

“

Montgomery County Superintendent Joshua Starr said Monday that the country needs a three-year moratorium on standardized testing and needs to “stop the insanity” of evaluating teachers according to student test scores because it is based on “bad science.”

- Valerie Strauss, Washington Post, December 10, 2012 ”

TEACHERS' VOICE



PROFESSIONAL

PROGRESSIVE

UNIONISM

**Legislative
Edition 2013**

HIGH EXPECTATIONS



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albuquerque teachers federation

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HIGH EXPECTATIONS



If you're having a sense of déjà vu, you're not alone. Much of what we expect this legislative session is the continuation of battles

carried over from last legislative session (or the last several). But in a 60-day session, we have more time to both fight the negatives and advocate for positive changes in funding and policy—and with your help, we intend to do just that.

So what do we expect from "them"? There will no doubt be more propaganda published in the Albuquerque Journal, campaigning for Governor Martínez and Secretary-designate Skandera's education "deforms." They will focus (again) on retaining 3rd graders not reading on level, as well as getting legislation passed to put the teacher evaluation plan already written in rule into law, tying your evaluation to test scores. Expect that they will work toward destroying the 3-Tiered System, with the goal of replacing it with a merit pay system. Expect their budget to contain money to reward "effective" teachers and schools, as a step in that direction.

Sadly, in addition to the direct threats to our profession, there are bigger threats on the horizon. Rather than raising revenue, we also expect "them" to introduce single sales factor legislation that could essentially give away half of our corporate income tax revenue. They may even put forth anti-union legislation, hidden in various bills, or blatantly on the table in Right to Work legislation. None of what we expect from "them" comes as a surprise.

So what can you expect from US? Expect us to fight against their harmful schemes and bad ideas, but also to fight for the right reforms and the funding our schools need. Expect us to introduce teacher evaluation bills based on research and balanced multiple measures. Expect us to fight for appropriate interventions and remediation for our struggling readers, not retention. And expect us to fight for more revenue, not less, and for more public education funding above the line so we can meet the needs of both our students AND our employees.

So what do I expect from you? Along with doing the amazing job you do every day, I need your voice. It is only through our collective action and advocacy that we can fight against their bad agenda and fight for what we need! There are talking points throughout this edition of the Teachers' Voice specifically designed for you to use as you citizen lobby throughout the session.

In Solidarity, *Ellen*

“ Learning goes both ways. Other countries have learned a great deal from the United States, and now it is time for American educators to open their eyes to other nations' globally-minded and future-focused practices, leverage existing assets, and create a truly world-class education system for this generation of students and generations to come.

– Vivien Stewart, *A World-Class Education: Learning from International Models of Excellence and Innovation* ”

AFT NM LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

OUR CHALLENGE: BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR NEW MEXICAN STUDENTS



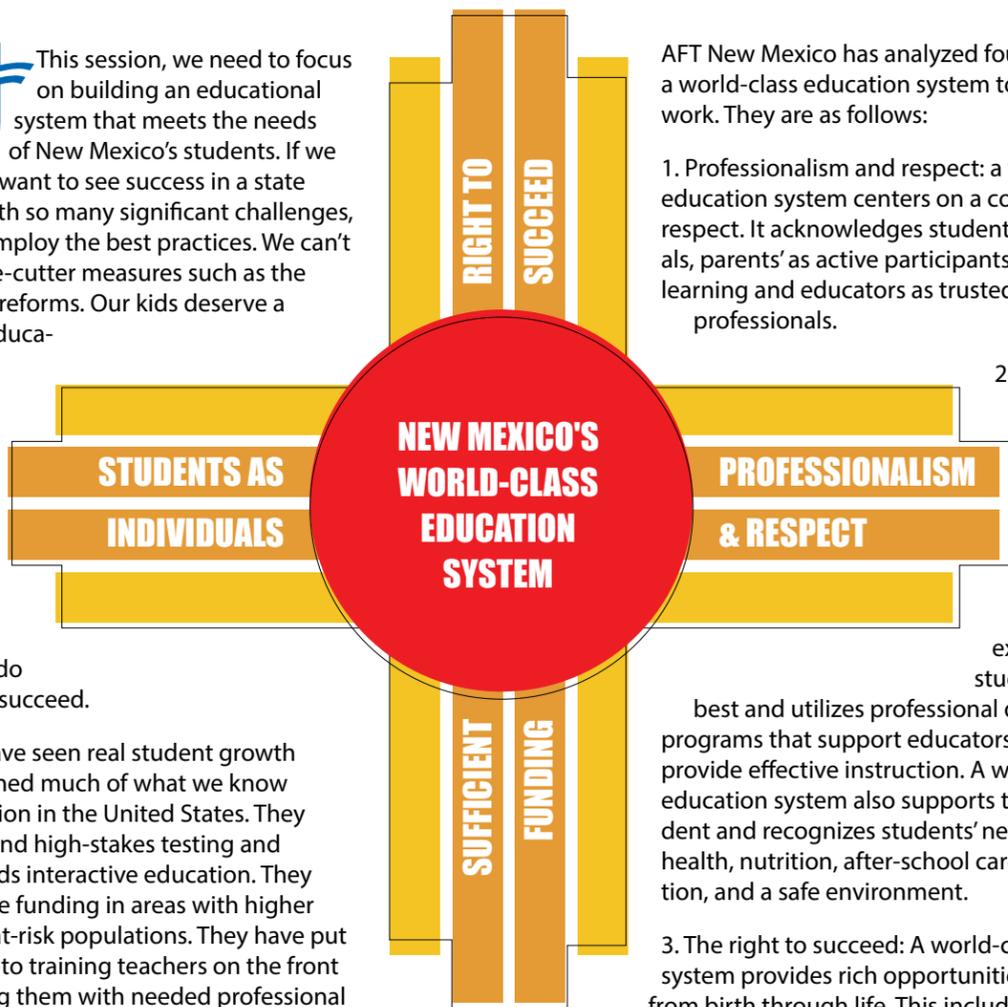
This session, we need to focus on building an educational system that meets the needs of New Mexico's students. If we want to see success in a state with so many significant challenges, we need to employ the best practices. We can't rely on cookie-cutter measures such as the failed Florida reforms. Our kids deserve a world-class education system – one that employs the best knowledge and research of how students learn and what we can do to help them succeed.

Places that have seen real student growth have abandoned much of what we know about education in the United States. They have left behind high-stakes testing and moved towards interactive education. They have put more funding in areas with higher poverty and at-risk populations. They have put more effort into training teachers on the front end, providing them with needed professional development and respecting and utilizing their skills as professionals.

In a world-class education system, students learn the skills that they will need to succeed in the 21st century. This includes the ability to:

- Effectively listen and communicate
- Work collaboratively
- Think creatively
- Be culturally aware
- Incorporate higher order thinking skills.
- Solve complex problems.

