

THE ADVOCATE

Federal Education Legislation Stalls

Major education legislation stalled in Washington before the winter break. Presidential vetoes and lack of agreement on complex NCLB issues have prevented funding and policy bills from making progress.

Funding

President Bush vetoed H.R. 3043 which carried funding for education, saying "This bill spends too much". The National School Boards Association said the veto jeopardized funding for Title I grants for disadvantaged students, special education, school improvement grants, teacher quality grants, career and technical education, and other programs needed to carry out requirements of IDEA and NCLB. Both the House and the Senate support increases to assist schools with underfunded, mandated programs; however, they fell short in a vote to override the President's veto. It is likely education will be included in a consolidated appropriations bill along with funding for other domestic programs. Currently an extension of the Continuing Resolution is in effect that maintains 2007 funding levels into 2008 until Congress and the President can agree on a funding bill.

NCLB

Committee Chairs Senator Ted Kennedy and Representative George Miller have said it is unlikely that agreement will be reached on reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind. Therefore, there is fear that the current law could stay in effect for years. Historically, major legislation rarely occurs during Presidential election years because politicians' attentions are elsewhere. A new administration will take the reins in 2009 and that could delay expedited passage that year as well.

In an official statement, NSBA said, "It is deeply troubling that Congress and the Administration have failed to make urgently needed improvements to the program. Allowing reauthorization to languish for another two or three years would be a disservice to our schools, students and local communities. This 'one size fits all' approach to high stakes testing is inadequate and does not provide a true picture of student or school performance." They conclude, "A steadily rising performance bar within a flawed system will wrongfully trap more schools in a progression of increasingly severe sanctions, creating a vicious cycle that threatens to undermine public support for our schools."

Medicaid Reimbursement

The SCHIP bill that contained a moratorium on agency rules eliminating Medicaid reimbursement to schools for transportation and administration also received a Presidential veto. Congress has been unsuccessful in providing an alternative bill that is acceptable to the President. Local school districts stand to lose millions of dollars in reimbursement for these mandated services if the agency rule is allowed to go into effect.

♦ Source: NSBA



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DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

By Joe Guillen

Association Prepared for 2008 Legislative Session

Every year, NMSBA initiates a legislative process that enables local school boards to express their opinions on current educational issues. These opinions are collected through a resolutions development process. After a comprehensive analysis of resolutions, our Resolutions and Legislative



Committee submits the Legislative Program for discussion, debate and adoption by the NMSBA Delegate Assembly at our Annual Convention in December. What results is a Legislative Program that represents the collective voice of New Mexico's 89 school boards and over 450 school board members.

At the urging of our membership the Resolutions Committee developed a more comprehensive Legislative Program that was well received by the Delegate Assembly. Recognizing the 2008 Legislature will meet for thirty days to consider bills primarily relating to budgets, appropriations and revenue, our 2008 NMSBA Legislative Program is focused in this area.

The Delegate Assembly this year also adopted a set of three guiding principals that will be utilized evaluate legislation not been anticipated by the Association.

- 1) NMSBA opposes legislation that would require districts to expend additional funds without the State providing those necessary resources;
- 2) NMSBA opposes legislation that attempts to diminish or take away local board control; and
- 3) NMSBA believes funding for public schools should be increased to a level that assures that every student will receive an adequate education based on his or her needs.

The 2008 Legislature will have much to accomplish in this short thirty-day session. The legislative priorities that NMSBA will be promoting include:

- ◆ Funding Formula Task Force Recommendations
- ◆ Increased funding for teachers, administrators and support staff
- ◆ Increased funding to offset higher employee insurance costs
- ◆ Opposition to vouchers or tuition tax credits which diverts funds from public schools
- ◆ Adequate funding to provide after-school, summer school and tutoring academic programs
- ◆ The right of districts to have cash balance set-asides not susceptible to recapture penalties
- ◆ Legislation that would remove offset penalties on Public School Capital Outlay projects imposed when school districts obtain funding through the legislative appropriation process
- ◆ Opposition to legislation that moves or reduces the governance of school districts in any fashion
- ◆ Restoration of local school board authority to approve the offers of administrative level employment

We will be working closely as active members of the Partners in Education group and we will be attending Legislative and Committee meetings to ensure our legislators know how school boards feel about particular pieces of legislation. Please come by the session often and reinforce our Legislative Program.

THE ADVOCATE

The mission of *The Advocate* is to provide information to the members of the New Mexico School Boards Association.

