

EDUCATION THAT WORKS FOR NEW MEXICO:

STRONG READERS
SUPPORTED EDUCATORS
SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES

DEB HAALAND
NEW MEXICO



From early learning to high school graduation to workforce development or a college degree, every step in a child's education should open doors, so that our children can stay here in New Mexico when they're grown.

I'm a proud product of New Mexico public schools and a proud parent of a University of New Mexico graduate. Strengthening our public schools and improving education for all New Mexicans will be a top priority. Traveling to all 33 counties in New Mexico, I heard from students, parents and educators who shared stories of students losing interest in school and falling behind. I heard about educators unable to make ends meet or find housing. School leadership and union members alike said there aren't enough workers to fill good-paying jobs and serve all of our children's needs.

No matter their background, every child in New Mexico deserves a fair shot, the chance to dream big, and the ability to reach their full potential. That starts with education. By working together with students, parents, teachers, employers and unions, we can build new solutions and deliver a future our children deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Rachel".

IMPROVE K-12 EDUCATION

When kids learn to read, the world is unlocked for them. I remember the wide eyes of my child when it clicked that they could read. At that moment, anything was possible. New Mexico has made great strides in education and we are on the precipice of a New Mexico Miracle for improved reading and math rates. With support from teachers, parents, and students, and informed by takeaways from the [Yazzie/Martinez](#) lawsuit, I have a plan to help all of New Mexico's kids succeed.

My plans to improve K-12 education:

- **Teach kids to read earlier.** Schools will ensure students can read before the third grade with targeted support for kids who fall behind. Providing the resources for early reading requires hiring and training literacy coaches to analyze literacy scores, supporting teachers inside the classroom, focusing on reading comprehension, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. Keep students engaged during long breaks with funding for summer reading and other hands-on learning opportunities to combat summer learning loss.
- **Improve and modernize school facilities.** Kids need quality school environments so they focus on learning. I will direct dollars from the Public School Capital Outlay Fund that have not been spent to improve school buildings such as modernizing HVAC and heating systems and adding technology capabilities so our students aren't impacted by blistering heat or extreme cold as they have been in the past and educators have modern tools to improve education.
- **Make sure students are focused on learning and not distracted by smartphones in the classroom.** Support schools and teachers to find a solution that works best for them to keep smartphones out of the classroom during the school day so students can learn and interact with their classmates.

- **Create an Every Child Outdoor Initiative.** Outdoor learning has been shown to improve academic performance, student engagement, and sense of community. This initiative will incorporate outdoor learning into K-12 curriculums and provide implementation resources, such as providing transportation funding for schools that would need to travel and guidance to apply subjects students are focusing on in the classroom to outside learning.
- **Raise math proficiency rates.** Pass the [School Math Changes Act](#). Work with local school districts to adopt and implement math screening programs to identify and provide extra help to students who are falling behind. Target support for kids not at grade level and provide the necessary resources by the fifth grade. Create a mathematics instructional framework to make sure ongoing professional learning, mathematics coaching, and program evaluation are aligned with the jobs of the future.
- **Strengthen underserved schools.** Address teaching shortages in New Mexico's rural and Tribal communities by offering educators employment, educational, and housing opportunities in those communities. Integrate Native language, history, and culture into schools that serve Native students. Allow for Tribal schools to receive Public School Capital Outlay funds to improve and update school buildings by supporting the passage of the [State-Tribal Education Compact Schools Act](#). Provide training to educators to integrate these topics into the curriculum. In close partnership with New Mexico's Tribes, pass the [Tribal Education Trust Fund](#) to provide long-term funding for Native language revitalization and other priorities.
- **Offer more opportunities for students to earn college credit in high school.** Expand participation in dual enrollment courses by picking up associated costs and promote these courses at high school career fairs and college days.
- **Revitalize Native languages.** Emphasize cultural and language history to enhance biliteracy programs—building on my work from when I was in Congress.

RECRUIT, RETAIN & SUPPORT EDUCATORS

Teachers, counselors, assistants, bilingual specialists, librarians, principals, superintendents and other education professionals are critical to improving student achievement, but across New Mexico, there is a shortage of educators. As Governor, I will work with local school boards, parents, teachers' unions, and community partners to recruit and retain educators across New Mexico, especially in rural areas, and support them so they have more capacity to focus on our kids.

My plan to recruit, retain, and support educators:

- ***Increase the number of qualified educators in New Mexico.*** Enter [Inter-State Educator Compacts](#) to increase the number of qualified teachers that can come to New Mexico with certifications from other states. Build on New Mexico's successful Teacher Residency program by indexing paid teacher residencies to beginner teacher salaries. Cover the full cost of advanced degrees, licenses, and professional certifications from New Mexico's universities. Add more special education teachers, educational assistants, behavioral health counselors, and support staff.
- ***Improve educator benefits.*** Increase the minimum pay for all education staff to reflect a living wage that grows with inflation, support better compensation packages, and protect pensions and retirement plans. Bolster professional development, stronger student loan forgiveness, and housing assistance for educators in rural communities. Increase the minimum salary of instructors and staff at colleges and universities, in particular adjunct and contingent faculty.
- ***Advance educators' professions.*** Create more time in teachers' schedules for professional development. Support career ladders, incentivize educators seeking certifications, build essential skills and leadership development, and create reasonable educator accountability systems.