In countries with a world-class education system, there has been a consistency of efforts to align policies with a coherent vision that includes investing in and trusting teachers as professionals, along with a purposeful focus on equity.



AFT New Mexico has analyzed four pillars of a world-class education system to guide our work. They are as follows:

1. Professionalism and respect: a world-class education system centers on a core value of respect. It acknowledges students as individuals, parents' as active participants in a student's learning and educators as trusted and respected professionals.

2. Instruction based upon how scientific knowledge of how students learn: A world-class education examines how students learn

best and utilizes professional development programs that support educators' efforts to provide effective instruction. A world-class education system also supports the whole student and recognizes students' needs, including health, nutrition, after-school care, transportation, and a safe environment.

3. The right to succeed: A world-class education system provides rich opportunities for students from birth through life. This includes quality early childhood education, a rich curriculum in K-12, including necessary interventions at every level and vocational education. It also includes affordable and quality higher education and life-long learning opportunities.

4. Sufficient funding: In order to recruit and retain caring, competent and qualified individuals and to provide the tools they need to be successful, we need to sufficiently fund education from birth to career.

We can rise to the challenge to provide high quality education for New Mexican students. We need to create comprehensive programs focused on engaging students. We need to challenge, support and respect our educational professionals. We need long-term commitments to work together to do what is best for students.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY

By Albuquerque Interfaith

A uniform system of free public schools sufficient for the education of, and open to, all the children of school age in the state shall be established and maintained.

–Constitution of the State of New Mexico, Article XII, Section 1

The "American people have always regarded education and [the] acquisition of knowledge as matters of supreme importance." We have recognized "the public schools as a most vital civic institution for the preservation of a democratic system of government," and as the primary vehicle for transmitting "the values on which our society rests." [A]s... pointed out early in our history, "...education is necessary to prepare citizens to participate effectively and intelligently in our open political system if we are to preserve freedom and independence... [E]ducation has a fundamental role in maintaining the fabric of our society. We cannot ignore the significant social costs borne by our Nation when select groups are denied the means to absorb the values and skills upon which our social order rests.

– U.S. Supreme Court, *Plyler v. Doe* (1982)

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TEACHER EVALUATION

A TIMELINE



- In 1996, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* was published. The report cited research confirming that teachers matter. In fact, they are the most important school-based influence on student achievement. Later research suggests that having particularly good teachers positively affects students' current and future academic performance.
- In 2001, *No Child Left Behind* was enacted, creating high stakes attached to student test scores.
- Political and philanthropic forces start converging to redefine teacher quality around student achievement.
- The phrase "teacher quality" has a new meaning: measuring effectiveness on the basis of student outcomes, as opposed to teacher inputs.
- Policies of high-stakes accountability have increased pressure on schools to measure and demonstrate results.
- In 2009, *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness* receives a lot of attention. The report is based on the premise that, "A teacher's effectiveness—the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement—is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision making in any meaningful way."
- Leaders of both political parties strongly endorsed linking teacher evaluation to student test scores, and foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Milken Family Foundation, and the Broad Foundation provide significant financial resources to support these efforts.
- In 2009, the ED Recovery Act, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, was announced by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. It included *Race to the Top*, a \$4.35 billion U.S. Department of Education contest created to spur "innovation and reforms" in state and local districts. In order to win the *Race to the Top* grant, states had to agree to tie teachers evaluations with student achievement.
- *Race to the Top* is very specific in its conception of an "effective teacher." "Highly effective teachers" are those whose students achieve high rates of growth—defined narrowly by the program as a change in test scores between two or more points in time (U.S. Dept. of Education 2010). Supplemental measures are encouraged, as are alternative metrics for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, but the primary emphasis rests on the test results in Language Arts and Math.
- In April 2010, working with the PED on their *Race to the Top* grant, ATF creates a "white paper" stating our support for a changed teacher evaluation system and outlining our plan for evaluation reform.
- Identifying "Highly Effective" teachers has become the new policy bandwagon.
- States start changing their teacher evaluation systems based on the assumption that teacher effectiveness can be measured with student test scores.
- Most have embraced a Value-Added Method (VAM) for measuring growth. VAM compares testing at two points in time rather than on students' test scores at a single point in time.
- There is no research base that proves teacher effectiveness can be measured with student test scores.
- Current tests have been found to be instructionally insensitive. As a result, research indicates that they are unsuitable for use in any educational accountability program.
- Some outcomes of basing evaluations on test scores:
 - Excessive test preparation.
 - A narrow curriculum.
 - An arbitrary and inordinate focus on students who are on the cusp of proficiency as measured by standardized tests—a focus that undercuts the right of all students to a well-rounded, content-rich curriculum that encourages them to develop critical thinking skills.
- Research shows that an excessive focus on basic math and reading scores can lead to narrowing and over-simplifying the curriculum to only the subjects and formats that are tested, reducing the attention to science, history, the arts, civics, and foreign language, as well as to writing, research, and more complex problem-solving tasks.
- A number of factors have been found to have strong influences on student learning gains, aside from the teachers to whom their scores would be attached. These include the influences of students' other teachers—both previous teachers and, in secondary schools, current teachers of other subjects—as well as tutors or instructional specialists, who have been found often to have very large influences on achievement gains. These factors also include school conditions—such as the quality of curriculum materials, specialist or tutoring supports, class size, and other factors that affect learning.
- VAM estimates have proven to be unstable across statistical models, years, and classes that teachers teach.
- One study found that across five large urban districts, among teachers who were ranked in the top 20% of effectiveness in the first year, fewer than a third were in that top group the next year, and another third moved all the way down to the bottom 40%.
- Another study found that teachers' effectiveness ratings in one year could only predict from 4% to 16% of the variation in such ratings in the following year. Thus, a teacher who appears to be very ineffective in one year might have a dramatically different result the following year. The same dramatic fluctuations were found for teachers ranked at the bottom in the first year of analysis.
- One study found that more than half of the teachers (53.6%) had a different effectiveness rating in reading between one VAM and a second VAM. In math, about 40 percent of the teachers would have been in a different effectiveness ranking.
- In the 2011 Legislative Session, the teacher evaluation bill (SB502) failed to pass in the legislature.
- Then, Governor Martínez created the "New Mexico Effective Teaching Task Force." The goal was to create a system for recognizing great teachers around New Mexico. Only one member of this task force, an elementary school teacher, was working with students every day in a classroom.
- October 2012, the ATF White Paper "Teacher Evaluation, Compensation and Student Outcomes: How can we link all of these components together in a fair, reliable system that will change public education for the better?" is rewritten and presented to ATF members, state legislators, and the public.
- In the 2012 Legislative Session, a house bill and a senate bill were modeled after the task force recommendations with 50% of teachers' evaluations based on tests.
- There were also competing house and senate bills that reformed teacher evaluation. Student outcomes were linked to teacher evaluation in these bills with Student Learning Objectives.
- None of the bills passed.
- NM Education Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera applied for a waiver requesting flexibility from NCLB based on a premature promise of new legislation mandating at teacher and principal evaluation system based 50% on test scores (SBA, for those who give it, and the school's A-F letter grade for everyone else).
- To get flexibility from NCLB, NM promised to create a system of teacher evaluation (comprised of test scores and other factors) and school evaluations (A-F Scores).
- The PED asserted that the approval of the waiver, even though the legislation did not pass, gave them "permission" to write new rules basing 50% of teachers' evaluations on tests.
- Pilot districts and schools are working under that system now in the 2012-13 school year.

