingent on the attributes of individual students, the efforts and attitudes of fellow teachers, and the classroom environments. The complexity of the process may tend to mitigate the student achievement effects of reforms based on individual incentive pay.”—*Randall Eberts et al., Teacher Performance Incentives and Student Outcomes. (Upjohn Institute, 2000)*.

## ■ Merit Pay Can Distort Professional Practices

- This review of the history of merit pay highlights examples of how performance compensation, as far back as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, has led to teaching to the test and other changes in instructional practice designed to garner short-term test gains, including diversion of resources in order to help those students closest to benchmarks.—*Wellford W. Wilms & Richard R. Chapleau, “The Illusion of Paying Teachers For Student Performance,” Education Week, November 3, 1999*.

## ■ Merit Pay Programs Have Not Sustained Themselves

- A major study of merit-based pay (Hatry, Greiner, and Ashford 1994) found that most (75%) merit-pay programs that had been in existence in 1983 and had been studied by the researchers were no longer operational in 1993.—*Hatry, Harry P., John M. Greiner, and Brenda G. Ashford, Issues and Case Studies in Teacher Incentive Plans (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 2009)*.

Most educators in New Mexico have not had a raise in take home pay since 2008. Cost for health care has risen while pay has remained stagnant, resulting in educators bringing home smaller paychecks every year. Many school employees have taken on second and third jobs. Others have quit or changed professions. All are demoralized.

Similarly, our higher education faculty and staff suffer from low wages. In an attempt to cut costs, many of our higher education institutions have increased the hiring of adjunct professors and all but ceased to create new tenured positions. This compromises the sustainability of New Mexico's higher education institutions.

**In a world-class educational system, all educational employees would be paid a living wage, have access to affordable health care and be able to count on a dignified retirement. In addition, a professional environment would encourage life-long learning, professional development and training, constructive feedback, and job advancement.**

“I have been teaching for 24 years. This year has been the most stressful year due to the many changes from the state department. I do not mind being evaluated multiple times, but the mystery of the value-added measure, the fact that principals are limited to scoring only what they see during a short evaluation, and the additional requirements have turned a process I used to enjoy into a very negative process.

**JENNIFER GUY**  
TEACHER, PINON ELEMENTARY  
LOS ALAMOS SCHOOL DISTRICT





# FACTS: The high cost of high-stakes testing

Tests in the United States can be categorized into several groups, including:

- Large-scale standardized tests, usually summative, mandated by states primarily for accountability purposes;
- Interim/benchmarking tests used by districts to improve performance on the standardized state-mandated tests; and
- A variety of locally determined tests, including summative, formative and diagnostic tests.

## What standardized tests are given in New Mexico?

- The **Standards Based Assessment (SBA)** is administered to students in grades 3-11. Students take this test for 2-3 weeks in the spring. All districts are required to give the SBA tests. This test fulfills the NLCB requirement for annual progress testing. It also is used in school grading and teacher evaluation.
- **Interim exams** are multiple choice tests given for three to four days a year. PED contracts with testing companies to provide these tests. These tests are not required by law except for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but many districts are using them in grades 3-8 to comply with the “other assessment” requirement in the PED’s teacher evaluation rule.
- The PED has developed 27 **End of Course (EOC)** exams. EOC exams must be given during a two week testing window at end of each semester. EOCs differ from final exams. They are based on general knowledge, not material taught by the instructor. EOCs also are used in teacher evaluation plans. Most are given at the high school level but some are given in the elementary and middle school grades and the PED continues to develop more tests.
- Additionally, the PSAT is required in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and many high school students take A.P. exams, SATs and ACTs.

Most New Mexico students in grades 3-11 will spend three to six weeks taking standardized tests, or 8% to 16% of their school year. That does not account for the additional weeks of class time spent preparing for standardized testing.

