



NEW MEXICO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

"Serving New Mexico's School Boards since 1958"

2026 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

I. Introduction

The mission of the New Mexico School Boards Association (NMSBA), as an advocate for public education, is to provide leadership and services that enable local boards of education to govern effectively. Through NMSBA, local boards of education are involved in the

legislative process to achieve needed school and program reforms. Each of these efforts is focused on the belief that every student is entitled to a free and quality public education.

Every year NMSBA issues a call for resolutions enabling local school boards to express their opinions on educational issues requiring attention by the State Legislature. After a comprehensive analysis of the resolutions by the NMSBA Resolutions and Legislative Committee, they are presented to the full membership at the Annual Delegate Assembly for discussion, debate and adoption. Our 2026 Legislative Program represents the collective voice of New Mexico's

89 school boards comprised of over 450 elected school board members.

The 2026 Legislative Session will be a challenging 30 day session with many important financial and policy issues to address. We trust our Legislative Program effectively highlights our priorities to share with New Mexico's Legislative, Executive and State Education Leaders.

NMSBA utilizes three guiding principles to develop our Legislative Program. The principles are also utilized to evaluate legislation introduced during the session that was not anticipated and did not go through our legislative review process. The guiding principles follow.



II. Guiding Principles

NMSBA's three guiding principles utilized to evaluate legislation affecting public education are:

making and supports legislation that maintains or expands local control and flexibility in decision-making.

school boards to utilize funds within their districts to meet local priorities and the diverse needs of their students and communities.

★ Local Control

One of the important components of a successful public education system is local control and flexibility in decision-making. NMSBA believes that local control must be preserved and, when possible, expanded. NMSBA opposes legislation that attempts to diminish or take away local decision-

★ Adequate Funding

NMSBA believes funding for public schools should be appropriated at a level that assures every student receives a quality education based on individualized student needs and fully complies with the Martinez/Yazzie court order. Funds should be appropriated in a recurring manner that preserves the ability of

★ Unfunded Mandates

NMSBA opposes legislation that mandates new programs or activities without providing necessary financial resources. NMSBA also continues to advocate for resources to carryout current unfunded mandates and programs for public schools.

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450 Strong!

III. Appropriations & Operations

★ SEG Funding/Above the Line

NMSBA supports funding to the SEG "above the line". It is our belief that "below the line" appropriations dis-equalizes funding to local districts.

★ NMSBA Also Supports

Sufficient funding for administrative and support staff; instructional materials; community schools programs; inter-vention programs; special education pro-grams; and increases to the unit value as called for in the State Constitution.

★ Operating Budget Hold Harmless

NMSBA supports legislation that closes the federal funding gap and holds public schools harmless from reduc-tions to operating budgets due to de-creasing enrollment which guarantees schools receive no fewer SEG reve-nues than prior year levels.

★ Operating Reserves

NMSBA supports legislation that pre-serves and protects local operating reserves (cash balances) without pen-alty.

★ At-Risk/Secondary Funding

NMSBA supports increased funding in the SEG for at-risk and secondary stu-dents with hold harmless provisions for all districts.

★ Small School Districts

NMSBA supports SEG adjustments to enable small districts to operate at a base level without reliance on supple-mental emergency funds. NMSBA op-poses mandatory consolidation of small districts for budgetary reasons.



Co-Curricular and Extracurricular

NMSBA supports full funding for co-curricular and extracurricular activities including music, arts, and athletics.

Compulsory Attendance/Truancy

NMSBA supports funding to enforce-ment of Compulsory Attendance Laws.

Cultural Responsive Curriculum

★ NMSBA supports legislation to fund culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and materials, accountability reporting, and training to engage in the work necessary to address educational disparities among racial groups.

Dual Credit Programs

NMSBA supports increased funding for and equitable access to dual credit pro-grams, and opposes action to restrict or limit student enrollment.

Early Childhood/ Pre-K/K-12

NMSBA supports funding for all day pre-school, half-day pre-school for 3 year-olds, K-5 and K-12 Plus initiatives; in-cluding flexibility to measure hours vs. days; and operational, facility and trans-portation costs.

★ Education Retirement

NMSBA supports funding the ERB to cover the net pension liability which districts now face.

★ Educator Housing Assistance

NMSBA supports funding educator housing allowances that correspond to a percentage of the average rent/ mortgage rates in NM school districts.

Ethnic Studies

NMSBA supports allowing districts to develop ethnic studies curriculum to satisfy social studies credit require-ments.



