

NEW MEXICO RISING - TOGETHER

RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

Prior to crafting New Mexico's State Plan under the new federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) conducted extensive stakeholder engagement throughout 2016 on behalf of New Mexico's students.

In the fall of 2016, the PED embarked upon the largest stakeholder engagement community tour ever. Opening channels of communication and hearing from all stakeholders, the PED partnered with New Mexico's leading public policy organization, New Mexico First, to develop the *New Mexico Rising Tour*. The statewide stakeholder engagement tour was intended to provide every New Mexico resident the opportunity to learn about the state's initiatives and share input in the development and design of the state's plan. The PED and New Mexico First hosted a wide variety of forums, including public meetings, online surveys, targeted working groups, tribal consultation and teacher and parent engagement sessions.

The *New Mexico Rising Tour* consisted of twenty-five (25) 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. Following the *New Mexico Rising Tour* and concurrent technical working group engagement related to ESSA, the New Mexico State Plan was developed. It is now available for review and additional feedback to stakeholders across the Land of Enchantment. To read more and provide additional input, please visit: <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html>.

With the release of New Mexico's state plan, the PED is proud to simultaneously release *New Mexico Rising – Together*, a summary of major themes of stakeholder feedback that have been incorporated into the state's ESSA plan. Given that much of what the PED heard was in response to local and state programs and/or upcoming state and local efforts that were not directly related to ESSA, the PED has included a wide array of responses and actions within *New Mexico Rising—Together*. Each represents a step forward in improving the educational experience for our students.

The New Mexico State Plan is posted online and available for additional stakeholder input through April 1, 2017.

Feedback from New Mexico's communities has been grouped into the following categories:

- Supporting New Mexico Educators
- Student Assessment
- School Accountability
- Ready for Success
- 21st Century Learning
- School Support
- Equitable Access for All Students
- Engaging our Communities

We look forward to continued collaboration so that EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS in New Mexico.

SUPPORTING NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS

WE HEARD: Let's work together to put more emphasis on the non-student growth measures within teacher evaluation (NMTEACH), with a greater focus on principal observations while continuing to prioritize our students' progress.

WE RESPONDED: The PED advocated for legislation to decrease the weight of student growth by ten percent and increase the weight of teacher observations by ten percent. Additionally, the proposed legislation increases the number of teacher absences exempted within NMTEACH from three to five.

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WE HEARD: Let's celebrate our educators and elevate and champion the teaching profession.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has launched three NEW teacher leadership opportunities for educators. These programs provide the opportunity for teachers to get involved in statewide networks focusing on their craft, public policy, and teacher ambassadorship. Additionally, the PED now has an in-house Teacher-Liaison, a veteran teacher from Albuquerque Public Schools, to participate in statewide outreach and policy development. Further, the department is committed to continuing to support annual teacher debit cards, stipends for recruitment and retention, and increases in starting salaries. Finally, we will continue to host an Annual Teacher Summit that not only provides teachers with resources and professional development but offers them a platform to network with their colleagues and celebrate their success with their students.

WE HEARD: Let's do a better job of ensuring that new teachers are ready for the rigors of today's classroom.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is establishing new program requirements and accountability measures for teacher preparation programs across New Mexico, ensuring that they are rooted in the practice of classroom teaching. Through partnership with our educator preparation providers, New Mexico is promoting a cycle of continuous improvement so that teachers are "first-day ready".

WE HEARD: Let's give elementary teachers high-quality science content training and professional development to ensure that all students are exposed to quality science instruction K-12.

WE RESPONDED: The PED held *Making Sense of Science* teacher institutes focusing on matter, energy and the integration of literacy and math strategies in science content, and will expand those summer training institutes based on demand. Over the next few summers, the PED would like to see every elementary teacher have this opportunity, contingent upon state STEM funding.

WE HEARD: Let's better support our teachers in implementing the Common Core Math Standards in their classrooms.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is piloting *Pathway to Math Excellence* in 2016-17, a project that provides classroom support to teachers with on-site math coaches and math content training during the school year. If successful in year one, the PED would like to expand the program to additional schools, contingent upon state STEM funding.

