

White Paper: New Mexico's Three-Tiered Teacher Licensure System

A Report to the Legislative Finance Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a result of consultations with the Licensure Unit of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) of the Department of Finance and Administration, the Legislative Finance Committee in January 2004 undertook a review of the status of the State's new Three-tiered Licensure System. The program review, a developmental evaluation of early-stage system implementation, relied in part

1. on background information and data provided by these two offices
2. an exhaustive review of recent professional and disciplinary literature on the relationship of licensure with education quality and accountability
3. a review of other states' licensure and accountability systems
4. an assessment of the state of the art in teacher evaluation—particularly dossier-based evaluation, and
5. on LFC observation of meetings of a Three-Tiered Implementation Council created by the Licensure Unit, along with various forms of agency consultation.

The findings were as follows:

1. ***Much has been accomplished:*** The State's new Three-Tiered Licensure System, established by HB 212, Public Education Reforms, in the 2003 Legislative Session, and signed into law in April 2003 by Governor Richardson, aims to advance teacher and educational quality in the state, on the premise that improved teacher quality will produce improved educational outcomes for the state. The new system requires licensees to demonstrate teaching efficacy and growth as they advance through certification, and it links teachers' licensure levels with guaranteed salary levels. Since enactment of HB 212, in anticipation of system deployment beginning July 1st, 2004, the PED has offered related training opportunities for teachers and administrators. It has engaged them, along with other stakeholders, in the definition of key system elements such as the Professional Development Dossier, through numerous workgroups and conferences, including the aforementioned implementation council, and web-based informational and survey resources. This process was found to be intensive, thorough, and effective.

2. ***There is growing national recognition of the State's new licensure system and demonstrated commitment to public education.*** The Center for Competency-Measured Education has commended New Mexico for its "expansion of program capacity and

access” in the direction of quality teacher recruitment and retention. *American Teacher*, in an article entitled “Hard Work Pays in the NCLB Era: New Mexico Gets it Right,” commends the state’s achievements in the transition to both alignment with the federal No Child Left Behind Act and to a new licensure system, stating that “the state has worked hard the past few years in revamping its teacher licensing system and has made teaching quality a statewide priority—the focus of dozens of community meetings, legislative hearings, rallies, and, importantly, successful ballot initiatives that will make sure schools have the resources to prepare teachers and fairly judge quality in the classroom.” The Southeast Center for Teaching Quality attests that New Mexico is the “notable exception” nationally to the failure by states to “to engage policymakers, stakeholders and practitioners in a discussion about what teachers need to know and be able to do systematically.”

Recommendations arising from this review are as follows.

While evaluating teachers on the basis of student standardized achievement test score gains may not be readily applicable in New Mexico, the PED, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders should consider ways to encourage inclusion of such student achievement data in the teacher dossier, for the sake of comparability of evaluation outcomes, and for the purpose of accountability. Another option is a North Carolina licensure device of requiring the reporting of standardized test results in evaluation documentation for top-tier certification.

Teacher licensure should be assessed in relation to the entirety of the educational system of which it is a part. If legislators or other policymakers want to gauge the impact of teacher quality on student success, that may be best accomplished by an independent evaluation, at the first-year mark of licensure system implementation, in the context of state education system performance as a whole. An assessment of teacher licensure in isolation would not be adequate to the task of ensuring its successful and cost-effective implementation. The new teacher evaluation and licensing mechanisms could be used, nonetheless, to collect multi-source, state-wide educational outcome data, and conduct state-wide teacher quality assessments.

State licensure criteria in New Mexico must complement and align with the state’s still-evolving accountability program, since the U.S. Department of Education now requires extensive state reporting to the Secretary of Education, including reports of (1) licensure requirements, (2) licensure standards, (3) the extent to which K-12 standards and licensure requirements coincide, (4) the percentage of teaching candidates passing required teaching examinations, and other information. In this context, there needs to be sufficient specification of educational outcome data as well as provision for its reliable collection and retrieval. Current means to measurement and reporting should be reviewed in relation to the need (a) to satisfy both federal and state reporting requirements, (b) to align state, district, and local school accountability, and (c) to ensure that the implementation of educational outcome measures is carried out in a sound and serviceable manner.

Overview: New Mexico's Three-Tiered Licensure System

The State of New Mexico's new Three-Tiered Licensure System, established by HB 212, Public Education Reforms, in the 2003 Legislative Session and signed into law in April 2003 by Governor Richardson, aims to advance teacher and educational quality in the state. The new framework is a progressive career system where licensees—teachers and administrators—are required to demonstrate increased competencies, and take on increased responsibilities, as they advance through certification. The new system links teachers' licensure levels and salaries to the quality of their work in the classroom, and it supports continual professional development—in part through mentoring.

