

2025 Legislative Agenda

# NEW MEXICO COMPETES

An agenda focused on tackling **crime**, lowering **taxes**, improving **education**, and solving the **healthcare workforce** shortage – essential fronts in the battle for a brighter economic future

## INTRODUCTION

The Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce works with government, business, and community partners to promote and develop a welcoming business environment and thriving, diverse economy in New Mexico. **Our goal is to make our city and state a great place to start and grow a business and a safe, exciting place to work and raise a family.** Prior to each legislative session, the Chamber’s Board of Directors approves a policy agenda – presented herein – that is consistent with our organization’s mission and work. During each session, our team of lobbyists and policy experts works on behalf of the business community to advocate for this agenda, and the Chamber produces a nightly newsletter – the “Legislative Roundup” – to keep our investors and partners up to speed on the latest activity in the Roundhouse.

The 2025 legislative session will commence under continued revenue growth in the state; never before have lawmakers and the Governor had so much money to spend, save, invest, or return to taxpayers. Recurring revenues for FY26 are projected to be \$13.6 billion; for reference, the first budget signed by Governor Lujan Grisham allocated just under \$7 billion in recurring general fund revenue in 2019. New revenue estimates recently released predict legislators will have \$892.3 million in “new” money available next year- a figure that represents the difference between projected revenue and current total spending levels. For the coming year, the Governor plans to raise year-over-year state spending by \$720 million (a 7% increase), higher than the Legislative Finance Committee’s (LFC) plan for \$577 million in new recurring spending (a 5.7% increase). Either way, the state is enroute to yet another record- sized budget. Plenty more will be spent in one-time money, and FY25 reserves are projected by the LFC to be 33% of recurring appropriations.

Despite the state’s impressive revenue picture, New Mexico’s economic growth – outside of the oil and gas industry – is tepid, our population is not growing, and participation in the labor force lags most other states. Soaring energy revenues will not last forever, leaving New Mexico with an extraordinary opportunity – while the state remains flush with cash – to build a more dynamic and competitive economy that is sustainable for the long haul.

**The Chamber's primary goal for the 2025 session is to encourage lawmakers to position our state to better compete for new businesses, workers, residents, and visitors.** Competition is a choice, and in New Mexico's case, it will require leaders to prioritize and address a set of serious challenges that currently put our state at a competitive disadvantage. Specifically, the Chamber will work to:

### **Make New Mexico a Safer Place**

Our well-earned, high-crime reputation makes our state a less welcoming place for businesses to locate and deters people from choosing to live and work here. Too many talented workers leave the state, and existing businesses struggle to recruit people to New Mexico to fill their workforce needs. The Chamber believes drug addiction and other behavioral health disorders are a key driver of the state's crime problem and will support increased investment in addiction services and treatment.

However, lawmakers should also make it harder to be a criminal in New Mexico and attack the large-scale fentanyl trafficking that contributes to our addiction problems. The Chamber supports increasing penalties for the illegal possession and use of firearms, closing the revolving door that so easily lets violent teenagers and dangerous people battling mental health disorders back onto the streets, adding to the ranks of our police and prosecutors, and investing in the wider use of crime-fighting technology.

### **Reduce the Tax Burden on Businesses and Families**

New Mexico's tax structure provides little incentive for people to either live here or start a business. Neighboring states either charge lower corporate income taxes, impose lower taxes on small businesses, or charge no residential income tax at all. This session, the Chamber will vigorously oppose the imposition of any new taxes on businesses or families and will specifically seek a reduction in middle-class personal income taxes, as well as a reduction in the state's high gross receipts tax rate (GRT) and the kinds of tax pyramiding that put New Mexico small businesses at a direct competitive disadvantage with businesses in other states.

