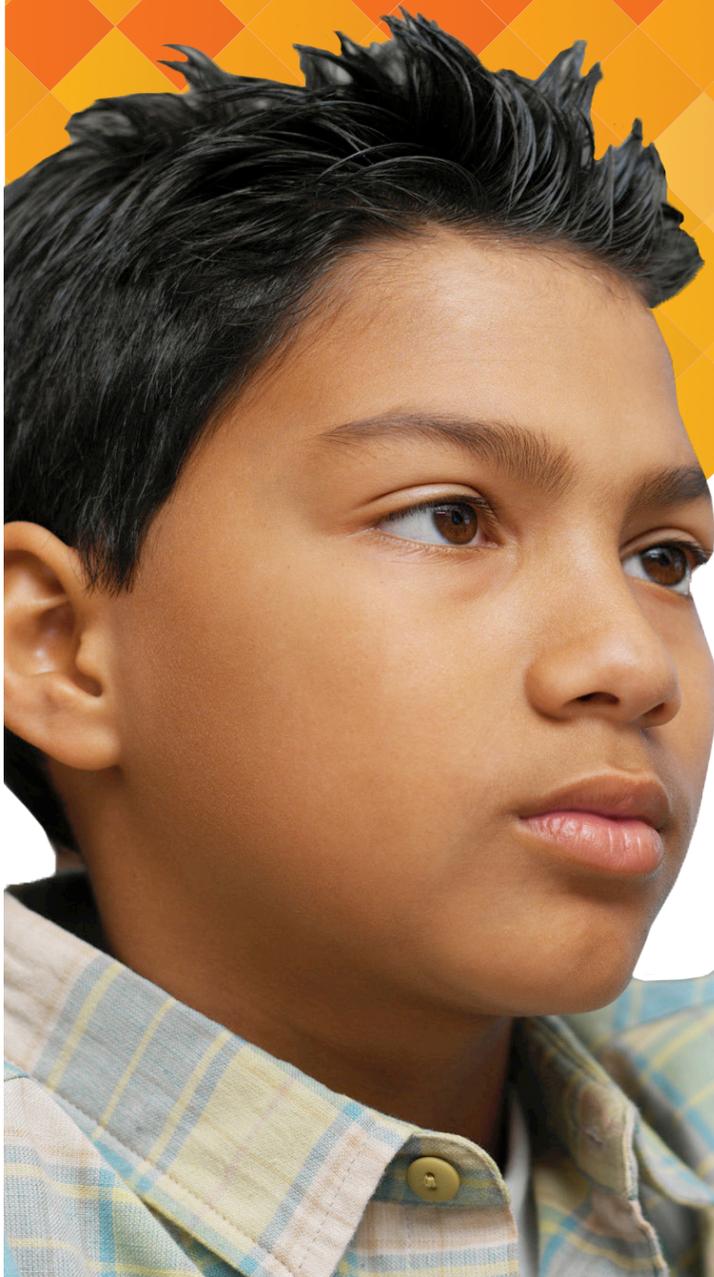


NM Public Education Department



**NEW MEXICO RISING
TOGETHER**

FIFTY RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK
FROM OUR COMMUNITIES



New Mexico Rising
Engaging our Communities for Excellence in Education

NEW MEXICO RISING - TOGETHER

FIFTY RESPONSES TO FEEDBACK FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

Prior to crafting and finalizing New Mexico's State Plan under the new federal law, the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) conducted extensive stakeholder engagement throughout 2016 and early 2017 on behalf of New Mexico's students.

In the fall of 2016, the PED embarked upon its largest stakeholder engagement community tour ever. Opening channels of communication and hearing from all stakeholders, the PED partnered with New Mexico's leading public policy organization, New Mexico First, to develop the *New Mexico Rising Tour*. The statewide stakeholder engagement tour was intended to provide every New Mexico resident the opportunity to learn about the state's initiatives and share input in the development and design of New Mexico's plan. The PED and New Mexico First hosted a variety of forums, including public meetings, online surveys, targeted working groups, tribal consultation and teacher and parent engagement sessions, ensuring the voices of all stakeholders would be heard.

