

**Public Education Commission  
&  
Public Education Department**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

***Charting Student Success in the New Millennium***

**January 14, 2005**

# **New Mexico Public Education Commission**

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***Dr. Veronica C. García***  
***Secretary of Education***

# **New Mexico Public Education Commission and Public Education Department Strategic Plan for Education in New Mexico**

## **Our Vision**

A world-class educational system in which all New Mexico students are prepared to succeed in a diverse and increasingly complex world.

The PEC and PED are dedicated to:

- Academic Achievement
- Quality Teachers, Principals, Administrators, and Educational Support Personnel
- Accountability, Choice, and Technology: Earning Public Trust
- Safe Schools and Respectful Learning Environments
- Equitable Access and Opportunity
- Return on Financial Investment
- Constructive Engagement with Our Partners

The PEC, together with the PED, will act to ensure that all students in New Mexico have the equal opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to be successful and responsible citizens.

## **Strategic Issues**

1. Instructional Support and Academic Achievement
2. Quality Personnel
3. Assessment, Accountability and Technology
4. Safe Schools and Respectful Learning Environments
5. Equitable Access and Opportunity
6. Finance Operations and Return on Financial Investment
7. Constructive Engagement with Our Partners and Communities
8. Indian Education
9. Rural Education

# **New Mexico Public Education Commission Strategic Issues for Education in New Mexico**

## **Preamble**

Article XII, Section 6 of the New Mexico Constitution establishes an elected Public Education Commission (“Commission”):

- A. There is hereby created a “public education department and a “public education commission” that shall have such powers and duties as provided by law. The department shall be a cabinet department headed by a secretary of public education who is a qualified, experienced educator who shall be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate.
- B. Ten members of the public education commission shall be elected for staggered terms of four years as provided by law. Commission members shall be residents of the public education commission district from which they are elected. Change of residents of a commission member to a place outside the district from which he was elected shall automatically terminate the term of that member.
- C. The governor shall fill vacancies on the commission by appointment of a resident from the district in which the vacancy occurs until the next regular election for membership on the commission.
- D. The secretary of public education shall have administrative and regulatory powers and duties, including all functions relating to the distribution of school funds and financial accounting for the public schools to be performed as provided by law.
- E. The elected members of the 2003 state board of education shall constitute the public education commission, until their terms expire, and the districts from which the state board of education were elected shall constitute the state public education commission districts until changed by law.

## **1. Instructional Support and Academic Achievement**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission ensure rapid, effective, measurable, and sustainable improvement in the academic achievement of all New Mexico students?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Student academic achievement represents the "bottom line" for public education. The Department's constitutional mandate for recommending educational policy, places the responsibility for expecting student success with the Department. Academic achievement is addressed in Standards for Excellence (which includes specifications for the Educational Plan for Student Success, Content Standards and Benchmarks, and Performance Standards), the New Mexico Student Achievement System, NCLB designations, and the accountability framework specified in the New Mexico Accountability Plan.

Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Academic Achievement:

- 1.1. Expect clear and high standards in all academic subjects and ensure that assessments are aligned with content, benchmark, and performance standards; require alignment of school curricula with performance standards and revise on a regular basis.
- 1.2. Expect improved student performance on all assessments with an expectation of 100% proficiency by 2014.
- 1.3 Support early literacy.
- 1.4 Expect 95%, or better, student attendance in every school.
- 1.5 Expect to be at or above 75% student graduation rate in every school.
- 1.6 Recognize high performing and high improving schools and provide rewards. Identify schools in need of improvement and promote student success through the support of the School Improvement arrangement.
- 1.7 Communicate performance results to the public.

## **2. Quality Personnel**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission respond to the needs for recruiting, preparing, inducting, and retaining qualified, well-trained, and adequately compensated teachers, principals, and administrators?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Quality teachers, principals, and administrators are one of the most essential components of the education system. The Department and Commission must recommend high standards related to entry into the teaching profession through licensure and professional development. The Department and Commission operate in partnership with the Legislature and Governor to provide funds for educator compensation.

Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Quality Teachers, Principals, and Administrators:

- 2.1 Recognize high standards and competencies for teacher, principal, administrator, and educational support personnel preparation, evaluation, and ongoing professional development.
- 2.2 Work with institutions of higher education to create a quality teaching work force that is prepared to meet the needs of New Mexico's diverse student population.
- 2.3 Recommended and expanded standards for licensure.
- 2.4 Expect that teachers are teaching subjects which they are qualified to teach.
- 2.5 Support a system of professional development directly tied to meeting identified student needs, including the requirement for continuing education, in-service training, and periodic re-certification; and create an incentive system which links continuing education and professional development to student performance.
- 2.6 Support a school district employee evaluation system with input from administrators, teachers, peers, parents, and students; require remediation as a condition of continued employment for employees who receive unsatisfactory evaluations; and support school districts in re-mediating and, if necessary, discontinuing employment of any who fail.
- 2.7 Recommend a system to reward outstanding teachers, principals, and administrators based on improvements from a baseline in student performance; create structures to increase compensation for board certified professionals.
- 2.8 Recognize a plan to increase the supply of teachers in critical areas. Expect innovative paths for those with exceptional expertise but without education degrees to enter the teaching profession.