## The effects of high-stakes testing

Howard Nelson, “Testing More Teaching Less” (2013). A factual analysis of the time spent testing in two mid-sized urban school districts with similar requirements for standardized testing as New Mexico found that:

“...the time students spend taking tests ranged from 20 to 50 hours per year in heavily-tested grades. In addition, students can spend 60 to more than 110 hours per year in test prep in high-stakes testing grades. Including the cost of lost instructional time (at \$6.15 per hour, equivalent to the per-student cost of adding one hour to the school day), the estimated annual testing cost per pupil ranged from \$700 to more than \$1,000 per pupil in several grades that had the most testing. If testing were abandoned altogether, one school district in this study could add from 20 to 40 minutes of instruction to each school day for most grades. The other school district would be able to add almost an entire class period to the school day for grades 6-11.”



## SECOND PILLAR

### Students as Individuals

**A world-class education system recognizes that students are human beings and are not standardized. They are unique individuals who learn in different ways and have varied needs and abilities. A world-class education system provides the resources necessary for all students to reach their potential.**

Students are more than a test score.

In the rush to improve student outcomes, New Mexico policy-makers have focused on the metric (standardized test scores), not on the research which informs how students can best achieve. The theory that if enough pressure is applied schools and teachers will produce better results is erroneous. It is downright dangerous to the health and well-being of our children. It relies on two faulty premises – first, that teachers alone without increased support can increase test scores and second, that the test score is the all important indicator of student success. Educators, parents and our communities define success in a multitude of ways. There are challenged test-takers who grow to be extremely talented adults.

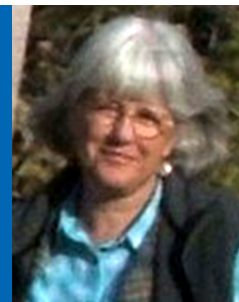
Educators are not opposed to assessing students. Educators frequently test students to see where a student is in their learning, how much progress they have made and where attention should be focused. However, high-stakes testing is a different matter. It means that students who do poorly on standardized tests have few, if any, opportunities for electives and a well-rounded education. It creates anxiety, which flows throughout the school from the administrators to the teachers, to the students.

“The universe of students I work with is primarily those who have difficulty with standardized tests. My work has always been **challenging** and **rewarding**. For years I have worked at showing my students that they are **unique**, that they have individual skills and **talents**, and that they can build on and **succeed**. I have spent years telling my students to think outside the box. Now I feel like I am forcing them **back in the box**.”



**PAMELA VEGA**  
TEACHER  
SOCORRO HIGH SCHOOL

“With high-stakes testing teachers are **stressed** and **overwhelmed** and cannot devote as much energy to **educating** kids. Paper and pencil tests are not a **complete picture** of student ability — and often those who do not ‘test well’ are left feeling **inferior** and **frustrated**, and **disenfranchised**.”



**SHIRLEY HODGE**  
SECOND GRADE TEACHER, TOBE TURPEN ELEMENTARY  
GALLUP, NM





# FACTS: Retention vs. Intervention

Intervention programs that are targeted to students at risk of failure are a more effective approach than retention. Retention can have long-term harmful effects and the decision to retain students should not be made without parental input.

## Grade Retention Retention's Long Term Effects Are Poor

- Shane R. Jimerson, et al., "Winning the battle and losing the war: Examining the relation between grade retention and dropping out of high school," **Psychology in the Schools** 39 (2002); 441, available at [http://www.education.ucsb.edu/jimerson/retention/PITS\\_DropoutRetention2002.pdf](http://www.education.ucsb.edu/jimerson/retention/PITS_DropoutRetention2002.pdf). A systematic review of seventeen studies examining dropping out of high school prior to graduation demonstrates that grade retention is one of the most powerful predictors of dropout status.
- Shane R. Jimerson, "Meta-analysis of Grade Retention Research: Implications for Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School," **Psychology Review** 30, (2001); 420-437. Previous reviews of the impact of retention had found, "Overall, the retained students had lower academic achievement, poorer personal adjustment, lower self-concept, and held school in less favor than promoted students." This study, updates the literature by reviewing 20 newer studies, finding results that similarly did not favor grade retention.