Articles published in *The Advocate* represent the ideas or beliefs of the respective writers and are not necessarily the views of the NMSBA unless otherwise noted.

The Advocate is the official publication of the NMSBA and is published quarterly. *The Advocate* is supported by membership dues and is sent to all school board members and superintendents of its member districts as well as education stakeholders. Non-profit postage paid in Santa Fe, NM.

Letters to the Editor are welcome. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit article submissions for clarity and length. Deadlines falling on a holiday or weekend will be extended to the next business day. The deadline for submissions is 4 PM:

Winter Issue - December 10th
Spring Issue - March 10th
Summer Issue - June 10th
Fall Issue - September 10th

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Donna Archuleta - Incoming President

As 2007 is about to close out, I reflect on what has occurred in the Cimarron School District. The most frustrating circumstance was when we were required to eliminate two more teaching positions that were vacant due to the fact that we are on emergency funding! Over the last four years we have lost 12 teaching positions due to the lack of funding. We try to make up for those teaching positions with long distance learning. It was very encouraging to listen to Representative Mimi Stewart's new funding formula proposal that would also inject a lot of money into education. Our superintendent ran the figures and with that formula Cimarron would not have been on emergency funding this year. I am hoping that even if the formula is not embraced by the legislators that, at the very least, it opens their eyes to the fact that they are not funding education adequately and take a look at raising our percentage of the general fund back to the 50% we need!



I was also very encouraged to hear the statistics that Secretary of Education Veronica Garcia gave to us at the Annual Conference. New Mexico has moved up in several of the National Rankings and that helps to support the concept that our public schools are not failing! Keep up the good work everyone!

By Lora Harlan - Outgoing President

WOW! How quickly the year has flown by. At the Annual Convention I passed the gavel as President of NMSBA to Donna. It was a great year for the association and it has been my pleasure to serve as your President. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I have had many great experiences, training opportunities, networking sessions, and put many miles on my car and in the air.

I want to recap a few of the highlights (in no particular order).

☞ In August Donna and I attended the President's Retreat in Anchorage, Alaska. Each year the NSBA President hosts a training session for Presidents and President-elects. Norm Wooten, NSBA President, 2007, has utilized as his theme, *Community Engagement*. Our time together taught us how this strategy can be used to bolster and build a support system for our students. In doing so, we give them more opportunities to succeed and less chance to fail. In a surprising turn, after this program had been in place for a couple of years, test scores improved. This was not an expected consequence, but so clearly established the link between our student's support system and how they perform academically. I felt very challenged to encourage NMSBA and my local district to consider just how we offer support to each of our students. It was also exciting to meet and visit with officers from all 50 states in an informal setting.



Continued on page 4

President's Message continued from page 3

As you know, NMSBA was host to the NSBA Western Region Meeting in September. During this conference state officers network with each other, receive training from the NSBA officers, and collaborate with colleagues from the nine states: Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, New Mexico, North and South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. There were many expressions of how much everyone enjoyed their visit to New Mexico. Kudos to Joe, Carolyn, and Liz for their outstanding work in putting it all together.

I have traveled many miles. Some of the most pleasurable have been as I traveled to our Region meetings across the state. I have visited several different areas in New Mexico and so enjoyed visiting with board members in their local regions. During each of these events I have witnessed snapshots of the *Sweet Successes* that are going on in your districts. What a gift you give to children, our students, each day. Thank you.

In closing let me share one last time some of our challenges. As we each have experienced, each year there are more demands made of our students, our districts, and we as board members. Unfunded mandates, budgets that are stretched beyond our limits, mobility, and declining/exploding enrollment just to name a few. Please let me repeat words from last December: "these challenges are on going and each of you has been elected to represent your community. That puts you in a state and national political arena that has direct impact on how you conduct 'school' business." Continue to carry that torch. Our future is at stake.

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United We Stand!

An Initiative of the New Mexico School Boards Association and the New Mexico School Superintendents Association

Positive, productive and enduring school board-superintendent partnerships are one of the preeminent keys to student achievement and to the ultimate success of public school districts. Unfortunately, in today's rapidly changing, always challenging public education environment, school board-superintendent partnerships are under tremendous pressure, and this most precious tie can all too easily be broken.

It is for this reason that NMSBA and the NM School Superintendents Association have joined forces to launch the *United We Stand* initiative which will:

- ◆ Promote the value and importance of positive, productive school board-superintendent partnerships;
- ◆ Provide opportunities to exchange board-superintendent team building information and opportunities for mutual collaboration and discussion;
- ◆ Recognize and showcase model school board-superintendent relationships and practices;
- ◆ Ensure a clear understanding of the distinct role school boards and superintendents play in the success of school districts.