The *New Mexico Rising Tour* consisted of twenty-five (25) facilitated listening sessions across New Mexico's six largest communities. Upon the conclusion, New Mexico First released a series of eight reports: one statewide summary, one report for each unique community visited and one summary of tribal engagement. Following the *New Mexico Rising Tour* and concurrent technical working group engagement related to ESSA, the New Mexico State Plan was developed.

The New Mexico State Plan was posted online in draft form at the beginning of March and was available for additional stakeholder input through April 1, 2017. The PED reviewed feedback on a rolling basis.

With the submission of New Mexico's state plan after 30 days of publication and additional public input, the PED is proud to release a final version of New Mexico's state plan and an updated version of *New Mexico Rising – Together*, a summary of major themes of stakeholder feedback that have been incorporated into the state's ESSA plan and the PED's strategic plan. Given that much of what the PED heard over the past nine months was in response to local and state programs and/or upcoming state and local efforts that are not directly related to ESSA, the PED has included a wide array of responses and actions. Each represents a step forward in improving the educational experience for our kids.

Feedback from New Mexico's communities has been grouped into the following categories:

- *Supporting New Mexico Educators*
- *Student Assessment*
- *School Accountability*
- *Ready for Success*
- *21st Century Learning*
- *School Support*
- *Equitable Access for All Students*
- *Engaging our Communities*



New Mexico Rising

Engaging our Communities for Excellence in Education

New Mexico Rising Together, Return Tour

These fifty (50) areas of responsiveness will be highlighted as part of the state's *New Mexico Rising Together Return Tour*, where the team at the PED will again travel to seven communities (including Santa Rosa) to share how New Mexico will create stability, continuity, and opportunity for schools and communities via its state plan. Secretary Hanna Skandera will present an overview of the final plan in each community, with a focus on these fifty areas of responsiveness, notably how the state will refine teacher evaluation, reduce testing time, and continue to equip, empower, and champion its educators. These seven community visits will occur between mid-April and early June. Scheduled visits include:

- Farmington – April 17
- Albuquerque – April 18
- Roswell – May 8
- Las Cruces & Alamogordo – May 9
- Santa Fe – May 10
- Santa Rosa – May 15
- Gallup – May 25

We look forward to continued collaboration so that
EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS in New Mexico.

SUPPORTING NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS

1. **WE HEARD:** Let's work together on the state's teacher evaluation to put more emphasis on non-student growth measures such as principal observations, while continuing to prioritize our students' progress. Further, let's find the right balance on the teacher attendance component of the system while recognizing that it has resulted in more instructional hours for kids and a significant cost savings for the state.

WE RESPONDED: The PED advocated for legislation to accomplish these goals during the 2017 Session, but the Legislature ultimately did not act upon the compromise. New Mexico's classroom teachers continued pushing for revisions through extensive research and NM teacher survey data, the PED jointly announced a plan for a revised system in early April 2017. The Department has decreased the weight of student growth by fifteen percent and increased the weight of teacher observations by fifteen percent. Additionally, the department doubled the number of teacher absences exempted within NMTEACH from three to six. The PED's actions are in direct response to feedback heard from stakeholders across the state, and formalized by Teach Plus, a group of teacher policy fellows. In addition to these recommended changes, teachers requested a sustainability clause for these revisions, for a minimum of five years.

2. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that a diverse group of statewide teachers are advising the PED on how to improve New Mexico's education system.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the Secretary's Teacher Advisory (STA) last year, which convenes regularly via both conference call and in-person meetings. Teachers from across the state are represented, as are teachers from different grades, subject areas, and backgrounds. To-date the STA has advised the PED on topics ranging from teacher-leadership opportunities to student assessment approaches to school accountability revisions. STA members played a major role in the state's first Teacher Summit in 2016, and weighed-in on the state's ESSA plan.

3. **WE HEARD:** Let's consider, in partnership with the deans and directors of teacher preparation programs across New Mexico, moving away from archaic and unaligned standards for teacher preparation program requirements so that we can better prepare our teachers for the 21st century classroom.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is adopting state regulation to incorporate INTASC model core teaching standards, which have a stronger focus on the application of knowledge and skills of current teaching practices.

