

PREPARING NEW MEXICO'S STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

NEW MEXICO EMPLOYER
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FINAL REPORT
OCTOBER 2022



PREPARING NEW MEXICO'S STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

New Mexico Employer Advisory Meetings – Final Report



OVERVIEW

Ensuring students are prepared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labor market has led state education departments across the United States to further explore what competencies students need to graduate “college and career ready” and how to best foster the right skills among students in K-12 and beyond. As states have worked to evaluate and realign their student accountability systems in the aftermath of the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), several have worked to incorporate [metrics of student success](#) that work to measure college and career readiness, such as career pathway involvement, CTE participation, dual credit enrollment, and participation in work-based learning opportunities. As outlined in New Mexico’s [Comprehensive Strategic Plan](#), there is no single path to success or a one-size-fits-all model that will work for all students and schools. Developing programs and educational opportunities that build the necessary skills to enter the labor market or succeed in college, while also providing meaningful academic enrichment to students, requires the full engagement of stakeholders across the education and employer sectors.

To improve student college and career readiness and employer recruitment and partnership challenges, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED), under the leadership of Secretary of Education Kurt Steinhaus, and with support from The Hunt Institute and the Thornburg Foundation, convened an advisory group of industry and community leaders to develop a set of recommendations and clear action steps to support NM PED’s goal to ensure that all students become college and career ready when they transition out of high school. Meeting attendees can be found in [Appendix B](#).

This report outlines the advisory group’s recommendations to NM PED and the New Mexico State Legislature for improving education-employer partnerships and college and career pathways for students. These recommendations are informed by feedback from attendees provided during:

- Virtual and in-person meetings in December 2021 and June 2022 to identify the challenges employers are facing and opportunities for partnership.
- A series of four virtual meetings from August to October 2022 to dive further into these challenges and identify priorities and recommendations for the state to implement.

With the 2023 Legislative Session around the corner, there is a critical opportunity to take action and carry out these recommendations as a starting point toward building a college and career-ready ecosystem. NM PED and THI will continue to build out the recommendations outlined below through an official Employer Advisory Committee in 2023.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Concluding the group’s final meeting of 2022, attendees finalized six immediate priorities for the state to work on in 2023. Each recommendation is further built out in the recommendations section on page 6. To improve education-employer partnerships and support student college and career readiness, the state should:

- ✓ Invest in work-based learning coordinators to develop and maintain partnerships.
- ✓ Increase funding to hire additional counselors to support individual college and career advising and coaching.
- ✓ Implement a work-based learning requirement for high school graduation that promotes career readiness.
- ✓ Provide additional financial incentives for partnerships that support historically underserved students and promote diversity among participants.
- ✓ Invest in paid internship opportunities for students.
- ✓ Organize a statewide campaign to connect students to careers and employers to schools.

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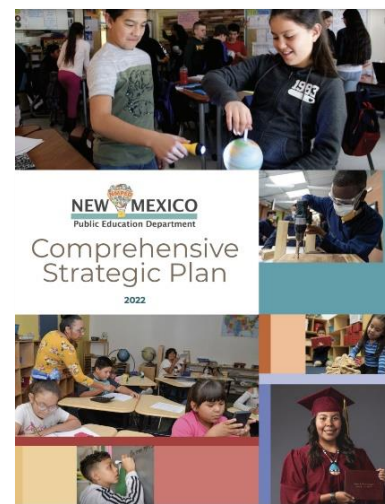
BACKGROUND

NEW MEXICO'S COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED) released its [Comprehensive Strategic Plan](#) in spring 2022. This plan builds off the work of the NM PED's Strategic Planning Task Force and establishes an educational agenda and a path forward for NM PED and its partners, including district and charter leaders, Tribal leaders, families, students, teachers, and community organizations.

The Comprehensive Strategic Plan is intended to guide the work of NM PED moving forward. Through four strategic pillars, NM PED has established a working framework to strengthen the educator workforce pipeline, increase equitable access to educational opportunities, ensure that students are college and career ready, and provide students with social-emotional and enrichment supports alongside existing academic supports.

At the center of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan is NM PED's commitment to addressing the Martinez/Yazzie Consolidated Lawsuit, which indicated that New Mexico had failed to provide a sufficient education for "at-risk" populations, including Native American students, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students. The [Martinez/Yazzie Discussion Draft Action Plan](#) summarizes the state's plan to address the court's findings. This action plan, along with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan, aims to guide state decision-making with one goal: "To assure that all students meet their full potential regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or background."