Association representatives have held preliminary meetings to brainstorm and begin to formulate a plan of action to implement the *United We Stand* initiative. Examples of proposed activities include the following:

- ◆ Encourage formal participation at association conference
- ◆ Contribute reciprocal articles in association newsletters
- ◆ Jointly produce a best practices program
- ◆ Form and make available relations assistance teams
- ◆ Undertake a study to determine the effects of superintendent, principal and board member turnover on AYP success
- ◆ Make joint presentations to legislative and other groups
- ◆ Conduct board-superintendent forums

The New Mexico School Boards Association and the NM School Superintendents Association are excited about the *United We Stand* initiative. If we are to be successful, we must work as one, trust one another and *Stand United!*

Annual Convention Recognizes Members

The NMSBA Annual Convention was held December 7-8, 2007 at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque. About 380 school board members, superintendents and education stakeholders participated in the conference.

Dr. Veronica Garcia, NM Secretary of Education gave the opening address to participants about the state of education in New Mexico. Later in the morning, Anne Barab's presentation was entertaining and interactive as she encouraged school boards in their attempts to balance attitude, reality and behavior to craft lives of resilience. She served three terms as a school board member in Dallas, Texas and became the first female Chief Operating Officer of a \$1.4 billion mortgage bank.



Hall of fame inductees include, from left, Randy Manning of Central, Vicki Smith of Cobre and Joe Guillen, formerly of the Espanola BOE. All three were honored for their many years of service to NMSBA and the children of New Mexico.

After lunch on Friday, the Delegate Assembly met to vote for the Executive Board officers of Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer; review the Resolutions for the Legislative Platform; and approve changes to the Association's Constitution and Bylaws. The Nominations report was shared and officer elections were held after hearing additional nominations from the floor. Lora Harlan (Clovis) moved into the Immediate Past President position; Donna Archuleta (Cimarron) moved into the office of President; David Zimmerman (Questa) moved into the position of President-Elect; Ramon Montano (Las Vegas City) was elected from the floor to the position of Vice-President; and Margaret Tapia (Pojoaque) was elected from the floor to the position of Secretary-Treasurer. With special thanks we



Lora Harlan, NMSBA President, pictured on the right, presented the NMSBA Board Member of the Year Award to Lilliemae Ortiz of Pojoaque.

recognize our two outgoing officers, Lilliemae Ortiz (Pojoaque) and Ralph Sepulveda (Cobre) for their longstanding support of NMSBA.

A special thanks also goes to our door prize contributor, Al Clemmons of George K. Baum and Company for donating ten \$100 bills (\$1,000 total) that were distributed by door prize tickets during the vote counting.

Prior to the Awards Banquet, Cooperative Education Services (CES), the Cuddy Law Firm and George K. Baum and Co. sponsored a Vendor Appreciation Reception for all the conference attendees.

There was an Awards Banquet on Friday evening to recognize those participating in the Leadership Development Program. Other award recipients recognized included those selected for the NMSBA Awards. Hall of Fame inductees were Joe Guillen, formerly of the Espanola BOE, Randy Manning of Central, and Vicki Smith of Cobre. Lilliemae Ortiz of Pojoaque was recognized as the Board Member of the Year. Clovis Municipal schools was acknowledged as the Board of Education of the Year.

Also at the Awards Banquet, outgoing president Lora Harlan passed the gavel to incoming president Donna Archuleta.

On Saturday morning, there were twenty-four breakout sessions offered for board members to receive relevant training. A Master Board Member certification class was also offered.



The 2007 NMSBA Board of Education of the Year was presented to the Clovis Municipal Schools Board of Education. Pictured here, they are (R to L): Mark Lansford, Terry Martin, Lora Harlan, Max Best and Lola Bryant.

♦ Summary by EE

Things it has taken me thirty years to learn

By Tom Salter

For more than three decades I have been immersed in the wacky world of media/communications/marketing/public relations. I have done a few exceptional things, a number of things right, a large quantity of average work, and a boatload of not-so-right things. Each flub and foible has brought a pearl of wisdom – and a scar or two. Here are some of the pearls.

Never wrestle with a pig – it gets you both dirty and the pig likes it.