4. **WE HEARD:** Let's do a better job of ensuring that new teachers are ready for the rigors of today's classroom. This should include greater accountability for educator prep programs as well as making clinical residency experiences available for our aspiring educators, in both traditional and alternative training programs. By increasing clinical residency experience, the focus of the state's training will be on ensuring that our teachers will be better prepared for day one of teaching students.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is establishing new program requirements and accountability measures for teacher preparation programs across New Mexico, ensuring that they are rooted in the practice of classroom teaching. The state's first-ever Educator Preparation Program Report Cards will be released in 2017, with a focus on program diversity, efficacy, and how well it meets market demands. Through partnership with our educator preparation providers, New Mexico is promoting a cycle of continuous improvement so that teachers are "first-day ready". Based on stakeholder feedback received over the past nine months, the PED is also considering a move to enhancing student teaching by supporting enhanced experiences for pre-service teaching candidates. By leveraging Title IIA funds and policy, the PED plans to work with colleges of education, districts, and other partners to create longer clinical residencies. The PED also plans to overhaul the requirements for mentorship by leveraging the NMTEACH effectiveness system to ensure that New Mexico's best teachers have a positive influence on novices.

5. **WE HEARD:** Let's celebrate our educators and elevate and champion the teaching profession.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has launched three NEW teacher leadership opportunities for educators. These programs provide the opportunity for teachers to get involved in statewide networks focusing on their craft, public policy, and teacher ambassadorship. Additionally, the PED now has an in-house Teacher-Liaison, a veteran teacher from Albuquerque Public Schools, to participate in statewide outreach and policy development. Further, the department is committed to continuing to support annual teacher debit cards, stipends for recruitment and retention, and increases in starting salaries. Finally, New Mexico will continue to host an Annual Teacher Summit that not only provides teachers with resources and professional development but offers them a platform to exchange best practices and celebrate the success they are having with their students.

6. **WE HEARD:** Let's give elementary teachers high-quality science content training and professional development to ensure that all students are exposed to quality science instruction K-12.

WE RESPONDED: The PED held *Making Sense of Science* teacher institutes focusing on matter, energy and the integration of literacy and math strategies in science content, and will expand those summer training institutes based on demand and available resources. Over the next few summers, the PED would like to see every elementary teacher have this opportunity, contingent upon state STEM funding. Plans for expansion are underway.

7. **WE HEARD:** Let's better support our teachers in implementing the Common Core Math Standards in their classrooms.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is piloting *Pathway to Math Excellence* in 2016-17, a project that provides classroom support to teachers with on-site math coaches and math content training during the school year. If successful in improving students outcomes in year one, the PED would like to expand the program to additional schools, contingent upon state STEM funding.

8. **WE HEARD:** Let's provide teachers with access to NMTEACH trainings on a virtual platform.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the New Mexico Teacher Leader Network (NMTLN), which is comprised of 50 teachers from across the state. One emphasis is developing resources for New Mexico teachers to facilitate learning and understanding of the NMTEACH system. The NMTLN will help leverage NMTEACH as a tool that can be used by teachers to guide and improve their practice. Additionally, the PED Teacher Liaison and Educator Quality staff hosted and recorded several webinars that are now available online. The PED Teacher Liaison and staff are also available to host additional webinars as requested, and have visited many communities to respond to questions and input.

9. **WE HEARD:** Let's better support teachers and leaders by providing all LEAs with more training for K-3 Literacy.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is offering Regional Consortium on Reading Excellence in Education (CORE) training to all K-3 teachers to increase student achievement through literacy instruction. CORE focuses classroom-based professional learning to enable effective reading, writing, and language support for students.

Additionally, New Mexico also launched the first-ever statewide Dream Team, a group of the state's best K-6 literacy educators.

Further, the PED has begun planning a Kindergarten Teacher Academy (K-Academy) for all of the state's kindergarten teachers, to provide early literacy training for every K-Teacher in New Mexico.

10. **WE HEARD:** Let's support licensure of teachers whose native language is not English as well as those who teach English language learners.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has embarked upon several strategies for supporting our educators serving English Learners, including TESOL waiver flexibility, investments in educator preparation programs, and ongoing professional development opportunities through the state's Educator Quality Division and Priority Schools Bureau. The PED has also worked to increase awareness around the TESOL endorsement—it is not a state or federal requirement for serving ELs but rather a requirement for eligibility for state-funding for bilingual multicultural education programs.

11. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure school administrators are being held accountable for their performance (and notably their effective execution of teacher evaluation) to ensure that constructive feedback is given to our teachers and student data is analyzed by all.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will be strengthening the implementation and oversight of Principal/AP evaluations as we head into the 2017-18 school year, ensuring that administrator evaluation data is collected, reported, and acted upon.

12. **WE HEARD:** Let's include some of the state's best educators in reviewing various statewide applications and competitive grants – from Reads to Lead grants to Direct Student Services applications to Assessment RFPs.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will select educators from across the state to participate in several review processes in 2017 and beyond, thus valuing teacher perspective in the review of district applications and vendor submissions.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

13. **WE HEARD:** Let's reduce the amount of time spent on required student assessments.

WE RESPONDED: The PED worked with educators across the state to reduce testing time across multiple assessments. Notably, PARRC was reduced, on average, by 90 minutes per grade. K-2 assessment time also dropped dramatically with the implementation of Istation. The PED is committed to pressing for additional reductions in PARCC testing time while maintaining a high-quality assessment.

14. **WE HEARD:** Let's eliminate End-of-Course exams (EOCs) that are redundant.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has already identified EOCs that will not be required beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, such as ELA 6-8 and Math 6-8. Districts will still be allowed to use them as desired for final exams, but they will not be required by the PED. Moving forward, the PED will provide enhanced guidance to districts regarding required End of Course exams.

15. **WE HEARD:** Let's improve and streamline the process for End-of-Course (EOC) exams through a better platform and provide another round of opportunities for educators to be a part of the design and implementation. Let's strengthen the rigor of End of Course (EOC) exams and ensure that they align with the skills necessary for college and career readiness.

WE RESPONDED: The PED launched the NM-EPIC platform for our students and educators and has conducted an initial administrative review of each EOC exam, as part of a multi-year initiative to revise current EOCs to improve content items, blueprints, and the administration platform. Concurrently, the PED hosted (and will continue to convene) a technical working group on high school graduation requirements and the role of primary and alternative demonstrations of competency. In the coming year educators from across the state will be gathered in working groups to review and refine the content for each of these important student assessments that provide equity for our students statewide.

16. **WE HEARD:** Let's review assessment practices at the school and teacher level to identify how many assessments are being given and how many hours are spent on assessment across New Mexico.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will reissue its assessment audit of local districts. Once the audit is complete and the PED has a better understanding of how much testing is occurring, the department will provide best practice guidance on ways to reduce and in some cases, eliminate excessive assessment.

17. **WE HEARD:** Let's provide schools with real-time student level data in reading to support teachers in providing focused and targeted literacy instruction.

WE RESPONDED: The PED adopted the K-3 Istation assessment tool. Istation provides teachers with student level data in real-time, lesson plan ideas, sample parent engagement letters, and detailed reports to assist them as they promote student achievement in reading. This assessment also significantly reduced testing time and overall cost to the state.

18. **WE HEARD:** Let's provide kindergarten teachers a diagnostic tool that supports them in stronger planning, more effective differentiated instruction, and regular communication with families.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico's kindergarten observation tool (KOT) highlights our understanding that a whole-child assessment is crucial in meeting the needs of each individual student, particularly in their early childhood development.

19. **WE HEARD:** Let's improve alternative demonstrations of competency for graduation in order to provide a consistent, all-encompassing, structured approach that ensures all students have the opportunity to demonstrate that they are college and career ready.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will continue to partner with stakeholders from local education agencies (LEAs) and the legislature to define graduation pathways and strengthen alternate demonstrations of competency.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

20. **WE HEARD:** Let's give our schools time to respond to new federal requirements and state priorities as it pertains to school and district accountability.

WE RESPONDED: The PED plans to incorporate new federal requirements, such as English Language Proficiency in School Grades, in the 2018-19 school year. The PED will advocate for this approach with federal officials in response to stakeholder input. The vast majority of stakeholders advocated for stability and continuity for as many years as possible under the current School Grades system.

21. **WE HEARD:** Let's not forget about the highest-achieving students. New Mexico's school accountability system should encourage schools to focus on kids that are already achieving at the highest-levels.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico is proposing a new indicator within School Grades beginning in 2018-19 (as part of ESSA) that focuses on students that have historically been in "Quartile 4"—the highest-performing in that school over the past several years. This change will call for new approaches to ensuring that all students are being challenged.