Profiles and Pathways Pillar

With this goal in mind, meeting attendees focused on recommendations to support the Profiles and Pathways Pillar of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan, which aims to develop 21st-century career and college pathways for all students. The Profiles and Pathways Pillar outlines strategies to increase students' successful completion of high school with research-based, relevant, applied, and experiential learning opportunities that support all students to become college and career ready and contribute as productive members of their communities. NM PED recognizes that incorporating input from and engaging in partnerships with New Mexico employers and the business community is critical to the success of the strategies outlined under this pillar. The NM PED has identified five key strategies for reaching this goal.

- **Graduate Profiles.** Develop community-driven local statewide graduate profiles that inform course offerings and graduation pathways.
- **Reimagined System of College and Career Preparation.** Reimagine college and career preparation by redesigning the career and technical education system and realigning K-12, higher education, and workforce systems.
- **Experiential Learning Opportunities.** Provide and strengthen experiential learning opportunities, such as career and technical education, by supporting schools' ability to create meaningful partnerships with employers and integrating those experiences with core academics.
- **Culture of College and Career Readiness.** Support schools in developing a culture of college and career readiness to ensure that students and families have access to support to help students plan for their future and understand the pathways to achieving their college and career goals.
- **School Redesign.** Support schools' capacity to implement a whole-school approach to experiential learning.

WORK-BASED LEARNING AND CTE IN NEW MEXICO

Career and technical education (CTE) focuses on workplace competencies and hands-on experiences that provide students with the skills, knowledge, and training to succeed in their future careers. While CTE programs vary across states and districts, they are [most commonly offered](#) as work-based learning opportunities that develop workplace skills, such as job

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shadowing, mentoring, service learning, internships, job site tours, and youth apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs.

Workforce preparation in New Mexico is designed around [16 career clusters](#), which are then broken down into 78 unique career pathways. In 2019-20, there were 65,102 secondary CTE participants in the state, 52.7 percent of which were male and 47.3 percent of which were female. The same year, there were [about 15,400 secondary students](#) classified as CTE concentrators within New Mexico, with arts, AV, and communications; hospitality and tourism; agriculture, food, and natural resources; and manufacturing serving as the most popular career clusters for students.

While work-based learning is not explicitly required for graduation in New Mexico, some work-based learning experiences may count for credit under the “Career Cluster, Workplace Readiness, or Language other than English” [graduation requirement](#). The state [currently does not provide public guidance or policies](#) regarding employer and/or school expectations and does not have frameworks in place to measure the overall quality of work-based learning programs, including whether students benefited from the experience.

Pathways2Careers Tool

NM PED, in collaboration with NS4ed, created the state’s [Pathways2Careers](#) tool, which allows educators, parents, and students to explore information about local labor markets and career clusters. The tool organizes information by workforce region and offers resources including research and quarterly analyses by region, district demographics, overviews of career clusters, monthly podcasts, and application of LMI communication methods to assist students in their career search.



COUNSELING AND ADVISING

School counselors play a significant role in helping students effectively transition to either college, a career, or the military after their K-12 educational years. School counselors, when properly supported, are able to [provide students](#) at all grade levels academic support, tools to manage their emotions, short-term counseling and referrals for long-term assistance, as well as advance equity within their schools. Access to American School Counselor Association (ASCA)-recognized school counseling programs has been shown to lead to [statistically significant higher SAT and ACT WorkKeys scores](#) and college enrollment for high school students, as well as [stronger job and college awareness](#) for elementary school students participating in programs developed by school counselors. Due to the significant role that school counselors can play in improving student outcomes on a variety of metrics, the ASCA [recommends](#) a student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1. Notably, the national average was 415:1 in [2020-21](#).

When counselors are provided the necessary supports and reasonable student-to-counselor ratios, they are able to work within their schools and communities to design effective academic and career preparation programs that meet the needs of all students. Potential college and career support may [include](#):

- Identifying and conveying the skills needed for school success.
- Demonstrating the connection between coursework and life experiences.
- Making course selections that allow them the opportunity to choose from a wide range of postsecondary options.
- Exploring interests and abilities in relation to knowledge of self and the world of work.
- Identifying and applying strategies to achieve future academic and career success.
- Demonstrating the skills for successful goal setting and attainment.
- Developing a portfolio to highlight strengths and interests.