We spend too much time wallowing in the mud. About 20 percent of the people in your community expect you to fail. They will be happy to help you do so and will gloat when it happens. Too often, we spend all of our time worrying about that 20 percent. Stop it. Spend some of your time working with the people who want you to succeed and most of your time with the people in the middle who don't know what to think. They are the ones who can be influenced and brought into your camp. It is unlikely that you will change the minds of the ones committed to the downfall of public education.

If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

We are our own worst enemies. List your “PR Nightmares” from the last five years. Why did they happen? Were staff members dismissive about parent complaints? Did the board charge ahead with a plan to change attendance zones/school start times/the elementary curriculum without asking for public input first? My experience has been that most PR problems are caused by not listening, not explaining, being inflexible, laziness or by not keeping our eyes on what is just ahead on the horizon. Very few of our PR problems have been caused by outside forces over which we have no control.

Never say anything negative to anyone who can't do anything about it.

Unless your mother-in-law is a part-time roofer, why tell her a school in your system has a leak? When you have a problem, find someone who can help solve it and get him involved. It does no good to complain to anyone who can't help – and complaining can erode public confidence in the quality of your schools and the education they are providing.

There is more than one path to any destination.

Micromanaging is a waste of time. It frustrates those below you and breeds staff discontent. If you feel like you must look over the shoulder of the people in your school system constantly and supervise every element of even the smallest project, your system has a deeper

problem. Let go of the day-to-day details and ask if you're ending up in the right place rather than nitpicking the road the staff took to get there. If you have to watch an employee's every move, you need to get a new employee.

If you're leading a herd, look back every now and then to make sure they're still there.

New ideas are needed in education today. However, before you head off down the road less traveled, it is important to make sure everyone in your flock knows where you are going, and more importantly, understands why you are taking this route to get there. If you gallop ahead, you may find yourself standing alone in the middle of a field asking, “Hey, where is everybody?”

If you need something, ask for it.

It is really as simple as that. The key is to ask the right person or group, and it may not be the obvious choice. Edward Bernaise, considered the father of public relations, was hired to increase book sales in an area. You would think he would go to libraries and bookstores to organize read-a-thons, buy three-get-one-free sales and special book clubs. Instead, he went to homebuilders. Huh? Yes, this forward-thinking PR genius convinced the contractors to include more bookshelves in homes they were building. If you buy a house with empty bookshelves, you will buy books to fill them. It worked, and book sales soared.

If you are an educational leader for any reason other than to help children, resign today.

What you do is too important to use it as a method to climb a ladder. Some school board members appear to care little about children and see their position as a way to be important. Sadly, the children in their school system suffer as a result.

Give credit where credit is due.

In most school systems, a student can be suspended or expelled for plagiarism. In too many offices, it is accepted practice. If you want to demoralize your staff, take credit for the work they do. My superintendent, John Dilworth is one of the best bosses you could have. He demands good work. If you don't live up to his expectations, he tells you in a constructive way (in his office in private – not in front of others), but he always gives credit to the staff members who do the work. At board meetings, public forums and cabinet meetings, he enthusiastically sings the praises of the staff for accomplishments big and small. And as you can imagine, we all work hard to do our best for him.

The media is an ineffective way to get your message to your public.

If you rely on the media publishing an occasional good story as the heart of your public relations program, you don't have a public relations program. Unless the local paper only publishes the articles you send them, the media tell the story they want to tell – not what you need communicated. There are so many elements to a good school system PR program that the media are the least effective tool in your PR toolkit.

Tell the truth.

Always. If you can't tell the truth, don't say anything.

Never give up

I have a picture of a road sign from a distant land. The words are in two languages, one of them English. The English translation reads, "Danger Ahead – Fasten Safety Belts and Remove Dentures!" That must be one bumpy road. If you were driving along and saw that sign, what would you do? Would you turn around or put your choppers in the glove box and hit the gas? It depends on where you are going doesn't it? If you are going to the store to pick up some Polydent, you would find another road or just go back home and not eat corn on the cob for dinner. If you are on

your way to help a son or daughter in trouble, you would forge ahead no matter what the risk. It is all about commitment. If you are committed to helping children and to making your community a better place, neither a bump in the road nor the Great Wall of China will stop you. Be committed and stay committed.

Best PR Advice

Perhaps the most important thing I have learned in thirty years is the key to good PR programs is to make friends in the community and keep them informed. While it really is that simple, it is not easy to do. There are many obstacles to good communication to overcome, both internal and external.

There is not one way to approach any PR problem and something that works in one situation may not be the answer the next time the same issue arises. One thing I know for sure is that I still have much to learn.