Since enactment of HB 212, the PED has begun offering training opportunities for teachers and administrators, to equip them to implement the new system, and given them numerous opportunities to contribute to the definition of key system elements, such as the Professional Development Dossier (PDD) and the highly objective uniform statewide standard of evaluation (HOUSSE), which is to go into effect July 1, 2004. Progress through the new system guarantees minimum salary levels for teachers at different licensure levels. The salaries will be phased in over a five-year period, beginning with minimum salaries for Level I teachers in the 2003-04 school year. HB 212 provides for a

- minimum salary of \$30,000 for all Level I, II, and III-A teachers in 03-04
- minimum salary of \$35,000 for Level II & III-A teachers in 04-05
- minimum salary of \$40,000 for Level II & III-A teachers in 05-06
- minimum salary of \$45,000 for Level III-A teachers in 06-07
- minimum salary of \$50,000 for Level III-A teachers in 07-08

Advancement to minimum salary levels with advancement in licensure will require an annual evaluation in every case. Teachers who are Level II in the current system and will be Level II in the new system will not have to complete a dossier, nor will those who are currently Level III and will be Level III under the new system. These teachers will, nonetheless, have to meet the new, more rigorous annual evaluations in order to qualify for the minimum salary bases. The only teachers who have to do dossier are those who move from Level I to Level II or from Level II to Level III after July 1, 2004.

As indicated in Section 22-10A-4 of NMSA 1978, New Mexico's Public School Code, teacher certification is part of "a progressive career system in which teachers are required to demonstrate increased competencies and undertake increased duties as they progress through . . . licensure." In 2003, the State Board of Education developed regulations to implement the new system. For teachers already holding a New Mexico Teaching License, whatever the licensure level held on July 1, 2004 was to be the licensure level at which they would enter the new system.

The new licensure system builds upon what was already in place: Teachers and principals will still develop annual professional development plans (PDP's), annual evaluations will still be conducted by principals, and recommendations for licensure advancement and renewal will still be made by superintendents.

The new system is expected to align state licensure with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act's requirement for "highly qualified" teachers. In line with the Act, teacher assignments are to be matched to qualifications. Teachers will also have options for adding endorsements that are consistent with the federal requirements for being "highly qualified." The new system

1. holds school districts accountable for developing professional opportunities that support teachers, notably peer mentoring support,
2. fosters professional growth in preparation for licensure advancement and renewal, and
3. requires that administrators receive professional development training in the effective evaluation of teachers.

Once the new system is phased in, to progress through the Three-Tiered Licensure System every teacher will need to demonstrate annually, through local-school-based evaluations, how s/he meets the nine teacher competencies and indicators New Mexico has established for their licensure level. These are:

State of New Mexico Teacher Competencies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum.2. The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.3. The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.4. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning5. The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development and learning, and applies them appropriately.6. The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive students behavior, and a safe and healthy environment.7. The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of student involvement and self-concept.8. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change, as appropriate.9. The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.

Beginning July 1, 2004, to advance to the next licensure level, either from Level I to Level II, or Level II to Level III-A, every teacher will need to demonstrate how s/he meets increased competencies for the next level by submitting a PDD, electronically, to the PED. Templates have been developed and made available to guide teachers through the process.

The teacher's Principal and Superintendent will also be submitting local annual evaluations, verifications, and recommendations supplementing the PDD. Under the new system, there will be higher expectations for performance and service as teachers move up through licensure levels. One million dollars appropriated during the 2004 Legislative Session is earmarked for training principals and superintendents in the new system during the 2004-05 school year.

Professional Development Dossier for Assessment of Teacher Competency

To meet the regulatory requirements of NMAC §6.69.4.11, Advancement to Level II or Level III Licensure, the PED created a Dossier Design and Development Committee to develop guidelines for the PDD. From the outset, the committee, itself composed of educators, involved K-12 teachers and administrators across the state in design of the dossier, on the premise of broad-based participation. Involvement was sought in the following three activities:

1. *Public review.* All New Mexico educators and other interested parties and stakeholders were invited to review draft "Guidelines for the Preparation of the PDD."
2. *Field trial.* Teachers with two or more years of teaching experience were invited to apply to participate in a field trial conducted from March through May 2004.
3. *Scoring.* Educators with five or more years of professional experience were invited to apply to participate in a benchmarking/scoring session to be held for a week in the summer of 2004.

1. Public review.

Public review of draft PDD guidelines has been intended to determine the reliability and validity of assessment measures and methods, and its focus has been on the reasonableness, clarity, and adequacy of each of the tasks prescribed in the PDD. The review, conducted online from January 21 to February 20, 2004 using a web-based survey (at <http://www.teachnm.org/field.html>), will be used to modify the assessment, if indicated.

2. Field trial.

Teachers with two or more years of teaching experience have been invited to apply to participate in a field trial from March through May 2004. For the field trial, 100 volunteer participants are to receive a stipend of \$500 for submission of a complete PDD. Teachers were invited to indicate their interest in participating in the field trial by completing the survey at a designated PDD website, <http://www.teachnm.org/field.html>. In addition to completing the PDD, which is estimated to take a minimum of 10-15 hours, teacher-participants were also asked to participate in a regional focus group.

The field trial is intended to establish the feasibility and validity of the Assessment of Teacher Competency that will be used to determine advancement from Level I to Level II

and Level II to Level III licensure. Field trial PDD's will be used to develop scoring materials and refine dossier specifications.

Teachers have been selected through purposeful sampling to represent a range of: geographic areas of the state, ethnicity of teacher/student populations, at least two years of teaching experience, high and low performing schools, and grade levels and subject areas.

The participation by teacher volunteers in the field trial will not result in licensure advancement; field trial dossiers will not be returned, nor will field test participants receive any feedback on their dossiers. The sole purpose of the field trial is to test implementation of the PDD process, from dossier preparation to scoring, evaluation, and validation.