22. **WE HEARD:** Let's hold schools accountable and report on how well they recruit and retain high-performing teachers. School Grades should include more information on the teacher workforce and student placement.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will include several such metrics in its 2017-18 School Grade report cards. While not for formal accountability, this reporting will further the important work of the New Mexico's Excellent Educators for All Plan ("Equity Plan"). The state's reporting will include information about teacher experience, recruitment, placement, and retention—with a focus on how the school works with its highest-performers. Additional educator equity metrics may also be included in response to feedback from teachers and other stakeholders.

23. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that charter schools that are not serving students well and/or not being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars are not permitted to continue to operate.

WE RESPONDED: The PED supports state policy (both legislation and regulation) requiring the automatic closure of charter schools that do not demonstrate fiscal responsibility and/or academic performance. Underperforming schools should be non-renewed by their authorizers, and the PED has recommended non-renewal for a handful of charter schools in the last 18 months. The PED has also increased the number of site visits and feedback given to schools to support continuous improvement through clear expectations and accountability.

24. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that all New Mexico schools are held accountable through School Grades, regardless of the students they serve.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will further define which schools qualify for Supplemental Accountability Measures (SAMs) with an eye towards ensuring that all students are on-track to be college and career ready.

READY FOR SUCCESS

25. **WE HEARD:** Let's be the fastest *growing* state in the nation in terms of our rate of student achievement.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico has set an ambitious goal of being the fastest growing state in the nation by 2020.

26. **WE HEARD:** Let's raise the bar for what a high school diploma means so that our students can be competitive in the job market. Let's also take the time to allow districts/schools to engage with parents, families, and students throughout the process.

WE RESPONDED: The PED originally intended to have a new standard in place for reading and math competencies for the graduating Class of 2017. However, after listening to feedback from across the state, the PED facilitated multiple technical working groups to further discuss changes with stakeholders and announced that the Class of 2020 would be the first to respond to updated high school graduation requirements that indicate competency on the PARCC is attaining a four or five.

27. **WE HEARD:** Let's make science education a higher priority—it should be included in state accountability systems, and new standards should be considered for adoption.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is working and will continue to work throughout 2017 with key stakeholders such as the state's Math and Science Coalition to consider new science standards and how to best incorporate science student achievement into School Grades beginning in 2018-19 as proposed in the state's plan.

28. **WE HEARD:** Let's make dual credit stronger and more accessible. While the PED's and the Higher Education Department's (HED's) proposals around dual credit reform are well-intentioned, continue to hear feedback on some of the proposed requirements so that New Mexico can continue to give as many students as possible access to opportunities provided by our higher education partners.

WE RESPONDED: The PED and HED are revisiting the policy changes put forward in 2016, pushing back the timeline for any reforms by at least one year, and considering alternatives to raising academic standards for students wishing to access dual-credit. Both PED and HED will consider additional input in 2017, while asking all stakeholders to keep the state's big goal of reducing remediation rates front-and-center in the discussions.

29. **WE HEARD:** Let's give our high school students round-the-clock access to personalized learning opportunities, both as a form of remediation and acceleration.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico pays for every high school sophomore to take the PSAT at no cost. Over the past four months districts and charter schools across the state have begun to access Khan Academy accounts for the students who took the PSAT. The PED, in partnership with College Board, has worked to ensure that our principals, educators, and students are aware of this opportunity and have the technical assistance needed to help students access it. Still, less than 10% of eligible high schools have set-up an account, and the PED will continue to follow-up with district and charter leaders to ensure every high schooler has access.

30. **WE HEARD:** Let's expand access to Early Childhood Education based on increasing demand.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico continues to invest in Early Childhood Education with targeted investments in districts and charters that demonstrate a willingness and capacity to leverage those investments to better prepare the New Mexico's youngest learners for sustained K-12 success. The state's Pre-K investment has near-tripled since 2011.

31. **WE HEARD:** Let's continue to provide even more flexibility through ESSA for Pre-K and Early Childhood programming, including the leveraging of federal resources and additional cross-departmental collaboration with the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Health.