### **Ensure New Mexico Families have Access to High-Performing Public Schools Run by Great Leaders**

When schools are run by talented leaders, they are able to recruit and support high-performing teachers and create a culture of high expectations that leads to student success. This notion is research-backed and at the center of the Chamber's belief that the best way to improve the performance of our education system is turn it around one school at a time. The Chamber supports the launch and expansion of high-quality public charter schools and will lead the charge on overhauling how principals are trained, elevating preparation standards for school leaders and ensuring prospective principals get excellent on-the-job training prior to leading their own school. The Chamber will continue to back the Governor's and Legislature's focus on early literacy, including requiring reading instruction rooted in best practices, mandatory interventions for struggling readers, and high-quality instructional materials in every school. The Chamber opposes the idea of scrapping our public education cabinet secretary and replacing the position with a partially elected state school board; this would inject more politics into public education, with no promise of better results for kids and families. Ultimately, to compete economically, businesses growing in New Mexico must be able to find great public schools for workers they recruit, and New Mexico students must become better prepared for successful careers.

## **Make New Mexico a More Attractive Place to Practice Medicine, Add to Our Healthcare Workforce**

It's not really healthcare if it's hard to find a doctor and medical appointments take months to schedule. New Mexico's dire shortage of healthcare workers – from primary care doctors to specialists to nurses of all types – threatens our economic future in a big way. A state with unsafe streets, low-performing schools, and a lack of access to basic healthcare will be a hard place to bring new jobs. The Chamber supports a package of proposals to make New Mexico competitive and attractive for healthcare workers – including eliminating the GRT on medical appointments, streamlining credentialing, joining interstate healthcare compacts to make it easier to move to New Mexico and practice medicine, raising Medicaid reimbursement rates, and overhauling a medical malpractice system that is uncommonly punitive toward doctors and sending our healthcare workers to other states.

New Mexico is already a beautiful place, rich in diversity, culture, history, weather, and natural resources. We envision a state with increasingly safer streets, stronger schools, lower taxes, and improved access to healthcare; such a state would be a powerhouse economically and one of the very best places to start a business, work, live, and visit. May that be our North Star this session.

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# NEW MEXICO'S BUDGET AND FISCAL FUTURE

## SPENDING

- **Priorities:** Focus new spending on substantial tax relief for consumers, families, and businesses; boosting economic development initiatives and incentives, include site readiness and job training; raising Medicaid provider reimbursement rates, eliminating gross receipts taxes on medical appointments, and other incentives to attract, develop, and retain a larger healthcare workforce; high-quality literacy instruction and charter school expansion; coordinated crime-fighting and behavioral health treatment; and large-scale capital projects.
- **Salary Increases:** Provide salary increases for state workers, including teachers, as well as substantial targeted raises (and recruitment/retention incentives) for hard-to-recruit public safety positions, such as police officers, correctional officers, and prosecutors.
- **Capital Outlay Projects:** Focus capital spending on large-scale infrastructure projects (roads, water systems, buildings, etc.) that have a sizable economic impact, address a policy problem, and local governments often cannot afford themselves. Establish new capital project guidelines and/or processes that would improve the vetting of projects and judiciously address the \$5.8 billion across roughly 5,300 projects in currently unspent capital appropriations from previous legislative sessions.

## SAVING AND INVESTING

- **Additional Endowment Funds and Trusts:** Create new endowment funds and expendable trusts – and utilize well-planned multi-year appropriations – to establish stable, long-term revenue streams for important programs and services, especially for things like Medicaid reimbursement rate growth or Behavioral Health provider services. While endowments and trusts provide sustainable, long-term funding streams for critical programs, thoughtfully balance these investments with adequate direct funding to address urgent needs or investments that could find us a better result.
- **Severance Tax Permanent Fund and Early Childhood Endowment Fund:** Preserve the basic structure of the Severance Tax Permanent Fund and Early Childhood Endowment Fund, which collect excess oil and gas revenue and provide a strong fiscal safety net for the state budget.
- **Government Results and Opportunity Fund (GRO):** Preserve the Government Results and Opportunity Fund (GRO) established in the 2024 legislative session with an appropriation of \$55 million. The Fund was created to support evidence-based programs that deliver measurable outcomes in key areas like behavioral health, education, and public safety.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

