



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
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CHRISTOPHER N. RUSZKOWSKI  
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
GOVERNOR

April 27, 2018

Superintendent Pamela Montoya  
PO Box 547  
Dulce, NM, 87528

Dear Superintendent Montoya:

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) has reviewed your resubmission of your *Significantly Restructure and Redesign* plan submitted on April 16, 2018, as part of the implementation of New Mexico's federally-approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan. Dulce Elementary School earned a School Grade of "F" in five of the last six academic years—and thus was one of only four schools statewide to be identified for More Rigorous Intervention (MRI). As such, Dulce district leaders were charged with choosing from one of four options to transform students' academic experiences. The district selected the Significantly Restructure and Redesign option and was therefore responsible for crafting a transformative plan that would increase student achievement. Upon initial submission of a plan that failed to do so, the district was charged with incorporating all input from the seven feedback categories provided by NMPED to the Dulce Independent Schools on March 21, 2018. The district was granted timeline extensions when requested.

In your district, an entire generation of students has been underserved. While we all fundamentally believe in every student's unlimited potential, that belief must be matched with action. It is a moral imperative to break down any barrier that stands in our children's way.

And yet, upon review of your resubmission, the plan does not indicate that the Board of Education for Dulce Independent Schools has approved all elements of the entire submitted plan. Instead, the resubmitted plan relies on contingencies, excuses and workarounds in order to avoid a clear commitment to addressing the educational needs of your students. This is unacceptable for our students who are in dire need of immediate change, and uncovers systemic operational and academic failures within the district.

More practically, the inadequacies of the plan limit NMPED's ability to review the plan in full and make any final determination. If this is Dulce's final plan submission, then NMPED will

select another option for the students in your district. It is discouraging that such a weak and tepid plan was delivered to NMPED on April 16<sup>th</sup>—one that does not demonstrate a genuine attempt to advance student achievement in a bold and purposeful manner. The resubmitted plan does not prioritize the needs of students and focuses instead on the needs of the adults—all this after an entire generation of students has been deprived of a high-quality education.

As the Superintendent, you have until May 7, 2018 to resubmit a complete plan in a manner that clearly indicates the Board of Education's unconditional, full support and approval of all elements. If the district fails to submit a plan in this manner, NMPED will select another option for the school immediately and may take further action to address the systemic issues that have been uncovered through this process. The financial, operational, and academic health of your district is being called into question, and our students deserve better than more of the same.

Please note that this letter and your resubmission of your MRI Significantly Restructure and Redesign Application will be posted publicly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Ruszkowski".

Christopher N. Ruszkowski  
Cabinet Secretary, NM Public Education Department

cc: Dulce Board of Education  
Debbie Rael, Deputy Secretary of School Transformation, NMPED  
Matt Montano, Deputy Secretary of Teaching & Learning, NMPED  
Marian Rael, Deputy Secretary of Finance & Operations, NMPED  
Ashley Eden, Deputy Chief-of-Staff, NMPED  
Elisabeth Peterson, Director of Priority Schools Bureau, NMPED