

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2022 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. **Local Control** – NMSBA supports local decision-making authority of school boards and opposes legislation and executive action that restricts the ability of locally elected school boards to respond to the varied and ever-changing needs of their districts, students and communities. NMSBA calls on the New Mexico Legislature to support legislation affirming and expanding the authority of locally elected school boards to independently develop and adopt educational policies and rules that reflect the educational needs of the students and communities they serve.
2. **School Flexibility** – NMSBA recognizes that school 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 instruction based upon relevant scientific evidence.

Adequate Funding

3. **Educator Recruitment, Retention, Preparation and Compensation** - 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 in substantial increased salaries for all school personnel to become regionally competitive.
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. **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.
6. **Hold Harmless for Declining Enrollment and Federal Funds** – 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 and does not reduce funding to schools because of the distribution of earmarked federal money.
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 and social emotional health needs of our students and staff.
8. **Extended Learning Programs** – NMSBA supports legislation to continue extended learning programs along with flexibility in the K-5 Plus Program to help increase student participation and adjust to family schedules; allow flexibility for a 15-day program to be continued; and provide funding to update all curriculum materials.
9. **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.
10. **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 programming 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.