



NEW MEXICO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2026 PUBLIC EDUCATION LEGISLATION PASSED BY HOUSE AND SENATE AND SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

The 2026 Legislative Session was a 30-day session with over 800 bills introduced. Of these, approximately 147 bills addressed public education, 12 were approved by both the House of Representatives and Senate and all were signed into law by Governor Lujan Grisham. A listing of these bills along with 4 House Memorials, 1 House Joint Memorial and 1 Senate Joint Resolution follow.

HOUSE BILLS

HB 2/a General Appropriation Act 2026 (Nathan P. Small, Meridith Dixon) – Approved a state budget of \$11.1 billion budget proposal which appropriates \$4.751 billion for Public School Support including the following:

- \$73 million to raise group insurance contributions for school districts to at least 80% of the cost of employee health insurance.
- \$55 million for districts to purchase culturally and appropriate instructional materials.
- \$59 million for districts to create an education plan; provide literacy programs; and provide career technical programs

While HB2 bill does not include funds for salary increases, the legislature approved a 1% salary increase for all state and school employees in **Senate Bill 15**, the omnibus tax package.

HB 30 Teacher Residency Act Changes (Debra M. Sariñana, Natalie Figueroa, Joy Garratt, Brian G. Baca, Mimi Stewart) - Amends the Teacher Residency Act; provides that the amount of the stipend for a teaching resident be set at a percentage of the statutory minimum salary for level one teachers based on the resident's qualifications; provides that a teaching resident may complete their teaching commitment in any public school after the residency instead of a public school in the sponsoring school district; provides that a partner school district or charter school shall be expected to offer employment to a teaching resident depending on the district's or charter school's staffing needs and the resident's performance. (LESC)

HB 34 School Nurse Licensure Provisions (Joy Garratt, Natalie Figueroa) – HB34 updates licensure requirements for level 2 and level 3 school nurses; removes language specifying teacher contract duration; and prescribes evaluation methods of level 2 and level 3 school nurses' competency. The bill also clarifies that school nurse licensure provisions apply to both school districts and charter schools..

HB 47 School Employee Insurance Programs (Raymundo Lara, Natalie Figueroa, Mimi Stewart, Tanya Mirabal Moya, Brian G. Baca) – requires school districts and charter schools to pay at least 80 percent of the health insurance costs of all public

school employees; requires a study of the sustainability of insurance programs for public school employees; appropriation included in HB2. (LESC)

HB 253 Public Education Changes (Joy Garratt, Susan K. Herrera, William P, Soules)

- amends the Public School Code by adding annual reporting requirements for school districts and charter schools serving distance learning students in full-time distance learning programs;
- revises the rural population factor in the state equalization guarantee (SEG), the state's public school funding formula, by excluding distance learning students from its calculation;
- enacts the "Distance Learning Act" to define distance learning students and full-time distance learning programs;
- requires full-time distance learning programs to comply with all provisions of the Public School Code;
- requires compliance with state and federal law regarding student privacy, student record confidentiality and secure student record storage, and maintain records of the school district's or charter school's expenditures related to the program;
- requires the Public Education Department (PED) to evaluate all full-time distance learning programs by the end of the 2027-2028 school year (SY28) and to certify the programs are in compliance with the Public School Code and related administrative rules;
- authorizes PED to begin this evaluation upon the effective date of the proposed changes and require reevaluation at least every five years.

HB 256 Defibrillators at School Athletic Events (Pamelya Herndon, Yanira Gurrola) – requires schools' cardiac emergency response plans provide information on the appropriate response to sudden cardiac arrest or other life-threatening emergencies during school athletic activities; and requires automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) to be clearly marked and accessible during school athletic events.

HOUSE MEMORIALS

HM 2 Study Screen Use in Elementary Classrooms (Joy Garratt) – Requests the LESC to conduct a study of the use of screen time for instruction and assessment in elementary school classrooms including the impacts of programs on student learning, development, and well-being; and requests the PED to establish guidelines for screen use in elementary school classrooms.

