

# Legislative Goals for 2026

1	<b>Health Insurance Premium Contribution Increase</b> Increase the state budget to cover 80% of all public education employees' health care premium costs, in order to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators from pre-k through higher education.
2	<b>Raise School Employees' Minimum Wage &amp; Increase Educator Salaries as a Retention Strategy</b> A 10% increase for all school employees, including a \$40,000 minimum for public school support staff. Invest in meaningful salary increases for faculty and staff of New Mexico colleges and universities to be commensurate with recent k-12 salary increases. Currently, higher ed salaries in New Mexico rank 36th in the USA, and ESP salaries in higher education rank 45th.
3	<b>Maximum Class Loads for K-12</b> Reduce maximum class sizes to: 15 students maximum for pre-k through 3rd grade, 18 students maximum for 4th through 8th grades, and 22 students maximum for 9th-12th grades.
4	<b>Community School Fund &amp; Framework</b> Increase appropriation to the Community Schools Fund designed for Community Schools planning and implementation. \$12.5M per year would be set aside for preparation for CS Certification.
5	<b>Public Employees' Retiree Healthcare Funds</b> Legislate a funding source to ensure the long-term solvency of the New Mexico Retiree Health Care Authority (RHCA).
6	<b>Special Education Compensation, Workloads and Educational Support</b> Increase funding for a \$10,000 annual stipend for special education teachers and a \$5,000 stipend for special educational assistants. Fund an additional 5 hours of dedicated planning time per week for special education teachers. Implement a uniform structure for districts to report both caseload and class load for special education teachers and ancillary staff. Develop a system that gives easy access to special education teachers and ancillary staff information on how caseloads are calculated, to track and combine individual full-time equivalency (FTE.) Limit the student to teacher special education and ancillary staff caseload/class load to 1 FTE per staff member including contracted staff members.