♦ *Written by Tom Salter - senior communications officer for Montgomery County Schools and veteran school public relations and communications presenter and trainer.*

♦ *Source: Alabama School Boards "Boardsmanship Basics", Fall 2007.*

January is school board recognition month

January is national School Board Awareness Month. The goal is to build awareness of the critical role an elected board of education plays in our community and schools.

When asked what kind of recognition they appreciate most, one board member stated, "anything that comes from the kids". Others say they appreciate sincere comments from the community and staff.

The New Mexico School Boards Association would like to thank all school board members for:

- ♦ putting children first
- ♦ serving the interests of all of the children of New Mexico
- ♦ caring enough to put your name on the election ballot
- ♦ taking the time to share your vision and voice
- ♦ attending countless hours of board meetings and training
- ♦ serving without compensation
- ♦ overseeing the goal of financial stability for your school district

At NMSBA we appreciate your dedication and we are here to help you!

The best piece of advice I received for school board service...

Focus on students and policy. If you need to micromanage, resign from the board and apply for a school division job. – *Sue Freidman, Union County BOE, Virginia*

Visit the schools (but not interfere with their operations); balance time between family, other activities and the board; try not to take things personally (keep your sense of humor and smile); and build coalitions or partnerships. We need to educate our communities on what boards do and why we are separate from other local government agencies. – *Juanita Haugen, Pleasanton Unified School District, California*

Surprises are only good in magic shows. Adhere to the "no surprises" rule. That means that board members need to read their packets and do their homework prior to the meeting. Superintendents need to respect board members and abide by the "no surprises" rule and strive not to ask board members to make quick, on-the-spot decisions at board meetings. – *Barbara Toney, former board member & consultant to the Illinois Association of School Boards*

● *Source: American School Board Journal, August 2006*

Courts Won't Interfere in Employee Evaluation Process

By Melissa Wurtzel O'Shea

The New Mexico Court of Appeals in *Lady Anne Henning v. Hobbs Municipal Schools* has ruled that employee evaluations are beyond the proper scope of review of the judicial system.

Lady Anne Henning, a tenured teacher in the Hobbs Municipal Schools, alleged in her lawsuit that she was improperly evaluated and forced onto a professional improvement plan and remained on the professional improvement plan even after it had been completed. Ms. Henning further alleged that her classroom was videotaped and that critical memoranda were written by administrators about her teaching and classroom discipline and that her evaluations and the memoranda were misleading or outright false. Ms. Henning argued that as a result of the Professional Improvement Plan she was not eligible for a Level III license, which was an adverse employment action.

Ms. Henning brought claims for breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing, interference with contractual relations, unlawful retaliation, defamation, fraud and civil conspiracy. The District Court dismissed the claims as not ripe for adjudication because Ms. Henning was still employed, had not been demoted nor had her pay decreased, and therefore had not suffered an adverse employment action.

The Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal but on different grounds. The Court found that all of Ms. Henning's claims, other than the breach of good faith and fair dealing, were barred by the Tort Claims Act. The Court held that employee evaluations, even if motivated by personal considerations or wrongfully motivated, are within the scope of authorized duties of school administrators, and thereby there is immunity under the Tort Claims Act. No waiver of that statutory immunity exposed the School Board or school officials to claims of this sort.

The claim for good faith and fair dealing, which is implied in every contract, requires that neither party do anything that will injure the rights of the other to the benefits of the agreement. *Bourgeois v. Horizon Healthcare Corp.*, 117 N.M. 434 (1994). Ms. Henning's allegations were that the evaluations and criticisms of her job performance were done in bad faith in an attempt to force her out of her job, and that it denied her the opportunity to earn a Level III license. The Court found that those facts did not breach the implied duty of good faith and fair dealing because she was not denied any of her rights under her employment contract and that she had not demonstrated she was otherwise qualified for a Level III license.

Finally, the Court specifically holds that there is "no general duty on the part of an employer to act nicely." The

Court went further to state that to allow suits over evaluations, absent any direct denial of contractual rights, would "unnecessarily involve courts in the employer-employee relationship and potentially subject employers to torrents of unwarranted and vexatious suits filed by disgruntled employees at every juncture of the employment process."

The ruling by the Court of Appeals constitutes a significant victory for school districts and school administrators. Administrators are now able to accurately and adequately evaluate poor teaching or management skills and implement proper growth plans without fear of legal challenges seeking to circumvent this process.