HM 30 Public Education Governance Study (Joy Garratt, G. Andres Romero, Brian G. Baca, Jack Chatfield) – Requests the LESC to study public education governance and long-term educational planning; the memorial further requests LESC to work with a broad working group of state agencies; educators; community, research, and nonprofit organizations; tribes, nations, and pueblos in New Mexico; and other members as directed by LESC. A final report, including both its research and recommendations, is requested to be published by November 30, 2026. (See Attachment A)

HM 47 Study Teacher Workloads (G. Andres Romero, Joseph L. Sanchez, E. Diane Torres-Velasquez) – Requests the LESC to conduct a study examining requirements and practices related to teacher workloads and the structure of instructional days and to develop recommendations to support high-quality instruction and teacher effectiveness that inclusively benefit all New Mexico students. In addition the memorial requests LESC to work with educational leaders; educators representing numerous grade levels, areas of instructional expertise, and communities in New Mexico; school personnel; teacher unions; the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC); and the Public Education Department (PED) and that a final report be published by December 31, 2026.

HM 53 Study “Gifted-In-Field” Teacher Endorsement (Tara L. Lujan, Yanira Gurrola, G. Andres Romero, Debra M. Sarinana, E. Diane Torres-Velasquez) – requests the Public Education Department (PED) to collaborate with the state’s public postsecondary educational institutions and gifted education organizations to study the creation of a “gifted in-field” endorsement for secondary gifted education teachers, including consideration of courses available from the state’s public postsecondary educational institutional institutions.

HJM 2 IPRA Implementation Study Task Force (Cathrynn Brown, Natalie Figueroa, Matthew McQueen) directs the attorney general to convene a task force to study the implementation of the Inspection of Public Records Act with representatives from various groups and organizations.

SENATE BILLS

SB 19 School Finance Unit Value Reset (William P. Soules, Benny Shendo, Jr., Linda M. Trujillo, Pete Campos, Roberto “Bobby” J. Gonzales) – Provides an extension of time to February 27, 2026, for the Public Education Department to adjust and set the final unit value; declares an emergency. *(Unit value was set by PED \$6,877.10, an increase of \$75.75 or 1.11 percent)*

SB 29 Math Requirements for Teaching License (William P. Soules, Debra M. Sariñana, Catherine J. Cullen) creates a statewide framework to address mathematics instruction by increasing teacher preparation requirements, creating requirements for a statewide mathematics instructional leadership framework, adding requirements for school district and charter school professional learning plans, and creating a system of screening and family notification regarding mathematics performance among kindergarten through third-grade (K-3) students. (LESC)

SB 37 High Quality Literacy Instruction Act (Mimi Stewart, Joy Garratt, Catherine J. Cullen) – Enacts the High-Quality Literacy Instruction Act; provides standards for literacy instructional materials; requires public schools to provide literacy assessments to students in kindergarten through third grade and interventions for student identified as having a reading difficulty; requires the PED to assign literacy instructional coaches to certain public schools. (LESC)

SB 64 Create Office of Special Education (Mimi Stewart, Joy Garratt, Cindy Nava) – Enacts the Special Education Act; creates the Office of Special Education (OSE) in the PED; provides for a deputy secretary of special education; provides powers and duties; removes gifted students from special education; recompiles current special education statutes into the Special Education Act; and requires OSE to consult with a committee of school district superintendents and charter school head administrators selected by their peers on a quarterly basis to plan and implement continuous improvement measures related to the systems and services provided to students with disabilities throughout the state. (LESC)

SB 73 Driver’s Ed Requirements (Heather Berghmans, Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Cristina Parajon, Natalie Figueroa) – Requires driver education courses including those provided by schools to include at least three hours of education and training on driving with vulnerable road users. The bill adds a definition for “vulnerable road users” and directs PED to promulgate rules for courses taught in public schools.

SB 240 Capital Outlay Projects (Benny Shendo, Jr. And Pete Campos) appropriates \$1.3 billion from all sources for the purpose of funding 1,344 capital outlay projects statewide. The bill includes appropriations to the Public Education Department for the following:

- \$70.7 million for 232 local school district projects statewide. (*list of projects available*)
- \$35,000 to purchase cameras and school buses statewide.
- \$18.8 million to purchase district owned school buses statewide.

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL

SJR 1 School Election Timing, CA (Linda M. Trujillo, Natalie Figueroa) – With voter approval at the 2026 general election this resolution proposes to amend Article 7, Section 1 of the Constitution of New Mexico to strike the requirement for school elections to be held at different times from partisan elections. This action would then allow school districts to place bond and mill levy questions on partisan election ballots, potentially increasing local revenue for capital outlay.