“New Mexico has already created a three-tiered licensure system at the state level, with locally aligned on-the-job evaluations. Based on a portfolio modeled on the National Board process, providing evidence of performance in three areas – instruction, student learning, and professional learning – teachers must demonstrate increasing competence in order to progress from Provisional Teacher (first three years) to Professional Teacher to Master Teacher... This has created an aligned system that focuses teachers on what their students learn as a result of their teaching decisions and on how they can learn to improve their effectiveness.

Linda Darling Hammond, Phi Delta Kappan, November 2012

- The PED's intent is to have the entire state under that system in 2013-14.
- In October 2012, AFT NM and ATF along with key legislators filed a petition for a Writ of Mandamus with the New Mexico Supreme Court, asking it to strike down the new teacher evaluation system on the basis of separation of powers principles. Under our state constitution, important education policy should be set—and changed—only by the Legislature.
- In December 2012, the NM Supreme Court denies the writ.
- 2013 legislative session—the fight continues.
- According to W. James Popham, past-president of the American Educational Research Association, there is no researched link between test scores and teaching effectiveness.
- The U.S. is the only economically-advanced nation to rely heavily on multiple-choice tests.
- An Education International Policy Paper, "Building the Future Through Quality Education" warns: "When one form of evaluation designed for a particular purpose is used to serve a different purpose, the consequences can be unforeseen and damaging."
- Other nations use performance-based or authentic assessments, where students are evaluated on the basis of real work such as essays, projects and activities.
- Ironically, because these nations do not focus on teaching to standardized tests, they score even higher than U.S. students on those kinds of tests.

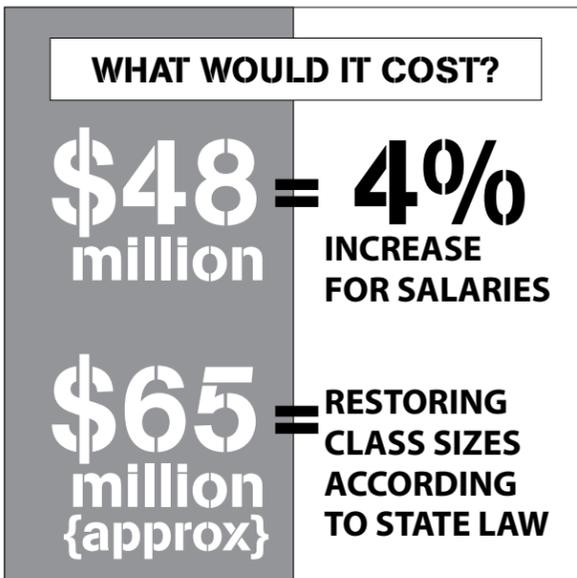
EDUCATION FUNDING

FUNDING

STATE BUDGET OUTLOOK IMPROVES

Key economists and legislative analysts reported in December that the state will likely see increases in revenues of over \$280 million for fiscal year that impacts the 2012-13 school year. These projections of new revenue, often referred to as new money, is the best news since the economic crisis began.

Out of the \$280 million, about \$80 million appears dedicated to meeting commitments related to Medicaid and public employee retirement contributions. Still, that leaves \$200 million dollars for the state to restore our education revenue.



Public education spending currently accounts for just over 40% of the state budget. If legislators appropriate based on the same percentage, schools should receive in excess of \$80 million. This amount of money could provide substantial salary increases to school employees or the restoration of lost teaching positions that resulted in temporary increases in class size and class load limits.

Until recently, a vast majority of recurring new money was usually allocated to public schools through the part of the funding formula that distributes money equally to school districts. Based on the past few years, the governor will undoubtedly want the money to be allocated in a way that allows the Public Education Department to use the money in a way that funds its "reform" agenda.

THE BUDGET

"ABOVE THE LINE" IS THE BOTTOM LINE!

When we talk about public education budget proposals, the amount of money is not our only concern. It matters whether funding recommendations are included "above the line" or "below the line" on the budget ledger. The amount of flexibility our school district has with spending—and that our union has in negotiations—will depend on how much of the budget is "above the line."

Money that is "above the line" in the budget goes through the school funding formula and is sent to the 89 school districts for operations. This is where money is appropriated for salaries (and, if lawmakers have the political will, for salary increases). Money that is "below the line" is essentially earmarked for specific programs, initiatives and nonrecurring costs.

Governor Martínez and Secretary-designate Skandera proposed a public education budget with a significant amount of money "below the line" for things like rewarding effective teachers and administrators, and specific reform initiatives. Rather than flowing money through the funding formula and giving school districts financial flexibility to meet their needs, the

executive branch intends to force its reform initiatives—including merit pay—by controlling funding at the state level. Earmarking money "below the line" in the budget means it can only be used for the specific purpose named in the line item. Districts and unions will have less money "above the line" over which to negotiate and meet local needs.

The bottom line: We need public school funding ABOVE the line! When you call, write or email your state senator and representative, give them that message.

SINGLE SALES FACTOR

A REVENUE ISSUE TO WATCH

Over the last few years in New Mexico, as with most other states, the sluggish economy has led to decreased revenue available to create the state's budget. As a result, funding for education has been cut. That loss has been felt by every public school student and teacher across the state with larger class sizes, less instructional material, classroom position cuts, and zero salary increases.

Yet, despite this severe decline in revenue for public services and government functions, the next legislative session is expected to debate proposals that potentially would lower revenue from corporate income taxes. Recent media discussions and newspaper editorials are promoting the "single sales factor" option. With this proposed change, a manufacturer's tax obligation would be calculated using only the relative amount of its out-of-state sales, eliminating payroll and property as equally-weighted factors in the taxation formula established under current state law.

Business interests tout the single sales factor as an incentive for manufacturers to move here and for current businesses to expand. Under the single sales option, it is estimated that our state's effective corporate tax rate for manufacturers would decrease from the current 6% to 2%. Most of the advantages from the single sales model, however, are realized by large, profitable multistate corporations. Small local businesses and individual tax payers are usually left to make up the gap in lost revenue.