## Intervention Interventions That Help Children Are Necessary

- Jennifer Sloan McCombs, Sheila Nataraj Kirby, and Louis T. Mariano, **Ending Social Promotion Without Leaving Children Behind: The Case of New York City (RAND 2009)**. The review of literature in this study found that retention alone does not appear to have long-term academic benefits for students. But, programs that included interventions, such as summer school, have a more positive affect.
- William Mathis, **Review of Florida Formula for Student Achievement: Lessons for the Nation (June 2011)**, <http://nepc.colorado.edu/thinktank/review-florida-formula>. Places the Florida retention program in context of broader education policies. Retention was introduced at the same time as a number of other important reforms, including smaller classes, reading coaches and pre-literacy screenings. In addition, retained students received summer school, were given the opportunity to work one-on-one with experienced teachers and other interventions.
- Stephanie Rose and Karen Schimke, **Education Commission of the States Third Grade Literacy Policies: Identification, Intervention, Retention (2012)**. This study reviewed the retention and intervention efforts in Florida and New York. It recommends that states focus on adopting comprehensive intervention plans as these program, not retention, improve reading success. The study suggests that states can avoid the harms associated with mandatory retention by taking the initiative to fund and adopt intervention programs independent of a retention requirement.

### A holistic approach

K-12 education should focus on the needs of the whole child.

In New Mexico, more than 29 percent of children live in poverty. Proven research establishes that there is a direct correlation between students' family income level and their likely performance in the classroom.<sup>1</sup>

Communities, especially those in poverty, need and depend on their schools to provide nutritional meals, reliable transportation, quality after-school enrichment and connection to health care and social services. A world-class education system commits to making these services readily available to students.

### Multicultural and multilingual education

A world-class education system promotes and respects a student's own heritage and community. It teaches students to engage and learn from peers who come from different backgrounds. This is critically important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Multicultural and multilingual education should be promoted, not marginalized.

“Culturally relevant curriculum is not just an abstract concept. When our children see that curriculum doesn't reflect their daily lives, many lose interest. Our Native American children are dropping out at alarming rates. One way we can turn it around is to increase culturally relevant curriculum.”



**JENNY RODGERS**  
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST  
GALLUP, NM

### Student success through one-on-one support and proper interventions

Students who are struggling can overcome difficulties through additional interventions. These interventions should start well before third grade. Interventions should be available to students throughout primary and secondary school so that students can succeed.



# FACTS: Doing What Works— Community Schools

Community Schools are partnerships between educators and community allies — including community-based organizations, local governments, school districts, institutions of higher education, unions and others. They leverage community resources to achieve a mutually agreed upon set of results focused on student learning and development.

Too many students come to school with needs and risks that impede their ability to thrive academically such as, but not limited to; homelessness, truancy, hunger, violence, substance abuse, transience, unstructured time, and mental and physical health needs.

By supporting community schools, we can address the opportunity gap by focusing on factors that are beyond the control of teachers and schools yet have a direct effect on student outcomes. These factors include, but are not limited to: healthcare, social services, after school programs, and parental involvement.

Research by the Institution for Educational Leadership shows that Community Schools improve student achievement, improve attitudes toward learning and improve graduation rates.

Community schools are not a new concept. They have their roots in the earliest, richest traditions of public education and are now recognized nationally in 34 states through the Coalition of Community Schools.

New Mexico's community schools program is young and there are several fully functioning community schools throughout the state through the ABC Community Schools Partnership and the Elev8 program. Continuing this trend could have great benefits for New Mexico.







## THIRD PILLAR The Right to Succeed

**A world-class education system offers access to high-quality educational opportunities throughout every stage of life.**

AFT New Mexico envisions a system that provides: high-quality early childhood education; support and diverse opportunities in K-12 education; affordable higher education; and, access to lifelong learning. Support for this system is driven by the understanding that education sets the stage for a vital state economy, a tax paying workforce, social and family stability and a flourishing culture.

- **Early Childhood Education:**

Access to high-quality early education provides the foundation for children to succeed. Through early education, cognitive and social skills are instilled and the foundation for academic learning is constructed. There is a vast need for improving early education in New Mexico. Only approximately 25 percent of children in the state have access to early childhood education.