### **3. Assessment, Accountability, and Technology**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission reach out and improve public trust and support for public education, including creating new initiatives and recasting current initiatives to broaden and expand the appeal of public education?

#### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Public trust is reflected in both poll data, which demonstrates the widely held public perception of poor quality in the schools, and the flow of students from public schools to alternative non-public means of obtaining an education. Technology is creating a new educational venue as the information age unfolds. Parents are increasing their demands for expanded choice in the educational process affecting their children. Public trust is measured by the satisfaction of the parents and the students in the job we are doing.

Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Accountability, Choice, and Technology: Earning the Public Trust:

- 3.1 Expect that every district understands this strategic plan and supports its implementation. Commit to better results as specified in the State Department of Education Implementation Plan.
- 3.2 Commit to having all students leave the New Mexico public school system with the tools necessary to ensure their future successes in higher education and/or careers.
- 3.3 Expect a consistent accountability program, performance criteria, and results evaluation for all school choice options so that results can be compared and continuous improvement fostered.
- 3.4 Expect expansion of curriculum and educational choices through technology.
- 3.5 Carefully review all state statutes and regulations. Wherever appropriate, substitute local accountability for state regulations.
- 3.6 The Public Education Commission and State Department of Education will continue to model a commitment to accountability and continuous improvement.

#### **4. Safe Schools and Respectful Learning Environments**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission increase school safety and ensure classroom environments that are conducive to learning and mutual respect?

##### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Many people believe that schools are less safe and classrooms less respectful than they were in the past. Although not universally true, these perceptions do have some basis in fact. In some schools, teachers may struggle with classroom discipline and lack of parental support. Recent events have shown that acts of violence can occur in any school at any time. Some schools are outstanding examples of safety, decorum, and self-discipline, and should provide models of excellence. The Department and Commission will promote regulatory and statutory changes and new programs to ensure that schools are safe and classrooms provide the proper environment for learning, decorum, mutual respect, and good citizenship.

Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Safe Schools:

- 4.1 Support school environments that protect children and teachers from harm originating from any source; eliminate theft, intimidation, harassment, threats, and possession of weapons, alcohol, and other drugs. Support high expectations for self-discipline.
- 4.2 Expect that building structures and infrastructures are safe and functional. Support adequate and equitable funding to meet safety standards.
- 4.3 Support clear and consistent behavioral boundaries that are equitably enforced. Support research-based protocols and other beneficial codes of conduct. Promote teaching skills and habits that encourage cooperation, help create a healthy social environment, and nurture positive relationships and non-violent dispute mediation.
- 4.4 Support local district policies that establish the authority and tools required to create respectful and well-behaved classroom environments.
- 4.5 Support alternative programs for disruptive and other students who are not successful in school.
- 4.6 Support school safety plans and their implementation.
- 4.7 Support opportunities for meaningful student involvement in leadership, decision-making and service.

## **5. Equitable Access and Opportunity**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission assure equitable access and educational opportunities to support student learning?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Equity includes issues related to program access, financial support (both operational and capital), and the support of diversity--both cultural and linguistic. Program direction and funding recommendations are designed to make all students competent in at least two languages. Categorical funding is sustained and enriched for instructional materials, transportation, and technology needs. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) assure quality programs for diverse populations.

The Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Equitable Access and Opportunity:

- 5.1 Support a structure for individualizing and implementing educational plans for each student.
- 5.2 Support a funding mechanism to ensure equitable building and infrastructure standards.
- 5.3 Expect adequate resources to meet all instructional needs.
- 5.4 Expect programs to ensure access to appropriate technology for all students.
- 5.5 Support programs that encourage students to develop proficiency in two languages.
- 5.6 Support criteria for multiple and diverse high school diplomas.
- 5.7 Support opportunities for school choice.

## **6. Finance Operations and Return on Financial Investment**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission ensure that dollars spent for public education bring measurable results that demonstrate student success?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Return on the financial investment in students is measured using data about students, teachers, schools, and school districts. Dollars invested in education must produce measurable results.

