

Focusing on Improving Student Achievement

Albuquerque Public Schools' top priority is the academic success of all its students. This goal requires a new commitment to supporting educators as they teach all New Mexican students. The State Legislature must create a policy environment that encourages public schools to develop a shared vision to build upon our successes and continue to adopt effective programs and strategies that tackle education's biggest challenges. The solution will not be found in fragmented interests. Rather, APS supports a systemic focus on learning, instruction, accountability, community and professionalism that concentrates on:

- * Providing meaningful professional development for teachers and principals that is aligned to district programs and goals
- * Engaging families and ensuring they are active partners in educational decisions affecting their students
- * Intervening early and often with students who are struggling and having the resources required to allow them succeed academically
- * Collaborating with stakeholders to create effective school evaluation systems that provide necessary support to schools and teachers
- * Tackling habitual truancy and examining attendance laws to ensure students are given the opportunity to learn
- * Expanding early childhood education and extended school-year and -day programs that are proven to enhance student achievement across New Mexico
- * Providing numerous educational opportunities for students that are more closely aligned to the demands of the workplace, colleges and universities
- * Focusing on our lowest performing schools and implementing the reforms selected by the superintendent and school board that have been proven effective in APS

Sufficiently Funding New Mexico's Public Schools

Recognizing the requirements in the New Mexico State Constitution, APS requests that the state Legislature sufficiently and adequately fund public education. APS believes sufficient funding includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- * adequate program support
- * increases for fixed costs
- * employee benefits
- * early childhood education
- * restoring class sizes to their statutory limit
- * extended school-year and school-day programs
- * professional development for teachers and principals

- * transportation services
- * textbook adoptions
- * education technology and distance learning
- * infrastructure necessary to deliver new standardized assessments

To ensure school districts are able to educate New Mexico's children to the best of their ability, APS also requests that the Legislature and the Public Education Department impose no new state-mandated, unfunded educational programs.

Improving New Mexico School Finance Law

APS understands the importance of being good financial stewards of our public dollars. APS also believes that every dollar spent in schools needs to support student achievement. In order to leverage our funding appropriately, APS requests that the state Legislature:

- * Make smart choices about the public school funding formula and implement appropriate changes to ensure equitable funding for all New Mexican students
- * Grant school districts the same flexibility as municipalities and counties when investing funds
- * Equalize funding for charter schools, traditional and alternative schools through the public school funding formula
- * Fund the capital needs of locally-authorized and state-authorized charter schools equitably throughout New Mexico
- * Amend definitions to allow school districts to fund education technology needs through all local revenue sources

Protecting Student Safety

Protecting our students and families is non-negotiable for APS. In the modern era, APS knows that the demands on school safety and social services for students have changed. APS has to be able to support our families' basic needs so all our students can learn. To achieve this, APS believes the state Legislature should take action to:

- * Permit school boards to authorize independent public school police departments that specialize in working with children to focus on protection of students and enhance their educational success
- * Increase health, mental health, and other community services that are housed in schools and the surrounding community to aid students and their families in leading healthy, productive lives
- * Foster safe, respectful and fear-free schools that address the needs of bullying victims and that work to eliminate bullying behavior