- **Rich Curriculum in K-12:**

A world-class education system acknowledges that students learn and express themselves differently. Students need to have the opportunity to engage in music, art and other creative activities. Physical education also plays a role in student learning, as physical well-being and teamwork are a crucial part of a student's education.

- **Small Class Sizes:**

Educational reformers like to point out that "teachers are the most important factor affecting student achievement." While that line has been largely criticized for its failure to acknowledge poverty and other factors that clearly affect student outcomes, it is true that the time a student spends with their teacher is important. New Mexico has laws that prohibit class sizes from exceeding unreasonable limits, yet the Legislature has passed waivers based on financial necessity that have contributed to the ever increasing number of students in classes.

“Class size matters. Before 2009, I had about 30 students per class, now my classes average around 36 and some have upwards of 40 students. My total load is up from 150 to 180 students. When classes get too large, students slip through the cracks, the dynamic of the classroom changes and students miss opportunities to participate and to ask questions.”



**SEAN THOMAS**  
TEACHER, ELDORADO HIGH SCHOOL  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

“In the Dulce School District we have seen a steady increase in class sizes over the past few years. I have also seen more pressure on our school system, less resources, and less time for teaching. We need to change course and put our children and the future of our state first.”

**BELVA EVERSGERD**  
TEACHER, DULCE MID-HIGH SCHOOL  
DULCE, NM

Kindergarten teachers report 22, 23 and even 30 children in their classrooms. The number of students per classroom in all grades has increased at a similar rate. It is not uncommon for high school classes to have 40 or more students per class. This trend must be reversed.

- **Vocational opportunities in K-12:**

A world-class education system does not only prepare students for college. It also prepares students for vocational careers. Vocational programs encourage students to stay in school and to learn career skills. Students should have access to high-quality instruction in vocational trades.

# FACTS: Class Size

## Maintaining reasonable class sizes is critical for student success

Class size reduction is associated with improved student achievement and other beneficial outcomes. When class sizes grow too large, an educator's focus often must shift from instruction to classroom management.

New Mexico has a strong statutory requirement for keeping class sizes to a reasonable level. Schools are generally allowed to have 20 students per kindergarten teacher; 22 students per teacher for first, second, and third grades; 24 students per teacher in fourth through sixth grade, and a daily teaching load of 160 students per teacher in seventh through twelfth grade.

However, since 2009 schools have been allowed to apply for a waiver to these requirements. Albuquerque Public Schools have operated under a 7% waiver, with student, parents and teachers reporting challenges with the large classes.<sup>1</sup> For the 2013-2014 school year, teachers have reported even greater increases. Individual elementary school teachers often report class loads of 23 to 30 students.

### Research finds Class Size Reduction is Associated With Improved Student Achievement

- U.S. Department of Education, Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported By Rigorous Evidence (2003), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/rigorousetid/index.html>. In this document, the U.S. Department of Education identified small classes in the elementary grades as among just four interventions it had found to be supported by rigorous evidence.
- Alan Krueger, Economic Considerations and Class Size (2002), available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w8875>. This study reanalyzed previous reviews of dozens of class size studies and found that when studies are given proper weight that there are consistent findings that class size reduction is associated with improved learning.
- Douglas Ready and Valerie Lee, Optimal Context Size in Elementary Schools: Disentangling the

Effects of Class Size and School Size (2007). Using data from the early childhood longitudinal study, the authors found both benefits to small classes and that large classes carry substantial disadvantages for students in early grades.

### Class Size Reduction has Benefits Beyond Test Scores

- Raj Chetty et al., How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence from Project Star (Sept. 2010), available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16381>. An analysis of the long-term outcomes of the Tennessee STAR class-size reduction experiment. It found that students who were in smaller classes in kindergarten were more likely to attend college, own homes and have retirement savings later in life.
- Harold Wenglinsky, When Money Matters (1997), available at <http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICWMM.pdf>. An analysis of NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade results that found that students in smaller classes did better, and that in particular the 8<sup>th</sup> grade results were driven by the relationship between smaller classes and improved student behavior and discipline.

