

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



NMSBA's top priorities are focused on keeping our students and staff safe, providing the best education possible for students, increasing achievement and implementing quality learning programs based on best practices.

Local Decision Making

1. **School Re-Entry Flexibility** – NMSBA recognizes that school re-entry planning decisions should not be a “one size fits all” proposition and supports legislation and flexibility to allow local school boards to make decisions about re-entry and small group instruction based upon relevant scientific evidence.
2. **Sharing of Data** – NMSBA believes all pandemic related scientific evidence and data should be shared with school districts to strengthen local decision making which will: maximize distance/blended learning; assess student achievement; ensure supports for social and emotional learning; emphasize authentic, culturally responsive learning; and, leverage more adequate and equitable school funding.
3. **Graduation and ADC** – NMSBA supports temporary flexibility for Alternative Demonstration of Competency (ADC) needed for graduation and extended time to meet course requirements particularly for graduating seniors.

Adequate Funding

4. **Core Education Mission** - NMSBA supports sufficient, stable and recurring funding, resources and the flexibility required to open the doors, meet any new mandates and fully staff the constitutionally mandated core education program to meet the unique needs of all districts - large, medium and small including transportation expenses.
5. **Hold Harmless for Declining Enrollment** – NMSBA supports legislation that holds school districts harmless from the prior year enrollment provisions of the State Equalization Funding Formula for the duration of the public health emergency.

6. **School District Operating Reserves** - NMSBA requests that school district reserves be preserved and protected without penalty as they are critical to keeping the doors open between revenue inflows, are utilized for locally established priorities and provide resources to address unfunded health and safety concerns.
7. **Student and Staff Safety** – NMSBA supports legislation to provide direct aid with the flexibility necessary for school districts to meet the unpredictable and ever-changing pandemic needs including PPE, technology and HVAC, social-emotional supports, training, food and other basics.
8. **Educator Recruitment, Retention and Preparation** - NMSBA supports legislative action that keeps all school personnel employed; partners with schools in covering any increases to the employer and employee cost of equitable health care for school personnel; and invests as we can, in increased salaries for all school personnel with the long-term goal of becoming regionally competitive.
9. **Digital Divide/Broadband Access** - NMSBA supports funding to ensure all districts and students are provided with Internet access, dedicated laptops, tablets or other devices coupled with education programing to enable and maximize online learning opportunities. NMSBA also supports the convening of a statewide committee to establish broadband access for all residents with representation from school boards and superintendents.
10. **Extended Learning Programs** – NMSBA supports legislation to continue extended learning programs along with flexibility in the K-5 Plus Program by removing the 80% cohort requirement to help increase student participation and adjust to family schedules; allow flexibility for a 15-day program to be continued; increase funding by changing the factor; and provide funding to update all curriculum materials.
11. **Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Curriculum** – NMSBA supports legislation that will continue to fund culturally and linguistically responsive training, curriculum/materials; and develop methods of reporting and accountability to assure NM students are provided these opportunities and engage in the work necessary to create change in our schools to address educational disparities.
12. **Impact Aid Distribution** - NMSBA supports a hold harmless provision from any reductions to district operating budgets as a result of the U.S. Department of Education’s recent ruling on federal impact aid distributions.