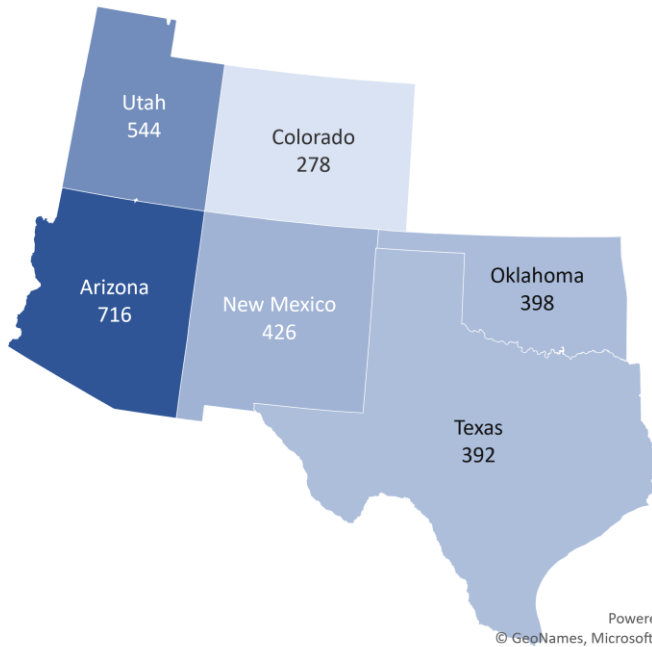
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Student-to-Counselor Ratio in New Mexico and Surrounding States

As of the [2021-22 school year](#), New Mexico has a student-to-counselor ratio of 426:1, higher than the national average. The following chart shows the number of students per counselor in New Mexico and neighboring states.



State	Ratio
Arizona	716:1
Utah	544:1
<u>New Mexico</u> (2021-22)	426:1
Oklahoma	398:1
Texas	392:1
Colorado	278:1

Note: Publicly accessible data for surrounding states only available for 2020-21 school year from ASCA.

As part of the Martinez-Yazzi Action Plan Discussion Draft, NM PED has laid out improvement targets aimed at expanding access to school counselors to better meet students’ social-emotional, behavioral health, and college and career support needs, including:

- Ensuring that every high school in the state has at least one fully certified school counselor and the social emotional supports to succeed in school.
- Reducing the average statewide student-to-counselor ratio and/or student-to-social-worker ratio to 250-to-1 by the 2026-27 school year, as recommended by ASCA and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

The New Mexico Public Education Department’s College and Career Readiness Bureau, in partnership with NS4Ed, provides support for school counselors throughout the state through its [New Mexico School Counselor’s Community of Best Practice](#). Through this community, school counselors across the state are provided access to resources, professional development, and workshops to assist them in advising students across three domains: academic, career, and social-emotional. Student career development is a primary objective of the community’s work. As such, significant emphasis is placed on utilizing the [New Mexico Career Pathways](#) dashboard to connect students to potential next steps post-graduation.

EXISTING FUNDING

The Perkins Act, originally passed in 1984, is the primary federal funding source for CTE and work-based learning programs in the United States. To help address the changing needs of the labor force, the federal government reauthorized the [Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act \(Perkins Act\)](#) in 2018. The most recent reauthorization, passed as the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, aims to introduce CTE programs to students at a younger age, incentivize innovation (e.g., early college high schools, dual enrollment, work-based learning, etc.), and ensure CTE programs are aligned with industry needs. Specifically, the law seeks to modernize and align workforce and labor market needs through competitive grants, expose students to CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities, enhance partnerships between CTE programs and the private and nonprofit sectors, [and more](#).

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To accomplish these goals, the Perkins Act provides [\\$1.23 billion in annual funding](#) that the government distributes via a base funding formula calculated using the state’s working age population (18-65) and per capita income. In 2021, New Mexico received nearly [\\$10 million](#) in Perkins V grant funding, 85 percent of which went directly to local districts.