### Class Size Reduction and Teacher Quality

- Christopher Jepsen and Steven Rivkin, "Class Size Reduction and Student Achievement: The Potential Tradeoff between Teacher Quality and Class Size," The Journal of Human Resources (2007). This study found that while California's statewide class size reduction program led to hiring of less qualified and experienced teachers, it still had positive effects on student achievement.
- Emily Pas Isenberg, Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau, The Effect of Class Size on Teacher Attrition: Evidence from Class Size Reduction Policies in New York State (2010). This analysis of class size reduction and teacher retention in New York State found that a reduction in class size from 23 to 20 was associated with a 4% increase in teacher retention.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abqjournal.com/153245/news/mixed-messages-sent-on-class-size.html>



# FACTS: Early Childhood Education

A major body of research finds that early education improves student learning outcomes and can lead to a large variety of other economic and social benefits. Investments in early learning are cost effective for the public given the fiscal and economic implications of their long-term effects.

- “Long-Term Cognitive and Academic Effects of Early Childhood Education on Children in Poverty,” **Preventive Medicine** 27 (1998); 204–207. This paper reviews 38 studies of the long-term effects of early childhood programs on children in poverty. Early childhood education is found to produce persistent effects on achievement and academic success. Head Start and public school programs produce the same types of effects as better funded model programs, but at least some of the effects are smaller. Head Start, public school preschool education, and education in high-quality child care programs offer avenues for public investment to improve the long-term cognitive development and academic success of children in poverty.
- Gregory Camilli, Sadako Vargas, Sharon Ryan & W. Steven Barnett, “Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development,” **Teachers College Record** 112 (March 2010); 579–620. Positive results were found for children who attended a preschool program prior to entering kindergarten. Although the largest effects were observed for cognitive outcomes, a pre-school education was also found to impact children’s social skills and school progress. Specific aspects that positively correlated with gains included teacher-directed instruction and small group instruction, but provision of additional services tended to be associated with smaller gains.
- Rodney J. Andrews, Paul Jargowsky and Kristin Kuhne, *The Effects of Texas’s Targeted Pre-Kindergarten Program on Academic Performance* (2012), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w18598>. This paper assesses the extent to which a large-scale public program, Texas’s targeted pre-Kindergarten (pre-K), affects scores on math and reading achievement tests, the likelihood of being retained in grade, and the probability that a student receives special education services. Participation in the

program is associated with increased scores on the math and reading sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), reductions in the likelihood of being retained in grade, and reductions in the probability of receiving special education services. These results show that even modest, public pre-K programs implemented at scale can have important effects on students’ educational achievement.

- Henry Levin, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig, Cecilia Rouse, “The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America’s Children” (October 2006), available at <http://www.literacycooperative.org/documents/Thecostsandbenefitsofanexcellentedforamerchildren.pdf>. This analysis identifies early childhood education as one of five interventions that can help reduce drop out rates. The authors find that the highest quality programs will lead to substantial reductions in drop out rates and that the long-term financial and economic benefits — including better health, lower rates of incarceration and higher earnings— alone more than make the program cost effective.

“For children in poverty, pre-school is imperative. These children come from homes with no lights, bedbug infestations, no books. In preK, they learn how to sit, listen, use scissors, recognize letters and numbers, stand in a line. The difference in preparation for kids who come from preschool and those who don’t is glaring. For every \$1 spent in pre-school, the district saves \$10 in remediation. Special Ed is VERY expensive. So let’s catch these beautiful children when their brains are forming. It’s an investment in our future.”



**STEPHANIE DEBELLIS**  
KINDERGARTEN, EMERSON ES  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM

# FACTS: Higher Education Funding

## Restoring Funding for Higher Education

New Mexico has cut its state support for higher education by 21.6% since the start of the Recession. While all states have made cuts, these cuts are nearly double the national average. It has also cut support at a greater rate than any state in the Southwest, besides Arizona.

