

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2024 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 the local decision-making authority of school boards and opposes legislation and executive action that restricts the ability of locally elected school boards and superintendents 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 length of school week, re-entry, and instruction based upon relevant scientific evidence and community needs.

Adequate Funding

3. **Educator Recruitment, Retention, Preparation and Compensation** - NMSBA supports legislative action that keeps all school personnel employed and vacancies filled; invests in substantial increased salaries for all school personnel to remain regionally competitive; provides a competitive benefits package including a decrease in employee health care costs to 20%; provides educator housing assistance; and ensures the education retirement system is financially sound.
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 actual costs for student transportation expenses. Special attention should go to addressing the possibility of an ESSER funding cliff and mandating that school district Requests for Reimbursement (RFRs) are processed within 30 days of receipt.

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CONTINUED

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. **Student and Staff Safety** – NMSBA supports legislation to provide direct aid with the flexibility necessary for school districts to meet the critical and ever-changing school safety and social emotional health needs of our students and staff.
7. **Extended Learning Programs** – NMSBA supports legislation to continue extended learning programs along with flexibility in the K-12 Plus Program to help increase student participation and adjust to family schedules; and provide sufficient funding to update all related curriculum materials.
8. **Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Curriculum** – NMSBA supports legislation that will continue to fund culturally and linguistically responsive training, curriculum/materials; develop methods of reporting and accountability to assure students are provided these opportunities; and engage in the work necessary to create change in our schools to address educational disparities as required by the Martinez and Yazzie Lawsuit.
9. **Capital Outlay** – NMSBA supports the continued reduction of local matching requirements for standards based and systems projects; removal of matching requirements for school safety, Pre-K and Career Technical Education facilities and programs; and funding for AC/HAVC upgrades.

Unfunded Mandates

10. NMSBA opposes legislation that mandates public schools to implement new programs, initiatives, requirements, or actions without providing the necessary financial resources. NMSBA will continue to advocate for funding for unfunded mandates that currently exist to include post Covid costs.