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NMSBA NEWS

Get to know your 2007-2008 NMSBA Executive Board

The current President is **Donna Archuleta**. She has been on the Cimarron Municipal Schools BOE for 11 years. She has served on the NMSBA Board of Directors as Vice President and Secretary of Region III. She has held the Executive Board positions of President-Elect, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. She has served as the Resolutions Committee Chair. She earned her Bachelor's degree from University of New Mexico in Education. She also completed school at the Anderson School of Banking and is currently employed as an accountant.

The President-Elect is **David Zimmerman**. He has been on the Questa Independent Schools BOE for 13 years. He has held the Executive Board positions of Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-President. He earned his Bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University in Math. He is self-employed as a welder.

The Vice-President is **Ramon Montaño**. He has been on the Las Vegas City Schools BOE for 7 years. He is on the Board of Directors as President of Region III. He is employed as a Deputy Sheriff.

The Secretary-Treasurer is **Margaret Tapia**. She has been on the Pojoaque Valley Schools BOE for 3 years. She is on the Board of Directors as Secretary of Region II. She has held national positions in NSBA as a Western Region Director in the Hispanic Caucus. She is employed as a Human Resources Generalist.

The Immediate Past President is **Lora Harlan**. She has been on the Clovis Municipal Schools BOE for 17 years. She has served on the NMSBA Board of Directors as President, Vice President, and Secretary of Region V. She has held the Executive Board positions of President, President-Elect, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer. She has served as the Resolutions Committee Chair, and Nominating Committee Chair. She is employed as a Children's Department Manager in a Christian Bookstore.

Ex-Officio Members

This was added with the policy change approval of Article CIX, Executive Board Section 1. Membership of the NMSBA Constitution during the Delegate Assembly, Friday, December 7, 2007. It states "any New Mexico school board member serving on the National School Boards Association Board of Directors shall serve as an ex-officio non-voting member" of the Executive Board.

Randy Manning is on the Central Consolidated Schools BOE and is in his fourth term of office. He has been active in the state association for many years and is currently on the Board of Directors as a Past-President. He has received the Board Member of the Year Award and was recently inducted into the NMSBA Hall of Fame. He was elected as At-Large Western Region Director of the NSBA. Randy has been a small business owner in his community for many years.

Lilliemae Ortiz is on the Pojoaque Valley Public Schools BOE and is serving in her third term of office. She has been active in the state association for many years and is currently on the Board of Directors as a Past-President. She recently received the Board Member of the Year Award. Lilliemae worked for the State of New Mexico in the Department of Finance and Administration for 27 years.

NMSBA REGIONS & 2008 SPRING MEETINGS

Region I

Wednesday, April 30* in Zuni

Aztec, Bloomfield, Central, Dulce,
Farmington, Gallup, Zuni

Region II

Thursday, March 20* in Taos

Chama Valley, Espanola, Jemez Mountain,
Los Alamos, Mesa Vista, Pecos, Penasco,
Pojoaque Valley, Questa, Santa Fe, Taos

Region III

Monday, April 21 in Santa Rosa

Cimarron, Clayton, Des Moines, Las
Vegas City, Las Vegas West, Maxwell,
Mora, Mosquero, Raton, Roy, Santa Rosa,
Springer, Wagon Mound

Region IV

Wednesday, April 9 in Mountainair

Albuquerque, Belen, Bernalillo, Grants-
Cibola, Cuba, Estancia, Jemez Valley, Los
Lunas, Magdalena, Moriarty, Mountainair,
Quemado, Rio Rancho, Socorro, Vaughn

Region V

Tuesday, March 18 in Texico

Clovis, Dora, Elida, Floyd, Fort Sumner,
Grady, House, Logan, Melrose, Portales,
San Jon, Texico, Tucumcari

Region VI

Monday, April 14* in Lake Arthur

Artesia, Carlsbad, Dexter, Eunice,
Hagerman, Hobbs, Jal, Lake Arthur,
Loving, Lovington, Roswell, Tatum

Region VII

Tuesday, April 22 in Ruidoso

Alamogordo, Capitan, Carrizozo,
Cloudcroft, Corona, Gadsden, Hatch
Valley, Hondo Valley, Las Cruces,
Ruidoso, T or C, Tularosa

Region VIII

Tuesday, April 29 in Silver

Animas, Cobre, Deming, Lordsburg,
Reserve, Silver City

**Indicates a change from previously
reported dates*

New Mexico receives ranking from *Education Week*

New Mexico ranked 30th nationally on *Education Week's* annual Quality Counts report "Grading the States' Outcomes and Policies" on educational issues released January 2008. The national average was a C grade and a score of 75.9, with only a handful of states earning a B and no states earning an A. New Mexico was one of 19 states to receive a grade of C with a total score of 75.2. This year the magazine returned to a state grading system to evaluate states' performance outcomes, policy efforts, and alignment of those policies across all grade levels. *Education Week* discourages comparisons from last year's report since the formulas were so different. The report also looked more broadly at states' recruiting and development efforts for teachers, standards, assessments, accountability, and school finance.