The Public Education Department and Public Education Commission Goals to address the strategic issue of Return on Financial Investment:

- 6.1 -Support the requirement for all districts and schools to link district budgets with site-level budgets for each school in the district.
- 6.2 Support the requirement that links performance requirements and each school's Educational Plan for Student Success to the budget and expenditures.
- 6.3 Support an accounting model that links individual schools' budgets and expenditures with program and grade level performance measurements, and demonstrate that dollars expended result in a return of measurable results.
- 6.4 Support the improvement audit and audit follow-up procedures to enable schools to address areas of exception.
- 6.5 Expect adherence to licensure specifications for school business personnel.

## **7. Constructive Engagement with Our Partners and Communities**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission advance the public education system of New Mexico with all educational partners?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Constructive engagement with educational partners is a requisite in an increasingly complex environment in which education is delivered. Increasing awareness of the interrelated support other state agencies may provide public school students and the significant policy roles the Legislature and Governor play through enacting statutes, necessitates a more constructive engagement with these partners. The Department and Commission will exercise leadership and will seek the advice and guidance of the education stakeholders in the state, including students, parents, businesses, universities, the legislative and executive branches, tribes, advocacy groups, professional organizations and unions.

The Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Constructive Engagement with Our Partners:

- 7.1 Work with education partners to identify educational issues and collaborate on solutions.
- 7.2 Expect schools and school districts to work in partnership with parents, students, and businesses.
- 7.3 Work closely with all levels of government including the legislative leadership and interim legislative committees, the governor and his/her staff, tribal governments, which would include participation in Government to Government meetings, and the federal government, to gain their support and participation in the education system.
- 7.4 Establish links with businesses to solicit their input and gain their support and participation in the educational system.
- 7.5 Engage local districts, schools, parents, students, and businesses in a commitment to improve results of public education in their communities.
- 7.6 Ensure quality customer service to all stakeholders.

## **8. Indian Education**

How can the Public Education Commission and Public Education Department ensure rapid, effective, measurable, and sustainable improvement in the academic achievement of all Native-American students.

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

With the enactment of the Indian Education Act during the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the New Mexico State Legislature in 2003, the Public Education Department was invested with certain responsibilities to address the needs of American Indian students to “ensure equitable and culturally relevant learning environments, educational opportunities and culturally relevant instructional materials for American Indian students enrolled in public schools.” Towards this end, five major areas were identified for support: teacher and administrator quality; maintenance of native languages; curricula and instruction; tribal and parent involvement; and accountability. In addition, the state assessment process has highlighted the need for additional services for American Indian students in closing the achievement gap.

The Public Education Commission and the Public Education Department goals to support the implementation of the Indian Education Act and to improve American Indian student achievement are to:

- 8.1 Increase the number of Native American teachers and administrators in the schools.
- 8.2 Assist teachers working with Native American students to gain endorsements in bilingual, TESOL, reading and special education to ensure quality education services.
- 8.3 Support the expansion of bilingual programs to ensure the maintenance of native languages.
- 8.4 Develop Memorandum of Agreements with tribes to establish appropriate language development programs for students.
- 8.5 Work with tribes to establish criteria, standards and procedures for teaching native language, culture and history.
- 8.6 Assist schools and tribes in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of curricula and materials in native language, history and culture.
- 8.7 Work with the Indian Education Advisory Council to increase tribal involvement and control over the schools and the education of their students.
- 8.8 Work with the tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to establish formal government to government relationships to facilitate services for American Indian students.
- 8.9 Support districts in developing programs that will assist American Indian students residing in urban communities.
- 8.10 Support research and implementation of exemplary programs for American Indian students.

## **9. Rural Education**

How can the Public Education Department and Public Education Commission respond to the needs of rural school districts?

### **BASIS FOR THE ISSUE:**

Rural schools and districts face unique challenges related to size and isolation. Of paramount concern is the provision of sufficient resources to ensure the long-term success of the state's smallest and most remote districts. In addition to fiscal limitations, access to staff and student educational opportunities, the availability of specialized services and staffing demands related to the highly qualified provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act are among the most pressing issues faced by rural educators and communities.

Public Education Department and Public Education Commission goals to address the strategic issue of Rural Education:

- 9.1 Support a study of the Public School Funding Formula, with an emphasis on the funding mechanism for rural schools and districts.
- 9.2 Identify a short-term solution to address the revenue shortfalls experienced by districts of fewer than 250 students.
- 9.3 Promote distance-learning options as a method of augmenting student and staff coursework and other forms of training in isolated locations.
- 9.4 Facilitate the development and implementation of a plan for providing an expanded menu of regional education services to school districts.
- 9.5 Develop initiatives for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers and administrators in rural New Mexico.