Twenty-three other states have adopted the single sales concept that our state legislature will consider in 2013. Their experience is a lesson for New Mexico. For example, after a switch to a single sales factor, the Oregon Dept. of Revenue estimated the change resulted in a \$77.6 million loss in state revenue for the 2005-2007 budget cycle. One large manufacturer benefiting from the new formula, Nike Corporation, received a \$16 million tax cut in 2006, according to the Oregon Center for Public Policy. A comparable formula change for our state is expected to have similar consequences. Gerry Bradley, research director for New Mexico Voices for Children, estimates that a single sales formula would result in a \$150 million revenue loss to the state budget.

In the last legislative session, Senate Bill 42 would have established a single sales factor for the corporate tax

formula. The bill died in committee, but it will no doubt return. Locally, many organizations—including your union—are questioning legislation that would reduce the amount of money available for already-underfunded schools. We urge you to inform yourself about the many issues to be debated by the next legislature—especially the single sales factor. The outcome of that debate could have a serious impact on your classroom.



Although we are constantly benchmarking American school performance against the Finns, we might be better served by benchmarking our school policies and social programs against theirs. For example, Finland's social policies result in a rate of children in poverty (those living in families whose income is less than 50% of median income in the nation) that is estimated at well under 5%. In the USA, that rate is estimated at well over 20%!

IT'S TIME TO ROAR

RESTORE OUR ANNUAL REVENUE

Where does the revenue to pay for public education in NM come from?

- Sales taxes
- State income taxes
- Corporate income taxes

Revenues needed for education are going to:

- Special interests that get tax exemptions, tax credits, tax deductions;

TOTAL: \$1.3 billion in revenue lost.

- Tax cuts for rich New Mexicans;

TOTAL: \$300 million in revenue lost.

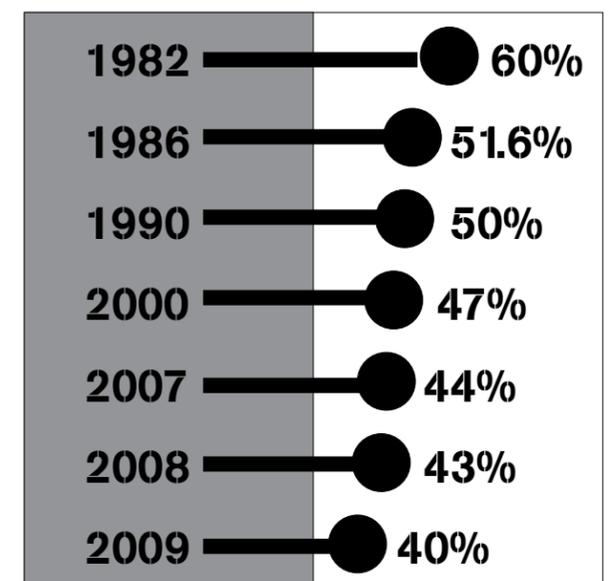
- Out-of-state corporations that do not pay taxes on profits made in NM;

TOTAL: \$50 million in revenue lost.

Results of lost revenue:

- 4 years of no pay increases;
- Problems paying for retirement;
- Problems paying for health insurance;
- Education jobs lost.

In 1982, state lawmakers passed legislation that repealed property tax revenue as the funding source for NM's public schools. In its place, state lawmakers passed legislation giving them the responsibility for paying for education with revenue from sales taxes, state income taxes, and corporate income taxes. That's when education's share of the NM state budget began to decline:



Why have school budgets been cut? Why have educator salaries been frozen? Why have employees had to pay some of the employer's share of retirement contributions?

Why??? Because our state lawmakers haven't had the political will to do 2 things:

1. Increase our state's revenue by closing tax loopholes for corporations and ending tax breaks for special interests and the wealthiest New Mexicans.
2. Increase public education's share of the state budget.

Effects of Inequality and Poverty vs. Teachers and Schooling on America's Youth
David C. Berliner, Regents' Professor Emeritus of Education at Arizona State University



SALSA is the electronic communication and advocacy system that ATF uses. If you are an ATF member, you probably receive ATF E-News alerts through your aps.edu email account. Though ATF may send you E-Activist Legislative Alerts to your APS email address, please **DO NOT** use this address when participating in any of the electronic communication opportunities provided in these alerts!!!

In order to participate in ATF's electronic lobbying through the SALSA system, please register a **NON-APS EMAIL**. It's easy to do – there is a link in the lead story "2013 Legislative Session."

To Register Follow These 3 Easy Steps:



go to www.atfunion.org

This is the Albuquerque Teachers Federation website home page.

SPICE UP YOUR ADVOCACY WITH SALSA >>



go to: atfunion.org



Find the front page news story entitled **2013 Legislative Session**, and then click on "read more." This will take you to the complete article, which will remain on the website throughout the session. Find the link at the very top of the page that says "**click here to register as an ATF E-Activist.**"



Fill out the form **USING A NON-APS EMAIL ADDRESS** and submit it. Then, watch your inbox for emails from ATF E-Activist and start advocating!



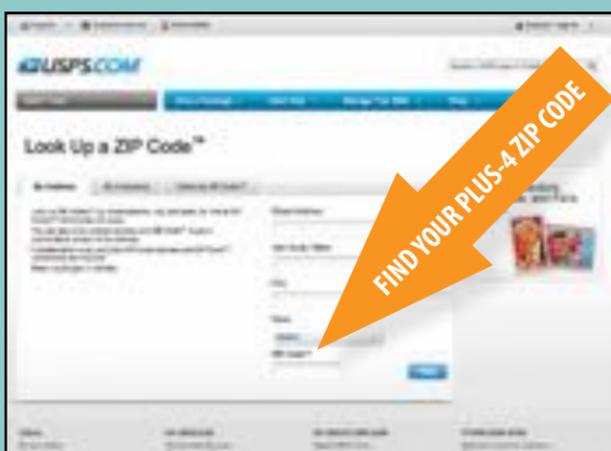
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Add the ATF E-Activist email address to your address book.

<< COMMUNICATION & ACTIVISM IS ESSENTIAL

COMMUNICATING WITH OUR LAWMAKERS is the only way we can make sure they know what educators need. If you are registered with our Salsa system, ATF will send you E-Activist alerts with simple actions you can take to communicate directly with your lawmakers. You can also call and write to your state senator and representative. If you don't know who they are, here's how to find out, and get their contact information:



You may need your "plus-4" zip code. It's on any piece of "junk mail" you receive, or you can go to the link below the screenshot to the right and follow directions to find yours.



<https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action>



Once you have your "plus-4" zip code, go to the link below the screenshot to the right and follow the directions on the New Mexico Legislature's website to search for both your senator and representative by zip code.