★ Extended Learning Programs

NMSBA supports legislation to continue extended learning programs including flexibility in the K-5 Plus Program to help increase student participation and adjust to family schedules; allow flexi-bility for a 15-day program to be con-tinued; and provide funding to update all curriculum and materials.

★ Health & Risk Insurance Costs

NMSBA supports full funding for the 80/20 rule for insurance premiums al-lowing public school employees to pay 20% and the district to pay 80% re-gardless of salary. NMSBA also sup-ports funding for a sound legal and risk prevention program for school districts.

High School ADOC Authority

NMSBA opposes efforts to remove school board authority to make educa-tional policy decisions regarding alter-native demonstration of competencies and supports dropping the Algebra II requirement necessary for graduation.

Anti-Underage Student Vaping

NMSBA supports funding for school and community education to address the vaping epidemic in schools.

Broadband Access

NMSBA supports funding for all stu-dents to be provided with Internet ac-cess and technology devices; and a state committee with school board, superin-tendent and NMPED representation to establish statewide broadband access.

Bullying Prevention

NMSBA supports funding to support the costs associated with development of bullying prevention programs, curri-culum and professional development.

★ Career and Technical Pathways

NMSBA supports funding for STEM, career and technical pathways, job in-tern opportunities, options for vocation-al endorsements, and career education start-up, operations and program costs.

Cigarettes & Tobacco Regulation

NMSBA supports legislation to repeal the preempting of stricter city and county regulations on the sale of tobac-co products and smoking devices.



Licensure Advancement System

NMSBA supports extending the current dossier program and convening a task force to develop a licensure system with multiple options for teacher advancement.

LGBTQ Success & Safety

NMSBA supports the success and safety of LGBTQ students by recognizing their unique challenges and by developing strategies for educational success.

Math/Reading Intervention

NMSBA supports funding to cover salaries, benefits and training for math and reading interventionists.

National Board Certification

NMSBA supports establishment of a fund to reimburse teachers who obtain National Board Certification.

Open Meetings Act (OMA)

NMSBA supports amending the OMA to allow for discussion of school safety policies/measures in Executive Session.

Paperwork Reduction

NMSBA supports creation of a task force to identify and remove all unfunded, unnecessary, duplicative laws, regulations, and reporting requirements.

★ PED Awards & Reimbursements

NMSBA supports the timely award of initial, final and carryover funds and timely processing of district requests for reimbursement.

Public Education Strategic Plan

NMSBA supports preparation of a 10-year strategic plan to guide early childhood, public and higher education.

Public Records Act (PRA)

NMSBA supports an exemption from the PRA which allow boards to release the names of only the final three candidates for superintendent positions.

REC Funding

NMSBA supports funding to ensure Rural Education Cooperative services are available statewide.

Return to Work

NMSBA supports legislation to eliminate or reduce ERB contributions for short and long term substitute teachers and retired PERA security personnel.

School Based Health Services

NMSBA supports efforts to increase the number of school based health centers and school nurses statewide; and, to develop a pathway of behavioral health providers and paid internships.

School Grades

NMSBA supports a school grading system that ensures grades are valid, defensible, replicable and can be used as a tool to improve district academic programs. NMSBA also supports creation of a School Grades Council with school district representation to oversee the school grading system in NM.

School Police Departments

NMSBA supports allowing school boards the option to create independent police departments to provide school security.

★ Student and Staff Safety & Security

NMSBA supports funding for school safety security personnel; capital improvements; training; behavioral, social emotional health services, counseling for student and staff well-being; student homelessness; guidance in utilizing armed school security guards; restorative justice; and paid internships for health care providers.

Separation of Children/Families

NMSBA calls for the immediate end to the separation of children from their families by the federal government.

Short Cycle Assessments

NMSBA supports development of a method for counting short cycle assessment data in school report cards and teacher evaluations.

Special Education Programs

NMSBA supports funding initiatives to attract special education staff, maintain and support programs to include accessibility and transportation costs.

★ Substance Abuse/Targeting

NMSBA supports resources to address teenage substance abuse and the packaging of drugs targeted at students.

Teacher Internship Program

NMSBA supports full-time teacher Level 1 salary/benefits funding for student teacher interns completing their student teacher internship requirements.

Teacher Leadership & Licensure

NMSBA supports funding for leadership development programs and funding for all fees and costs associated with educator licensure and credentialing.

