Calendar
May 31, 2021
Memorial Day, Offices Closed
June 30 - July 3, 2021
NEA RA (Virtual)
July 4 - 5, 2021
Independence Day, Offices Closed

Highlights from the Regular Legislative Session

Our NEA-NM legislative team worked countless hours in reading, watching, analyzing, monitoring and attending meetings around various forms of legislation that could have an impact on our education system here in New Mexico, be it favorable or not. One of the biggest was the passage of House Joint Resolution 1. HJR 1 will put a critical question in front of the voters in November 2021. The question will ask whether or not the state should take an additional 1.25% from the Land Grant Permanent Fund to fund Early Childhood Education and K-12 Education. If it is approved by the voters, it will send many millions of needed dollars to finally fully fund Early Childhood Education, NM would be the first state in the nation to achieve such an opportunity for our youngest students and has been called a “game changer” because it will positively change outcomes for NM children. Another vital component to HJR1 is that it would substantially fund increased salaries for K-12 educators, which could go a long way in helping to end the shortage of qualified teachers. NEA-NM is proud to have endorsed and assisted in the election of many bright and capable women to the Senate that helped pass this legislation: Carrie Harmelin, Siah Correa Hemphill, Brenda McKenna and Katie Duhigg. All of these legislators had a strong first session and helped to ensure that this bill made it out of the Senate (where it had previously died). The new Senate Pro Tempore, Mimi Stewart, also had a strong first session in her leadership role, Senator Stewart was able to pass legislation that, if signed by the Governor, will mandate paid sick leave for workers in the private sector. This will have a positive impact on the well-being of many and the community as a whole. In the final hours of the regular session, floor debate in the Senate got quite heated toward Senator Stewart and a break in the debate was called. Those same dynamic democratic women in the Senate all stood with Senator Stewart as she showed strength and grace under pressure. Senator Stewart also introduced legislation that would have made K-5+ and Extended Learning Time mandatory for all. However, due in large part to the coordinated efforts of NEA-NM, the bill was revised into one that we could support with no “one-size-fits-all” approach. The mandatory language was removed and the statute was modified to read K-5+ schools rather than programs. It also changed the statute to “provide a good faith attempt to keep children with the same teacher”. The new language provides a greater degree of flexibility and is expected to be signed by the Governor. It will also make K-5+ and/or Extended Learning part of the school calendar. If a school elects to have these programs, the legislature plans to receive this money, all students and staff in that school must participate. Another great piece of news comes out of House Bill 2, which increases funding for education by 5.5% over 2021-2022. This increase would cover a 1% increased employer contribution to the Education Retirement Fund for the next 2 years and gives some much-needed solvency to the fund for future stability. Additionally, HB 2 covers a 1.5% cost of living increase to current educators for salaries for all K-12 and Higher Education employees. It also includes 10 days of COVID paid sick leave for employees who may need to quarantine or have become ill and helps to alleviate many concerns
Returning to School at the End of the School Year...continued

The Special Legislative Session

The Special Legislative Session that was called by the Governor ended 3/31/21 with a bill being passed that would legalize and regulate the production, sale and use of recreational cannabis in New Mexico. This is in addition to the use of medical cannabis, and it expands decriminalization to legalization of recreational cannabis.

NEA-NM, in partnership with the Center for Community Schools and NEA EdJustice, is proud to present you with the inaugural cohort of the NEA-NM Education Justice Fellowship. The purpose of this fellowship is to foster the creation of a cohort of NEA-NM member-fellows who have deep awareness of racial/social justice issues in education and are empowered to organize local coalitions and advocate for education justice in their communities across New Mexico, in collaboration with local affiliates and community stakeholders. Our fellows come from both urban and rural districts in our state, work in varied roles in their schools, and have differing levels of experience with organizing and advocacy; however, they all share a clear passion for and commitment to advancing education justice through their work. Throughout the fellowship year, these fellows will learn about social/racial justice, develop their leadership and coalition-building skills, meet with community activists and grassroots organizers, receive one-on-one coaching and peer-mentoring, and engage with community stakeholders in order to identify and pursue an education justice project with local impact. We cannot wait to see this stellar group of education professionals grow into a model cohort of leaders and advocates for education justice in their communities!

We welcome the participation of local leaders, peer educators, and all other stakeholders in this fellowship. If you would like to offer assistance/mentoring to a fellow or simply introduce yourself as a resource in your community, we encourage you to reach out to fellows from your locals. As fellows get further along in their project development and would like to offer assistance/mentoring to a fellow or simply introduce yourself as a resource in your community, we encourage you to reach out to fellows from your locals. As fellows get further along in their project development and would like to offer assistance/mentoring to a fellow or simply introduce yourself as a resource in your community, we encourage you to reach out to fellows from your locals.

Join Now Madness!

NEA-NM members have demonstrated tremendous resolve this past year, exercising their voices at the bargaining table with school districts and virtually at the Roundhouse. Much has been accomplished, including reaching important Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) around reentry to increasing funding in education for NM schools. Our work is not done, however, and we invite you to help us grow to strengthen our voice as a community of educators and support professionals.