<http://www.nmlegis.gov/LCS/legislatorsearch.aspx>

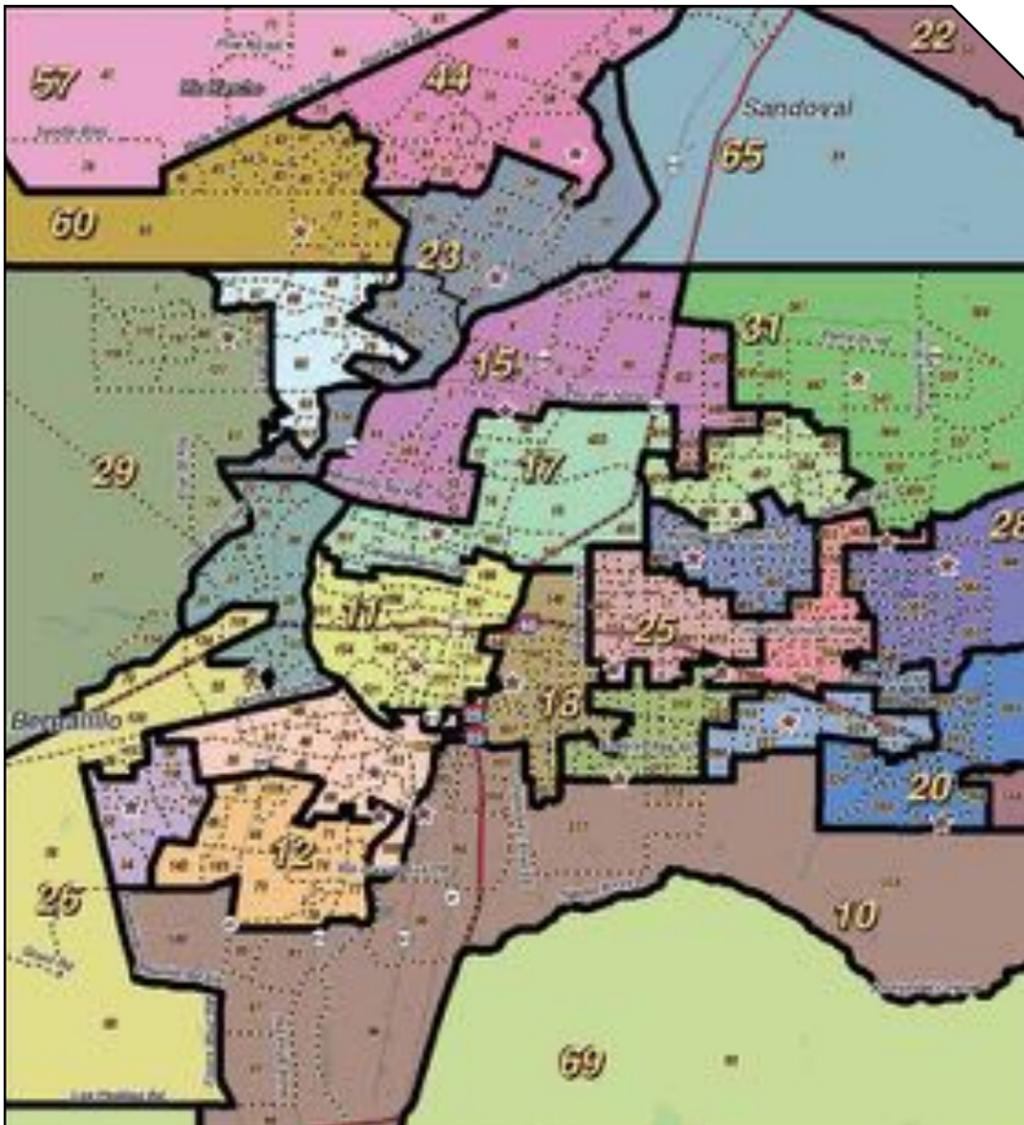
It's also essential that we keep our colleagues informed during the session. We need your help! ATF will be hosting educator-to-educator phone banks Mon - Thurs 5-8 pm throughout the legislative session. If you can give just one evening of your time to help, you can make a

volunteer
EDUCATOR-TO-EDUCATOR
M-TH
5:00PM TO 8:00PM

difference! Food is provided, and we'll be holding prize drawings each week for our volunteers.

Go to the "2013 Legislative Session" story at atfunion.org, and click on the link that says "Volunteer to call fellow educators." Simply fill out the form and select the date(s) you'd like to help.

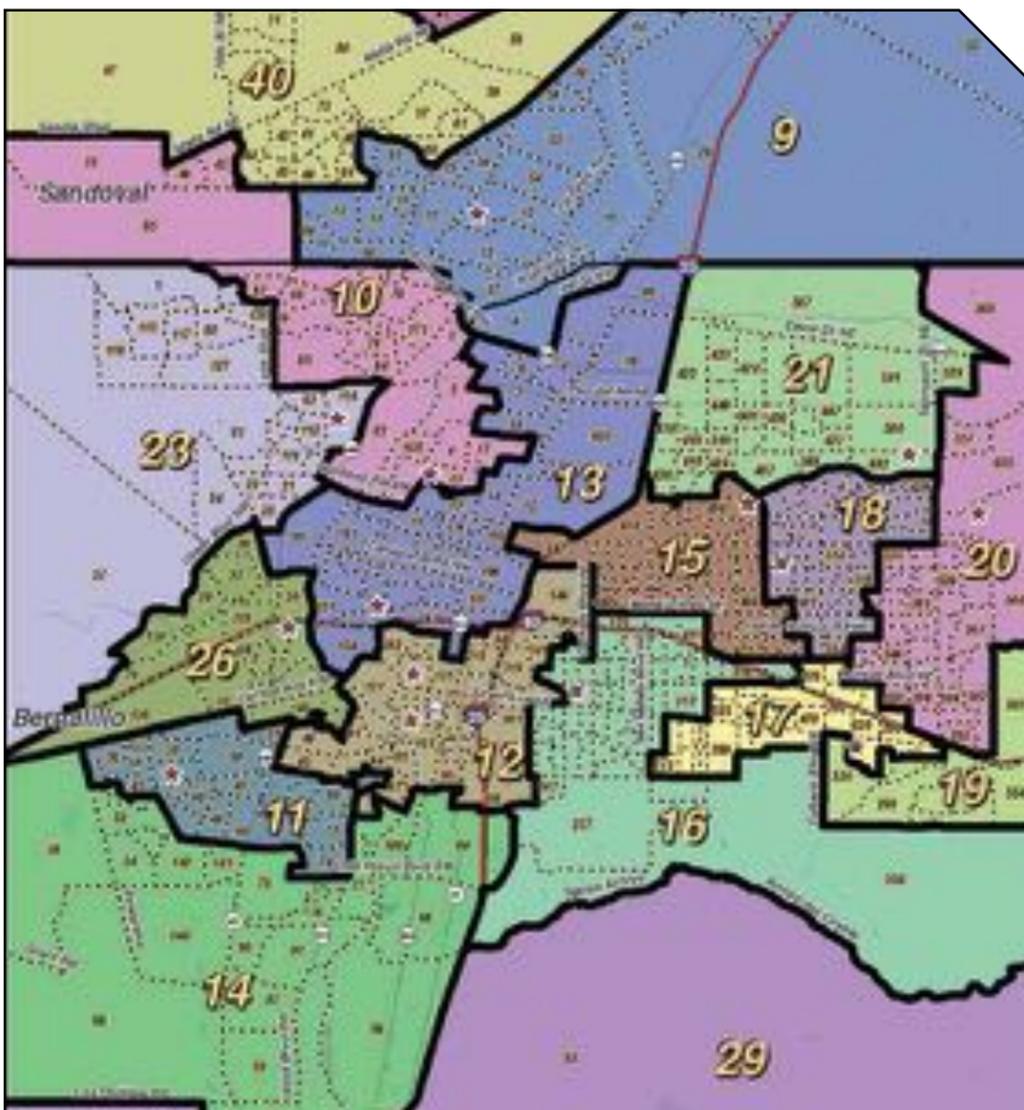
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CONTACTING LEGISLATORS

REGISTER AS AN ATF E-ACTIVIST AND HELP GET OUR MESSAGE HEARD!