3. Scoring.

Educators with five or more years of experience were invited to apply to participate in a benchmarking/scoring session to be held for one week in the summer of 2004. Though participants would not be paid for the week's work, those participating, and meeting an inter-rater reliability standard, will be eligible to score PDDs once the system is implemented in the 2004-05 school year.

Assessment of Teacher Competency

Advancement to higher levels of teacher licensure in the State of New Mexico is based on criteria specified in Title 6, Chapter 69 of PED regulations. These regulations outline the competencies for each level and set the parameters for the assessment system. Every teacher will submit a PDD at the end of three years of successful teaching at Level I in order to advance to Level II. After their third year of successful teaching at Level II, teachers who seek Level III licensure may submit an additional PDD for evaluation.

The PED has established guidelines to assist teachers in demonstrating essential competencies for advancement to Level II and Level III, as specified in the regulations. District requirements related to teacher evaluation for Licensure and Professional Development Plans are found in PED Regulation 6.69.4,

Performance Evaluation System Requirements for Teachers.

Level II Licensure

A teacher must apply for Level II licensure at the end of three years of successful teaching at Level I, including successful completion of a formal mentoring program in their district. A teacher seeking Level II Licensure must submit a PDD compiled according to the *PDD Guidelines*. While a teacher failing positive evaluation for advancement to Level II licensure is subject to dismissal, mentoring provisions in the new system will allow for guided professional development for advancement.

Level III Licensure

A teacher is eligible to apply for Level III licensure upon completion of at least three years of successful teaching at Level II and achievement of an approved post-baccalaureate (master's or doctoral) degree *or* advanced certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Application for Advancement in Licensure and the PDD

A teacher applies for both Level II and Level III licensure by completing and submitting the PDD. The PDD documents a teacher's reasoning and action in his or her own classroom.

PDD documentation is a collection of classroom data (lesson descriptions, handouts, student work, video and audio recordings, photos, chronicles of individual student progress) with explanations written by the teacher, accompanied by verification and recommendation by the district superintendent.

No one part of the dossier is expected to fully represent a teacher's work or be fully indicative of the teacher's efficacy; rather, the entire dossier is intended to provide sufficient evidence to judge when s/he is qualified to advance to a higher level of licensure.

The PDD is organized into five "strands." These sections are connected with designated combinations of the aforementioned Teacher Competencies and are designed to help teachers document their teaching for reviewers from outside their school and district. A booklet entitled *Guidelines for the Preparation of the New Mexico Professional Development Dossier* provides detailed instructions for preparing each strand and for submitting a completed PDD.

The dossier strands and the documentation required for each are outlined in the following chart provided by the PED:

State of New Mexico Professional Development Dossier Strands

<p>Strand A. Instruction (Competencies 1, 2 & 5)</p> <p>Strand B. Student Learning (Competencies 3, 4, 6 & 7)</p> <p>Strand C. Professional Learning (Competencies 8 & 9)</p>	<p>Strands A, B, and C will be represented by data from the teacher's classroom, explained and organized by the teacher to show how s/he meets the competencies.</p>
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<p>Strand D. Verification</p>	<p><i>For Level I to II</i>—Superintendent verifies: (1) participation in a district’s formal mentorship program; (2) three years successful teaching experience at Level I; and (3) that the dossier is accurate and is the work of the teacher.</p> <p><i>For Level II to Level III:</i> Superintendent verifies at least three years successful teaching experience at Level II.</p>
<p>Strand E. Evaluation (All Competencies)</p>	<p>Superintendent’s recommendation for advancement, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and completion of the candidate’s professional development plan. • Verification that measurable objectives were achieved. • The Principal’s annual observations of the candidate’s classroom practice.

Status of Three-Tiered Licensure Implementation as of April 2003

The Three-Tiered Licensure system was adopted by the State Board of Education on August 28, 2003. Since then, several committees and workgroups have been active in designing two major pieces of the framework. The PDD is designed and under field trial. It has been available for public review and comment on the Teach New Mexico website (www.teachnm.org) for several months, and the Local Annual Evaluation is undergoing final preparation and review. The PDD and the Local Annual Evaluation are the two major pieces of the HOUSSE system provided in state statute for the three-tiered licensure framework. Rules adopted in 2003 by the State Board of Education specify that the new licensure system will be in place by July 1, 2004.

Status of Regulations and Pending Regulatory Issues

The rules adopted by the New Mexico State Board of Education in August 2003 not only set into motion the three-tiered licensure system, but also defined all of the necessary requirements on teacher quality to bring New Mexico into compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. The rule adoption last summer involved twenty-five licensure rules. Since that time, the PED has identified one major and few minor regulatory issues that still need to be addressed:

- (a) A major concern that still needs to be addressed is the licensure reciprocity rule. This rule was extensively revised by the State Board of Education in 2001 in order to remove barriers to teachers coming to New Mexico from other states. Indeed, the 2001 amendments have resulted in more teachers coming to New Mexico from out of state. School districts, especially those around the border areas with other states.

