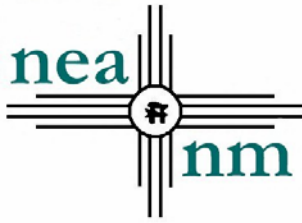


National Education Association-New Mexico AFT New Mexico 2010 Joint Legislative Goals

2010 Joint Legislative Goals

As the experts, AFT NM and NEA-NM have jointly committed to collective action on educational issues for New Mexico. The accomplishment of the following goals will achieve excellence in education for our students and educational employees. The legislative goals of AFT NM and NEA-NM represent our stands on issues likely to come before the 2010 Legislature. We will work both to introduce legislation and to support legislation regarding these issues.



**AFT-New Mexico
National Education Association-New Mexico
2010 Joint Legislative Goals**

Goal 1: Quality Learning and Teaching

Quality learning and teaching in New Mexico's public education system will be achieved when the legislature provides the necessary resources accompanied by the implementation of researched based best practices guided by expert educational professionals.

A. STUDENT LEARNING

- **High Student Performance.** Giving our students the best ability to perform requires the expectation of high standards of academic performance. These standards must be developed with the full participation of professional educators. Systems must be in place to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn and perform to their full potential. **Such systems would include the resources necessary to ensure successful completion of NM High School requirements with a successful transition to college or career.** Accountability for achievement of these standards must be provided by an equally rigorous system of assessment.
- **Accountability for Student Performance.** Opportunity to learn standards must be considered and addressed in conjunction with accountability targets mandated by state statutes. State statutes must be rewritten to include Opportunity to Learn Standards with Accountability Standards. No sanctions for failure to meet accountability standards will be implemented where both are not in place. **Varied performance assessments, including, but not limited to, a statewide criterion-referenced test, must be authentic and must actually assess whether or not rigorous standards for student learning are being met. The development of curricular standards and their accompanying assessment system is a legitimate state priority that must be funded through legislative appropriation. A single high-stakes standardized norm-referenced exam must not be a part of this accountability system but may be used for benchmarking our education system with national standards. These assessments should be used for diagnosis of student needs, improvement of instruction, and not for staff evaluation.**
- **Early Childhood Education.** The highly successful and proven K-3 PLUS program must be expanded and funded to continue to help close the achievement gap in New Mexico.

- **High School Redesign.** High school redesign legislation has passed the legislature and the necessary resources to implement this redesign must be provided by the legislature. High school redesign must not be used as a vehicle to deny students the traditional/regular high school experience by farming out or outsourcing curricula.

B. FUNDING/REVENUE

Especially in these hard economic times, we advocate for legislation which will allow public school employees to meet the needs of our students. This will require holding public schools harmless in the wake of any more budget cuts and the consideration of revenue enhancing measures so that program and personnel are not reduced or sacrificed in our schools.

C. STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Partnerships with Parents:** We recognize that all children in New Mexico have the right to a school environment where parents or guardians are encouraged to participate in partnerships that will increase each child's social, emotional, and academic growth. Parental and family involvement in a child's education is key to academic success and individual development. We advocate the passage of legislation that will improve the capability of local schools and local school districts to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home.
- **Class Size: Resources must be provided to honor current statutory class size and student load requirements.** Any efforts to reduce funding by changing current requirements must be resisted. **We oppose any efforts to reduce funding by increasing current class size/student load requirements.**

GOAL 2: EQUITY.

Equitable access to a high quality public educational system must be protected.

A. SUFFICIENT SCHOOL FUNDING

- **Sufficient Funding for Public Schools.** The legislature must meet its constitutional responsibility to fund New Mexico's public schools in a sufficient manner. This has been determined by an independent legislative study to be approximately 15% more than **2008** funding to meet programmatic needs. In meeting this mandate the legislature must find and commit the necessary revenue sources to keep our public schools sufficiently funded and able to meet our students' many and diverse academic, behavioral, and social needs.

- **Tax Structure, Economic Development and Funding Schools.** The legislature must address the issues of making our state tax structure fair by closing loopholes and leveling the playing field for big and small businesses in our state as they look for new funding streams to sufficiently invest in our public schools. **We oppose legislative efforts that prioritize incentives to business/corporations with taxpayer money over funding for public schools.**
- **Unit Value.** The unit value must reflect real program costs, and increases in the unit value must reflect any mandated changes, including Response to Intervention (RTI), as well as inflation. We believe it to be crucial that the legislature solve the adequacy concerns regarding public school funding rather than promoting a judicial solution to this pressing problem. The unique programmatic needs of rural schools must be adequately and equitably funded. **Legislation must be passed that restores the unit value to original 2009 levels and prevents any future cuts.**

B. COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

- **Pay.** Meeting the diverse needs of our students requires a qualified team of professionals. In order to attract and retain competent qualified school employees, levels of compensation must be competitive. While compensation plans other than traditional salary schedules may be beneficial, the goal of ensuring that all educational personnel are paid competitively must be the priority. Legislative salary goals for educational employees must be equitable and explicitly stated. **We continue to support additional training, length of service, job responsibilities, and length of work day/year as the pertinent factors for determining salaries and oppose any arbitrary, so-called merit pay schemes based on subjective criteria, such as, standardized test scores. For these reasons, we support legislation which will restore the 1.5% to public employees that was taken from their paychecks to balance the budget in the 2009 legislative session. We also support holding our public schools harmless from any further cuts and work to restore the \$200 million taken in the 2009 legislative session. We will again advocate for avenues to generate more revenue into the state's general fund.**
- **Compensation in the Public School Funding Formula.** The New Mexico public school funding formula should flexibly support salary structures consistent with the three-tiered licensure structure. Such salary structures must provide on-going career increases for experienced teachers. Statutory changes to the formula should not create “winner” and “loser” school districts and must contain “hold harmless” provisions.
- **Insurance.** Escalating health insurance premiums erode efforts to improve the overall compensation of education employees and must be addressed by the legislature. **Funding must be provided to allow educational employers to pay any necessary increases in employee health insurance premiums to prevent any further erosion of health benefits and to restore previous benefits levels.**

- **Retiree Health Care.** We support legislative efforts and funding that maintains the commitment that the legislature made on behalf of the citizens of New Mexico to public employee retirees when NMRHCA was created. It is not a pre-funded retirement benefits program but rather an on-going legislative commitment. We support the legislature giving NMRHCA the sufficient annual revenues needed to meet expenses.
- **Retirement.** All education employees should be afforded the full benefits of retirement, without offsets for other pension plans. New Mexico educational retirement plan must remain a fully funded defined benefit plan. The legislature must insure the financial security of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Association without demanding increased contributions from employees.

C. HEALTH CARE

All New Mexicans deserve access to affordable, high-quality health care. We must make health care more affordable for all New Mexicans, including those who are already covered. Any real solution to making health care more affordable for everybody must start with the commitment that all New Mexicans should have health coverage.

D. PUBLIC MONEY FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- **No Voucher, Tax Credits, Public Scholarships or Other Schemes to Privatize Public Schools.** The New Mexico State Constitution requires a system of free uniform public schools. The limited financial educational resources of the state must be directed toward fulfillment of this constitutional mandate. We oppose any attempts to use public funds for private school vouchers, tuition tax credits for attendance at a private school, home school, or for-profit management of public schools. Legislation must be passed to prevent the privatization of the basic education program at any school **including private, for-profit providers to control the educational program of virtual charter schools.**