WE HEARD: Let's provide teachers with access to NMTEACH trainings on a virtual platform.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the New Mexico Teacher Leader Network (NMTLN), which is comprised of 50 teachers from across the state. One emphasis is developing resources for New Mexico teachers to facilitate learning and understanding of the NMTEACH system. The NMTLN will help leverage NMTEACH as a tool that can be used by teachers to guide and improve their practice. Additionally, the PED Teacher Liaison and Educator Quality staff hosted and recorded several webinars that are now available online. The PED Teacher Liaison and staff are also available to host additional webinars as requested.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure that a diverse group of statewide teachers are advising the PED on how to improve New Mexico's education system.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the Secretary's Teacher Advisory (STA), which convenes regularly via both conference call and in-person meetings. Teachers from across the state are represented, as are teachers from different

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grades, subject areas, and backgrounds. To-date the STA has advised the PED on topics ranging from teacher-leadership opportunities to student assessment approaches to school accountability. STA members played a major role in the state's first Teacher Summit in 2016.

WE HEARD: Let's better support teachers and leaders by providing all LEAs with more training for K-3 Literacy, not just Reads to Lead districts.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is offering Regional Consortium on Reading Excellence in Education (CORE) training to all K-3 teachers to increase student achievement through literacy instruction. CORE focuses classroom-based professional learning to enable effective reading, writing, and language support for students. New Mexico also launched the first-ever Dream Team, a group of the state's best K-6 literacy educators. Further, the PED has begun planning a Kindergarten Teacher Academy (K-Academy) for all of the state's kindergarten teachers, to provide early literacy training for every K-Teacher in New Mexico.

WE HEARD: Let's support licensure of teachers whose native language is not English as well as those who teach English language learners.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has embarked upon several strategies for supporting our educators serving English Learners, including TESOL waiver flexibility, investments in educator preparation programs, and ongoing professional development opportunities through the state's Educator Quality Division and Priority Schools Bureau. The PED has also worked to increase awareness around the TESOL endorsement—it is not a state or federal requirement for serving ELs but rather a requirement for eligibility for state-funding for bilingual multicultural education programs.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

WE HEARD: Let's reduce the amount of time spent on required student assessments.

WE RESPONDED: The PED worked with educators across the state to reduce testing time across multiple assessments. Notably, PARRC was reduced, on average, by 90 minutes per grade. K-2 assessment time also dropped dramatically with the advent of Istation. The PED is committed to pressing for additional reductions in PARCC testing time while maintaining a high-quality assessment.

WE HEARD: Let's provide schools with real-time student level data in reading to support teachers in providing focused and targeted literacy instruction.

WE RESPONDED: The PED adopted the K-3 Istation assessment tool. Istation provides teachers with student level data in real-time, lesson plan ideas, sample parent engagement letters, and detailed reports to assist them as they promote student achievement in reading. This assessment also significantly reduced testing time and overall cost to the state.

WE HEARD: Let's provide kindergarten teachers a diagnostic tool that supports them in stronger planning, more effective differentiated instruction, and regular communication with families.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico's kindergarten observation tool (KOT) highlights our understanding that a whole-child assessment is crucial in meeting the needs of each individual student, particularly in their early childhood development.

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WE HEARD: Let's improve and streamline the process for End-of-Course (EOC) exams through a better platform and provide another round of opportunities for educators to be a part of the design and implementation. Let's strengthen the rigor of End of Course (EOC) exams and ensure that they align with the skills necessary for college and career readiness.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the NM-EPIC platform for our students and educators and has conducted an initial administrative review of each EOC exam, as part of a multi-year initiative to revise current EOCs to improve content items, blueprints, and the administration platform. Concurrently, the PED hosted (and will continue to convene) a technical working group on high school graduation requirements and the role of primary and alternative demonstrations of competency. In the coming year educators from across the state will be gathered in working groups to review and refine the content for each of these important student assessments that provide equity for our students statewide.

WE HEARD: Let's improve alternative demonstrations of competency for graduation in order to provide a consistent, all-encompassing, structured approach that ensures all students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they are college and career ready.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will continue to partner with stakeholders from local education agencies (LEAs) and the legislature to improve graduation requirements and update state regulation pertaining to alternative demonstrations of competency.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

WE HEARD: Let's give our schools time to respond to new federal requirements and state priorities as it pertains to school and district accountability.

WE RESPONDED: The PED plans to incorporate new federal requirements, such as English Language Proficiency in School Grades, in the 2018-19 school year. The PED will advocate for this approach with federal officials in response to stakeholder input. The vast majority of stakeholders advocated for stability and continuity for as many years as possible under the current School Grades system.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure that charter schools that are not serving students well and/or not being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars are not permitted to continue to operate.

