

# NEW MEXICO RISING

## *An Executive Summary of New Mexico's State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act*

### HISTORY

Over the past six years, New Mexico has been steadfast in the belief that every child in New Mexico, regardless of background, ethnicity, or zip code can learn and achieve academic success.

At every level, Governor Susana Martinez and her administration have worked to implement initiatives that deliver on the promise of a quality education for every one of New Mexico's 339,613 students. The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) has pursued a student-centered reform agenda, knowing that every year is an urgent opportunity to set our students up for success. Under Governor Martinez, the PED established a strategic plan in 2011 that included five strategic priorities designed to deliver on the promise that every child can learn:

*Smarter Return on Investment*

*Real Accountability for Real Results*

*Ready for Success*

*Effective Teachers and School Leaders*

*Options for Parents*

### FROM NCLB TO ESEA WAIVER TO ESSA: BACKGROUND ON THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

In September of 2011 the PED sought a waiver from federal requirements that were part of No Child Left Behind. The state's ESEA Waiver made a commitment to concrete, student-centered reforms, including educator evaluation (NMTEACH), school accountability (School Grades), higher standards (The New Mexico Common Core State Standards) and a new assessment aligned to those standards (PARCC). Fast-tracked as a national leader for kids, New Mexico was one of the first states to earn a federal waiver. Since receiving approval to implement the New Mexico Plan five years ago, the state has implemented these reforms and delivered results for students.

In December of 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA replaced the previous law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2002 and updated its predecessor the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. Overall the law represents a shift to empowering State Education Agencies (SEAs) to deliver results for students with both greater accountability and flexibility. Because New Mexico put student-centered reforms in place throughout the past six years, the state is well-positioned to continue to build on our strong foundation *and* build upon what we heard from New Mexico communities as we continue our rise in student progress.

New Mexico's proposed state plan under ESSA builds on the momentum of recent student success while meeting updated federal requirements. The plan includes a continued commitment to robust college and career ready standards and assessments, meaningful school accountability, a commitment to ensure that all students are served by excellent educators, and dynamic strategies for turning around the state's struggling schools. Additionally, the

plan articulates New Mexico’s methodology for setting statewide academic goals and trajectories and an approach to strategically utilize federal funding to best meet our students’ needs.

## NEW MEXICO RISING STATEWIDE TOUR

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) conducted extensive stakeholder engagement throughout 2016 in the development of a state plan on behalf of New Mexico’s students. In the fall of 2016, the PED embarked upon the largest stakeholder engagement community tour ever, partnering with New Mexico’s leading public policy organization, New Mexico First, to develop the *New Mexico Rising Tour*. With the aim of providing every New Mexico resident the opportunity to engage in the process of providing input in the development and design of the state’s plan, the PED hosted a wide variety of engagement opportunities including public meetings, online surveys, targeted working groups, tribal consultation and teacher and parent meetings. Additionally, in an effort to provide multiple communication channels, the PED provided updates on its website:

<http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html>.

The *New Mexico Rising Tour* consisted of twenty-five (25) fully facilitated listening sessions across New Mexico’s six largest communities. Upon the conclusion of the tour, New Mexico First released a series of eight reports: one statewide summary, one report for each unique community visited and one summary of tribal engagement. The statewide summary report and additional reports are available online at <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html>.

Additionally, the PED has published a summary of forty (40) major themes of stakeholder feedback that have been incorporated into the state’s ESSA plan, incorporated into other state policy/programs, and/or will be integrated into upcoming efforts to improve the educational experience for our students. That document, *New Mexico Rising—Together*, is posted alongside the state’s plan.

With the conclusion of the *New Mexico Rising Tour* and the extensive public engagement related to the Every Student Succeeds Act, the New Mexico State Plan is now available for review to stakeholders across the Land of Enchantment. To read more and to provide additional input, please visit: <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html>.

## NEW MEXICO’S STATE PLAN

### LONG-TERM GOALS - SECTION 1

The first section of the state’s plan is a testament to the recent progress teachers and students have made in New Mexico. In partnership with district leaders, teachers and parents, in 2016 New Mexico demonstrated unprecedented progress in every objective measure from math, reading, and science to school grades to advanced placement to educator effectiveness. New Mexico is on the rise and looks to continue its commitment to this trajectory by highlighting bold goals in the first section of the state’s plan.