Teachers/Police Officers

NMSBA supports legislation allowing retiring teachers, police officers, and other professionals to return to work immediately without penalty.

★ Teacher/Principal/Staff Salaries

NMSBA supports additional funding to increase minimum salaries of the three-tiered licensure system to remain regionally competitive; increase bilingual teacher and TESOL stipends at \$1,000 and \$500 respectively; and increase Education Assistant compensation to a \$20 hour minimum.

★ Technology & Artificial Intelligence

NMSBA supports funding for the development and implementation of statewide technology and artificial intelligence plans, and related professional development.



Testing Reduction/Study

NMSBA opposes testing requirements beyond current law which take time away from student instruction.

Three-Tiered System / Professionals

NMSBA supports the creation of a three-tiered licensure system for all certified professional staff not currently in the existing structure.

Transportation

NMSBA supports fully funding actual costs required by districts to transport students to and from, as well as for after school programs in safe and healthy ways in air conditioned buses.

Capital Outlay

NMSBA supports continued PSCOC funding for standards, systems and preventative maintenance programs.

- ★ NMSBA supports continued funding for broadband, school safety, cyber-security, AC/HAVC upgrades and renewal energy programs.

★ NMSBA supports reduction of local matching requirements, easement of waiver requirements and elimination of match requirements for school security, safety, Pre-K, and CTE projects.

- ★ NMSBA supports allowing school bond elections to be included on the General Election voting ballot.

NMSBA supports repeal of the bonding requirement for sub-contractors on school projects where the general contractor has bonded the entire project.

NMSBA supports exemption of schools from paying gross receipts taxes and impact fees from governmental agencies on construction projects.



IV. Accountability & Governance

Academic Achievement

NMSBA supports governance that keeps student success, achievement and quality learning as the number one priority of all local school boards.

Accountability

NMSBA believes accountability for meeting state standards is the responsibility of local boards, staff, parents, students, and the community at large.

★ Board Member Removal

NMSBA opposes the removal or suspension of individual board members by NMPED as statutory recall procedures already exist for this purpose.

Charter School Advocacy

NMSBA opposes actions by NMPED officials to promote charter schools over traditional public schools.

Charter School Budget Audit Approval

NMSBA supports legislation requiring school board approval of local charter school budgets prior to submission to NMPED as well as approval of corrective action on audit findings.

Health Insurance Continuation

NMSBA supports the option of allowing school board members to continue NMPDIA insurance coverage at their own expense after leaving office.

Improved Collaboration

NMSBA promotes collaboration between Executive, Legislature & local

school boards in the development of new programs, initiatives and ratings which are accurate, equitable and consistent.

★ Local Governance/Flexibility

NMSBA supports flexibility in local decision making to align with community needs to include standards based programs, instruction time, school calendar, four-day school week, and graduation requirements.

Nepotism Waivers

NMSBA supports legislation that allows waivers to hire school board member relatives for hard-to-fill vacancies.

Per Diem Payments

NMSBA supports the reinstatement of full-day per diem for school board members to attend school board meetings.

State Governance System

NMSBA supports passage of a Joint Memorial to re-establish a State Board of Education with the authority to appoint a State School Superintendent and operate the state department of education.

School Board Special Elections

NMSBA supports needed changes to the Local Election Act to include the option of conducting in-person special elections.

School Board Training

NMSBA supports flexible training for school board members in the areas of financial, budget, audit oversight and governance models and programs proven to be effective.

2026 NMSBA Resolutions Committee

Chairperson

Marvyn Jaramillo - Mesa Vista

Members

Gary Montoya - Central

Lance Wright - Cloudcroft

Terry Martin - Clovis

James Casaus - Cuba

Lisa Maxwell - Farmington

Laura Salazar Flores - Gadsden

Priscilla Benally - Gallup

Terry O'Brain - Hobbs

Teresa Tenorio - Las Cruces

Toby Willis - Logan

Alyssa Esquivel - Lordsburg

Monica Aragon - Mora

Albert Chavez - Moriarty Edgewood

Felix Benavidez - Pojoaque

Inez Rodriguez - Portales

Gary Tripp - Rio Rancho

Jack Cheney - Roswell

Carmen Gonzales - Santa Fe

Kimberly Klement - Silver

Patrick Cohn - Silver

Travis Glenn - Tatum

Chris Matson - Vaughn

Christine Ludi - West Las Vegas

Linda Montoya - West Las Vegas