The reciprocity rule was not addressed in August of 2003 because it was first necessary to refine the requirements of the Three-Tiered system first. In addition, the PED had been particularly concerned about proposing any reciprocity rules that would reestablish any of the former barriers that existed prior to 2001—for instance only partial recognitions of years in service elsewhere in calculating teaching experience for certification purposes. The major questions to be addressed in revisions to the reciprocity rule are as follows:

- How will years of teaching experience in another state or foreign country be counted toward the three-tiered licensure placement or advancement?
- Will teachers from other states or countries be required to complete a PDD to be placed in the appropriate licensure level?
- How will teachers coming into New Mexico be evaluated in the new Local Annual Evaluation system in a way that would be consistent and not interfere with a school district's right to dismiss a new teacher in the first two years of service before he/she obtains invested employment rights?
- How will emerging guidance from the US Department of Education on "highly qualified" teachers under the No Child Left Behind Act shape policy on teachers moving from one state to another?

Now that it considers that it has sufficient information to address these concerns, the PED is reportedly ready to move forward during the months leading to the new school year on reciprocity rule amendments. Action on such a rule is expected by the beginning of the 2004-05 school year.

- (b) Other concerns involving prospective rule changes include the following:

- Clarifying the Continuing Licensure Rule 6.60.6 NMAC statement in Section 22-10A-10 (B) NMSA and 22-10A-11 (B) NMSA about completion of a level one and two licenses means that the license holder must complete three years of teaching experience, not just hold a license for three years. Further clarifying that no other experiences, degrees, awards or other accomplishments may substitute for three years of evaluated elementary or secondary

school teaching experience under a license, including years of teaching experience without a license, and also establishing predictable time frames during the calendar year for submission of PDDs.

- In the Teacher Evaluation Rule 6-69.4 NMAC, clarifying how Level 3-A teachers whose primary role is outside of the classroom will be evaluated.
- Clarifying in the Certificates of Waiver Rule 6.61.9 NMAC and in the Alternative Licensure Rule 6.60.3 NMAC that waivers and internship licenses are not level I, II, or II-A licenses. They are pre-Level I and any years of experience under those licenses do not count as the three years at a level license for purposes of licensure advancement.

Committees and Workgroups Addressing Three-Tiered System Implementation

Within a month of the adoption of HB 212 in the 2003 legislative session, the then State Department of Education convened a statewide planning conference in Albuquerque to make recommendations about the general framework of the Three-Tiered Licensure System and how New Mexico would meet the federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act that all teachers teaching the core academic subjects will be “highly qualified” by 2006.

The group then assembled, consisting of all of the major stakeholders involved in teacher quality initiatives for several years, including representatives of every organization with an interest in teacher evaluation and support; it was asked to address the following:

- 1) How will teachers enter the teaching profession? This question focused on how potential teachers were prepared and tested.
- 2) How will teachers remain in the profession? This question focused on the annual evaluation.
- 3) How will teachers advance in the profession? This question focused on a process for progressing through a career ladder.

Their responses were to be guided by the following additional concerns:

- 1) Are the proposals valid and fair?
- 2) Are the proposals credible and feasible?
- 3) Are the proposals supportive and respectful of good teaching?
- 4) Do the proposals fulfill the spirit of accountability?

The recommendations emerging from the planning conference were studied, summarized, and finally incorporated into draft rules by the State Education Department in May and June 2003. At the end of June, the Department reconvened the original planners to share with them the ideas and draft rules that had been assembled as a result of their work and to ask them if they felt that the proposed rules were consistent with their earlier recommendations. They agreed on the draft rules, and on the major components of the proposed system—namely the PDD and the teacher evaluation process at the local school level.

During July and August 2003, twenty-five public hearings and informational sessions were held around the state on the proposed rules. Over twelve hundred public comments were received on the draft rules, overwhelmingly favoring the proposals. The State Board of Education received these comments and adopted all of the rules, as amended, at its August 28, 2003 meeting. By October 1, the Department had formed a Three-Tiered Implementation Council to guide the design phase of the Three-Tiered System. At their first meeting, the Council organized by forming five workgroups to design specific system components:

- 1) a PDD workgroup
- 2) a Local Annual Evaluation workgroup
- 3) a Teacher Training workgroup
- 4) an Administrator Training workgroup, and
- 5) an Independent Reviewer Training workgroup

The PDD workgroup, led by the Superintendent of the Moriarty Schools, completed its design work in January, 2004. The PDD was then ready for field testing, pending recruitment of teacher volunteers willing to prepare a field trial PDD. The Local Annual Evaluation workgroup, led by the Assistant Superintendent of the Roswell Schools, finished its design work in March, 2004. A field test of that design began implementation in April 2004. Teacher and administrator training workgroups met contemporaneously to plan the deployment and training process for teachers and administrators scheduled to begin summer of 2004 and to extend through the 2004-05 school year.

The Independent Reviewer Training Group is to meet in May and June 2004 in preparation for field trial PDD reviews in summer 2004. These design activities and several of the early implementation initiatives and events would be made possible through an appropriation of \$250,000 from the Legislature in FY 04.

The design work on the Three-Tiered System and HOUSSE concluded in April 2004. Several major concerns and tasks were still outstanding, namely to:

- Implement an extensive training program for the teachers and administrators of New Mexico on the new licensure system, beginning in

the summer of 2004 and extending through the 04-05 school year. HB 2 from the 2004 legislative session appropriated \$1 million for this purpose. Plans are underway for this project.