New Mexico received an A- (89.8) in the area of Standards, Assessments and Accountability. The state ranked 16th in the nation in this area for having standards that are clear, specific and grounded in content, a regular timeline for revision of standards, and for having supplementary resources for educators. This category also recognized the state's Standards Based Assessment for its variety of measures to assess student performance, the subjects tested, and how the test correlates to grades 3-8. New Mexico was also recognized for holding schools accountable for the performance of their students. New Mexico was ranked 9th in the nation for progress in early childhood and college and career readiness, coming in with a B-, a grade of 82.1. This progress included early learning

standards, school readiness assessments, interventions, and kindergarten standards.

New Mexico was recognized for defining college and work readiness, and providing diplomas or pathways to careers or post secondary education. "The state has taken the initiative to align high school graduation requirements with college entry requirements, better preparing students for success," said Dr. Reed Dasenbrock, NM Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education. "In addition, the Higher Education Department is working with college deans to improve mentoring of new high school teachers and to ensure all of our teachers meet higher standards."

A new category for this year's report was the teaching profession. New Mexico received a C+, a score of 77.1, and ranked 17th nationally for its work with teachers. New Mexico was noted for its initial licensing requirements, support, evaluation and training of teachers, salaries for teachers in comparison to similar professions, incentives for teachers to take leadership roles, and maintaining information about teachers by school poverty level. In 2007, New Mexico reported to the U.S. Department of Education that 94% of all core courses were taught by teachers highly qualified in their subject areas.

To view the entire report, go the New Mexico Public Education website at www.nmped.state.nm.us or the Education Week magazine website at www.edweek.org.

♦ Source: NM PED

Student Health

New Mexico gets a B+ on National School Food Report Card

In November 2007, the Center for Science in the Public Interest released their annual report card rating each state's school meals. No state received an A grade, but two states (Kentucky and Oregon) received an A-; six states received a B+ (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Nevada, New Mexico and Washington); nine states earned a B or B-; six states and the District of Columbia received Cs; seven states got Ds; and 20 states got Fs.

CSPI based its grades on five key considerations:

- ♦ Beverage nutrition standards
- ♦ Grade levels to which policies apply
- ♦ Locations on campus to which policies apply
- ♦ Food nutrition standards
- ♦ Time during the school day to which policies apply

Over the last 20 years, obesity rates have tripled in children and adolescents, and only 2 percent of children eat a healthy diet, in comparing key nutrition recommendations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Despite that, about a third of elementary schools, 71 percent of middle schools, and 89 percent of high schools sell items such as sugary drinks, snack cakes, candy and chips out of vending machines, school stores, or a la carte lines in the cafeteria, according to the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study*.

The entire report is available from the website at www.cspinet.org under "Two-thirds of states get poor grades on school food report card".

● Source: www.cspinet.org

PDK/Gallup Polls Finds Public Opinion on NCLB Worsening

As Congress debates changes to the No Child Left Behind Act, with an eye to maximizing the achievement of all students, the 39th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, conducted in June 2007, identifies the public's interests and concerns.

Fifty-four percent of respondents answered that they knew a great deal or fair amount about NCLB, up from 45% last year and 24% in 2003. Thirty-one percent of respondents held a "very or somewhat favorable" opinion of the law, about the same as last year, but 40% now say they have a "somewhat or very unfavorable" view. In addition, more respondents are now likely to place more blame for failing schools on NCLB itself as opposed to the schools (49% now, 43% previously).

Schools place "too much emphasis" on achievement testing, a central tenant of NCLB, according to a plurality of respondents (43%, up from 31% in 2002). About 40% believe schools do "about the right amount" of testing. Among public school parents, 52% believe there is too much testing, up 20 points from 2002.

Half of those polled believed that NCLB's focus on reading and math was reducing instructional time in other areas. Ninety percent of those who felt that NCLB has resulted in a narrower curriculum are concerned about it. Sixty percent of those polled think students need to spend more time learning about other nations and cultures. Ninety percent believe that all children should become proficient in a second language in addition to English and that foreign language instruction should begin in elementary school (70%).