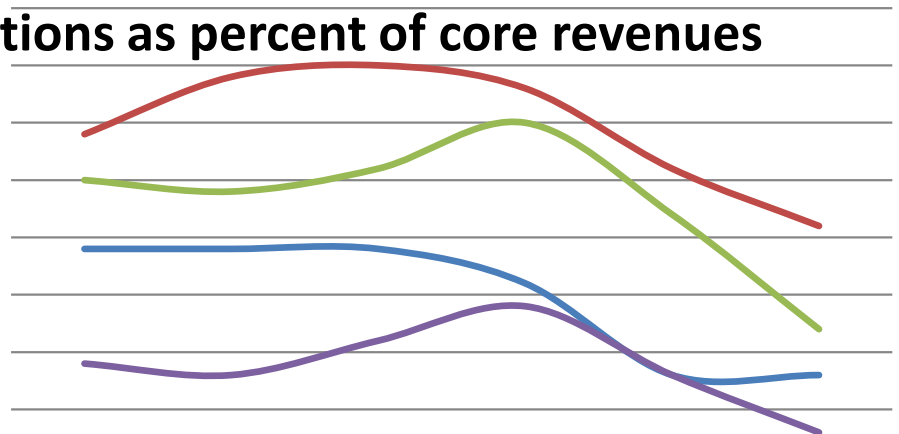
Tax appropriations for higher education have fallen from \$959,313,000 in 2007-2008 to \$731,277,800 in 2012-2013. New Mexico four-year institutions also lag behind their counterparts in the Southwest in percent of budget

devoted to instruction. While the average for the Southwest was 40% of resources spent on instruction, New Mexico's four-year institutions averaged 29%.

The result is that tuition has increased, stressing the lottery fund scholarship and forcing students to take out larger loans. Meanwhile, colleges still see a lack of revenue.

### State appropriations as percent of core revenues

Percent



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Central New Mexico Community College	39	39	39	36	28	28
New Mexico Highlands University	49	54	55	53	46	41
Northern New Mexico College	45	44	46	50	42	32
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	29	28	31	34	28	23

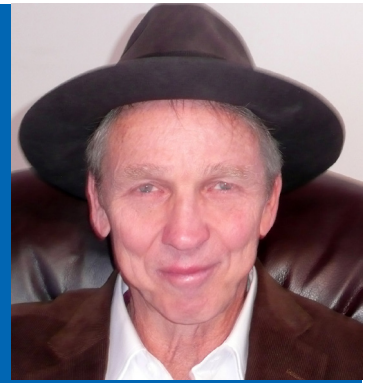
- **Access to Higher Education:**

In a world-class education system, cost should not be a barrier to higher education. New Mexico has made great strides towards making this a reality through the lottery scholarship. The lottery scholarship should be maintained and its availability made more equitable by offering it to students who choose to take some time off between high school and college. To sustain the fund, the state needs to stop the downward trend of decreasing appropriations to higher education institutions.

Additionally, there is a current trend toward creating higher education funding formulas tailored to graduation rates. Any such formulas should be carefully crafted so that they will not be a disincentive to offering programs that cater to working and/or older students who may take an extended time to finish their degrees.



“I suppose some people may say, ‘You chose to be an adjunct, you knew what you were getting into; so you shouldn’t complain.’ The fact is, we chose to be academics because we love to teach and do research, and assumed there was a reasonable expectation of a relatively secure, middle-income career if we worked hard and stayed with it.



“But then we found that over the last 20 to 30 years, even with a rapidly growing student population, a huge percentage of full-time academic positions had been converted to very low-paying, single-course offerings, and that caps had been put on how many such positions one was allowed to teach. So, even if you were willing to take on a heavier load to make up for the low pay, which many of us try to do by racing between two or more campuses, you could not do much more than barely **scrape by**.

“That we still do this is a mark of our dedication, but also in many cases, the desperation of thousands of adjunct faculty, that we forge on daily and give gladly to our students while receiving so little compensation or respect, in return. I think nearly any adjunct would tell you, the appreciation of the students is our largest reward.

