

**Hope Morales, New Mexico Policy Director:
Testimony Before the New Mexico Department of Education in Support of High
Quality Educator Preparation Programs**

Teach Plus Fellows are currently researching teacher training and practices that can better support new teachers. New Mexico, like many other states have struggled with recruiting and retaining teachers. In 2015 New Mexico was ranked second highest in the nation for teacher turnover amongst new teachers (Burgess, 2016). Many teachers leave the education field between their third to fifth year of teaching. Darling-Hammond (2012), notes that “a number of beginners leave the teaching profession early because they don’t feel effective.” Although teachers meet the required hours, pass the required classes, and teaching assessments, there are many things that happen in the classroom that teachers are not prepared for. Teachers are asked to be reflective practitioners; preparation programs and districts should do the same.

I have often heard that the only constant in education is change. The training and strategies we use must also change to better serve the diversity of our students. Statewide monitoring of education preparation programs can serve as a valuable tool for the universities. This tool should be used by the universities to continually develop and improve their programs. Information should be shared between universities and districts to improve their partnership and adjust their practices to better support training educators. New teachers should be part of this important conversation to give feedback about the preparation they received and indicate how the training they received could have been improved.

The topic of teacher preparation has come up often in various meetings throughout our state, however, there is a lack of transparency regarding the effectiveness of the trainings new teachers are receiving. Aspiring teachers deserve to know which state universities offer high quality education programs to aide in their decision for which campus they will attend. Students deserve the right to be taught by educators who are “Day 1 Ready.” Teachers who are Day 1 Ready does not mean that they are perfect educators on day 1, rather it means they have been trained in a way that gives them confidence to lead their classrooms with a variety of skills and strategies that support student learning on day 1 and throughout the school year.

Part of our research and recommendations from Teach Plus Fellows include: Increase classroom training experiences and providing training in schools and with students new teachers are most likely to serve in their first years of teaching. There are many factors and individuals involved in ensuring our students receive a high quality education. Teacher preparation programs, along with other support systems, are an essential partner to ensure our teachers are prepared to educate the youth of New Mexico.