- Establish a means of using information technology and internet resources for the submission and assessment of the PDD. Although the first round of submissions may be done on paper to adequately train reviewers, certainly by 2005 submissions and evaluations are expected to be done on-line.

Projections for the Three Licensure Levels

Estimates of the changes in the movement of teachers into licensure level since April 2003, based on FTE (Full-time Equivalent) counts, are as follows—differences in estimates owe to coding protocols in the State’s Accountability Data System that make it difficult to identify FTE totals consistently. The numbers provided in the following table are unaudited:

Level	LESC* Actuals, May 2003	Percentage of Total	PED** Running Totals, March 2004	Percentage of Total
Level I FTE	3,310	16%	3,890	19%
Level II FTE	13,954	69%	11,988	59%
Level III FTE	2,922	15%	4,374	22%
Totals	20,186	100%	20,252	100%

* *Legislative Education Study Committee (based on FY 2003 reported actuals)*

***PED (based on unaudited FY 2004 running licensure application totals)*

Evidently, teachers who had previously qualified for Level III licensure but had not applied for it, are doing so during the transition period ending June 30, 2004. It should be noted that teachers moving up to Level III licensure must have the recommendation of their superintendents and must still be evaluated on the new and higher standards for Level III teachers by September 1, 2006, so as to attain the higher salary. Moreover, it is important to note, with regard to the anticipated fiscal impact on the state, that many of the level III teachers already earn salaries that are near or above the minimums associated with Level III in the new tiered system—many experienced teachers have already reached the \$45,000 and \$50,000 salary minimums. As with the preceding table, the following numbers are provided by PED and unaudited:

Current Level III FTE Total =4,374	Current Salary
211 (2%)	Below \$40,000
1,000 (23%)	\$40,000 - 45,000
2,125 (49%)	\$45,000 or more
1,038 (24%)	\$50,000 or more

This table indicates that about 96 percent of current Level III FTE already earn or will earn the minimum base salaries required in HB 212 (\$45,000 in 2006-2007 and \$50,000 in 2007-2008).

It is likely that more teachers will apply to become Level III teachers during the next several years. This movement is an intended consequence of a progressive licensure system with higher levels of responsibility, recognition, and remuneration. The PED will need to monitor the actual numbers moving into higher salaries, and increases in the total number of teachers in the system, in order to weigh fiscal impact.

Due to a statutory amendment in the 2004 legislative session, after May 19, 2004 librarians will also be counted among the ranks of teachers. However, most school districts already considered librarians as licensed teachers when they implemented the first step of the three-tiered licensure system, so that fiscal impact of the 2004 amendment should not be significant.

The fiscal impact of the total increase in number of teachers noted since April 2003, with an influx of new teachers into first-tier licensure of approximately 1,000, will be larger than the impact of upward movement in licensure level. The increase in recruitment of qualified teachers may be seen as a boon at a time when most states face teacher shortages, an outcome that is likely due to the publicity given to the State's new licensure system and new investments in public education.

Analysis: Connecting Tiered Teacher Licensure and Student Achievement

Licensure is meant to be: 1) a quality control process to establish and maintain high standards, and 2) a formal certification from a statutorily-constituted agency for individuals to perform specific authorized work. Under New Mexico's new licensure model, teachers will be required to show evidence of professional efficacy and growth in order to move to a higher licensure tier or to be re-licensed.

The State's new Three-Tiered Licensure system is designed to be performance-based system that offers multiple levels of and opportunities for teacher career advancement and professional growth. It is part of an extant, comprehensive State Accountability System that informs accountability reporting and decision making. System reporting includes Adequate Yearly Progress reports and decisions aligning with No Child Left Behind federal requirements for all public schools and school districts, including public schools with variant grade configurations (e.g., K-12), public schools that serve special populations (such as alternative public schools, juvenile institutions, and state public schools for the visually impaired), and public charter schools.

The new licensure policies, practices, and procedures aim to

1. Improve student learning outcomes in demonstrable ways, using validated and reliable assessments of student performance.

2. Reflect and promote best practices in multi-source teaching and teaching assessment.
3. Ensure teaching quality by requiring high performance-based standards in content knowledge and pedagogical practice.
4. Promote focused professional development that includes a support structure for professional growth, specifically a mentoring process enlisting veteran teachers.
5. Align the licensure/certification system with both state and federal performance-based teacher standards.
6. Facilitate the development of an infrastructure for state, district, school, and individual accountability for both improved student learning outcomes and the professional development of teachers.

Additionally, the new licensure model and system is expected to offer:

- a. Focused requirements for licensure renewal as well as advancement
- b. Direct connection between teacher evaluation and professional development plans
- c. Performance-based evaluation of teachers by trained evaluators for renewal of or advancement in licensure, and
- d. Content-area assessment aligned with federal requirements, including NCLB

Analysis: Education System Accountability

In New Mexico as elsewhere, policy makers want to ensure that increased education funding equates with higher performance. Measuring the effectiveness of the entirety of a state's public education system is very difficult. On the other hand, the effectiveness of educational components can be measured, and the relative importance of the components assessed. Most states have some system that measures the performance of students on standardized tests that cover core academic areas—math, reading, writing, science, and the social studies.

