



National Education Association - New Mexico

Great Public Schools Begin With Us!

Betty Patterson

President

Mary Parr-Sánchez

Vice President

Charles Bowyer

Executive Director

COMMENTS FOR ATTRIBUTION

Betty Patterson

President - NEA New Mexico

Albuquerque

NEA New Mexico Press Briefing

September 29, 2014

I'm Betty Patterson, President of NEA New Mexico.

NEA New Mexico has filed suit in state court against New Mexico Education Secretary-Designate Hanna Skandera for her implementation of a new statewide teacher evaluation system in violation of the New Mexico Constitution.

Our request is quite simple. We're asking the court to declare that Ms. Skandera implemented her teacher evaluation system unlawfully – and – that she and the New Mexico Public Education Department be enjoined from implementing their system.

Basically, we're asking the court to stop the madness.

There is no doubt that teacher evaluation could be – and should be – improved. In fact, there was a statewide committee that drafted a new process, and I was on that committee, as was Ms. Skandera.

But the legislature rejected that committee plan. And despite that rejection, Ms. Skandera and the Public Education Department changed that plan, set their own timelines for implementation, and proceeded without any input from the entire public school community.

Ms. Skandera and the Public Education Department have implemented a teacher evaluation system that does not work – that is not wanted – and that is having a negative impact on teachers – and most especially – on children.

Teachers are leaving the profession. Those who can retire are retiring. And classroom teaching positions all across the state remain unfilled months after school has opened for the year.

As many as 200 classrooms in the Albuquerque area public schools remain empty because experienced teachers have left and replacements can't be found. And that's true all over New Mexico with many systems having 30-40 unfilled teaching positions.

We have the positions. We have the money to pay the teachers. But we can't find the teachers.

Why? For many, the new teacher evaluation system was the last straw. They've seen the Governor and Ms. Skandera travel the state making outrageous charges about their profession – remarks, mind you, that have never been supported by any facts.

Those that remain have seen their class sizes increase to compensate for the vacant positions the new teacher evaluation system has created.

And students are seeing already limited individual instruction time reduced due to those increased class sizes.

Local schools districts – who have the legal requirement to create locally-appropriate evaluation systems – have been left out of the process.

They can't alter Ms. Skandera's system to fit their local needs. And they can't refuse to implement her illegally mandated system for fear of economic reprisals in their state funding.

Simply put – we now have a statewide teacher evaluation system that was imposed illegally – a system that wasn't wanted – a system that wasn't needed – and a system that doesn't work.

And why? What goals are the Governor and Ms. Skandera trying to accomplish with their new evaluation system?

Whatever their goals, it has become quite clear that improving teaching and learning in New Mexico's public schools were not among them.