

HB 157: Strengthening School Leadership in New Mexico

HB157 is designed to improve school leadership in New Mexico by **modernizing site administrator licensure and preparation programs**. It ensures that principals and charter school head administrators receive **targeted training** to meet the challenges of school leadership, separate from superintendents and district-level administrators.



Why HB 157?

- Current law treats all school administrators the same, applying the same licensure requirements to principals, superintendents, and district administrators — despite their vastly **different responsibilities**.
- Effective leadership improves student outcomes, yet preparation programs do not currently have clear, **research-based standards** for training school principals.
- **Administrator turnover** is costly and disruptive—better training will help retain strong school leaders and create more stable learning environments.

Improving Education Quality & Equity

The State of New Mexico is responding to the **Martinez/Yazzie** court ruling by making dramatic increases in education funding and by pursuing strategies to substantially improve the adequacy and equitability of education provided to students, especially at-risk students. Research has shown that:

- School leaders improve schools and student success.
- Investing in school leaders is an effective strategy for addressing teacher shortages and retention.
- Advancing historically under-supported schools necessitates strong school leadership.
- School leadership is a cost-effective strategy for improving student outcomes at scale.
- State policies and practices can play an important role in improving school leadership.

The Impact of HB 157 on New Mexico's Schools



Better School Leadership = Better Student Outcomes
Well-trained principals drive academic success.



More Stability = Less Turnover
Strong preparation reduces administrator burnout and increases retention.



Equitable Access
Ensures rural, urban, and tribal schools have access to well-trained leaders.



Stronger Teacher Support
Effective principals create positive working environments, improving teacher retention and performance.

*Research finds that replacing a below-average principal with an above-average principal leads to **2.9 additional months** of math learning gains for students per year and **2.7 additional months** of reading learning gains for students per year.*

Key Provisions

Defining “Site Administrators” for More Targeted Training

HB157 introduces a clear definition of “site administrators” in the School Personnel Act, which includes:

- Assistant Principals
- Principals
- Charter School Head Administrators
- Other school administrators, including superintendents and district-level leaders, will have separate licensure requirements tailored to their roles.

Establishing Rigorous, Research-Based Preparation Standards

- All site administrator preparation programs must be approved by the Public Education Department (PED).
- New program requirements ensure that training includes:
- Comprehensive curriculum aligned with state and national leadership standards.
- Deliberate candidate recruitment and selection to build a strong leadership pipeline.
- Robust clinical experience with hands-on leadership training in schools.
- Cohort-based learning with trained coaches for mentorship and professional development.
- Formal partnerships between preparation programs and school districts/charter schools to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Creating a Tiered Licensure System for Career Growth

- HB157 establishes three levels of site administrator licensure:
 - **Provisional Site Administrator License** – Entry-level license for those beginning their leadership careers.
 - **Initial Site Administrator License** – License for new site administrators meeting basic competency standards.
 - **Professional Site Administrator License** – Advanced license for experienced administrators demonstrating leadership expertise.
- The outdated 3B license will be repealed on July 1, 2028.
- Superintendents will have separate licensure to ensure they receive training specific to their leadership responsibilities.

Strengthening Accountability & Oversight

- PED will track program success and candidate outcomes through data collection on:
 - Graduate readiness and effectiveness in leadership roles.
 - The number of licenses issued through each preparation pathway.
 - The distribution of licensed administrators across schools and districts.
- A **task force** of experienced educators and administrators will develop **performance standards** and evaluation rubrics to ensure consistency and quality.