

New Mexico's School Leadership Action

This document is intended to help answer questions and guide conversations about school leadership in New Mexico. During technical assistance on the topic, provided by Andy Cole, a senior consultant from The Wallace Foundation, and Ashley Idrees, an education policy specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures, state legislators and representatives were able to ask a multitude of questions that are answered below.

How many students does New Mexico serve?

New Mexico serves over 338,000 students in public, private and charter schools.

It is important to understand the context in which school leadership is applied to every state. In New Mexico, having a contextual approach to school leadership will lend itself to understanding how best leaders can support students of all abilities, students who live in poverty and students who live in rural areas.

What is New Mexico's approach to school leadership?

The New Mexico Public Education Department approves traditional school leader preparation programs. State policy requires school leader preparation programs to align with the adopted standards by addressing the department's approved functional areas and related competencies. Though specific responsibilities may differ between districts, school districts must meet the [New Mexico Administrator Competencies](#).

Knowing the approach to school leadership—whether it be traditional or non-traditional—is vital to revising and enhancing current state policy. Legislators are encouraged to discover their own state's approach to school leadership. Having this knowledge will aid in targeted measures that school districts can take to improve practice throughout states across the nation.



How does one become a licensed school administrator in New Mexico?

In order to become a licensed school administrator for an [initial license](#), a candidate must complete each of the following:

- Pay a \$150 fee with a cashier's check or money order.
- Complete an initial application.
- Provide official sealed transcripts reflecting completion of bachelor's and master's degrees from a regionally accredited college or university, which must include:
 - 18 graduate hours in an educational administration program and apprenticeship or internship that consists of a minimum of 180 clock hours, or
 - 18 graduate hours in an educational administration Master of Business Administration (Woodrow Wilson Fellowship approved program from New Mexico State University or the University of New Mexico); and apprenticeship or internship that consists of a minimum of 180 clock hours, or
 - Carlsbad Alternative Educational Administration Program certificate of completion (Principal Leadership Development) and apprenticeship or internship that consists of a minimum of 180 clock hours.
- Hold a current level 2 or level 3A teacher's license, or a current level 2 or level 3 instructional support provider license.
- Pass the following New Mexico Teacher Assessments (NMTA)
 - [Content Knowledge Assessment in Education Administration](#)

What makes New Mexico unique in how it prepares school leaders?

New Mexico is unique because of the emphasis placed on prior teacher's license and an apprenticeship or internship that consists of a minimum of 180 hours. [Research](#) on adult learning emphasizes the importance of providing strong content and field experiences during leadership preparation because of the intellectual challenge it creates. Providing future school leaders with an opportunity to

cultivate their skills through real-life experiences will enable their growth outside of the classroom.

Providing school principal candidates with an apprenticeship or internship enables their psychological safety in that they are able to try new techniques and learn without the fear of failure through an internship.

How can universities prepare future school principals?

The Wallace Foundation created and implemented the [University Principal Preparation Initiative](#) (UPPI). This initiative focuses on evidence-based policies and practices in three areas:

- Developing and implementing high-quality courses of study with practical, on-the-job experiences.
- Putting in place strong university-district partnerships.
- Developing state policies on program accreditation, principal licensure or certification, and other matters (funded internships, for example) to promote more effective training statewide.

How are leaders supported when they are serving as school principals?

Once school principals are leading, often their own support dissipates as they are viewed as the source of support. Through a principal supervisor role, school leaders are provided with support and guidance from their district to enhance their continuous growth. Even more, [research](#) shows that when principals are supported in this way, retention increases.

Because of increasing rates of principal turnover, and the multi-faceted disruption that occurs once a principal has left, support while in the role is vital. Implementing purposeful support and mentorship can aid in principal retention and enable growth for everyone.

Where can I find more information about school leadership?

For more information and research on education leadership, visit The Wallace Foundation's Knowledge Center at www.wallacefoundation.org.

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