We are excited to announce that as of April 1st, NEA-NM launched its Early Enrollment campaign - a state-based initiative that invites new members to experience the transformative impact of being a part of the Association for no immediate cost. From April 1st to August 31st, educators can join the Association without paying dues until the new school year starts. This campaign is designed to support the growth of participating local affiliates* by maximizing local organizing efforts and inviting potential members to experience being part of the Association. In addition to gaining access to the professional learning resources and everyday benefits offered by the Association, potential members will recognize the power of their Association to create positive change for their students, communities, and profession.
Returning to School at the End of the School Year...continued
around that particular issue, especially for those who do not have a healthy balance. Finally, HB-2 increases important funding to Grow Our Own Teachers and provides for some necessary leave time and funding for those educational assistants who choose to attend school and further their career opportunities.

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NEA-NM 2021 Legislative Summary

With the pandemic as a backdrop, the First Session of the 55th Legislature adjourned Sine Die (Indefinite End) Saturday, March 20, at noon. For 60 days, state legislators introduced, debated, amended and voted on 916 bills. Of those bills, we tracked 170 public school related bills or about 18% of the total. Of those 170 education related bills that we tracked, only 37 passed both chambers or 4% of all legislation introduced. This number is important because it puts into perspective the importance that legislators place on public education and illustrates the frustrations that many have around the antiquated process of legislation. Senator Antoinette Sedillo Lopez recently told the press “The world is changing too fast for us to keep up in the current format” as she referred to the ineffective process of lawmakers in our state. Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero echoed the frustration pointing to the institutionalized attitudes towards gender and ethnicity and how these play out in the prioritization of legislation.

In Summary

Inviting lawmakers to “end systems of discrimination and marginalization that do not allow all students to learn and perform to their full potential.” She wrote: “We must work to make sure that in a minority majority state, we do not try to standardize our students or their education in a way that ignores their unique attributes and challenges.”

In order to rebuild our public schools, it helps to have a legislative process that is reflective of the fierce urgency of their students, communities, and profession.

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We welcome the participation of local leaders, peer educators, and all other stakeholders in this fellowship. If you would like to offer assistance/mentoring to a fellow or simply introduce yourself as a resource in your community, we encourage you to reach out to fellows from your locals. As fellows get further along in their project development and stakeholder engagement, they may also be reaching out to you! We believe this fellowship is a model for promoting leadership development and professional excellence aligned with NEA-NM’s racial/social justice priorities that can be scaled and replicated to meet local affiliate needs in the future. Please do not hesitate to reach out and get involved!

• Amanda Gutierrez-Lopez, NEA-ALbuquerque
• Arturo Lujan, NEA-Santa Fe
• Ashleigh Poilier, NEA-T or C
• Autem Moya, NEA-Santa Fe
• Brian J Patton, NEA-ALbuquerque
• Caitlin Shivers, NEA-Santa Fe
• Camellia Termini, NEA-LOS Lunas
• Cameron Michael Sandoval, NEA-Carrizozo
• Carlos Avila, NEA-Las Cruces
• Carol Schrader, NEA-Santa Fe
• Denise Taylor, NEA-Roswell
• Helen West, NEA-Cortez
• Henry Jasso, NEA-Las Cruces
• Jamie Torres, NEA-Santa Fe
• Jessica Arriete, NEA-Rio Rancho
• Kaitlyn McCoy, NEA-ALamogordo
• Kari Deswood, NEA-Farmington
• Kathryn Vigil, NEA-Rio Rancho
• Mercedes Avila, NEA-ALbuquerque
• Michele Franklin-Hill, NEA-Santa Fe
• Nicole Wayne, NEA-Farmington
• Susana Rios, NEA-Las Cruces
• Teresa Chavez, Espanola-NEA
• Wendy Graham, NEA-Las Cruces

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Join Now Madness!

*Potential members from CSEC-Las Cruces and Rio Rancho are not eligible.

If you would like to decline the NEA-NM’s Educators Defense Assessment and the EdPAC contribution call 505.982.1916 for assistance.
Read Across New Mexico!

This half-day event is a must for all New Mexico Educators “to highlight diverse authors and books for an increasingly diverse student population across New Mexico and America.” In collaboration with NEA-NM and NEA-AC, ELS has aligned with NEA’s Read Across America Advisory board’s theme of “Celebrating a Nation of Diverse Readers.”

Who: All Certified and Certified members
When: April 17, 2021
Time: 9am - 1pm
Where: Zoom - email david.morales.nea@gmail.com to register

Celebrate READING that promotes our state’s great cultural and linguistic diversity, all from the comfort of your home! There will be prizes, surprises, and incredible professional learning opportunities that focus on ideas, plans, and lessons that will add culturally responsive literature to your library and teaching practice.

Spring 2021 VOL. 32 ISSUE 3

Forging The Path Together

Returning to School at the End of the School year

“When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.”

Harriet Beecher Stowe

As the nation continues to grapple with the after effects of a global pandemic that shut schools down for in-person learning over a year ago, there continues to be many important and pressing challenges for both employees and students alike. Despite putting a collective educator voice to those challenges, April 5th was the day determined by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to reopen in-person instruction to all students that desired such a return. Given this enormous task, NEA-NM will continue to work with our members to closely monitor school conditions across the state while advocating for a safe and equitable environment in all our schools. Please do not give up, the tide is turning.

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