WE RESPONDED: The PED supports state policy (both legislation and regulation) requiring the automatic closure of charter schools that do not demonstrate fiscal responsibility and/or academic performance. Underperforming schools should be non-renewed by their authorizers, and the PED has recommended non-renewal for a handful of charter schools in the last 18 months. The PED has also increased the number of site visits and feedback given to schools to support continuous improvement through clear expectations and accountability.

WE HEARD: Let's not forget about the highest-achieving students. New Mexico's school accountability system should encourage schools to focus on kids that are already achieving at the highest-levels.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico is proposing a new indicator within School Grades beginning in 2018-19 (as part of ESSA) that focuses on students that have historically been in "Quartile 4"—the highest-performing in that school over the past several years. This change will call for new approaches to ensuring that all students are being challenged.

READY FOR SUCCESS

WE HEARD: Let's be the fastest *growing* state in the nation in terms of our rate of student achievement.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico has set an ambitious goal of being the fastest growing state in the nation by 2020.

WE HEARD: Let's make science education a higher priority—it should be included in state accountability systems, and new standards should be considered for adoption.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is working with key stakeholders such as the state's Math and Science Coalition to consider new science standards and incorporating science student achievement in School Grades beginning in 2018-19.

WE HEARD: Let's make dual credit stronger and more accessible. While the PED's and the Higher Education Department's (HED's) proposals around dual credit reform are well-intentioned, let's scale-back some of the proposed requirements so that New Mexico can continue to give as many students as possible access to opportunities provided by our higher education partners.

WE RESPONDED: The PED and HED are revisiting the policy changes put forward in 2016, pushing back the timeline for any reforms by at least one year, and considering alternatives to raising academic standards for students wishing to access dual-credit.

WE HEARD: Let's consider, in conjunction with the deans and directors of teacher preparation programs across New Mexico, moving away from archaic and unaligned standards for teacher preparation program requirements.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is adopting state regulation to incorporate INTASC model core teaching standards, which have a stronger focus on the application of knowledge and skills of current teaching practices.

WE HEARD: Let's give our high school students round-the-clock access to personalized learning opportunities, both as a form of remediation and acceleration.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico pays for every high school sophomore to take the PSAT at no cost. Over the past four months districts and charter schools across the state have begun to access Khan Academy accounts for the students who took the PSAT. The PED, in partnership with College Board, has worked to ensure that our principals, educators, and students are aware of this opportunity and have the technical assistance needed to help students access it. Still, only 6% of eligible high schools have set-up an account, and the PED will continue to follow-up with district and charter leaders to ensure every high schooler has access.

WE HEARD: Let's better define our career-oriented pathways across the state—with consistent terms, delineated pathways, and rich resources delivered to the field.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is designing and publishing a student guidebook that details the four steps to determining their ideal career pathway, including recommended course selections for 79 career pathways, based upon New Mexico employment demands, average New Mexico wages, and postsecondary educational requirements.

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WE HEARD: Let's expand access to Early Childhood Education based on increasing demand.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico continues to invest in Early Childhood Education with targeted investments in districts and charters that demonstrate a willingness and capacity to leverage those investments to better prepare the New Mexico's youngest learners for sustained K-12 success. The state's Pre-K investment has near-tripled since 2011.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure that students are exposed to the most up-to-date competencies and explore new options for fine arts and physical education standards.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will facilitate working groups with teachers, administrators, district leaders, and legislators to compare current standards with new, nationally recognized standards to better understand what is right for students in New Mexico.

WE HEARD: Let's raise the bar for what a high school diploma means so that our students can be competitive in the job market. Let's also take the time to allow districts/schools to engage with parents, families, and students throughout the process.

WE RESPONDED: The PED originally intended to have a new standard in place for reading and math competencies for the graduating Class of 2017. However, after listening to feedback from across the state, the PED facilitated multiple technical working groups to further discuss changes with stakeholders and announced that the Class of 2020 would be the first to respond to updated high school graduation requirements.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING

WE HEARD: Let's ensure that there is reliable Broadband access statewide, so that every student can leverage the potential power/resources of online requirements and opportunities. Many communities don't have internet access, which makes it hard for them to use the rich material found online to advance their learning.

WE RESPONDED: Governor Martinez has made a commitment to Broadband access statewide. The team at the PED is leading a statewide effort to ensure Broadband-For-All by 2018. Wi-Fi networks will be upgraded in schools across the state, dramatically improving access and speed for students.

WE HEARD: Computer science is and will continue to be an important economic driver for the state, but our schools do not provide enough opportunities for students to access these skills.