When, as in New Mexico, there has been a substantial increase in state funding for public education, the expectation for accountability sharpens. However, there is often a lack of common understanding among stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, advocacy groups on all sides, and policy makers) in the interpretation and implementation of accountability systems.

One perspective on accountability is that student performance on standardized tests is the true measure of whether or not teachers and school districts are doing their jobs. Conversely, others argue that the educational process should be assessed in its entirety and that measuring only selected areas of student achievement is misguided. It is also sometimes proposed that public debate on accountability prompts schools and school districts to attend to performance questions and public responsibility, and that is taken to

be a positive outcome even if the premises of the performance-and-accountability systems are subject to—often partisan—question.

Nationally, the education debate has in fact moved in the direction of performance-based accountability: Public support for increased education funding through whatever means, from property taxes to state outlays, has become contingent on the demonstration of educational outcomes. The public is also more insistent on a demonstration of willing accountability on the part of public education officials.

Educational Accountability Systems and Licensure—a Peer State Review

Across the United States, the key areas forming the basis of teacher certification are: subject matter knowledge, knowledge of learning and teaching, knowledge of students, and observation and apprenticeship. Several states have recently incorporated licensure exams. Such examinations are now codified in the No Child Left Behind Act. All states now require approved programs to include preparation and coursework in key areas and to attest to candidate competency based upon the assessment of these key areas. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) also require that educator preparation programs assess candidate performance and demonstrate teacher candidate impact on student learning.

Certification or licensure is intended to ensure a certain level of quality for entering teachers. In recent years, states have increased requirements for certification, tightened regulations and expectations for teacher education program approval and standards for teacher education accreditation. Licensure has historically functioned to ensure quality for the entry level into a profession as well as for advancement in certification.

States (Connecticut, Kentucky, Illinois, Minnesota) that have consistently aimed to have highly qualified, well-prepared, and certified teachers also have, on average, higher scores on the primary college entry test for the state (SAT or ACT) than states (DC, Georgia, Florida, Texas, South Carolina, Louisiana) where there are large numbers of emergency certifications, waivers, or simply unprepared teachers.

Generally, certification requirements include graduating from an approved teacher preparation program that provides courses in subject area content, educational theory and pedagogy, and field experiences. Exit requirements are generally similar as well—student teaching or internship, tests, and acceptable grades. Some states have demonstrated success in ending teacher shortages at the same time they raised certification standards and the results have been significant improvements in student achievement and minority student achievement.

Licensure is a vehicle used by states to ensure that an individual is capable of meeting the demands of teaching. Traditionally, teacher licensure has been used to ensure that individuals who want to teach in a state's classrooms have met a minimum standard of competence. It is also assumed, however, that new teachers will grow in their knowledge and skills as they gain experience in the classroom. While classroom experience is very

valuable, relying on it solely as a path to professional growth is problematic. Teachers also need high-quality professional development experience to keep current in advancements in disciplinary content and pedagogy. Also needed, typically, mentoring by accomplished teachers

At least forty states recognize the value of teaching experience and offer a second-tier license that requires teachers to move from an entry level stage to one that classifies them as career teachers. In the majority of these states, advancement to the second tier is based solely on the successful completion of a certain number of years of teaching experience. Most also require teachers to renew their license by completing college coursework or other professional development experiences.

However, as states, districts, schools, and teachers are held ever more accountable for student success, many states have developed or are developing performance-based licensure systems that establish standards of what teachers should know and be able to do at different career stages. Sometimes categorized as “standards-based accountability systems,” these systems demand that teachers demonstrate mastery of established competencies, and teaching effectiveness as measured by student performance on standardized tests (an instance is Colorado, recently requiring standardized testing as an evaluation criterion for teachers, schools, and districts).

Performance-based, multi-tiered licensure systems serve several functions. Teachers who are not deemed effective in the classroom are identified earlier than otherwise, and they are given remedial opportunities, while faced with forfeiture of teaching licensure if such remedies fail. In addition to identifying ineffective teachers early in their career, multi-tiered systems are intended to recognize the enhanced expertise of experienced teachers and their capacity for assuming more demanding or complex responsibilities. These systems provide a means to acknowledge and, in some states, compensate teachers who demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills. They also serve to assure the public that teachers will continue to learn and to grow professionally throughout their careers.

The table found in Appendix A summarizes the tiered licensure systems of four states reviewed for this report: Arkansas, Connecticut, Kentucky and Wisconsin. It presents schematically the key components of each state's system and presents a side-by-side analysis for comparison. It should be noted that advancement to the next licensure level is usually associated with higher compensation, but that none of tiered systems reviewed provides minimum guaranteed salary floors by licensure level, as does New Mexico's new licensure system. In most other respects, New Mexico's new licensure system closely conforms to peer-state frameworks.

Each state includes varying periods of mentoring and induction for its beginning teachers. For example, Kentucky's induction program is only one year, while Connecticut's is at least two years, and, in some cases, three. In Arkansas, induction includes up to two years of mentoring, while in Wisconsin mentoring ends when a teacher has successfully created a professional development plan.

For more advanced licensure, Connecticut and Kentucky both require teachers to obtain a master's degree. In both Kentucky and Wisconsin, teachers create development plans that are tied to state standards and designed to promote effective teaching. The emphasis of the licensure requirements in these two states is not so much on the evaluation of teacher's skills as on improving the quality of their professional development. Arkansas also requires approved professional development activities, but only for licensure renewal.

