



NEW MEXICO
Education Speaker Series

Connecting Challenges with Ideas & Strategies

– NOTES –

Session I: Can New Mexico Build a High Performing Education System for a Changing World?

June 11, 2018, Thornburg Campus

This is the first of a nine-month lunch series bringing together education and business leaders from around the state to learn from national and local experts about promising and best practices in education in high-performing systems. Participants will engage with each other on possible education reform in New Mexico. The group is using the report titled “No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State” created by the National Conference of State Legislatures as a guide.

Speakers:

Michelle Exstrom, program director National Conference of State Legislatures, and Sen. Mimi Stewart, chair of Legislative Education Study Committee and former teacher.

Moderator: Jeannie Oakes, former Presidential Professor in Educational Equity at UCLA and former Director of Education and Scholarship at the Ford Foundation.

Exstrom:

The National Conference of State Legislatures embarked upon a study of high performing countries on PISA (the Programme for International Student Assessment). Refer to “No Time to Lose: How to Build a Word-Class Education System State by State.” What they learned, by studying school systems in Alberta, Canada; Estonia; Finland; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Poland; Shanghai, China; Singapore; and Taiwan; where students out-perform those in the United States:

- **There is no silver bullet. Instead, map policies to get to where you want to go. It can take 15–20 years. Do not give up. Multiple states have citizens committees who have started this work.**
- Students come to school ready to learn, with extra support given to struggling students. This does not necessarily mean universal pre-K, though it may mean support for parents. Children are not permitted to fall behind, as supports are marshalled as soon as struggle appears.
- Teacher preparation programs are centered in prestigious research universities with rigorous training and clinical practice that often take longer than in the U.S. The nation often pays for this clinical training.
- Teachers are paid on par with architects, attorneys, engineers and accountants.
- Countries developed benchmarked standards for student learning.

- Career and technical education is available to students, linking workplace needs to certificates upon graduation, but with no “dead ends”. This is not a second-class pathway, and many go on to college.
- These other countries spend less on education than the U.S., but spend it more strategically, such as placing several teachers in large classes to provide one-on-one assistance for students. They do, however, spend more than the U.S. on a safety net for children and families that prevents many of the problems that schools in the U.S. struggle to solve.

Senator Stewart:

Education reform should be a grassroots effort, and it can be bipartisan. Progress in New Mexico:

- Already increasing funding annually for pre-K and K-3 + programming.
- \$100,000 appropriated for state benchmarking of policy against other high-performing states. Private funding sought.
- Deming High School is offering a career-technical path in partnership with the Carpenters’ Union.
- In light of teacher shortage, NM Educational Retirement Board is now interviewing departing teachers and learning that testing, such as PARCC, is one of the reasons for turnover.

What New Mexico can do:

- Create a shared statewide vision, likely championed by a group such as these attendees. (New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty already has a working group.)
- Benchmark policies against high-performing countries and states.
- Initiate a priority area of reform (we do not have to wait for all the pieces to come together).
- Get businesses to partner with K-12 for Career and Technical Education.
- Invest in social safety net outside of education.

Methodology tips:

- Meet in different locations to create buy-in.
- New Mexico can employ the help of the NCLS. (New Mexico Association of School Boards voices support for this approach.)
- Do not legislate “around the edges.”

“New Mexico is starting from more than zero,” Senator Stewart.

“The world looks more similar than you would think when you compare the diversity in languages and immigration in high performing countries with that in New Mexico,” Exstrom.



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