WE RESPONDED: The PED worked with computer science stakeholders and others to refine language in a bill that will allow for computer science courses to be used for graduation requirements beginning in 2021.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure that distance learning continues, for our rural districts in particular, and that the highest quality of coursework is provided for all students.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is committed to revamping IDEAL-NM to ensure all students have access to distance learning opportunities that promote college and career readiness through high quality content and the expertise and skills of New Mexico's best educators.

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SCHOOL SUPPORTS

WE HEARD: Let's get more resources to our struggling schools and populations in need, and let's use ESSA as an opportunity to achieve this with federal dollars while also continuing programs that are getting results like Principals Pursuing Excellence.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is proposing to move more resources to the state's highest-need schools through ESSA's Direct Student Services opportunity, which allows low-performing schools to apply for additional funds to support kids in extended learning time, accessible, high quality online coursework, additional tutoring and other supports.

WE HEARD: Let's encourage schools to become bilingual, teaching students who know English other languages while supporting those who are learning English.

WE RESPONDED: In 2014, New Mexico became the 5th state in the U.S. to adopt a state seal for bilingualism-biliteracy. In 2015, the PED adopted a new rule and aligned guidance to support this statute. The PED recently adopted the Common Core Spanish Language Arts and Spanish Language Development standards to ensure that instruction is rigorous and well-aligned.

WE HEARD: Let's implement a new online dashboard and project management tool because WebEPSS does not adequately support district and school leaders.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has launched the NM DASH online system, providing districts and schools with a process management tool to capture 90-Day plans and monitor progress in shorter cycles for improved student results.

WE HEARD: Let's target data-driven leadership training and support to boost student achievement.

WE RESPONDED: The PED leveraged the School Improvement Funds to launch the Leadership Innovation Model through Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) and will fund up to five districts pursuing a focus on data-driven, strategic, and meaningful leadership.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure school administrators are being held accountable for their performance (and notably their effective execution of teacher evaluation) to ensure that constructive feedback is given to our teachers and student data is analyzed by all.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will be strengthening the implementation and oversight of Principal/AP evaluations as we head into the 2017-18 school year, ensuring that administrator evaluation data is collected, reported, and acted upon.

EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

WE HEARD: Let's offer more support to English language learners (ELLs) by partnering with community organizations that can provide volunteers, mentors and tutors.

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WE RESPONDED: The PED has partnered with the Center for Educational Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) to improve the Family Engagement Toolkit to support districts and schools in encouraging and fostering authentic home-to-school connections that support student achievement.

WE HEARD: Let's not allow Congressional roll-backs on Advanced Placement fee waivers to keep our students in low-income communities from reaching their full potential.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico is committing to fully fund all AP fee waivers for the spring 2017 testing.

WE HEARD: Let's help charter schools start up without significant obstacles.

WE RESPONDED: In a collaborative effort with the Public Education Commission (PEC), the PED worked on establishing updated criteria for new charter schools and continues to advocate for smoother start-up procedures.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES

WE HEARD: Let's engage parents and family members more frequently and with greater depth. We need to get our parents and families more involved in our students' success.

WE RESPONDED: The PED established a new role, the Parent & Family Outreach Coordinator to assist parents and families in supporting their child academically. Additionally, the PED has launched the Family Cabinet, comprised of 25 parents/guardians representing 17 school districts across the state. The PED is also piloting a new model of parent engagement, Academic Parent Teacher Teams, to be implemented in six schools across New Mexico that will establish best practices for parent engagement.

WE HEARD: Let's communicate more often with Superintendents and Charter Directors—regular communication is the key.

WE RESPONDED: The PED hosts bi-weekly calls with all superintendents. For each call, Superintendents have the opportunity to co-design the agenda based on the topics requested by their leaders, and the PED uses the remaining time to detail important updates. Similar calls with charter school leaders are held on a monthly basis.

WE HEARD: Let's ensure the PED is visiting the state's communities during the ESSA stakeholder engagement period and connects our ESSA plan to the priorities of our communities.

WE RESPONDED: When NM stakeholders were asked "In one word, what does education mean to you?" The #1 response was OPPORTUNITY.

The PED traveled the state and held twenty-five (25) community meetings and engaged nearly over 1,800 New Mexicans between October-December. To ensure that every child has educational opportunity, the PED is supporting policy, programs and practice that continue to increase quality options for students, parents, and families, including pushing for the automatic closure of poor performing charter schools and allowing the highest-performing schools (often those with waiting lists) to grow.

The PED is committed to increasing high-quality school and program OPPORTUNITY for all of New Mexico's students.