The global economy is demanding more from our students, and they’re rising to the challenge. New Mexico’s long-term goals are aligned to the New Mexico Department of Higher Education’s “Route to 66” initiative, which sets the vision for 66% of New Mexico students earning a college degree or postsecondary credential by the year 2030. Given the recent progress that the state’s students, schools and educators have demonstrated, New Mexico is determined to accelerate our overall trajectory.

**Our ultimate goal is to make the state the fastest-growing in the nation.**

*By 2020, the state's academic goals include:*

- 50% of students on grade-level in reading and math
- 80% of students graduating high school
- A dramatic decrease in the percentage of students requiring remediation

These ambitious goals create another opportunity for New Mexicans to pull together on behalf of our kids.

The long-term goals section also details New Mexico's commitment as a "truth-teller" in terms of how it approaches school performance and public transparency, reaffirming our belief that all of our children can achieve at the highest-levels and will respond to high expectations. It calls upon all New Mexicans to be steadfast in their commitment to providing honest and transparent information to students, teachers, families, and taxpayers.

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## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 1, LONG-TERM GOALS**

**New Mexico's long term goals elevate and promote the existing work related to our strategic plan's *Ready for Success* priority which aims to ensure every NM student graduates high school ready for college and career.**

*Highlights from Section 1 include:*

- ✓ **Ambitious goals for the next six academic years that accelerate the speed at which the achievement gap is closed. This includes a higher standard for high school graduation and an ambitious trajectory for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> year graduation rates. It also includes academic goals for English Language Learners;**
- ✓ **Increased alignment of expected outcomes of K-12 and higher education in New Mexico; and**
- ✓ **A commitment to build upon the feedback from ESSA stakeholder engagement throughout the implementation of the state's plan.**

## **CONSULTATION & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT - SECTION 2**

The second section of the state's plan outlines how the PED engaged with stakeholders in developing the plan. It also includes a section on how the PED will provide oversight and technical assistance to the state's districts and charter schools (LEAs), as well as reduce paperwork and other administrative burdens. Beyond the events of the *New Mexico Rising Tour*, the PED held an additional ten (10) community and parent events and developed four technical working groups to address major elements of ESSA. Through these multiple channels of engagement, nearly two thousand New Mexicans were engaged in the development of the New Mexico state plan. Throughout the draft plan and within the corresponding document, *New Mexico Rising—Together*, the PED incorporated ideas and input that are in the best interest of New Mexico's children.

The section also includes sample community visit agendas, screenshots from the state's ESSA website, links to reports created by New Mexico First, and details on the subjects tackled in the various technical working groups. Stakeholder groups were also created for Title I and Title III Directors who engaged in the important technical details of their respective federal programs.

Additionally, within the second section the PED outlines its overall approach to providing support and monitoring the state’s LEAs, including extensive training, professional development, and targeted investment opportunities provided by each of the agency’s divisions.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 2, CONSULTATION & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

**New Mexico’s plan for consultation and performance management is centered on the *Smarter Return on Investment* priority which aims to ensure every dollar state and federal dollar is maximized for student outcomes.**

***Highlights from Section 2 include:***

- ✓ **A full overview of the PED’s partnership with New Mexico First for the *New Mexico Rising Tour*, which centered on working with communities to set a vision for student success; and**
- ✓ **A preview of the state’s proposed approach to a consolidated funding plan for LEAs which will ensure that districts are expending more time and effort on the education of students and less time on burdensome or redundant administrative processes.**

## ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS - SECTION 3

The third section of the state’s plan provides summary information regarding the state’s academic assessments, with a focus on how the state meets federal requirements while addressing student assessment in other languages.

The PED has dramatically reduced the time spent on required student assessments over the past several years and has asked all LEAs to conduct assessment inventories to reduce testing time at the local level as well. The federal government has praised New Mexico’s efforts to reduce testing and to require local inventory processes to do the same. Further, the PED has committed to decreasing time spent on the state’s main standards-based assessment, PARCC, over time.

New Mexico has established a strong foundation of student assessment in reading, math, and science. The state’s focus is now on improving content and streamlining operations, which includes a commitment to returning quality, actionable and timely student data to educators and families. Throughout *New Mexico Rising—Together*, the PED has incorporated ideas and input about how to strengthen the state’s overall approach to assessment, while committing to collaborating with educators on improvements to End Of Course Exams, student data tools, and open-source instructional resources. This section highlights multiple areas where New Mexico is reducing both cost and testing time while ensuring that every student has access to high-quality assessments that will propel their academic trajectory forward.