Among the state’s incentives to support career pathways, New Mexico offers the [Job Mentorship Tax Credit](#) to businesses that hire students in an approved career education program. Under this credit, eligible businesses may claim a credit equal to 50 percent of the gross wages paid to qualified students who are employed by the business during the year. This credit cannot be applied to more than 10 students per business per year, and cannot exceed \$12,000 in any taxable year, among other requirements.

The state also explicitly named work-based learning and workforce training programs as part of its American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding plan. In total, New Mexico has been awarded nearly [\\$1 billion dollars](#) in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds. The [plan highlights \\$6 million](#) for summer internships and enrichment programs that provide work-based learning opportunities.

CONVENING THE EMPLOYER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Over the past ten months, the New Mexico Public Education Department and The Hunt Institute have convened diverse groups of employers to discuss the challenges that employers are facing and explore opportunities for developing sustainable partnerships. As part of these ongoing discussions, NM PED and THI conducted a series of six meetings with industry leaders to dive deep into conversations surrounding topics such as education-employer partnerships, work-based learning, college and career planning supports, and employer incentives (see table below).

During these meetings, participants learned from resource experts on best practices and examples and provided input on their challenges, priorities, and recommendations pertaining to each topic. It was evident from these meetings that more needs to be done to improve college and career readiness among students in New Mexico, and that employers play a critical role in collaborating with education systems to streamline pathways.

Meeting Topic	Description
<i>A Discussion about Education and the Workforce (virtual)</i>	The first meeting on December 15 th , 2021, kicked off our series of meetings with a two-hour discussion with the state’s employers to discuss the challenges they have faced with recruitment and opportunities for partnerships with NM PED.
<i>Effective Partnerships for Change (in-person)</i>	The second meeting on June 8 th , 2022, focused on how employers and state agencies can best foster sustainable partnership frameworks that last.
<i>Expanding Work- and Community-Based Learning Opportunities for Students (virtual)</i>	The third meeting on August 29 th , 2022, focused on how New Mexico employers and schools can work together to expand work- and community-based learning opportunities to prepare students for the 21st-century workforce. A recording of the meeting can be found here .
<i>Improving College and Career Readiness Planning (virtual)</i>	The fourth meeting on September 15 th , 2022, focused on how New Mexico employers and schools can work together to provide students with the necessary support systems to graduate college and career ready. A recording of the meeting can be found here .
<i>Incentivizing Employer Involvement in Education (virtual)</i>	The fifth meeting on September 28 th , 2022, focused on developing state incentive policies to nurture greater employer and community engagement in student college and career readiness. A recording of the meeting can be found here .

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Finalizing Recommendations (virtual)

The sixth meeting on October 25th, 2022, was a one-hour meeting focused on finalizing the group's priority recommendations from the prior meetings. A recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS IN NEW MEXICO

The following section breaks down the immediate priority recommendations of the advisory group, including opportunities for program creation and expansion. While the immediate priorities of the group are highlighted below, all recommendations as outlined in the section "Supporting a College and Career Ready Ecosystem" are critical to improving student postgraduate outcomes and should be included in the state's short- and long-term priorities. As New Mexico looks to move forward with implementing these recommendations, supporting a diversity of public schools and businesses across the state will require thoughtful planning, cross-sector collaboration, alignment across strategies, and flexibility to meet the unique needs of all students and employers.

Immediate Priorities

01. INVEST IN WORK-BASED LEARNING COORDINATORS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS.

The advisory group recommends that the legislature invest in district and/or school-level coordinators to manage work-based learning programs and connect employers to schools and students. Having trained staff that is dedicated to maintaining program partnerships would relieve educators and employers from having to take on a similar role and would provide a point of contact to assist them in navigating program-related challenges. Moreover, coordinators within a region can collaborate with each other and with local businesses to design programs that have regional continuity.

Investing in work-based learning coordinators would reduce administrative burden and expand school administration capacity, allowing schools to expand quality programming for students. Coordinators may be responsible for the administration and management of programs such as internships and apprenticeships, job shadowing, teacher externships, transitional programs, school and site visits, transportation support, and associated paperwork. Coordinators can also manage partnerships with local organizations supporting this work.

While the state may consider housing coordinators within local organizations, [Regional Education Cooperatives](#), or within relevant state agencies, it would be valuable to have site-specific coordinators that are ingrained in the communities that they serve and can therefore effectively nurture partnerships between student populations and workforce needs.

