



Hanna Skandera  
Secretary

New Mexico  
Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

Robert McEntyre  
Public Information Officer  
(505) 470-2620  
[Robert.McEntyre2@state.nm.us](mailto:Robert.McEntyre2@state.nm.us)

# NEWS RELEASE

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## PED Releases Comprehensive Review of School Background Check Policies and District Compliance

**SANTA FE, NM** – Today, the New Mexico Public Education Department released its comprehensive review of background check policies for every school district in the state. PED staff, along with the Department of Public Safety, conducted the review to ensure that districts are following state law. The review also provides guidance to strengthen state law and improve those policies.

“New Mexico’s parents deserve to know whether their child’s school district is following the law, conducting background checks, and providing a safe environment for our kids,” said Secretary Hanna Skandera. “This review will help districts craft stronger policies, identify lapses, and hold districts and charter schools that aren’t in compliance accountable.”

The review examined background check policies and compliance for all 188 districts and charter schools throughout New Mexico. This included background check compliance for all district-level and charter administrators, all newly hired employees, and an audit of all districts’ board-approved background check policies.

Highlights of the review’s findings include:

- All school districts and charter schools have access to New Mexico’s background check system through the web-based Cogent portal;
- 183 districts and charters submitted board-approved background check policies – one district and four charters failed to make these submissions;
- 184 districts and charters submitted written assurance that their board approved background check policies comply with state law, and that they are in compliance with these policies – one district and three charters failed to make these submissions;
- Districts and charters reported that 14 of 1,758 administrators do not have a required background check on file – two districts and seven charters failed to report data on administrators; and,
- Districts and charters reported that 81 of 5,253 newly hired employees do not have a required background check on file – three districts and six charters failed to report data on newly hired employees.

School districts or charter schools that are not complying or did not report required data have until March 1, 2016 to comply. After that date, PED will begin taking action against the licenses of any superintendent or charter school director not complying.

The full review is available online here: <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/topnews.html>

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