Eighty percent of those polled felt that English Language Learners should be required to pass an English proficiency test before their reading and math scores are used to measure school performance. Seventy percent of those polled question holding special education students to the same standards as other students.

Perhaps troubling for school boards, PDK/Gallup found more respondents than in prior years willing to shift decision-making authority over to K-12 schools from the local board to the state and federal level. In 1980, 68% believed the board should have "the greatest influence in what is taught", but that has dropped to 49% this year (and down 9 points from last year). Thirty-one percent of respondents believe the state should have the greatest influence, and 20% believe this responsibility lies with the federal government.

The poll was administered to 1005 randomly selected adults nationwide, weighted to reflect the population, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 points.

To read a full report of the poll, visit www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kpollpdf.htm

♦ Source: *Vermont School Board Association Board Room and PDK*

Supreme Court to take up special education case

The US Supreme Court will hear a special education case in the upcoming term that could have huge implications for public school districts. *Board of Education of the City School District of New York v. Tom F.* will be one of the most closely watched decisions of the 2007-08 term. It will determine whether the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a district to pay for a student's private education even though the child had not attended a public school or if the student must "try" what might be an inappropriate placement before moving to a private setting.

♦ Source: *School Board news, October 2007, by Joetta Sack-Min*

STEM plan could interfere with local control

NSBA issued a press release in December to Congress regarding implications of an education plan recommended by the National Science Board that could have an impact on local school boards' ability to control educational policy.

The National Science Board's plan to bolster science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) would help equip students with the skills they need to prosper in the 21st century but the implementation of the plan could conflict with local school board's decision-making. The plan, "A National Action Plan for Addressing the Critical Needs of the U.S. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education System" would focus on unifying the nation's STEM education system and making certain that such classes are taught by qualified educators.

In addition, the action plan will establish a national education council that would have the ability to set national academic content guidelines and teacher certification requirements.

"NSBA believes that giving such responsibilities to an independent national council is in direct conflict with our locally and democratically controlled public education system," said Chrisanne Gayle, director of federal programs at NSBA. "Such an entity would divest state and local governments of their responsibilities and authority over public education and institute governance structure with little or no oversight or accountability that would be responsible for high-level decision making."

NSBA commended aspects of the plan that would recruit and retain STEM teachers through performance-based pay, bonuses, alternative certification bonuses and student loan forgiveness.

♦ Source: *NSBA*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

NSBA Annual Convention
March 29 - April 1, 2008
Orlando, FL
www.nsba.org/conference

Celebrating Educational Opportunities
April 25-27, 2008
Fairmont Hotel, San Jose, CA
www.csba.org

School Law Conference
June 6-7, 2008
Hotel Albuquerque
Albuquerque, NM
www.nmsba.org

Information for NMSBA conferences will be available on the NMSBA website.
Go to www.nmsba.org, and from the homepage choose "Conference Information"
For out-of-state conferences, see the website listed.

Tidbits...

Now that was a great gift!

Today is one of the good days. Morgan Corliss, 13, feels well enough to go to school, even as she suffers from a rare kidney disease. "I've had a fever... My kidneys sometimes would hurt, and I would be really tired and dizzy" Corliss said. In 2007, Morgan had lost 85 percent of her kidney function. Last fall doctors said she urgently needed a transplant. She has a rare kidney disease called focal segmental glomerulosclerosis. Morgan's mother, Caryn Corliss said, "That was hard. And I was angry. Very, very angry that she has to feel the pain..." But there was also immense fear that accompanied the anger. Where could Morgan find someone quickly to donate a kidney? The Franklin, N.H. family bombarded the town with fliers and radio appeals for an organ donor. Jim Friel, the principal at Morgan's middle school, barely knew the eight-grader, but he did not hesitate. "I just had this overwhelming feeling" Friel said. "It's the right thing to do." He said, "I've spent 24 years of my life trying to make a difference in the lives of kids, and if this isn't making a difference in the life of a child, I don't know what is." Doctors told Friel to expect several weeks of pain and missed work – sacrifices that discourage many people from becoming donors. "There is no way I can ever thank him enough," Morgan's mother said. "She'll be able to go to those school dances. She'll be able to play outside – do all those things and live a teenager life." Friel is undergoing more blood tests to ensure he's a good match for Morgan. So far, all signs look promising for a transplant next month. "I told her... she's going to be stuck with me following her around the rest of her life because she'll have a piece of me with her," Friel joked.

♦ *Source: ABC/World News Tonight, December 17, 2007 – Written by John McKenzie*

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