In this upcoming 2022 Legislative Session, NM legislators will be working to transform our public schools by delivering the equitable and quality public education all students deserve. Legislation can—and should/include NEA-NM priorities. We know educators across the state have taken a beating during the pandemic and education policy must include better pay, affordable healthcare for educators, manageable class sizes, time for planning and above the line funding for Community schools.

Educators’ Voices Must Be Heard

Educators have been saying it for years: fund our school system, end the teacher shortage crisis, ensure staff have the time to offer students one-on-one attention and tailor-made supports. Despite this, prior to Governor Lujan-Grisamich’s election, our schools were simply allowed to sink into perpetual scarcity and crisis. While a great deal of important work has been done under this administration to make up for the years of financial and political neglect, even more remains to be done. We don’t want an approach to legislative funding that focuses solely on patching up the holes in our current system, we need to adopt an innovative and transformative new approach to ensuring all New Mexico’s students not only have what they need to survive, but also to thrive.

Just as doctors and other medical staff working on the frontline should be heeded as experts on our effective response to this pandemic, so too must educators be treated as experts in their classrooms and be given a central role in shaping the future of education. In an effort to capture and amplify the collective voice of educators in our state, we at NEA-NM have surveyed thousands of our members across the state about their top legislative budget priorities for building a better school system. Based on these responses, we have developed a list of six key issues that educators believe should be prioritized in future legislative sessions:

1. More Funding for Our Schools – But Not More of the Same

Our state is facing an acute teacher shortage crisis that is only growing worse during this pandemic, with many exiting the profession to retire or because of teacher burnout, and few entering. Those few that are entering the education profession are mainly doing so through alternative licensure schemes that put new educators into classrooms without critical important training or student teaching experience. One of the most effective ways to recruit and retain high-quality educators is to ensure all public school employees make a living wage and end the pay penalty whereby school employees make a living wage and end the pay penalty whereby educators make 30% less than nonteacher college graduates. If we want our children to be taught by the best teachers, we must offer competitive wages that compensate educators for their qualifications.

2. Class Sizes & Adequate Staffing

Students are not able to have their individual needs met when class sizes exceed statutory class-size limits and when educators are stretched thin by inadequate staffing. Class size waivers and misleading class-size averaging practices poke holes in the laws put in place to ensure every student is receiving the education guaranteed by our state constitution, and these loopholes must be eliminated. To adequately staff our classrooms, we must bring in varied high-quality professionals who can give students individualized support, respond to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, support their physical and mental health needs, and inspire joy, creativity, and critical thinking.

3. Planning Time

Adequate planning time for educators in our state, who overwhelmingly assess assessments, observe other classrooms, and meet with students and parents. The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated the need for adequate planning time for educators in our state, who overwhelmingly work closely with the largely unvaccinated student body on a daily basis.

4. Educator Wages

The issue of healthcare takes on new weight in the context of the ongoing pandemic: educators, the majority of whom are vaccinated, nonetheless work closely with the largely unvaccinated student body on a daily basis. Faced with rising health insurance premiums, expensive copays, and declining benefits, many educators fear that if they or someone in their family falls ill, they will not be able to afford life-saving care. The critical link between educator mental and physical wellbeing and student outcomes has been well established: when educators are happy and healthy they are better at their jobs, less likely to experience burnout, and more likely to remain in the education profession.

5. Healthcare

More Funding for Our Schools – But Not More of the Same

These past two years have been incredibly hard on New Mexico’s schools, students, and educators. It may be tempting to believe that many of the issues that have come to mainstream attention as a result of the pandemic are new problems or are solely the result of our current circumstances. As a middle school teacher for 25 years, a mother of 4 public-school-educated children, and now president of the organization tasked with representing educators across the state of New Mexico, I can tell you this is not the case.

While it’s true that schools across the country have struggled during this time, this crisis has revealed the particularly vulnerable condition that New Mexico’s public education system is in. Small holes in the fabric of our social safety net have been ripped open to reveal that, for decades, our underfunded and under-staffed school system has been failing many of our students, their families, and their communities.