New Mexico may consider braiding funding from [multiple state and federal funding streams](#) in addition to Perkins V or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) dollars, such as [Extended Learning Time Program \(ELTP\)](#) funding or Coronavirus State and Local Federal Relief Funds (SLFRF), which can be used to support workforce training. Smaller, rural schools with lower student population sizes may also be able to share one coordinator to reduce costs without reducing quality.

02. INCREASE FUNDING TO HIRE ADDITIONAL COUNSELORS TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE AND CAREER ADVISING AND COACHING.

As of the [2021-22 school year](#), New Mexico has a student-to-counselor ratio of 426:1, which is behind both the national average and [surrounding states](#) like Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. The current number of counselors also does not meet the ASCA recommended student-to-counselor ratio of 250:1, making it insufficient for optimal student support. The advisory group recommends that the legislature implement policies that increase the number of experienced counselors to provide students with dedicated, one-on-one college and career advising.

As part of this effort, strategies to work with colleges and universities to strengthen counselor career pathways and improve recruitment and retention is essential for sustainable improvements. One such opportunity would be to expand programs

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such as the University of New Mexico (UNM) and NM PED's [Expanding Opportunities Project \(EOP\)](#), which aims to “recruit and retain school-based mental health (SBMH) providers to serve the needs of students across the state, with a focus on rural and frontier communities that have a high percentage of at-risk and vulnerable student populations.” The program provides stipends and tuition reimbursement for students interested in becoming licensed mental health professionals in rural, high-needs schools. Additional efforts by the state to listen to and understand counselor perspectives about their challenges would also help develop strategies to increase the number of counselors in the state.

The advisory group also recommends repositioning the role of counselors to emphasize college and career planning. Counselors serve multiple roles that include social and emotional, behavioral, and college and career supports. Moreover, the investments and goals under the Martinez-Yazzi Plan focus primarily on social and emotional supports. While important, we must ensure counselors have the time and knowledge to assist students with college and career preparation. Therefore, special attention should be taken to build counseling capacity to sufficiently meet these needs, especially in smaller communities that may have [fewer counselors](#) to provide comprehensive supports.

State Legislation Highlight: [Texas HB 18](#), passed in May 2015, created the Texas OnCourse program, which aims to strengthen advising services that are offered to middle and high school students. The initiative, created with buy-in from higher education institutions, counselors, advisers, and other partners, created a free, digital portal where students, families, educators, counselors, and administrators can connect to resources that prepare students for life and career post-high school.

03. IMPLEMENT A WORK-BASED LEARNING REQUIREMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION THAT PROMOTES CAREER READINESS.

“We found that skills are not lined up right across industries. How do we make sure the skills employers need are embedded into what student learn?”

Currently, New Mexico statute requires students to complete one credit in any career cluster course, workplace readiness course, or a course in a language other than English. The advisory group recommends that the legislature revise the state's high school graduation requirements to include a more substantial work-based learning component that better aligns with career ready outcomes. Examples of revisions may include adding apprenticeships and sufficient job shadowing to experiences that fulfill the requirement or separating the second language requirement to have a dedicated career-oriented requirement. Institutionalizing a mandatory graduation requirement can help ensure all students receive career exposure and develop a minimal degree of workplace skills and understanding for postgraduate success. The state may also consider supporting schools to weave career exploration and work-based learning into existing curricula as a requirement, such as in senior capstones and subject coursework, to further expose students to critical knowledge and workplace skills.

When developing such a policy, policymakers should consider including student voice in the decision-making process to garner buy-in and help ensure that the requirement will reflect student preferences and needs. Legislators may also consider reevaluating existing requirements to ensure they support postgraduate success and are not overly burdensome to students.

Furthermore, work- and community-based learning programs should provide students with opportunities to take on meaningful tasks and projects for their employers and appropriately trains and prepares students for careers, beyond simply answering phones or sorting mail. To ensure that the experiences that fulfill the requirement are relevant and meet high standards, the state should consider standardizing experiential learning outcomes across programs to ensure consistent, high-quality experiences and outcomes. Codifying key learning and career outcomes for students participating in these programs would level-set expectations between employers and students, reduce inconsistencies in program quality across industries, and help employers design more meaningful learning opportunities for students.