Legislators want to know what their voting constituents want them to do. The efforts of ATF's full-time lobbyists can best be supported and reinforced by the actions of its members when they contact their legislators directly through electronic lobbying, phone calls, letters, fax, and personal visits. When communicating with your legislators, remember that you are the professional in the field of education. Be prepared to share your knowledge and expertise to dispel myths and bad information, and promote positive action in support of public education.

LETTER WRITING FORMAT & CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

Senator or Representative _____
 State Capitol Building
 Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Senator or Representative:

I am a registered voter in your district and I am a member of the Albuquerque Teachers Federation. I (describe your job – e.g. teach 4th grade; teach math; provide counseling/therapy, etc.) at ___ school.

I ask that you support and vote for House Bill/Senate Bill (give the bill number or title). As a professional who works daily with children, this legislation is important because _____.

I would appreciate your support for HB/SB _____.

Please let me know your views on this important bill. Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely,

IDENTIFY YOURSELF

State that you are a voting constituent. Tell where you work and what you do, and how long you've been an educator. Briefly state the contribution you make toward a student's education, using a personal anecdote, if possible.

ASK FOR SPECIFIC ACTION TO BE TAKEN

State what you are advocating for or against. Link your position on a specific bill with your professional needs and experience.

For example: "Please vote against the budget because it cuts education again," or "please support mandatory combined reporting so that out-of-state corporations pay their fair share."

SAY THANKS & REQUEST FEEDBACK

Always close with appreciation for past support and thanks for their consideration for your position. Ask the legislator to respond with information on how they view the issue and what actions they propose to take.

go to: atfunion.org

GET LEGISLATIVE INFO FROM YOUR UNION

SIGN UP TO GET ELECTRONIC UPDATES

If you want to receive regular email updates concerning legislative action, salary increases/pay raises and education reform, go the Albuquerque Teachers Federation website, www.atfunion.org and click on the 2012 Legislative Session story, then the link at the very top of the first page that says "click here to register as an ATF E-Activist. Once there, simply fill out the required (*) fields and register your email address. This will provide you with the most current information available throughout the legislative session.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR ATF FED REP

The Fed Rep(s) at your school will be provided with up-to-date information concerning the events in Santa Fe. Throughout the legislative session, your union will provide updates on the issues and the key legislators to contact. Please stay in touch with your rep and act on the requests to participate in the lobbying efforts.

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR LEGISLATORS

To quickly identify your State Senator or Representative, refer to page 7 in this newsletter. District maps and contact information for both chambers are also included. Email addresses are also listed. Specific messages on targeted issues can be easily sent to legislators by selecting the Get Active! link on the Albuquerque Teachers Federation website, www.atfunion.org.

How to identify your legislators and access their contact information

1. Go to www.nmlegis.gov
2. From the **Members** menu: **click on Find Your Legislator**
3. For House or Senate: **click on Search by Name, District or Zip Code**
4. On the next page **Search for Your Legislator: enter your 5-digit zip code**
5. Finally, since most zip codes overlap several legislative districts, **enter your complete 9-digit zip code**. The next page will show your state senator and state rep. **Click on the names** to access their contact information.

FED REPS ACT



The ATF Fed Rep Council passed a motion in support of the APS General Obligation Bond and Mill Levy package. The ATF Fed Rep Council asks all union members to encourage all APS employees, their families, friends and all registered voters to vote early FOR the "Public School Capital Improvements Tax" (mill levy) and the "General Obligation Bonds" starting on January 11. Election Day is February 5, 2013.

ORGANIZING

Our Union, Our Community



The Albuquerque Teachers Federation and Albuquerque Educational Assistants Association want to thank our Fed Reps, school staffs and school communities that made our third annual Roadrunner Holiday Food Drive a success! Our unions did a lot in the community this fall:

- We collected over \$4000 for the PTA Clothing Bank, all donated by school employees! Meredith Bunting, our Fed Rep at Coronado ES, generously donated the \$200 gift card she won in our membership drive prize drawing!
 - At least 26 schools/locations conducted food drives, either with our union or on their own. These are the departments & locations whose Fed Reps told us they were participating – thank you, and thanks to any other schools we were not aware of that did participate!
- *Special thanks to Wally Walstrom and students from Monte Vista Elementary for representing all participating schools at the KOB TV live broadcast on November 17!*
- Many union members and their families participated in Sortin' Sunday at Roadrunner Food Bank on November 18, helping sort all the donations from the previous week's food drives!
 - Over 20 people participated in the Twinkle Light Parade!

COPE

APS Board Elections: Important & Critical



Something different happened this year when it came time to ratify the contract. Whereas in the past, the Board has always passed through without contention the contract recommended by the negotiating team, this year there was contention. In fact, the contract passed the Board with only a vote of four to three.

Three of the Board members who voted in support of the union contract, Lorenzo Garcia, Paula Maes, and Dave Peercy, are facing reelection. Lorenzo Garcia's and Dave Peercy's districts are basically intact. District 5, Paula Maes' former district, has become a new west side district and Paula Maes is now combined in District 6, where David Robbins has been the member.

This year, as well, there are more competing interests than just the ongoing labor/management issues that shape school policy. This year, the governor will be playing an active role and infusing large amounts of money into local board races to try to establish Boards of cheerleaders for her proposals of evaluation, retention, and grades.

There will also be candidates whose focus is to divert more and more resources out of the organized public schools and into charters.

As always, the ATF C.O.P.E will interview all candidates in order to find the strongest, most resolute supporters of the public schools and the rights of the people who make them work.

Watch for the endorsed candidates in January, and actively work to support the candidates who will work for our rights and our schools!

It may seem to some that we are constantly declaring crises. But those who work to vilify us and our schools for either political or financial gain will continue to pursue their goals. Their success has been limited in direct relationship to our organization and fight! We need a culture of activism. Just as we are never "done" inside the classroom, we need to see that we are never "done" in the political realm outside the classroom, if we care about our profession and our livelihood.

