

TO: New Mexico Public Education Department
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+++++ **INTRODUCTION** +++++

Teacher professional development (PD) is an essential part of our profession. Research from the Center for Public Education shows that schools with strong professional learning communities and teaching coaches have higher student achievement.¹ As New Mexico teachers and Teach Plus Teaching Policy Fellows, we recognize the importance of developing teachers in our schools and classrooms. In this memo, we review the results of our survey of New Mexico teachers' satisfaction with their PD and put forth recommendations to improve how teachers access and acquire high-quality professional learning.

+++++ **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT** +++++

PD for teachers in New Mexico is currently driven by districts and publishers. These PD opportunities have a place and a purpose, but teachers attending this style of traditional 'sit and get' PD are limited to what is provided.² In fact, over 90 percent of the PD teachers receive in a school year are from 'workshop style trainings.'³ Just as our profession has changed, so have the needs of educators. As teachers, we prefer to engage in content-specific, teacher-led professional learning that meets the needs of our diverse student populations and our diverse communities. Relevant, high-quality, content-specific PD is directly correlated to improved educational outcomes for students.⁴ Differentiating the PD content and aligning it to educators' needs will give New Mexico's teachers access to strategies to help improve student outcomes, equip teachers with skills based on need, and provide teachers with opportunities for ownership over the improvement of their career.

+++++ **TEACH PLUS SURVEY ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** +++++

In 2018, Teach Plus Fellows conducted a survey of more than 300 New Mexico educators to learn more about their experiences with PD in their districts. We wanted to know how teachers

would grade the professional development overall and what teachers thought of their PD planning and selection process. Our findings are summarized in the table below.

<p>More than half of the teachers surveyed graded their PD between a B and C.</p>	<p>Overall PD grade: A=9 percent B= 29 percent C= 27 percent D= 22 percent F=11 percent Unsure= 2 percent</p>
<p>Satisfaction with teacher leadership opportunities</p>	<p>38 percent of teachers were satisfied with the teacher leadership opportunities that stemmed from their PD, compared to 62 percent who were not satisfied.</p>
<p>Involvement in PD planning and selection process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 70 percent of teachers indicated they are not involved in the planning process of the PD they receive. + 9 out of 10 teachers indicated they do not have the autonomy to select their own PD

+++++++ **RECOMMENDATIONS** ++++++

Taking into account the survey results, our own experiences with professional development, and current systems in place in New Mexico, we recommend the following:

1 Put in Place a Three-Tier Professional Development 'Marketplace' System

We recommend creating a three-tier professional development system that will provide educators with a clear vision of the various PD topics available throughout the school year. We recommend structuring the tiers so they build upon one another, with specific teaching and learning strategies as well as content-specific topics. This more personalized, multi-tier approach would allow both novices and veterans to feel supported and engaged in improving instructional outcomes based on the needs of their diverse classrooms.

TIER 1:

PD topics are geared towards new or struggling teachers; refresher for teachers needing support in subject areas or specific content in the classroom. The PD opportunities are short in duration, with fewer sessions before implementation, and target an area that can be put into practice immediately. Initial support level of professional development.

TIER 2:

Mid-level professional development for teachers interested or desiring specific tools to apply within the classroom. The topics are more in-depth, and the PD is for an extended duration. Teachers have an opportunity to engage in a longer-term process and/or strategy to implement. Teachers are required to reflect on current practices and make specific changes or adjustments to their classroom practice.

TIER 3:

Deep dive professional development that will offer teachers an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency and practices within the classroom. PD that can also provide leadership opportunities at the school-, district-, and state-level. Teachers facilitate their own PD by creating and delivering high-quality, teacher-led professional development. We recommend that districts compensate Tier 3 teachers, thus investing in their most high-performing teachers and growing the profession. We believe this will incentivize highly-effective teachers to lead professional development.

Teachers are the boots on the ground and are current experts on the issues and concerns within the classroom. We learn best from the successes and failures of our peers on topics that are relevant, engaging, and presented by actual classroom teachers that are leaders in the profession. Our proposed three-tier system provides growth, support, and collaboration needed to revitalize the teaching profession in New Mexico.