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 3, ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

**The academic assessments section builds upon existing efforts aligned to the *Real Accountability for Real Results* strategic plan priority designed to create a transparent education system that is defined by academic excellence. The section also aligns to the *Ready for Success* strategic plan priority which strives to ensure every New Mexico student graduates high school ready for college and career.**

**Highlights from Section 3 include:**

- ✓ **A commitment to optimize student assessment and reduce testing time where possible; and**
- ✓ **Continued use of high quality, rigorous assessments that provide transparent information to teachers and parents allowing them to make informed decisions for students.**

ACCOUNTABILITY, SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT FOR SCHOOLS - SECTION 4

The fourth section of the state’s plan includes the core functions of State Education Agencies (SEAs) as outlined by ESSA. These include the establishment of rigorous and transparent school accountability systems and systematic approaches to address consistently low-performing schools, including those schools that are not fully serving students from specific subgroups. New Mexico’s School Grading system is well-established and meets many of the foundational elements required by ESSA.

Based on stakeholder feedback, New Mexico proposes to create stability and continuity for our educators and families by maintaining a consistent approach to School Grades over the next two academic years (2016-17 and 2017-18). The state’s approach to academic proficiency, student growth, graduation rates, and other indicators of school quality are each explained in detail. This section also includes a proposal for how New Mexico will incorporate additional stakeholder input and align with all federal requirements beginning with the 2018-19 school year. This approach is responsive to input from several different working groups, and creates an opportunity for all stakeholders to deeply understand the newest component of school accountability, English Language Proficiency.

The state’s guiding principles and methodological details are both outlined in this section, as is New Mexico’s commitment to high expectations for all students. Building on School Grades, New Mexico is able to build a system of supports for the state’s lowest-performing schools, as required by ESSA. Within this section, a methodology for identifying both Comprehensive and Targeted Schools is explained. As required by federal law, Comprehensive schools are identified as the bottom 5% of Title I schools or high schools with a graduation rate below 67%. Targeted schools demonstrate low-performance in a particular subgroup such as English language learners, students with disabilities, Native American students, and/or students from low-income communities. The PED will support the lowest performing schools by providing a variety of customizable options that best help schools deliver what their students need to be successful.

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 4, ACCOUNTABILITY, SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT FOR SCHOOLS, INCLUDE:**

**Strengthened by our commitment to the strategic priorities of *Real Accountability for Real Results and Options for Parents & Families* the New Mexico plan for this section solidifies the state’s commitment to parents and students receiving transparent information paired with opportunities to make decisions in the best interest of their children.**

**Highlights from Section 4 include:**

- ✓ **Enhancements to School Grades beginning in 2018-19, including: incorporating science, adding a growth to proficiency measure for English Learners and the removal of “bonus points”; and**

- ✓ **Updated and improved supports and interventions for struggling schools, including a roll-out of the state’s new NM-DASH progress monitoring system, a set of more rigorous interventions an LEA must implement if they do not exit low-performing status and a unique opportunity for struggling schools and districts to access additional resources through “Direct Student Services”.**

## SUPPORTING EXCELLENT EDUCATORS - SECTION 5

The fifth section of the state’s plan outlines New Mexico’s commitment to further equip, empower, and champion our educators. By building upon established evaluation and support tools, including NMTEACH, New Mexico outlines how it will support LEAs in the preparation, recruitment, licensure, induction, evaluation, professional development, and compensation of effective educators. The section explains the role of Title II federal funding in supporting educator effectiveness systems, and declares the state’s intent to continue to utilize this critical federal funding source to build upon the strong foundation that has been established over the past six years. This includes support for the ongoing training and credentialing of school leaders in the NMTEACH system. NMTEACH is the foundation of support for our educators and is the centerpiece to implementing the state’s *Excellent Educators For All Plan* that was approved by USED in 2015. Both the research and evidence-based case for meaningful educator evaluation is restated and cited within this section.

There is also an overview of the state’s approach to improving educator preparation programs—a strategy that continues to be cited by stakeholders as a top priority for improving our education system. Throughout the section, there are examples of educator supports that both the SEA and LEAs can continue to invest in and support—from hard-to-staff stipends to teacher debit cards to the establishment of New Mexico’s first Teacher-Leader Network. As part of the state’s approach to ESSA over the past year, expanding teacher-leadership opportunities has been of first importance.