AROUND THE NATION (from AFT Leader Net)

AFT Campaign Takes on Excessive Testing



The AFT has launched the second phase of our campaign against excessive testing, Learning is More Than a Test Score, which will include a policy agenda that takes into account what we learn from teachers, parents and others.

The AFT's efforts to help all children succeed—by de-emphasizing testing and ensuring instead that instruction includes the arts and physical education and is based on high-quality standards such as the Common Core State Standards—began earlier this year with an online petition and a resolution stating that testing should inform, not impede, teaching and learning. "Public education should be obsessed with high-quality teaching and learning, not high-stakes testing," AFT president Randi Weingarten says. "Tests have a role to play, but today's fixation with them is undermining what we need to do to give kids a challenging and well-rounded education and to fairly measure teachers' performance."

Sign on at www.learningismore.com/take-action.

AFT Proposes Bar-Like Exam for New Teachers

All future teachers should be required to meet a universal and rigorous bar that gauges mastery of subject-matter knowledge, much like the bar exam lawyers must take before they can enter the legal profession, and demonstrates competency in how to teach, the AFT says in a new report on boosting the standards for teacher preparation.

"Raising the Bar: Aligning and Elevating Teacher Preparation and the Teaching Profession," issued by the AFT Teacher Preparation Task Force, urges a move toward a systemic approach to preparing teachers and a more rigorous threshold to ensure that every teacher is ready to teach. "School systems are raising the bar for students through the widespread adoption of the internationally-benchmarked Common Core State Standards; we must do the same for teachers," says AFT president Randi Weingarten.

ISSUES TO WATCH

CHANGES IN RETIREMENT

The Educational Retirement Board (ERB) has proposed changes in its plan design that will insure the long-term solvency of the plan. In order for these changes to go into effect, the legislature must enact them into law. The proposed changes were made with direct input and unanimous consensus of all of the stakeholder groups in the New Mexico Educational Retirement System, and have the backing and support of all of the groups including ATF.

CURRENT ERB PLAN	PROPOSED ERB PLAN CHANGES
Annual Contribution Rate: 9.4%	Annual Contribution Rate as of July 1, 2014 for all current and future members earning over \$20,000: 10.7%. Contribution rate for current and future members earning \$20,000 or less on or after July 1, 2008: 7.9%.
Minimum Retirement Age: None	Minimum retirement age for new members hired after effective date of change: Age 55.
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): begins at age 65	Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): begins at age 67 for new members hired after effective date of change.

3-TIERED LICENSURE SYSTEM

In the early 2000s, New Mexico suffered from a severe teacher shortage. The New Mexico legislature created the current three-tiered teacher licensure system in order to help retain and recruit quality teachers. A series of wage floors were instituted to attract individuals to enter and stay in the profession. The three-tiered system has been successful at reducing New Mexico's teaching shortage by creating a career path for teachers.

The Legislative Finance Committee's (LFC) November 2012 report criticizes the three-tiered system for allowing teachers to advance who don't show growth in their classes' overall SBA scores. The LFC suggests that raises should be available only for teachers who improve their classes' average standardized test score. In other words, destroy the current system and replace it with "merit" pay.

The three-tiered system was designed to recruit and retain qualified and competent teachers. It was not designed to be a "pay for performance" system.

The LFC's observations are largely inaccurate, short-sighted and fail to offer real solutions to improve the quality of teaching in New Mexico. We believe that the three-tiered system remains a critical tool for attracting and retaining teachers to New Mexico and are opposed to linking the three-tiered system to students' standardized testing scores.

We propose that the state finish the three-tiered system by developing a true teacher career ladder designed to attract and retain the most competent, qualified, and caring teachers in New Mexico and which builds on the NM Three-Tiered Licensure System.

More needs to be done to attract individuals to the profession of teaching in New Mexico. Salaries remain very low and are diminished further by increased health care and pension contributions. New Mexico ranks 40th in teacher pay with an average salary of approximately \$46,000 a year even though New Mexico ranks 24th in cost of living. A Tier 1 teacher takes home barely \$1,400 a month after deductions.

It is important to note that New Mexico's 3-Tiered System:

- is unique
- is a high-stakes system
- currently includes both student learning and teacher evaluations

ATF's Position on Compensation

- Teachers should be paid well for teaching and evaluation must have as its primary goal strengthening the individual and collective practices of teachers and schools to improve student learning.
- Teaching is broad in its scope of responsibilities, all of which must be taken into account within a compensation system.
- Reward both expertise and extra time.
- Value teachers for their expertise; not for quasi-administrative work.
- If compensation is tied to evaluations, then it must be a legitimate evaluation system.

A Career Ladder that Builds on the 3-Tiered Licensure System

- As teachers, we want to be recognized for experience and education, but the current Training & Experience (T&E) Index is not adequate.
- We need a funding formula that builds on the minimum salaries in the 3-Tiered System.
- We support adapting the T&E Index so that it's similar to the way we fund students by assigning them weight according to a formula.

By designing a Teacher-Weighted Formula that would create a career ladder, each Level II and Level III teacher is weighted by a formula based on:

- Experience
- Education
- Credentials
- Added responsibilities
- Evaluations
- Student growth

By changing the T&E Index to a Teacher-Weighted Formula, school districts will truly have a career ladder of opportunity within the licensure levels. This system will continue to honor education and experience for all teachers by adding a weighted formula for each Level II and III teacher. It will also provide incentives and pay growth potential if a teacher wants to stay at Level II for an entire career. In addition, it will allow pay increments for extra work or assignments for teachers if they choose to take on additional responsibilities.

Success of the Three-Tiered System

A 2007 study by LFC, LESC and OEA found that the Three-Tiered System has been successful in recruiting and retaining teachers. PED's current data shows that there continue to be gains in teacher retention. Low-income schools are having success in retaining educational professionals.

“It is hard to swallow LFC's assertion that there is no correlation between teaching experience and education and performance. Claiming that the 3-Tiered System is broken because it doesn't do what it wasn't designed to do is like saying airport security hasn't prevented car accidents. This is just politically-motivated nonsense.

To quote the late U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts."