Content for the three tiers could include:

Tier	Participant	PD Examples
Tier 1	Level 1 teachers; veteran teachers looking for specifics to support classroom needs; pre-service teachers, alternative licensure teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Interpreting Standards+ Understanding 5 shifts in Competency Based Education+ Curriculum Review+ Student Engagement Strategies+ Classroom Management+ Incorporating 5E model+ Classroom Setup+ Rubric Implementation+ Lesson Plan Setup+ Test Prep Strategies+ Parent Relations+ SAT strategies
Tier 2	Level 2 and 3 teachers who have demonstrated competency in their content area; teachers that are moving into leadership roles at their school or district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Google classroom+ Rubric design+ Making Sense of Science+ Analyzing Assessments+ Science Making Circles+ Technology Integration+ Student Engagement+ Reading across the curriculum

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Teaching with Rigor + Socratic Discourse + Interactive Notebooking + Creating Analytical Learners + Project-based learning strategies + Cultural Sensitivity training
Tier 3	Teacher leaders with Level 2 or 3 licenses, who have demonstrated mastery of their content area and already hold a leadership position within their school or district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Backwards planning + Long term teacher/leader cadre + Designing assessment + Project based learning design + Research or study methods + Open Source Curriculum Field Tests (OpenSciEd) + Teacher Mentorships + Grant Writing + Cross Curricular Rubric design + Community engagement for classroom growth + Leadership for Social Emotional Learning + NM Dream Team + Teach Plus NM + Instructional material review

2 Support the Three-Tier System with a Comprehensive, User-Friendly Website

In order to target professional development to each teacher's interests and licensure level needs, we recommend that NMPED develop a website to support the three-tier professional development 'marketplace' structure. We suggest that NMPED use the 'marketplace' format for the website, so that administrators and educators can easily access and 'buy' topics and sessions that interest them most. Districts and teachers can also use the information on the site as a reflection tool to target areas for the most effective professional development as targeted on their Professional Development Plan. The website should not limit any user to only one tier, but allow users to select from any training they determine to be appropriate for their needs.

The website should clearly delineate:

- + The trainings available at each level.
- + The instructor(s) for that topic (whether they are a NM educator, state consultant, or paid training company).
- + The training format (in-person, online, blended, etc.).
- + The time it will take to complete the training.
- + Post-training requirements.

3 Create a Statewide Task Force to Determine Specific Needs of New Mexico's Educators

When developing the three-tier system, NMPED should partner with stakeholders to create professional development topics that are relevant to specific demographic areas and school requirement based on their student populations. Each district will have unique needs and varied resources, so the NMPED should collaborate with leadership teams within schools to determine the needs of the school community. Many schools already have curriculum committees and that can provide insight into the professional development needs of their teachers.

We recommend that the task force:

- + Survey stakeholders to determine their PD needs (teachers, educational assistants, instructional coaches etc.).
- + Develop the online marketplace of PD options (see recommendation 2). We have provided the initial scaffolding for the three-tier system that can be used as a guide, dependent upon the availability of professional learning opportunities and the actual needs of New Mexico's educators.
- + Develop a rubric for assessing PD opportunities, to determine that they are indeed high quality.
- + Develop a post-PD effectiveness survey as a guide for district use.

4 Require districts to provide a survey at the end of each three-tiered PD session to evaluate the effectiveness of that training.

While we recognize that surveys should be used judiciously, PD sessions in general, and especially those that are required by the district, should include a survey that determines the effectiveness of the session. The PD taskforce can develop the basic survey to evaluate presenter and content effectiveness that would be used as a guide by districts and updated by districts/schools as needed. Districts should maintain the data from the survey and use it when making decisions related to additional PD, including effectiveness of trainers and appetite for topics.

+++++ **CONCLUSION** +++++

Students directly benefit from their teachers receiving high-quality professional development. As a state, we should aim to improve educational outcomes for New Mexico's children; therefore supporting teacher development needs to be a top priority. Teachers need support to grow and improve their practice, schools and districts need support in providing high quality professional learning opportunities for their teachers, and the PED needs support to enforce equitable resources for teacher PD. Our recommendations on how to improve the delivery of excellent PD to New Mexico's teachers should bring us closer to reaching these goals.

+++++ **ENDNOTES** +++++

- ¹ <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/research/teaching-teachers-effective-professional-development>
- ² <https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf>
- ³ <https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf>
- ⁴ <https://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf>;
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED514190.pdf>