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### HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 5, SUPPORTING EXCELLENT EDUCATORS

**The excellent educators for all section is rooted in the *Effective Teachers and School Leaders* strategic plan priority which aims to place an effective principal in every school and an effective teacher in every classroom. Specific activities within this section are grounded in our moral and legal responsibility to fully implement New Mexico’s Excellent Educators for All Plan, which includes assurances that the state will pursue strategies and activities that ensure equitable access to effective educators, notably for our students from low-income communities.**

#### ***Highlights from Section 5 include:***

- ✓ **Sustained and optimized efforts and investments to equip, empower and champion educators;**
- ✓ **A pledge by the PED to pursue legislation in response to stakeholder feedback regarding the weight of student growth, observations, and teacher attendance;**
- ✓ **A commitment to unveil the first-ever Educator Preparation Program Report cards in 2017;**
- ✓ **A plan to grow the state’s teacher-leadership opportunities, including an expansion of the New Mexico Teacher-Leader Network; and**

- ✓ **An ongoing commitment to multiple educator professional development and support systems, from Teachers Pursuing Excellence to Pay for Performance, both of which had record-high demand from the state’s districts and charters this year.**

## SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS - SECTION 6

The sixth and final section of the state’s plan outlines New Mexico’s approach to creating systems of support to ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive education for all students. Key federal requirements of this section include how the state will protect and provide educational opportunities for children with disabilities, children and youth in foster care, migratory children, homeless children, and “neglected, delinquent and at-risk students” identified under Title I. New Mexico provides a full continuum of support for the state’s children through a combination of federal and state funding, from Pre-K programs to free-and-reduced price breakfast and lunch to STEM and Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities.

ESSA reaffirmed the federal commitment to funding and programs designed for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The state has a long-standing track record of dedicating significant staff and resources to ensuring that federal funding programs are appropriately administered and monitored, notably across all parts of Title I. The PED also explains its deepening investment in parental and family engagement, both via state and federal programs. 21<sup>st</sup> century community learning center investments are also found within this section.

This section is a critical component of the state’s plan, as it outlines the various wrap-around services that are provided via federal funds, which ensures that our students are safe, healthy and well-served as they attend school each day. The section, when reviewed in concert with the other sections, represents New Mexico’s commitment to a well-rounded education that puts all students on-track for college and career.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM SECTION 6, SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS

**The PED remains committed to supporting all students, as has been the aim of the *Smarter Return on Investment and Ready for Success* strategic plan priorities since 2011, ensuring that every dollar is best spent on preparing students for success.**

**Highlights from Section 6 include:**

- ✓ **Innovative tools and engagement opportunities for parents and families, including Academic Parent Teacher Teams and a recently-launched Secretary’s Family Cabinet;**
- ✓ **A continuation of the Results Driven Accountability program, which will serve over 100 schools via Title I funding over the next three years;**
- ✓ **A restatement of the state’s commitment to fully fund opportunities to prepare high school students for college and career including ongoing AP fee waivers for students from low-income communities; and**
- ✓ **An overview of the state’s services for English Language Learners with accompanying resources and tools provided by the PED.**

New Mexico's education system has become student-centered. Our districts, schools and educators are held accountable for student performance and new standards and assessments are preparing students for a competitive global economy. To support our educators in this endeavor, New Mexico made massive investments, both financial and human resource, in some of the state's lowest-performing schools.

The results: 5,000 more students are proficient in reading and 7,300 more in math in just the last year. 77 of 89 districts showed gains in math proficiency and 57 in ELA proficiency in the second year of PARCC administration. American Indian students outpaced others in their improvement, showing the highest growth in reading. And the state's students achieved an all-time high graduation rate of 71% in 2016, an increase of 8 percentage points from the 2010-11 school year. New Mexico's students made gains in an unprecedented 19 of 21 measures in 2016, all while our schools raised the bar and implemented more rigorous benchmarks and gateways for student advancement.

New Mexico's education system has been transformed. And its students are on the rise. The Every Student Succeeds Act will continue to reinforce New Mexico's place as a national leader in education expectations and student outcomes, and provides an opportunity to refine the systems that got us here.

We must continue this rise, together.