...
Community Schools

Our schools and classrooms are not set up to ensure educators can meet the needs of students and families. Many of our communities are struggling from historic marginalization, families often feel disconnected from our education system, and many of our students do not have their basic needs met and are struggling with mental and physical health issues. Community Schools are a vehicle for change that offer an opportunity for educators to get what they need for their classrooms and their worksites. We need sustainable recurring funding to make the community school strategy accessible to all schools in our state.

Early Childhood Education

All students should have access to successful programs that close educational opportunity gaps, including universal pre-K and other early childhood programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive of students with disabilities. NEA-NM supports the proposed constitutional amendment allocating additional funds from the Land Grant Permanent Fund to early childhood education and the public school permanent fund.

The Time to Act is Now!

As damaging as the pandemic has been to students, educators, families, schools, and communities, the crisis also presents an opportunity to capitalize on the unprecedented mainstream attention on our schools to overhaul the system and build a new, more equitable and effective one in its place. The time to act is now, when federal funds from President Biden’s American Rescue Plan are available to us and before our society forgets the lessons learned by our children’s struggles during the pandemic. In our 2021 Legislative Funding Priorities report, educators have used their expertise to draw out a road map to success for our state’s education system; isn’t it about time we listened to them?

Bylaw Amendment 2.4: h. Membership Dues

This Bylaws Amendment will be voted on during the 2022 NEA-NM All Active Member election. If passed, this amendment will take effect at the beginning of the 2022-2023 fiscal year starting on September 1, 2022.

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

This amendment changes the dues structure for retiring ESP members considering they make less in salary than other active members. This language aligns with NEA’s new ESP Retired dues assessment.

TEXT OF AMENDMENT TO BYLAW 2.4, h. MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Bylaw 2.4 Membership Dues

h. Dues of retired members shall be as set by the NEA-New Mexico Board of Directors. The annual and membership-for-life dues of any retired member who joins after the 2021-2022 membership year and who was an Active ESP member at the time of retirement, shall be sixty percent (60%) of the dues of Retired members as established by the NEA-New Mexico Board of Directors.

RATIONALE: The RA this summer passed the exact same language for its national ESP Retired dues assessment, and this will align us with national. It will provide us with an avenue to seek retired membership from our state ESPs who have or will retire as ESPs. As Active members, our dues structure at the national and state levels take into account that most ESPs make less in salary than other active members and, for that reason, pay a lower dues assessment. For the first time, there will be an acknowledgement that the majority of our ESPs also make less in retirement benefits than other Active members who retire. It is anticipated that this will have a positive effect in recruiting ESPs into NEA-NM Retired and provide it with an even greater diversity of retired school employees in its ranks.

SUBMITTED BY: Unanimous vote of the NEA-NM Retired Board of Directors with a “DO PASS” recommendation. Majority vote of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws & Rules, with a “DO PASS” recommendation. Majority vote by the NEA-NM Board of Directors with a “DO PASS” recommendation.

The NEA-NM 2022 All Member Election is underway. Following are the candidates for various positions. Elections will begin with online voting on Tuesday, February 4, 2022. Postcards and emails will be sent with your member voting details during this week. Be on the lookout for these items. Additional election information will also be available at www.nea-nm.org. Paper ballots may be obtained by contacting NEA-NM at (505) 982-1916. Voting closes on Tuesday, February 25, 2022. Here are your candidates!

Declared Elected Candidates

In accordance with Standing Rule 9, since only one candidate was nominated for these positions, these candidates were declared elected on November 6, 2021, at 12 noon. The Standing Rule states, “If the number of candidates nominated, including write-in candidates who have declared their write-in candidate in accordance with timelines and procedures established by the Elections Committee equals the number of positions to be filled, the Board of Directors shall declare such candidates elected.”

President of NEA-New Mexico and delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly
Mary Parr-Sánchez: It has been my honor to serve as the NEA-President these last few years. I humbly ask for your support for a second term. I still have so much work to do. Together, we have accomplished so much, and I hope we can continue together in our forward momentum.

Vice President of NEA-New Mexico and delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly
Bethany Jarrell: Thank you all so much for your support through my first term as your NEA-NM Vice President. It has been my honor to serve in this role and hope for your support in serving another term. We still have a lot of work to do and I will continue to advocate for all of our NM educators.