In addition, all four states encourage teachers to master basic teaching competencies in order to progress from their initial license to more advanced licensure tiers. The way this is accomplished differs from state to state, however, with some states encouraging teachers to master these competencies earlier than others. Arkansas, Connecticut and Kentucky require beginning teachers to demonstrate mastery of a full range of competencies in order to progress from the first to the second stage of licensure. Wisconsin, however, only requires that beginning teachers develop a professional development plan that addresses two competencies out of ten in order to move to the second licensure level. To retain a second-level license, a teacher must have a plan addressing all ten competencies.

The presence or absence of incentives to move through the licensure tiers reflects certain system strengths and weaknesses. Three of the states profiled have a voluntary third tier, but the attractiveness of the third-tier is likely dependent on incentives. For example, Connecticut provides no incentives to move to the third tier. In fact, the state may have created a disincentive for teachers to progress to tier three because the third-tier license has renewal requirements, while the second-tier license does not. Teachers who reach the third tier in Wisconsin attain the status of "Master Educator" but, as in Connecticut, they receive no additional compensation. Kentucky teachers receive an automatic salary increase on reaching Tier 2, Rank 3.

In contrast with these states, New Mexico may be seen to have instituted a more self-consistent evaluation and compensation system by providing minimum salaries by licensure level, pegging professional and licensure advancement to compensation. However, by doing so the state has moved into uncharted territory, since, as mentioned previously, no other state has been found in this review to calibrate compensation to certification level as does New Mexico.

One question still outstanding is what relationship might emerge between the evaluative rigor anticipated of PDD reviews and the volume of movement into higher licensure levels. It might be the case that sufficient rigor in PDD evaluation could serve as a deterrent to applications for advancement in licensure. If so, the fiscal impact of guaranteed compensation levels would be somewhat lessened.

One more state of possible comparative interest for New Mexico is North Carolina, where advancement to the highest licensure level, "Experienced Teacher," requires the reporting of student standardized test scores; exceptions are made for academic areas such as plastic arts or certain science subjects for which there are no such standardized

tests. The framework for the North Carolina Experienced Teacher Summative Evaluation System is reproduced in Appendix B. That state has significant numbers of Experienced Teachers, many of them National Board certified, serving as mentors and assessors in the state's performance-based teacher development system. Associating the most demanding level of accountability and service with the most advanced level of certification is a way of gaining teachers' buy-in for evaluation systems predicated on demonstrated classroom performance.

Analysis: Defining and Assessing Dossier-based Teacher Evaluation

A dossier or portfolio is an organized collection of materials that demonstrates the development of a teacher's knowledge and skills in relation to student learning and other outcomes. The format, contents, and organization and presentation of materials in portfolios vary depending on the evaluation context and its prescriptions and requirements. Irrespective of context, portfolios or dossiers by definition provide documentary and graphic evidence of an individual teacher's development and teaching effectiveness through purposeful compilations of and reflections on his or her work, effort, progress, and results.

Portfolios can be an effective way for teachers to demonstrate their professional competence and to demonstrate proficiency and efficacy beyond minimum competencies. Whether as part of annual evaluations or of certification, teachers' portfolios speak to their proficiency in areas such as curriculum planning, classroom instruction, home-school communication, extra-curricular investment in school administration, and professional knowledge.

Many states now require teachers to submit portfolios for initial and advanced certification. Methods of assessing portfolios are being developed that promise to provide those interested in measuring teacher quality with an alternative to testing for certification or other evaluation means.

There are two kinds of evaluation for professional development, advancement, certification, and/or re-certification: *formative evaluation* and *summative evaluation*. Formative evaluation is oriented toward professional development, and therefore prospective. Summative evaluation aims to determine retrospectively the quality of instructional materials and evidence of teaching effectiveness (as presented in the portfolio), for the purposes of advancement or certification. Portfolios or dossiers typically incorporate both formative and summative evaluation, as does New Mexico's PDD.

Portfolio or dossier evaluation is defined in various ways in the education literature. The definition adopted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), is as follows:

Information derived from assessments of candidate proficiencies, in areas of teaching and effects on student learning, candidate knowledge, and dispositions.

Candidate performance data may be derived from a wide variety of sources, such as projects, essays or tests demonstrating subject content mastery; employer evaluations; state licensure tests; and mentoring year “portfolios” as well as assessments, projects, reflections, clinical observations, and other evidence of pedagogical and professional teaching proficiencies (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2001, p. 52).

NCATE has identified what it considers appropriate assessment strategies in its guidelines for teacher preparation and evaluation programs, and it lays emphasis on integrated, multi-source evaluation that may include both certification tests and portfolios, aiming to measure both what candidates know and what they can do (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2000). This approach generally (a) is viewed as an alternative to over-reliance standardized test performance (in assessing either teachers or students), (b) refers to direct observation or examination of performance, and (c) assumes that knowledge is a function of the contextual situation where it is learned and used.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Portfolio Assessment in Teacher Evaluation

Four features of dossiers or portfolios render them the tools of choice for teacher evaluation. The features include: (a) portfolios can feature multiple examples of both teachers’ and students’ work, (b) portfolios are or can be made to be context-rich, (c) portfolios can offer opportunities for evidentiary selection and self-assessment, and (d) portfolios offer a look at a teacher’s professional and skills development over time. Teacher work samples are regarded as apt assessment elements: “Teacher work samples (TWS) are exhibits of teaching performance that provide direct evidence of a candidate’s ability to design and implement standards-based instruction, assess student learning and reflect on the teaching and learning process” (Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality, 2003).