- **Substantial Tax Relief for Families and Businesses:** Given the state’s unprecedented revenue position and high national inflation in recent years, provide substantial tax relief to families and businesses, including a reduction of personal income taxes for the middle class, as well as a lower gross receipts tax rate and a reduction in gross receipts tax pyramiding (that drives up prices, disproportionately harms small businesses, and makes New Mexico businesses less competitive with businesses in other states).
- **No Tax Increases:** Create no new taxes on residents or businesses and enact no income or gross receipts tax increases.
- **No Increase in Wage/UI Rates:** Oppose raising the minimum wage (including indexing the minimum wage rate) and raising unemployment insurance rates.
- **Higher Costs on Employers:** Oppose attempts to impose new regulatory mandates and raise operational costs on businesses in New Mexico, including higher taxes, increases to various rates, or additional exposure to lawsuits.
- **Commercial Property Tax Reform:** Support a measured approach to bringing commercial property valuations in line with fair market assessments, while protecting business stability through a multi-year transition period.
- **Workers Compensation Act:** Substantially preserve New Mexico’s existing Workers Compensation Act, given its success and stability over time, as well as its balance and benefit to businesses and workers alike. Oppose any amendments to the Act that have not been approved by the Workers Compensation Advisory Council; oppose legislation that would allow bad-faith claims outside of the Workers Compensation Courts; and oppose legislation that would intrude on the employer/employee relationship by re-defining misconduct.
- **Paid Family Medical Leave Requirements:** Oppose the enactment of an onerous paid family medical leave proposal that would create a new tax on businesses and employees each year, increase the overall cost of labor in New Mexico, add significant cost and burden to employers to find replacement workers (at a time of widespread workforce shortages), and lead to significant workplace disruptions across the economy year after year – affecting employers and employees alike.
- **One-To-One Apprentice to Journeyman Ratio:** Oppose attempts to require a ratio of one-to-one apprentice to journeyman ratio for program standards in the building and construction industry trades.
- **Public Bank:** Oppose any effort to create a public bank in New Mexico.

- **Rent Control:** Oppose legislation allowing the imposition of rent control at the local level.

## **GROWTH: INCENTIVES AND MARKETING**

- **Job Training:** Secure \$10 million for the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP).
- **Closing Fund (LEDA):** Secure \$20 million to maintain a robust closing fund for economic development projects, a critical business recruitment tool.
- **New Mexico Partnership:** Increase the budget of the New Mexico Partnership by \$1 million annually (to \$1.9 million overall); the Partnership plays a key role in attracting new businesses, creating high-quality jobs, and diversifying our economy.
- **Site Readiness Pilot Program:** Pass legislation and secure \$24 million to establish a site readiness pilot program, a new economic development incentive that would invest in the infrastructure necessary to prepare sites across the state for future business relocations and expansions.
- **Military Base Planning Commission Project Fund:** Join with the Kirtland Partnership Committee to support a new project fund for infrastructure projects adjacent to military bases that could help attract new base missions to the state. Appropriations request is 12 million.
- **Military Spouse Employment and Economic Opportunities:** Join with the Kirtland Partnership Committee and support New Mexico joining 15 interstate licensing compacts to streamline the re-licensing process for military spouse professionals who transfer with their active-duty spouse and want to work in New Mexico. Several examples of those compacts include: Registered Nurse Compact, Teacher Mobility Compact, and Social Work Licensure Compact.
- **Tourism Marketing:** Secure \$16 million for national and international marketing and advertising campaigns to showcase New Mexico’s attractions, culture, cuisine, etc. to a global audience.
- **Statewide Beautification Campaign:** Secure \$2 million for the Governor’s statewide beautification effort, which is designed to promote community well-being, environmental quality, and economic vitality.
- **Route 66 Centennial:** Secure \$2.5 million to celebrate the upcoming Route 66 Centennial and showcase the state’s iconic role in America’s transportation history.

# ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## **ENERGY**

- **Oil and Gas Production:** Oppose the imposition of onerous regulations, additional taxes, or significant new fees on oil and gas production, upon which New Mexico’s budget and economic outlook are heavily dependent. Oppose opening the Oil and Gas Act this session.
- **Solar, Wind, Nuclear, and Other Energy Industries:** Oppose the imposition of onerous regulations, additional taxes, or significant new fees.
- **Environment Amendment:** Oppose a Constitutional amendment referred to as the “Green Amendment” that relates to a person’s right to clean air, water, and land; this has always been – and remains – an important policy priority, but enacting a new Constitutional right on this subject would lead to endless and costly lawsuits that would impact the state’s fiscal and economic health and shift policymaking on energy and environmental matters into the courts and away from the legislative and executive branches.
- **Public Utility or Municipal Aggregation:** Oppose legislation designed to explore or enact the creation of a public power utility in New Mexico or authorize municipal aggregation.
- **Wildfire Liability:** Oppose bills that would inequitably distribute wildfire liability between utilities and other parties; such legislation would create an imbalanced approach to responsibility and risk management, potentially compromising public safety, economic stability, and environmental protection.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- **Strategic Water Supply:** Support the Governor’s request for \$75 million to create a strategic water reserve (state-purchased, treated produced or brackish water) that will improve the state’s drought resilience and be used in production of clean energy in a way that does not impose onerous new taxes on the oil and gas industry.
- **Highways and Roads:** Support the LFC’s recommendation to appropriate \$350 million for highway and road construction, including \$100 million for local road maintenance, \$188 million for state road maintenance, \$12 million for equipment, and \$50 million for wildlife corridors.
- **Internet Access and Expansion:** Secure \$650,000 to maintain basic functions of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE), created in 2021, and secure \$70 million to a satellite connectivity deployment project (and other needs of the state’s internet access expansion program).
- **Key Capital Projects:** Support various capital funding requests, including:
  - **Film Center:** A joint request by the City of ABQ, CNM, and NM EDD for the Railyards film center/ NM Arts Collaborative for \$10 million.
  - **Rail Trail:** Further construction of the Rail Trail, including a crossing at Central Ave., a crossing at Lomas Blvd., and construction in the Sawmill Area.
  - **Affordable Housing:** Affordable housing construction, improvement, and rehabilitation throughout Albuquerque, including transitional housing for veterans and a request by the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (a joint city/county effort) for \$100 million (the current

combined project list has a \$261 million gap in funding and represents more than 2,000 potential housing units).

## WORKFORCE, HEALTHCARE, AND HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Healthcare Workforce Expansion:** Support initiatives – including statutory changes and appropriations – designed to grow New Mexico’s healthcare workforce and make our state a more welcoming, hospitable, and financially viable place to practice medicine. This would include:
  - **GRT on Medical Services and Rural Care Tax Credit:** Permanently repeal the state’s gross receipts tax on medical services (a tax that creates a serious competitive disadvantage to practicing in New Mexico) and expanding the Rural Care Tax Credit.
  - **Health Professional Loan Repayment Program:** Secure \$25 million to expand the use of loan repayment as a key incentive for attracting doctors to practice in New Mexico and keeping them here.
  - **Medical Malpractice Reform:** Support reforming the state’s medical malpractice act (which currently discourages physicians from practicing in New Mexico) by capping attorney fees; raising the legal standard for awarding punitive damages and capping them; and prohibiting the filing of multiple malpractice lawsuits over a single injury. New Mexico currently has the second highest number of medical malpractice lawsuits per capita in the U.S.
  - **Centralized Credentialing Process:** Create a centralized credentialing system, reducing administrative burdens on doctors and other healthcare professionals, allowing them to begin practicing more quickly and making it easier for patients to keep their providers when their insurance coverage changes.
  - **Interstate Healthcare Worker Compacts:** Support New Mexico joining all ten interstate healthcare worker compacts so that doctors, psychologists, and other providers licensed in other states can more easily provide care to New Mexico patients, including via tele-health.
  - **Medicaid Reimbursement Rates:** Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to healthcare providers (NM has a higher proportion of patients insured by Medicaid than any other state, and Medicaid generally pays less than the cost of providing treatment).
  - **Medicaid/Healthcare Permanent Fund:** Support the creation of a Medicaid/Healthcare Permanent Fund (\$1B-\$2B) that would, among other things, allow for the growth of Medicaid reimbursement rates long-term (in past financial downturns, revenues have not been sufficient



