

# **New Mexico Educator Equity Plan**



**November 3, 2015**

**Submitted by**

**The New Mexico Public Education Department**



## Executive Summary

Ensuring equal access to an excellent education for all children is a promise the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) is committed to deliver. Unequal access to effective education has been the norm for too long, and today in New Mexico the problem persists. Minority students and those growing up in poverty are less likely to have an effective teacher. These inequities are exacerbated when looking at certain subjects, particularly in Math and Science – key industries to the New Mexico economy.

Recent developments initiated by Governor Susana Martinez and Secretary Hanna Skandera allow us to see this historical problem in a new light. Data emerging from the new NMTEACH Educator Effectiveness System is allowing us to better see the inequities and take action based off of our analyses. Information from NMTEACH is beneficial from a multifaceted perspective, benefitting all stakeholders, including students, teachers, district leadership, and PED. The system gives decision makers better information than the state has ever had to identify inequities and leverage resources to acutely target the sources of inequity. PED and local districts have already begun to use this data to inform programming and support. As a result, much of New Mexico's Educator Equity Plan focuses on programs that have already been implemented. Many of these are in their first or second year of implementation, and PED is committed to making programmatic decisions based on their results and impact. Programs creating more equity will be expanded, and those with no impact will be modified or abandoned in favor of efforts that develop more access to effective teaching for all students.

The development of this plan provided an opportunity to create cohesion around how we will create equitable access to effective teachers. Our developmental process was rooted in the following vision and theory of action when conducting analyses and stakeholder meetings:

### **Vision:**

*Every student has access to an effective teacher that advances their learning towards the ultimate goal of being college and career ready.*

### **Theory of Action:**

*If we prepare teachers to be successful in the classroom with the necessary pedagogical and cultural tools,*

*And if we create an environment that strategically recruits and retains effective teachers to teach our most needy students by rewarding effectiveness and providing continued support aimed at success,*

*Then all teachers have the ability to be effective and we will prioritize our best teachers to serve in our most needy areas.*

Our initial analysis, a root cause exercise and stakeholder engagement meetings led us to focus on the following: 1) teacher preparation, 2) recruiting and retaining teachers, 3) cultural competency, and 4) professional development. PED has instituted several programs in each of those areas. In the future we will look to determine the effectiveness of these programs and make adjustments to them as necessary. In addition, further analysis of data will assist to better identify the specific underlying causes for inequity. PED plans to update the public on progress via their website, district report cards, and an annual convening to share progress on closing equity gaps.

## Introduction

Both the U.S. Department of Education and the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) believe that equal opportunity is a core American value. Equal access to excellent education provides meaningful opportunities for students to achieve their goals. Recognizing that family income and race often predicts a student's ability to access excellent education in our country, the U.S. Department of Education asked state education agencies, including PED, to submit a State Educator Equity Plan in accordance of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These reports must express how the state will take steps to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

The public K-12 education system in New Mexico serves over 330,000 students through 89 school districts and 96 charter schools. New Mexico's student population is 60% Hispanic and 75% minority. Over two-thirds of the state's students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The state's demographics add urgency to this plan, as any unequal access minority or economically disadvantaged students impacts a majority of the state.

The following document is PED's response to this call to ensure equal access to all students to an excellent education.

The report features 7 sections:

1. ***Stakeholder Engagement*** – delivers a summary of our engagement process, including those invited
2. ***Effectiveness: The Foundation for Equity*** – provides a rationale for why our Educator Equity Plan focuses on teacher effectiveness
3. ***Glossary of Terms*** – interprets selected terms used in New Mexico's Educator Equity Plan
4. ***Equity Gap Analysis*** – examines student gaps in equal access to effective teachers
5. ***Root Cause Analysis*** – investigates the root causes for our identified equity gaps.
6. ***Current Strategies for Eliminating Equity Gaps*** – explains current efforts for eliminating equity gaps
7. ***Ongoing Monitoring and Support and Future Analysis*** – provides a plan of how PED will share progress in eliminating equity gaps and next steps the Department plans on taking

## Stakeholder Engagement

In May, 2015 PED provided opportunities for stakeholders to provide both in-person and written feedback on existing equity gaps and efforts to address them. Three in-person stakeholder meetings were hosted in Albuquerque, Roswell, and Santa Fe. Stakeholders from parent groups such as the New Mexico Parent Teachers Association were invited to each meeting. The following stakeholders were invited to each in-person meeting:

- American Federation of Teachers /Albuquerque Teachers Federation
- National Education Association
- Principals Pursuing Excellence participants
- New Mexico Elementary and Secondary Principals Associations
- Regional Educational Cooperatives
- District Superintendents
- New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators
- New Mexico Parent Teachers Association
- Institutes of Higher Education
- State Bilingual Advisory Council
- New Mexico Hispanic Education Advisory Council
- New Mexico Indian Education Advisory Council
- New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
- New Mexico Employability Partnership
- Chamber of commerce executives from Albuquerque, Gallup, Las Cruces, and the Hispano Chamber of Commerce
- New Mexico School Boards Association
- New Mexico Council of Administrators of Special Education
- New Mexico Office of African American Affairs
- Schools of Education Deans and Directors Workgroup
- Leadership from Native American communities across the state

Included in the Appendix are the invitations and sign-in sheets from each meeting, the notice requesting written comments, all written comments received as of May 25, 2015, and the materials used at each stakeholder meeting. Future stakeholder meetings will include invitations to additional stakeholders and stakeholder groups, including school-based stakeholders like school counselors and ancillary service providers.

Each meeting followed the same agenda: PED opened by sharing the equity data and describing current efforts to address the gaps and then engaged in an open dialogue with attending stakeholders. The guiding questions used for the discussions were:

- What does educator equity mean to you?
- What are the barriers to closing equity gaps in your community?
- How can New Mexico begin to close equity gaps?
- What is the best way to annually report equity gap data and progress towards closing those gaps?

Prior to the first meeting and request for written comments, the PED team went through a half day root cause exercise to determine the causes of equity gaps across the state. The results of that exercise were not part of the presentation to stakeholders. However, during the discussion portion of each meeting similar root causes and barriers were identified. The themes identified included:

- Lack of adequate teacher preparation, in general, as well as how it relates to cultural competence
- Inadequate mentoring and professional development
- Lack of instructional leadership at the school site
- Competition for time and resources
- Local district zoning
- Teacher pay
- Geographic challenges (e.g. extremely rural communities)

The themes identified above were also reflected in the written comments received.

As New Mexico continues implementation of its educator equity plan, it has made the following commitments in regards to ongoing stakeholder engagement:

- Annual meetings to report on equity gaps and progress in implementing programs to address the gaps
- Annual, public reporting on educator equity progress through the district report card and PED website

