

**Testimony to APS School Board on behalf of GACC:**  
**Business Community Input Meeting for APS Superintendent**

*Monday, January 12, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., at the Alice and Bruce King  
Educational Complex, 6400 Uptown Blvd. NE*

Thank you Dr. Maestas, and members of Albuquerque Public Schools Board, for inviting the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce to offer its comments as you begin your search for a new superintendent. My name is Jed Fanning and I am the Executive Vice President & Commercial Group Manager of US Bank New Mexico. I am also the Vice Chair of the Chamber's Workforce Development and Education Division.

The state of education in New Mexico is a critically important issue to the business community, and we look forward to continuing this discussion as you move forward with your selection process.

The Chamber feels strongly that the Board must identify a superintendent who employs a student-centered approach to education reform. Specifically, the Chamber supports the following student-centered policies.

The Chamber supports policy to improve grade-level reading for students in the third grade. For those students who are not reading at grade-level in the third grade, the Chamber supports robust and effective intervention and support programs designed to improve reading proficiency and ensure that students stay on a path to graduation. The fact is that third-grade reading proficiency is critical to setting students on a path to degree completion and New Mexico cannot afford to continue losing our students before they graduate from high school.

The Chamber supports policy to reduce both truancy (unexcused absences) and absenteeism (excused and unexcused absences), including enforcement of procedures proven to identify and address chronically truant and absent students. The impact of missing any school, whether excused or unexcused, can be harmful

to students, preventing them from establishing an academic foundation in the early years and eventually contributing to drop out rates.

The Chamber supports the delivery of social services for children, youth and adults in the Albuquerque area on site at every local school. Linking students to social services agencies by creating youth or family service centers on school sites can facilitate identification of health and social service needs that are barriers to student learning. On-site youth or family service centers can also facilitate planning between the school and the community to address the health and social service needs of its families and children.

The Chamber supports the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. These rigorous standards in mathematics and English language arts will prepare our students to be competitive in a global economy.

The Chamber supports inclusion of student achievement data in teacher evaluation.

The Chamber supports policy to reward highly effective teachers and school leaders. We support effective professional development for teachers, including teacher mentoring programs where highly effective teachers help those teachers who may need guidance and support.

The Chamber supports policies for recruiting and retaining STEM teachers to ensure our students are prepared with the skills they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.

Dr. Maestas and members of the Board, the Chamber believes that we must provide our students with access to the highest quality education possible. The reforms I have discussed here today will help do this, and we hope that you will consider candidates who also prioritize these reforms as you conduct your selection process for our next APS superintendent. Thank you.