WE RESPONDED: Within Section 6 of the state's plan, New Mexico has highlighted how ESSA creates opportunities for early childhood education via Title I funding. This opportunity will continue to be highlighted by the PED. Further, through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, the PED will work to leverage data to continuously improve early childhood programs in collaboration with multiple agencies.

32. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that students are exposed to the most up-to-date competencies and explore new options for fine arts and physical education standards.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is facilitating working groups with teachers, administrators, district leaders, and legislators to compare current standards with new, nationally recognized standards to better understand what is right for students in New Mexico.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING

33. **WE HEARD:** Let's help bridge the connection between student learning and careers for our high school students. Students that are ready with an employable skill set might miss out on the multitude of opportunities in their communities without opportunities to explore them. And let's better define our career-oriented pathways across the state—with consistent terms, delineated pathways, and rich resources delivered to the field.

WE RESPONDED: The PED's College and Career Readiness Bureau recently distributed the Career Clusters Guide to encourage student awareness of how high school fits into their career aspirations. As part of the state's NM Graduates Now initiative, internship and externship opportunities with local and regional employers will be broadcast via the Department of Workforce Solutions internship portal. The student guidebook details the four steps to determining their ideal career pathway, including recommended course selections for 79 career pathways based upon New Mexico employment demands, average wages, and postsecondary educational requirements.

34. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that there is reliable Broadband access statewide, so that every student can leverage the potential power/resources of online requirements and opportunities. Many communities don't have internet access, which makes it hard for them to use the rich material found online to advance their learning.

WE RESPONDED: Governor Martinez has made a commitment to Broadband access statewide. The team at the PED is leading a statewide effort to ensure Broadband-For-All by 2018. Wi-Fi networks will be upgraded in schools across the state, dramatically improving access and speed for students.

35. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure that distance learning continues, for our rural districts in particular, and that the highest quality of coursework is provided for all students.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is committed to revamping IDEAL-NM to ensure all students have access to distance learning opportunities that promote college and career readiness through high quality content and the expertise and skills of New Mexico's best educators.

SCHOOL SUPPORTS

36. **WE HEARD:** Let's continue to cut administrative costs and re-allocate more funding where it needs to be: in the classroom with our students.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has increased the dollars flowing to New Mexico classrooms by more than \$242 million, while holding administrative costs steady. Now, 73% of public school dollars go directly to the classroom. Looking ahead, the PED would like to see 76% of dollars go directly to the classroom by 2020. The PED is also practicing what it preaches: the department's budget was reduced by 30% in 2011, and just this year eliminated 18 positions.

37. **WE HEARD:** Let's get more resources to our struggling schools and populations in need, and let's use ESSA as an opportunity to achieve this with federal dollars while also continuing programs that are getting results like Principals Pursuing Excellence.

WE RESPONDED: The PED is proposing to move more resources to the state's highest-need schools through ESSA's Direct Student Services opportunity, which allows low-performing schools to apply for additional funds to support kids in extended learning time, accessible, high quality online coursework, additional tutoring and other supports.

38. **WE HEARD:** Let's encourage schools to become bilingual, teaching students who know English other languages while supporting those who are learning English.

WE RESPONDED: In 2014, New Mexico became the 5th state in the U.S. to adopt a state seal for bilingualism-biliteracy. In 2015, the PED adopted a new rule and aligned guidance to support this statute. The PED recently adopted the Common Core Spanish Language Arts and Spanish Language Development standards to ensure that instruction is rigorous and well-aligned.

39. **WE HEARD:** Let's implement a new online dashboard and project management tool because WebEPSS does not adequately support district and school leaders.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has launched the NM DASH online system, providing districts and schools with a process management tool to capture 90-Day plans and monitor progress in shorter cycles for improved student results.

40. **WE HEARD:** Let's target data-driven leadership training and support to boost student achievement.

WE RESPONDED: The PED leveraged the School Improvement Funds to launch the Leadership Innovation Model through Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) and will fund districts pursuing a focus on data-driven, strategic, and meaningful leadership.

EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

41. **WE HEARD:** Let's include more rigorous goals for our English Learners to empower them with the linguistic tools needed to advance them in all content areas to ensure academic success.

WE RESPONDED: The PED altered its draft plan from a 6-year trajectory for students attaining English language proficiency to a 5-year trajectory. This revision also drew upon federal guidance and statewide data in re-establishing the timeline for students to become proficient in English. For the purposes of school accountability, a student growth model that considers appropriate progress over the five year period will be employed.