- **Grow and retain quality school leadership.** Expand efforts to better prepare and train school district superintendents, principals, and other school leaders. Increase pay for principals, create school administrator residency programs for educators looking to transition to enter school administrations, support educators pursuing higher education for administrative roles.
- **Listen to educators.** Create support systems for teachers to manage challenging classroom situations so teachers and students feel safe and respected. Establish a task force to work with teachers so their expertise directly informs policy, teacher preparation, and credentialing requirements.



SUPPORT FAMILIES & LEARNERS

Our kids' success in schools requires students and families to have stable home lives. When families are struggling, it's harder for kids to focus on their school work. I will do everything I can to ensure families have what they need to keep students healthy and safe. Healthcare, nutritious food, stable housing, reliable internet, and safe roads are essential pillars to improve academic outcomes.

My plan to support families and learners:

- ***Save families money.*** Increase the Child Tax Credit and automatically deliver it to eligible families.
- ***Adopt and expand Community School Models.*** Community schools are an opportunity to reimagine public education in our state by centering the voices of students and families to create space for shared leadership and decision-making among students, families, educators, and community members. As responsive institutions, community schools identify the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve, organize resources, and facilitate strong partnerships to remove barriers and create cultures of safety, belonging, and care. Offering wrap-around services like counseling, school based health care, dental, family support, and community engagement at schools so parents and caregivers have convenient services while they're working and caring for their families.
- ***Increase funding for before- and after-school programs.*** Encourage learning and safe environments outside of the classroom by improving access to math tutoring, reading programs, arts, outdoor activities, and other programs. Not only does this support learning, but it also helps working parents.

- **Improve rates of student attendance.** Implement attendance texting programs for local school districts to notify parents of absences. Expand and create school-level supports for the Attendance for Success Act, such as dedicated attendance clerks, to make sure students are in the classroom and to address the challenges that contribute to a student's absence. Launch a governor attendance award for every school.
- **Provide school districts the flexibility to pursue creative solutions.** Allow schools to tailor their school hours and calendars to their unique communities to improve learning opportunities for kids, provide flexible preparation and professional development time for teachers, and carve out ample time for innovative career technical education programs. This would include creating a new transportation funding formula for schools that empowers students to engage in meaningful, community-connected learning experiences outside of school buildings and in their communities. Many school districts around the state have found success from addressing specific community needs, and we have much to learn from them.



INVEST IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As a single mom, I cleaned my child's preschool to afford the cost of an early childhood education. When I was in Congress, I introduced legislation to provide universal free, high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities. Today, New Mexico is the first state to make childcare free. This program will save families thousands of dollars a year and improve outcomes for kids. To ensure the success of this program, New Mexico needs to hire more early childhood educators and families need access to the program.

My plan to invest in Early Childhood Education

- ***Make it easier for families to enroll in early childhood education.*** Provide online applications, hire more case workers to handle intake, and offer automatic enrollment.
- ***Improve childcare provider benefits and pathways.*** Raise pay for early childcare workers to align with the living wage in the community they work in and support housing opportunities for experienced childcare providers in communities with severe shortages.
- ***Open more quality childcare facilities.*** Cut the red tape to increase the number of licensed, quality childcare providers across New Mexico.
- ***Keep teaching exciting and effective.*** Provide early childhood professionals more opportunities for professional development and training to stay up-to-date on teaching methods.
- ***Protect universal childcare and early learning into the future.*** Grow the Early Childhood Trust Fund and champion investments in education and training for New Mexico's childcare professionals.

PATHWAYS FROM SCHOOL TO CAREERS

As a first-generation college graduate, I know the challenges of navigating higher education. I didn't go to college until I was 28, and had to take out student loans to afford it. There should be options for those who want to attend college and those who want to follow a different pathway. When a student finishes high school, they should be prepared with the knowledge to choose a career that fits their goals and talents. As Governor, I am committed to ensuring every New Mexican has the opportunity to shape their future and find economic stability in a changing economy.

My plan for schools to careers:

- ***Expand career pathways starting in middle school.***
 - Cultivate the next generation of skilled trades-workers by bolstering the trades, starting in middle school, in partnership with experienced, quality union apprenticeship programs.
 - Expand and stabilize funding for Career Technical Education by creating reliable funding formulas.
 - Expand non-trades and non-college jobs training in high schools and community colleges, such as hospitality, arts and entertainment, and tech programs.
 - Partner with New Mexico-based employers to provide training in public schools.
 - Increase support for students with disabilities by offering more pre-apprenticeship opportunities that prepare them for workforce participation.

- **Redesign high school experiences for students.** Provide relevant college and career-focused instruction that is rigorous, engaging, and tied to job opportunities and workforce needs.
- **Expand the Opportunity Scholarship.** Meet our state's workforce needs in education, health care, social work, and public safety by providing free tuition for New Mexicans, including for graduate education and vocational certificates.
- **Make sure that students are ready to enter into the changing world as adults.** Support financial literacy, civics learning, media literacy, and data literacy for all high schoolers entering the job market.