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State Delegate to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly
Lucille Martinez-Holguin, Española
Diana Jackson, Alamogordo
Tammie Yazell, Central Consolidated
Shannon Moe Facka, Central Consolidated
Lisa Felix, Farmington
Nicole Baker, Farmington
Beverly Whigles, Las Cruces
Michael Campbell, Las Vegas West

Retired Board of Directors
Eduardo Holguin
Rosalinda Carreon Altamirano
Ely Gonzalez

Cluster Delegate to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly
Sue Holman, Raton
Aimee Feldman, Raton

Retired Delegate to the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly
Eduardo Holguin
Mary Lou Cameron
Rosalinda Carreon Altamirano
Carol Tewellet

The actual number of delegates to be determined by the membership figures in each category as they exist on January 15, 2022.

For more information on our 2022 Legislative Targets, visit nea-nm.org

Take Action!

Thank you all so much for your support through my first term as your NEA-NM Vice President. It has been my honor to serve in this role and hope for your support in serving another term. We still have a lot of work to do and I will continue to advocate for all of our NM educators.
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1. **Educator Wages**
   - Our state is facing an acute teacher shortage crisis that is only growing worse during this pandemic, with many exiting the profession to retire or because of teacher burnout, and few entering. Those few that are entering the education profession are mainly doing so through alternative licensed schemes that put new educators into classrooms without critical, important training or student teaching experience. One of the most effective ways to recruit and retain high-quality educators is to ensure all public school employees make a living wage and end the pay penalty whereby educators make 30% less than nonteacher college graduates. If we want our children to be taught by the best teachers, we must offer competitive wages that compensate educators for their qualifications.

2. **Class Sizes & Adequate Staffing**
   - Research from around the globe shows us that the education systems with the most high-performing students are those that ensure educators have ample time to prepare and analyze lessons, develop and evaluate assessments, observe other classrooms, and meet with students and parents. The COVID-1 pandemic has further demonstrated the need for adequate planning time for educators in our state, who overwhelmingly work with underserved student populations facing poverty, lack of technology, and other out-of-school barriers to education that require additional one-on-one attention to overcome.

3. **Planning Time**
   - While it’s true that schools across the country have struggled during this time, this crisis has revealed the particularly vulnerable condition that New Mexico’s public education system is in. Small holes in the fabric of our social safety net have been ripped open to reveal that, for decades, our under-funded and under-staffed school system has been failing many of our students, their families, and their communities.

4. **Healthcare**
   - The issue of healthcare takes on new weight in the context of the ongoing pandemic: educators, the majority of whom are vaccinated, nonetheless work closely with the largely unvaccinated student body on a daily basis. Faced with rising health insurance premiums, expensive copays, and declining benefits, many educators fear that if they or someone in their fam- ily falls ill, they will not be able to afford life-saving care. The critical link between educator mental and physical wellbeing and student outcomes has been well established: when educators are happy and healthy they are better at their jobs, less likely to experience burnout, and more likely to remain in the education profession.

5. **Policy Funding**
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6. **Systemic Change & Equity**
   - To transform our public education system, it will take the dedication and cooperations of every member of our community—from tribal leaders to educators and experts to parents. We need everyone at the table if we are to succeed at what is most important to us: helping our children realize their dreams.”

- Wilhelmina Yazzie

2021 NEA Human & Civil Rights Award Winner: Wilma Mankiller Awardee

2022 Legislative Session and Lobby Day

Join us as we raise our voices in favor of our students and public schools. Register now with the QR code for NEA-NM’s 2022 Lobby Day. We’ll kick off our political action on Sunday, January 23rd, from noon to 2:00 p.m., with a public education rally at the Roundhouse with signs, banners and street art created by Santa Fe educators and community members. On Monday, January 24th, educators will visit legislators at the Roundhouse and finish the evening at a legislative reception with special guest, NEA President Becky Pringle.

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Interested in attending an Art Build in Santa Fe on January 14th, 15th or 16th? For more information visit nea-nm.org/legislative-updates or email ssianez@neanm.org.