In conjunction with creating a work-based learning requirement, the state should develop a statewide evaluation system for work-based learning programs to encourage continuous improvement of programs that benefit employers and provide worthwhile experiences to students. A formal evaluation system can be used to iterate on existing programs to improve effectiveness and reward or further incentivize businesses with a track record of providing strong learning experiences to students. As a starting point, organizations like the [American Institutes for Research](#), provide resources to support comprehensive work-based learning evaluation.

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04. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED STUDENTS AND PROMOTE DIVERSITY AMONG PARTICIPANTS.

“We need to be the people that what we’re designing does not have limits and is not directed only toward privileged kids.”

The advisory group recommends that the legislature provides additional financial incentives for school and employer partnerships that support historically underserved students and promote diversity among participants through intentional recruitment. The diversity of people and businesses in New Mexico demands a statewide ecosystem designed to accept and encourage diversity. Therefore, it is important that the state create programs that meet the needs of all students, not just “high achievers” or students with greater resources. Offering additional resources and funding to partnerships and employers that support low-income students, students in rural communities, students of color, English language learners, undocumented students, justice-involved youth, and other students that may not typically participate in these programs may improve access and support students that stand to benefit from these programs.

Any financial incentives created for employers, such as tax breaks, reimbursements, and others, need to be clear and accessible, and designed with employer capacity in mind. While larger employers may have staff who can handle the paperwork associated with tax credits, small businesses are less likely to take advantage of those opportunities. New Mexico should design these incentives to meet the needs of employers of all sizes and industries. Strategically earmarking incentives for specific expenses, such as program marketing, virtual learning opportunities, transportation, training, uniforms, and others, may help target investments for specific state equity goals. For example, targeting funding for transportation to work-based learning sites can improve access to opportunities for rural or low-income students.

Recent disbursement of financial benefits have been delayed, resulting in less time for schools to be thoughtful with spending funds and also less time for students and educators to utilize the equipment or other goods they purchase with the funds. As the state considers expanding financial incentives, state agencies should evaluate and address any existing hurdles surrounding funding distribution and streamline processes before adopting additional initiatives.

05. INVEST IN PAID INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS.

The advisory group recommends that the legislature provide funds to support paid internship opportunities for students, as increasing the number of paid internships in New Mexico can reduce the financial burden for both students and employers. Providing a sufficient wage can make students less likely to take on additional jobs so that they can focus on learning and can make some businesses more competitive.

Options to support paid internships include expanding existing programs that have shown promise, such as NM PED’s [Summer Enrichment Internship Program](#), or providing an employer matching fund to cost-share student wages between employers and the state. The state may also consider developing student grant programs through schools to provide internship stipends. Districts can consider targeting this funding for specific industries to incentivize student participation, particularly in high-needs industries and regions that are less popular.

NM PED’s College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) launched the Summer Enrichment Internship Program in 2021 and extended the program to 2022, utilizing more than \$9.89 million for the program from their pandemic relief funds. The program provides high-quality, paid internships in government agencies, including county, tribal, and/or municipal placements for New Mexico high school students. Expanding the program year-round and as a permanent program would provide additional opportunities for financial assistance.

06. ORGANIZE A STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN TO CONNECT STUDENTS TO CAREERS AND EMPLOYERS TO SCHOOLS.

“Not enough people understand the importance and value of work-based programs for students. Marketing and telling the story is important.”

There is an urgent need for more robust marketing approaches and clearer information about the benefits of work-based learning for both students and employers. Therefore, the advisory group recommends that the legislature provides funding to support a statewide information and data campaign to both inform students about the available jobs and industries in the

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state, as well as inform employers about the value of work-based learning partnerships and funding opportunities. A multi-layered marketing strategy should use sharing and communication platforms that leverage the different ways students receive information (e.g., through social media, videos, or other channels) in order to reach a wider audience.

As part of this campaign effort, state funding should also support the improvement of existing digital career readiness tools and the development of a centralized, multi-language hub where employers can share opportunities and resources and students and families can learn about existing career pathways. Having a statewide digital tool that is a “one-stop-shop” for students to connect with employers and apply for work-based learning opportunities, while at the same time providing a platform for employers to communicate with students, schools, and coordinators would simplify processes to engage in career exploration and training. Attendees agreed that a digital tool should be accessible in multiple languages and could provide informative videos, video games, and other resources for students. NM PED could work alongside employers, students, and educational leaders to build and market a statewide tool or improve upon the existing Pathway2Careers tool to more easily facilitates partnerships between students and employers.