Nexus between 3-Tier & Standardized Test Scores

The LFC report and corresponding PED charts and graphs are bewildering. The text of the report claims that Level 3 teachers are not much more effective at raising or maintaining standardized test scores, but the results show that there is a significant difference between the results of Level 1 teachers and Level 3 teachers. For example, on page 19 the report states that, "In 2012, Level III teachers were able to drive 2 percent

JAN/FEB 2013

JANUARY

W: 9 W: 16 W: 23 W: 30	READING INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNICATION-DISORDERED STUDENTS: 4:30-6:30PM <i>*4-session workshop series</i> Members: No cost/Non-members: \$25 per session
TU: 15	CCSS PLANNING & PEDAGOGY: 4:30-6:30PM <i>Two workshops on this day</i> No cost/RSVP required for one of the workshops
W: 16	NATIONAL BOARD LARGE GROUP MTG: TIME TBD <i>For current National Board candidates</i>
TH: 24	CPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 2:00-4:00PM <i>(TBA)</i> Members: No cost/Non-members: \$25
TH: 24	CCSS PLANNING & PEDAGOGY: 4:30-6:30PM No cost/RSVP required
TH: 31	ATF SYMPOSIUM: 4:30-6:00PM <i>(TBA)</i> No cost/No RSVP required

FEBRUARY

W: 6	CCSS PLANNING & PEDAGOGY: 4:30-6:30PM No cost/No RSVP required
W: 6 W: 13 W: 20 W: 27	MANAGING DIFFICULT STUDENTS: 4:30-6:30PM <i>*4-session workshop series</i> Members: No cost/Non-members: \$25 per session
W: 20	NATIONAL BOARD LARGE GROUP MTG: TIME TBD <i>For current National Board candidates</i>
TH: 21	CCSS & ELLS: 4:30-6:30PM No cost/No RSVP required
TU: 26	CCSS PLANNING & PEDAGOGY: 4:30-6:30PM No cost/No RSVP required
TH: 28	CPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 2:00-4:00PM <i>(TBA)</i> Members: No cost/Non-members: \$25
TH: 28	ATF SYMPOSIUM: 4:30-6:00PM <i>(TBA)</i> No cost/No RSVP required

TO REGISTER CALL: 262-2657

All events held at ATF office: 530 Jefferson Street NE

more of their math students and 4 percent more of their reading students to higher proficiency levels." This data shows that Level 3 teachers performed roughly 22% better in reading and 13% better at raising proficiency levels in Math. This is significant.

Overall Need to Support our Teachers

Teachers are part of the solution, not part of the problem. It is easy to quip that by pressuring teachers we can drastically improve the system. But our teachers already feel that pressure. Teachers want to teach. Above all, they want their students to be successful. Focusing on high-stress tests and threatening to pull the rug from under the short career ladder that currently exists will not attract more teachers to New Mexico.

We need to create education policy that respects education as a profession and gives our educators the tools that they need to be successful. We need to focus on putting resources in the classroom and scaling down our class sizes. There is no silver bullet to radically improving education in New Mexico. But it is clear that, moving forward, our policymaking should include the voices and expertise of those in the classroom.

Instead of spinning research that was poorly done in the first place, the LFC should be speaking to the thousands of teachers who have completed the 3-Tiered System and asking them apples-to-apples questions. What did you learn by advancing through the system? Is the system helping to retain you in the profession? In what way can we, as legislators, better enhance this system to keep you in the profession?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Three ATF Members Win Golden Apple Award!

Please let ATF know if you either successfully renewed as a National Board Certified Teacher this year, or if you became an NBCT for the first time, so we can recognize you in the Teachers' Voice in the spring! Email Kristin at kjo@atfunion.org. The ATF Teacher Leadership Foundation will also host a reception to honor all first-time achievers who are ATF members. Tentatively set for February 22.



ATF & AEA Members Shine!

Congratulations to three of our ATF members who received the Golden Apple Award! Ulrike Kerstges (Tierra Antigua/Ventana Ranch), Jeffrey Tuttle (Monte Vista) and Cristal Dawn Wilson (Mark Twain) were all selected for their outstanding teaching and professionalism. We are so proud to have you all as ATF members.

ATF Joyce Briscoe NBCT Award

On Friday, February 22nd, ATF will host the Fourth Annual Joyce Briscoe NBCT Award reception. The program recognizes and awards up to \$1,000 to members who achieve National Board Certification for the first time. The scholarship award helps offset the \$2,500 National Board fee. Congratulations to our ATF members!



HELP STUDENTS
START THE YEAR OFF RIGHT

REMINDE THEM TO CALL
FOR FREE HOMEWORK HELP!

344-3571

5:30 - 8:30 PM
monday-thursday

TEACHERS' VOICE



albuquerque teachers federation
professional progressive unionism

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Ellen Bernstein

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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MIDDLE SCHOOL VP

Mary Mercier

Roosevelt Middle School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VPs

Stephanie DeBellis

Emerson Elementary School

Miriam Martinez

Los Padillas Elementary School

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Attn: Ellen Bernstein
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www.atfunion.org

continued from page one...

PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE FOUNDATION OF DEMOCRACY

- Public schools matter to the strength of our economy as much as the future of our democracy. A good education is the only path to a good job. In this economy, good jobs are only available to those with some college – over 60% of all new jobs require at least some post-high school education. If public schools don't have resources to provide a good education, our children won't have a chance at the middle class.
- Our schools are more important than ever, but are starved for resources. In 2008, an independent, nonpartisan study commissioned by the state legislature found that NM school funding was short \$345 million (15%) from what was needed to give our children a sufficient education. Now the gap is over \$500 million.
- NM cut school funding almost 1/6 (12.5%) in the last five years, third worst in the country. 2011's cut --\$707 per student -- was the deepest in the entire U.S. Schools have already eliminated extra help for struggling students, cut technology teachers, and forced parents and teachers to pay for classroom supplies.
- Yet NM has \$16 billion in the land grant permanent fund for public schools, the second largest in the entire U.S. Last year the fund grew by 18.1%. At a time when NM's economic future depends on good education, we refuse to invest more in quality early childhood programs and public schools.
- Privatization has come to NM. The billion-dollar corporation Pearson now controls the GED exam and has decided to increase the cost to at least \$120, several times what most testing centers charge, and to start charging for pre-tests. It will be entirely on-line by 2014 and Spanish-language test won't be immediately available. With historically high drop-out rates, NM is especially hard-hit by limited access to the GED.
- Out-of-state companies are already in NM to run charter schools. In August, the multi-million-dollar Virginia-based company K12, Inc. started a 500-student "virtual" charter school, entirely on-line, but ostensibly in Farmington, with most students drawn from APS. The company seeks to expand the school to as many as 1600 students, adding to the 147,000 students K12 enrolls across the nation, including on-line pre-schoolers. It will divert approximately \$2.1 million from Albuquerque Public Schools.
- More are coming. Last year the state received 43 letters of intent for new charters, 18 from out-of-state corporations, including two from Texas and four each from Arizona and Maryland. These outside companies will spend thousands of dollars attracting students to drain NM taxpayers and send our tax dollars out of state, yet face the barest level of outside oversight for our children's educations.



Need Help With Teaching? CALL PAR!

Are you struggling with your teaching? Contact the union at 262-2657 or the Mentor Program Coordinator at 880-8249 X 174 and request a volunteer application.

COMMON CORE

Join our new ATF Blog about the Common Core: Teachers Own the Common Core (TOCC). You can access TOCC on the ATF website at www.atfunion.org. We look forward to hearing from you!