42. **WE HEARD:** Let's offer more support to English language learners (ELLs) by partnering with community organizations that can provide volunteers, mentors and tutors.

WE RESPONDED: The PED has partnered with the Center for Educational Study of Diverse Populations (CESDP) to improve the Family Engagement Toolkit to support districts and schools in encouraging and fostering authentic home-to-school connections that support student achievement.

43. **WE HEARD:** Let's work together to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are addressed under the state's ESSA plan so that the PED and LEAs have the same expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. Further, let's focus on students with disabilities who are homeless or in foster care due to the instability in their homes and schooling, placing them at greater risk of disengaging in school, becoming truant and dropping-out.

WE RESPONDED: The New Mexico IDEA State Advisory Panel and PED's Special Education Bureau will promote and encourage the development of policy and appropriate rules statewide to eliminate barriers and improve academic success for students with disabilities that are experiencing homelessness or are in Foster Care.

44. **WE HEARD:** Let's involve our students in developing the state's plan for their success.

WE RESPONDED: The PED plans to create the Secretary's Student Advisory Council later in 2017. The Council, as envisioned recently based upon stakeholder input received in late March, will be comprised of students and will serve as an advisory council to the PED on matters pertaining to them, including: graduation requirements, student assessment, teacher quality, school leadership, online learning, advanced placement, dual-credit, and more. This idea will be developed in partnership with the Secretary's Teacher Advisory and Family Cabinet in the months ahead.

45. **WE HEARD:** Let's not allow Congressional roll-backs on Advanced Placement fee waivers to keep our students in low-income communities from reaching their full potential.

WE RESPONDED: New Mexico is committing to fully fund all AP fee waivers for the spring 2017 testing, and has begun to develop a plan, based on strong stakeholder support, to continue this allocation in FY18.

46. **WE HEARD:** Let's help charter schools start up without significant obstacles.

WE RESPONDED: In a collaborative effort with the Public Education Commission (PEC), the PED worked on establishing updated criteria for new charter schools and continues to advocate for smoother start-up procedures.

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITIES

47. **WE HEARD:** Let's engage parents and family members more frequently and with greater depth. We need to get our parents and families more involved in our students' success.

WE RESPONDED: The PED established a new role, the Parent & Family Outreach Coordinator to assist parents and families in supporting their child academically. Additionally, the PED has launched the Family Cabinet, comprised of 25 parents/guardians representing 17 school districts across the state. The PED is also piloting a new model of parent engagement, Academic Parent Teacher Teams, to be implemented in six schools across New Mexico that will establish best practices for parent engagement.

48. **WE HEARD:** Let's leverage federal funds to develop wrap-around services and partnerships with organizations that help support community schools, notably perennially struggling schools under ESSA.

WE RESPONDED: The PED will ensure that districts interested in funding community school models will receive guidance to leverage Title I funds, notably for those schools that have been identified in the bottom 5% of performers (Comprehensive Schools). As part of the state's suite of supports, applying for additional Title I funding is a starting point for those schools seeking to transform culture, climate, and student outcomes.

49. **WE HEARD:** Let's communicate more often with Superintendents and Charter Directors—regular communication is the key.

WE RESPONDED: The PED hosts bi-weekly calls with all superintendents. For each call, Superintendents have the opportunity to co-design the agenda based on the topics requested by their leaders, and the PED uses the remaining time to detail important updates. Similar calls with charter school leaders are held on a monthly basis.

50. **WE HEARD:** Let's ensure the PED is visiting the state's communities during the ESSA stakeholder engagement period and connects our ESSA plan to the priorities of our communities. Following the submission of the state's plan, the PED should return to the state's communities and explain how stakeholder input was incorporated and what the plan (and the new federal law) now means for New Mexico's students.

WE RESPONDED: When NM stakeholders were asked "In one word, what does education mean to you?" The #1 response was OPPORTUNITY.

The PED traveled the state and held twenty-five (25) community meetings and engaged nearly over 1,800 New Mexicans between October-December. Additionally, the PED will be revisiting each community during the New Mexico Rising Return Tour during April and May.

The PED is committed to increasing high-quality school and program OPPORTUNITY for all of New Mexico's students.