“As a state, as a society, we should be embarrassed by the fact that the majority of instructors teaching our **young people**, who will be the **future** of this country, cannot live on the salaries we receive. Teaching in higher education, which was **formerly** a secure and even **prestigious** middle-class job, has now become a ticket into **chronic poverty** for many who chose to devote themselves to this profession. While we try daily to inspire students about the value of learning, privately I feel that I cannot honestly encourage young people to seek a career in higher education when the statistical odds are that they will end up in a position similar to that of most adjuncts today.”

**KENT GOSHORN**

ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR, SPEECH COMMUNICATION  
NORTHERN NEW MEXICO COLLEGE









## FOURTH PILLAR Sufficient Funding

### Restoring funding to pre-2008 levels

As more children and families have slid into poverty, the state has decreased spending on education. New Mexico has had an 11.4% real cut in real state aid per pupil since 2008, or \$874 per pupil according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.<sup>2</sup> According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' analysis, "New Mexico's \$72 per-pupil increase this year was not nearly enough to offset the state's \$946 per-pupil cut over the previous five years." Only 12 states have recorded harsher cuts on a percentage basis. Because New Mexico relies so much on state aid, the cuts are on a dollar per pupil basis the fifth largest cuts in the nation.

This drop in funding since 2008 is even more significant in light of the fact that in 2008, a comprehensive study found that New Mexico was already underfunding public education by 14.5%.<sup>3</sup>

While these damages accrued, the New Mexico Land Grant Permanent Fund is growing. This fund was established for the purpose of providing stable funding for education and other public programs in New Mexico. It kept a steady rate of growth of 11% throughout the financial crises of 2009 and grew by an astonishing 13.28% this year, nearly double its targeted return on investment goal.

“A child’s day starts and ends on the buses. We are the first and last people they see. We notice the stress on these kids. My fellow workers too are under an incredible amount of stress due in no small part to making ends meet, but also to managing a bus of 75 kids, sometimes with no AC. I would love to have a lawmaker drive with me for just one day! We are always losing drivers. This compromises the safety of the children. It’s hard to retain drivers when they don’t earn a living wage!”



**MERCY CHAVEZ**  
SPECIAL NEEDS BUS ATTENDANT  
LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

“Six years ago I had 20 students in a classroom. This year I am in a portable trailer with 24 students plus eleven special ed inclusion students. With the implementation of Common Core, we have received little in the way of instructional materials, and our ability to make copies of things that we create has been greatly reduced. As our numbers increase, our resources decrease even faster. We don’t have sufficient EA coverage and we do not have funding for materials. We must find a better way to help our children. Don’t forget, they are our future!”

**BERNAGENE SHAY**  
2012-13 NEA-NM CENTRAL REGION TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE  
5TH GRADE TEACHER, MARTIN LUTHER KING ES  
RIO RANCHO, NM









# Revenue Options

Moving forward, New Mexico has a number of options it can take to restore funding and provide for needed services for its children.

## Do No Harm

When funds are insufficient, cutting taxes is not the solution. That means not passing any tax cuts that will exacerbate the pressures on services. While low taxes may be one part of a good business climate, research tells us that schools, roads, and other public services are far more important. These need to be paid for.

While we believe there is an appropriate role for the state to support job creation by these New Mexico companies, the change to the “single sales factor” for manufacturers from last session will likely benefit big business at the expense of small business and public services.<sup>4</sup> We believe that lawmakers should change this so that the state can reinvest in schools.

## Land Grant Permanent Fund

The legislature should place in front of voters an amendment to the constitution that restores the payout from the permanent fund to a level that restores school funding, allows for additional payouts for early childhood education and K-12 while providing safeguards to maintain the fund’s stability.

AFT New Mexico’s advocacy on this issue is well known. We believe the fund is a unique resource that should be put to work on behalf of our children, and that it can be used to help build a system of supports from early childhood through college.