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Supporting a College and Career Ready Ecosystem

The recommendations provided by the advisory group aim to support a college and career ready ecosystem that benefits both students and employers. While the top recommendation in each section indicates the highest priority proposals for the advisory group, it should be noted that all components are critical to the long-term success of the ecosystem.



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Conclusion

These recommendations are submitted to the New Mexico Public Education Department to inform their legislative requests ahead of the 2023 Legislative Session. Based on research, best practices, and feedback from community and industry leaders across the state, successfully implementing these strategies will bolster New Mexico's college and career pathways so that students are better informed and prepared for promising postsecondary opportunities, and employers can benefit from a qualified and skilled workforce. Looking ahead, NM PED will use these recommendations to inform and further build out policies for the state to adopt through an upcoming Employer Advisory Committee in 2023.

The members of the advisory group have committed their time and input to inform NM PED and the New Mexico State Legislature of their challenges, priorities, and recommendations, and it is with great hope that the legislature works to carry out these recommendations in partnership with NM PED to guarantee the future of the state's students, families, and communities.

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APPENDIX A: ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The advisory group identified key priority areas and recommendations to strengthen New Mexico’s workforce pipeline. The following table provides the full list of recommendations provided by the advisory group, organized by strategy areas.

Strategies	Recommendations
<i>Expand Work- and Community-Based Learning Experiences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement a work-based learning requirement for high school graduation that promotes career readiness. ✓ Increase funding to implement high-quality work- and community-based learning programs. ✓ Expand dual-credit opportunities across the state for work-based learning. ✓ Partner with and increase financial supports for intermediary organizations in New Mexico. ✓ Standardize experiential learning outcomes across programs.
<i>Reduce “Red-Tape” & Build Capacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Invest in work-based learning coordinators to develop and maintain partnerships. ✓ Shift student payroll and liability coverage to the education sector where possible. ✓ Develop a flexible “menu” of work-based learning options for schools and employers of varying sizes and capacities.
<i>Improve Marketing Approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organize a statewide campaign to connect students to careers and employers to schools. ✓ Provide further professional development and accountability to educators and school administrators. ✓ Evaluate and improve existing digital career readiness tools. Build a centralized work-based learning and career-readiness hub accessible to different stakeholders. ✓ Diversify information resources and sharing platforms.
<i>Focus on Equity & Stakeholder Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide additional financial incentives for partnerships that support historically underserved students and promote diversity among participants. ✓ Incorporate youth voices and input in programmatic decision-making. ✓ Expand virtual learning opportunities.
<i>Improve Student College & Career Advising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase funding to hire additional counselors to support individual college and career advising and coaching. ✓ Implement teacher externships and other educator professional development opportunities to integrate work-based learning and skills in the classroom. ✓ Increase funding for transportation so that all students have access to work-based learning opportunities, especially in rural areas. ✓ Implement programs to assist students with college and career transitions.
<i>Provide Meaningful Incentives to Nurture Employer Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Subsidize student wages to promote paid internship opportunities and reduce financial burden. ✓ Provide clear and accessible financial incentives to employers to nurture engagement. ✓ Streamline state funding distribution to ensure employers are receiving funds promptly. ✓ Clearly communicate non-financial benefits to employers.

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APPENDIX B: MEETING ATTENDEES