to raise reimbursement rates over time), ideally making it less of a disadvantage to practice in New Mexico.

- **More International Doctors in NM:** Allow fully trained and vetted doctors from other countries to apply for a provisional license to practice under supervision in New Mexico for two years, after which they could apply for a full medical license.
  - **Healthcare Faculty Salaries and Preceptor Support:** Expand access to higher education in the healthcare field by increasing salaries for the faculty who train future healthcare professionals and providing a tax credit for the preceptors who provide community-based education for doctors, nurses, and others.
  - **Healthcare-related CTE:** Increase the number of home-grown healthcare workers by expanding access to healthcare-related career and technical education in high school, providing more opportunities for students to earn certifications in high school (e.g. as EMTs or nurse assistants), and providing liability protections to employers that participate in providing CTE opportunities for students.
  - **New UNM Medical School Facility:** Support a request of \$30 million by the University of New Mexico for capital funds to plan and design (and eventually construct) a new School of Medicine
  - **UNM College of Pharmacy:** Support a request of \$25 million for renovations for the UNM College of Pharmacy.
- **Office of Substance Use Disorders:** Support the creation of the UNM Office of Substance Use Disorders (\$4.2 million), which would expand clinical services, education, and research across the state and provide evidence-based addiction treatment statewide.
  - **Oppose the “Medicaid Forward” Initiative:** Oppose the “Medicaid Forward” initiative, which would allow New Mexicans whose income levels exceed current Medicaid thresholds to access Medicaid (on a sliding-scale pay model). This would destabilize the private commercial insurance market, create a projected budget shortfall of \$232M-\$581M, and represent a major step toward a single-payer health system.
  - **Mandating Nurse Ratios:** Oppose legislation mandating nurse staffing ratios in healthcare facilities, a policy that- in practice- would significantly reduce access to healthcare.
  - **Competitiveness in University Athletics:** Support the appropriation of over \$12 million to the University of New Mexico Athletics Department to address compliance requirements with the House vs. NCAA anti-trust lawsuit (allowing for revenue-sharing with student athletes) and ongoing Title IX equity gaps between men’s and women’s program resources; this appropriation would significantly move UNM Athletics toward long-term fiscal sustainability and place the Department on a more competitive footing financially with other Mountain West Conference programs. In addition, support UNM’s capital request to plan and design the construction of a new football stadium and replace video boards across several of its sports arenas.

- **QNM-I:** Support UNM’s request for funding for the Quantum New Mexico Institute, a joint entity of UNM and Sandia National Laboratories to help build and sustain the emerging quantum economy. Quantum information science is a field that combines quantum physics, computer science, and information theory to study how information can be stored, processed, and transmitted using quantum systems.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

### PRE-TRIAL RELEASE, JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORMS, AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES

- **Rebuttable Presumption of Pre-Trial Detention:** Change New Mexico law to presume that a person arrested for violent or other serious crimes is a danger to the public and should be held in jail prior to his/her trial, unless the defendant can convince the judge in the case that he/she would not, in fact, pose a threat to public safety if released. Covered crimes should include, at a minimum, serious violent offenses; felonies involving the use of a firearm; felonies involving great bodily harm; and felonies committed by repeat offenders or those on court-ordered supervision.
- **Juvenile Justice Penalties and Reforms:** Support the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Attorney’s efforts to amend the New Mexico Children’s Code to strengthen the penalties for juveniles who commit violent crimes and homicides. This could include adding rape, drive-by shooting, and other crimes as offenses for which juveniles can be charged as adults; making the unlawful possession of a firearm a felony crime; and extending the age of possible imprisonment from 21 to 25 years old.
- **Concurrent Juvenile Jurisdiction:** Join with the Kirtland Partnership Committee to support the establishment of concurrent jurisdiction for juvenile cases on military installations, allowing both state and federal authorities to hear and decide these cases. This helps juvenile offenders receive the most timely and appropriate adjudication and keeps federal resources on other types of cases.
- **Criminal Competency Changes:** Support changes in the justice system that require involuntary commitment proceedings against repeat criminals with severe mental health disorders (currently, many of these individuals are simply released from jail and repeatedly made available to commit other crimes). Additionally, support a more reasonable definition of the type of poor judgment, self-neglect and irrational, destructive, or dangerous behavior a person must exhibit to be considered a candidate for involuntary commitment.
- **Fentanyl Crisis:** Support legislation that would amend the Controlled Substances Act to include fentanyl and increase penalties for those who traffic fentanyl in New Mexico.
- **Illegal Firearm Possession by a Felon:** Make the crime of being a felon in possession of a firearm a second-degree felony, punishable by a minimum of nine years in prison.
- **RICO Prosecutions:** Strengthen New Mexico’s RICO statute by expanding the scope of crimes that qualify for RICO prosecution, including illegal firearm trafficking.

- **Human Trafficking:** Support increased penalties, strengthen law enforcement surveillance in prosecution of human traffickers, increase border security efforts to identify trafficking operations, and disrupt trafficking networks, like stash houses. Extend the definition, of human trafficking so that prosecution is not so reliant on victim testimony.
- **Public Highways and Medians:** Support legislation prohibiting people from lingering on narrow medians.
- **Release Pending Appeal:** Support legislation ensuring that anyone convicted of a capital or serious violent offense shall not be entitled to release pending appeal of their conviction.
- **Violations of Conditions of Release:** Pass legislation requiring pretrial services agencies to notify crime victims, the court, the prosecutor, and a defendant's counsel when someone who has been charged with a crime violates their pretrial conditions of release. Additionally, clarify that pretrial release and supervision records are subject to the Inspection of Public Records Act.
- **Threats of Mass Violence:** Pass legislation elevating the offense of threatening a mass shooting from a misdemeanor to a fourth-degree felony.
- **Cyberbullying:** Create a new criminal penalty for the cyberbullying of students and associated penalties for this conduct.

## **RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- **Pre-Trial Interviews of Child Victims:** Support the Attorney General's effort to amend state law to no longer subject child victims to often hostile pre-trial interviews by defense attorneys, in cases where the victim has completed a forensic/safehouse interview.
- **Victims of Crime Act:** Support the Attorney General's effort to strengthen the rights and protections for victims of crime, improve the notification process for victims, and provide legal remedies for the failure to adequately support victims, including civil penalties for violations, providing victims with a separate private right of action, and providing victims with standing to assert their rights during criminal proceedings.
- **Children's Code:** Amend the Children's Code to allow for greater transparency and accountability to know the full extent of the problems with CYFD.
- **Governor's Organized Crime Commission:** Secure \$4.5 million in recurring funding to properly staff and equip the Governor's Organized Crime Commission, which works to suppress organized crime in the areas of human trafficking, drug trafficking, illegal cannabis operations, gun smuggling, and retail theft, including a centralized intelligence center to support the entire state and the purchase of vehicles and equipment.
- **Crime Reporting:** Support legislation requiring all law enforcement agencies across the state to produce reports regularly, in a unified way, on crime incidents and ballistics information.
- **Public Safety Technology, Equipment and Facilities:** Support various agency requests for law enforcement funding, including:

- **State of NM:** Protective equipment upgrades and body cameras (\$4.2 million); law enforcement vehicles; and various technology and systems enhancements (\$2.7 million); New Patrol Helicopter (\$10 million).
- **Local (APD):** Real Time Crime Center equipment (\$900,000); crime-fighting technology including body cameras, tasers, license plate readers, drones, mobile surveillance units, and security smart cameras (\$10 million), and emergency policy vehicles (\$1 million).
- **Local (BCSO):** Metro Air Support (\$450,000) and technology infrastructure and software upgrades (\$8 million) to enhance data sharing, dispatch and communications systems.

## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

- **Behavioral Health Funding and Services:** Support efforts by the Attorney General, Governor, or Legislature to expand the behavioral health workforce, improve access to behavioral health treatment, enhance and extend various types of behavioral health services statewide, and improve the coherence and reliability of behavioral health interventions. This could include the creation of a new permanent Behavioral Health Trust Fund to provide sustainable ongoing funding for behavioral health programs.

# K-12 EDUCATION

## **EDUCATION SYSTEM GOVERNANCE**

- **Secretary vs. State School Board:** Oppose a Constitutional amendment that would eliminate the cabinet-level secretary of education and replace it with a superintendent selected by a partially elected state board of education; such a move would needlessly introduce more politics into public education, inhibit coordination across agencies on issues relating to children and families, and compromise effective charter school authorization. Additionally, New Mexico once had a state school board, and the governance model did not produce improvements to student outcomes, while making it difficult to hold anyone accountable for poor performance.
- **Staff for the Public Education Commission:** Support the PEC’s desire to have its own dedicated staff; this structural change would enhance the commission’s ability to fulfill its critical role in ensuring educational excellence and innovation while maintaining proper oversight of charter schools.
- **Timeline for the Release of Student Performance Date:** Pass legislation requiring the Public Education Department to release statewide test results by September 30 of each year.

## **STUDENT LEARNING, SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, AND OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES**

- **Improving the Teaching of Reading:** Support the Governor’s recommendations to: train elementary educators in the science of reading (\$14 million); expand structured literacy professional development into secondary schools (\$5 million); and support a second year of the summer reading intervention program (\$30 million).

- **Individual Reading Plans:** Require schools and teachers to work with parents to establish individual reading plans (IRPs) for the lowest-performing K-2 students; early literacy is the foundation for all future academic success.
- **High-Impact Tutoring:** Require high-impact tutoring for the lowest-performing students in grades 3-8; this kind of tutoring represents one of the most effective interventions for accelerating student learning and closing achievement gaps.
- **Cell Phones in Schools:** Support legislation designed to reduce or eliminate the use of cell phones by students while in school, which would benefit teachers by keeping students' attention on their instruction and benefit students both academically and socially.
- **High-Quality Literacy Curriculum and Materials:** Support additional funding for the provision of high-quality literacy curriculum and materials in schools, in alignment with the "science of reading."
- **School Leadership Standards and Preparation:** Pass legislation to raise the standards for principal preparation in New Mexico, in alignment with best practices; this would include requiring aspiring principals to engage in significant on-the-job training before overseeing their own school. Additionally, establish a school leadership institute to focus on the ongoing development of school and district leaders, and create a licensure process for district leaders that is separate from the one used for principals.
- **Public Charter Schools:** Oppose any measure that would limit or stop public charter schools from opening, expanding, or replicating; oppose any measure that would cap or limit enrollment in charter schools.
- **Charter School Facilities:** Support adding \$30 million to the revolving loan fund for charter school facility projects; this funding would address critical facility needs through a fiscally responsible, self-sustaining fund structure.
- **Public School Open Enrollment:** Support efforts to allow – and make it practically possible – for families to choose to attend any public school, regardless of their address (this could include more transparent enrollment practices and solutions to transportation).
- **Education Savings Accounts:** Support a state-funded program that would allow parents to use public education funds for various educational expenses (tutoring, materials, tuition, etc.); implementation must include strong financial oversight, academic accountability, equity safeguards, and best-practice administrative infrastructure.