## Reform Corporate Subsidies and Tax Increment Financing

New Mexico has several major state finance programs that are ostensibly designed to support job creation by companies in the private sector. Given how many of our current problems are the result of a lack of good jobs, it is vital for these programs to be effective. If they are not effective, and simply pad corporate bottom lines, they should be discontinued and the funds put to better purposes.

A recent report by the economic development organization Good Jobs First found that New Mexico lacked sound and consistent policies to ensure that subsidies were used properly. New Mexico earned a “D+” and only the Dakotas, Alaska and the District of

Columbia had worse scores. In particular, New Mexico should be strengthening penalties, providing more active review of programs and better disclosing information about enforcement and regulation.<sup>5</sup>

## Return to 2003 personal income tax rate system

New Mexico’s 2003 Personal Income Tax cut disproportionately benefits the state’s wealthiest taxpayers. A family making \$22,000 pays the same personal income tax rate, 4.9 percent, as a family making over \$100,000. Since the enactment of the cuts, the bottom 40 percent of taxpayers have received no benefit while the state highest earners, those making over \$295,000, averaged a \$13,277 tax cut.<sup>6</sup>

In 2009, New Mexico’s least well off, families making less than \$13,000, paid about 12 percent of their household income in state and local taxes, while a family with an income above \$610,000 paid only 6 percent.<sup>7</sup> A restoration of pre-2003 income tax rates could generate as much as \$450 million in additional revenue.<sup>8</sup>

## Return to the 2003 capital gains tax system

The state should include in this roll back a return to its pre-2003 capital gains tax and equalize the tax with New Mexico’s Personal Income Tax. The current rate, at around 2.4 percent, disproportionately favors the wealthy. The vast majority (76 percent) of the benefit of the cut, has gone to New Mexicans earning more than \$200,000. A restoration of the pre-2003 level would generate \$51 million with a limited impact on the state’s economy as “there is little connection between lower capital gains taxes and higher economic growth.”<sup>9</sup>

## Taking Combined Reporting to the Next Level

AFT New Mexico believes the state requiring combined reporting for big box realtors was a step in the right direction. Combined reporting laws are an effective tool to prevent multistate corporations from sheltering income in U.S. tax havens. But, they do little to affect the overseas off-shoring of revenue. Montana, Massachusetts and West Virginia, however, extend their combined reporting to income in those countries that have been designated by the federal government as tax shelters, such as Bermuda and the Cayman Islands.

# Components of Effective Teacher Evaluation

Excerpt from Linda Darling Hammond's Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement

- Teacher evaluation should be based on professional teaching standards and should be sophisticated enough to assess teaching quality across the continuum of development, from novice to expert teacher.
- Evaluations should include multifaceted evidence of teacher practice, student learning, and professional contributions that are considered in an integrated fashion, in relation to one another and to the teaching context. Any assessments used to make judgments about students' progress should be appropriate for the specific curriculum and students the teacher teaches.
- Evaluators should be knowledgeable about instruction and well trained in the evaluation system, including the process of how to give productive feedback and how to support the ongoing learning for teachers.
- Evaluation should be accompanied by useful feedback, and connected to professional development opportunities that are relevant to teachers' goals and needs, including both formal learning opportunities and peer collaboration, observation, and coaching.
- The evaluation system should value and encourage teacher collaboration, both in the standards and criteria that are used to assess teachers' work and in the way results are used to shape professional learning opportunities.
- Expert teachers should be part of the assistance and review process for new teachers and for teachers needing extra assistance. They can provide the additional subject-specific expertise and person-power needed to ensure that intensive and effective assistance is offered and that decisions about tenure and continuation are well grounded.
- Panels of teachers and administrators should oversee the evaluation process to ensure that it is thorough and of high-quality, as well as fair and reliable. Such panels have been shown to facilitate more timely and well-grounded personnel decisions that avoid grievances and litigation. Teachers and school leaders should be involved in developing, implementing and monitoring the system to ensure that it reflects good teaching well, that it operates effectively, that it is tied to useful learning opportunities for teachers, and that it produces valid results.

# Endnotes

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