- **Doug Ackerman**, President & CEO, New Mexico Oil and Gas Association
- **Dr. Kerry Akashian**, Career Development Education Lead, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- **Lutz Arnhold**, Managing Director, Rosewood Hotels & Resorts
- **Jessica Au**, Senior Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute
- **Gary Aycock**, State Supervisor of Agricultural Education & State FFA Advisor, New Mexico State University
- **Dr. Vickie Bannerman**, Deputy Secretary for Identity, Equity, and Transformation, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Leticia Bernal**, Area Director, United Way of Central New Mexico
- **Rob Black**, President & CEO, New Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- **Heather Brewer**, New Mexico Government Relations Liaison, Permian Strategic Partnerships
- **Tracey Bryan**, President & CEO, The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
- **Madison Burns**, Program Manager, NMSU
- **Ernie C'deBaca**, President & CEO, Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
- **Michael Canfield**, President & CEO, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- **Terri Cole**, President & CEO, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- **Jacqueline Costales**, Deputy Secretary (Interim) of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Dale Decker**, Founder & Principal, Dekker/Perich/Sabatini
- **Bryan Dooley**, Executive Direction, Region 9
- **Marc Duske**, Special Projects Manager, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Jason Espinoza**, Owner, KW Consulting LLC
- **Sara Fitzgerald**, Senior Vice President of Policy Research and Strategic Communications, Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- **Seana Flanagan**, Managing Director, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **David Foster**, President, DHF Solutions
- **Greg Frostrad**, Director (Interim) of Policy and Legislative Affairs, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Dr. Angelo Gonzales**, Deputy Secretary (Interim) of School Transformation & Innovation, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Annemarie Henton**, Director of State & Local Services, RS21
- **Dr. Cecilia Hernandez**, College Associate Professor of Curriculum and Instruction & Co-Director of Educators Rising, New Mexico State University
- **Julia Ahrns Hoffman**, Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute
- **Martha Hughes**, Adults in Education Manager, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Jack Jekowski**, Principal Partner, Innovative Technology Partnerships, LLC
- **Erin Johnson-Kruft**, Senior Director of Employer and Industry Engagement, Central New Mexico Community College
- **Howie Kaibel**, Brand Manager, M'tucci's Restaurants
- **Kathy Keith**, Director, Community Partnerships, LANL Foundation
- **Aadil Khan**, Associate Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute
- **Karen Kinsman**, Director/Senior Program Manager, UNM STEM-H Center
- **Leean Kravitz**, Vice President/Government, Fidelity Investments
- **Kyle Lee**, CEO, CNM Ingenuity
- **Raquel Leon** External Affairs Manager, Intel
- **Alexandra Lutz**, Interim Director, NMPED
- **Dr. Matthew Martinez**, Director of Community Engagement, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Lucy Berrier Matheson**, Senior Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute

PREPARING NEW MEXICO'S STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

New Mexico Employer Advisory Meetings – Final Report



- **Yolanda Montoya-Cordova**, Deputy Secretary, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions
- **Debbi Moore**, President/CEO, Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
- **Hillary McPartlon**, CEO, McPartlon Roofing
- **Tony Monfiletto**, Executive Director, Future Focused Education
- **Karen Moses**, Editor-in-Chief, Albuquerque Journal, United Way Policy Committee
- **Debbi Moore**, President/CEO, Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
- **Jessica Nojek**, State Director, SkillsUSA New Mexico
- **Jenny Parks**, President/CEO, LANL Foundation
- **Dr. Paola Peacock-Villada**, Director of Strategy and Talent Development, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Christine Phipps**, Director, Career Technical Leadership Project
- **Dr. Elaine Perea**, (Former) Director of College and Career Readiness, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Rodney Prunty**, President & CEO, United Way of Central New Mexico
- **Clara Raley**, STEM Program Manager, College of Engineering, New Mexico State University
- **Alarie Ray-Garcia**, Owner, Impronta
- **Roberta Rivera**, Community Involvement, Sandia National Laboratories
- **Gloria Ruiz**, Director of Public Affairs, Twenty7Fifty
- **Greta Schouman**, Vice President of Apprenticeship, Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. NM Chapter
- **Dr. Samantha Sengel**, Vice President, Workforce and Community Success, Central New Mexico Community College
- **Michael Sheehy**, Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute
- **Dr. Kurt Steinhaus**, Secretary of Education, New Mexico Public Education Department
- **Amy Tapia**, Manager, Sandia National Laboratories
- **Erica Vevurka**, Director of K-12, The Hunt Institute
- **Katrina Wagner**, Community Relations Specialist, Sandia National Laboratories
- **Russell Walter**, New Mexico FFA, New Mexico Agriculture Education
- **Alvin Warren**, Vice President of Career Pathways & Advocacy, LANL Foundation
- **Dr. Michael Weinburg**, Senior Policy Officer, Thornburg Foundation
- **Amy Whitfield**, Executive Director, Office of African American Affairs, Office of the Governor
- **Julia Whitfield**, Associate Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute
- **Tobie Baker Wright**, C3P Program Director, LANL Foundation
- **Katie Yunker**, Senior Program Manager, The Hunt Institute