The professional literature and professional practice argue strongly for the value of using portfolio assessment in teacher evaluation. However, this kind of assessment has a number of inherent difficulties that teacher evaluation systems must consider. Two of the most commonly cited relate to (1) the time-intensive nature of portfolio evaluation and (2) the lack of “objective” scoring and therefore of comparability in assessment. In 1997, Wolfe and Miller (1997) found that time and scoring posed the two greatest barriers for high school teachers, as well as principals, implementing portfolio assessment.

That portfolio or dossier evaluations may be unduly time-consuming has been considered by the PED Three-Tiered Implementation Council, which reported in particular principals’ concerns but also noted concerns expressed by teachers about the time requirements of dossier preparation in the PDD field trial. The literature in fact notes consistently that development and implementation of portfolio reviews require a sustained commitment on the part of teachers and administrators alike; this commitment is often difficult to justify, in light of the extensive planning, preparation, and evaluation activities required.

It is sometimes charged that most evaluation of portfolios is subjective and qualitative, lacking validity, reliability, and comparability (Worthen, 1999). If teacher certification depends on a demonstration of competencies, portfolio assessment measures must have reasonably valid and reliable characteristics. Achievement of acceptable levels of judgment reliability for such assessment requires the use of scoring rubrics based on performance standards, such as insistence on validated pre- and post- assessments of students in the portfolio. Good rubrics can reduce subjectivity and variability in teacher evaluation.

Scoring rubrics—definitions of component assessment criteria, such as those developed for the PDD in relation to state-mandated teacher competencies—are one way to increase the reliability and validity of portfolio evaluation. Reliability refers to the degree to which the same measurement will yield closely similar results in successive applications. Validity refers to the degree to which a measure tests what it is intended to test.

Interrater and intrarater reliability are two forms of reliability issues associated with authentic assessment. Interrater reliability is concerned with determining if multiple evaluators would each assign similar scores to the performance of an individual based on predefined scoring criteria. Development of scoring criteria to guide the evaluation process increases the interrater reliability as a result of reducing arbitrary or subjective evaluation decisions (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). The use of scoring rubrics enables multiple independent evaluators to assess a candidate's performance and typically arrive at a similar score.

However, even a well-designed and articulated scoring rubric will not eliminate scoring discrepancies completely among evaluators, but only reduce these variations. The PDD evaluation system has attended carefully to the need for inter-rater reliability in its prospective use of outside professional reviewers for dossiers, to be tested in the process of rating field test PDD's in summer 2004.

Intrarater reliability is concerned with the ability of an individual evaluator to assign consistent scores to several candidates. Well-defined scoring rubrics, a feature of the PDD, can reduce the impact of adverse factors (such as fatigue) if the rater refers to the rubric periodically throughout the evaluation session.

Multiple indicators of quality and performance can serve to strengthen the validity and reliability of portfolio assessment systems. To determine a candidate's teaching ability, it is necessary to consider more than just one source of evidence. A series of assessments organized into a portfolio or dossier represents multiple indicators of performance, judged on multiple criteria over a period of time. As is the case with New Mexico's Three-Tiered Licensure System, certification systems relying on dossier reviews use multiple indicators of performance—because of the inherent logic of dossiers as collections of multiple evidence indicators. For example, in Georgia the Professional Standards Commission uses the Praxis I and Praxis II rating instruments, which rely in part on portfolio reviews, the successful completion of an accredited teacher preparation

program, and the recommendation from the graduating institution as the basis for certification decisions.

The electronic submission of dossiers, provided for in the State of New Mexico Three-Tiered System, brings a different set of challenges to the implementation process. The decision to use electronic, or electronically-formatted, portfolios to document candidate performance requires a reorientation of assessment systems (Barrett, Lewis & Batson, 2002). Technology competency—familiarity with the word processing, spreadsheet, or other programs prescribed—can be a difficult challenge, particularly when first implementing electronic portfolios, as anticipated in New Mexico

The American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) has led a national movement to promote and disseminate best practices in the use of portfolios. Additionally, the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII) has addressed the use of portfolio assessment and its impacts. The New Mexico PED has benefited from consultation with these and other sources of standard practice.

National Recognition for New Mexico’s New Licensure System

Recently, the Center for Competency-Measured Education (2003) conducted a survey of eight states including New Mexico, along with Arizona, Utah, Nevada, Texas, Montana, Louisiana and Oklahoma, “whose educational system and political culture appeared to favor innovative approaches to teacher recruitment, preparation and certification [and displayed] a combination of factors, such as the commitment of senior state leaders to systemic change (Arizona, Utah, Montana), demographic pressures to expand and diversify the “teacher pipeline” (Nevada, Texas), and interest in teacher quality as a means of raising the state’s overall educational achievement (Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico).

The study identified as education policy *drivers* in New Mexico the uneven distribution of teacher supply across the state, concern about teacher quality, and a desire to address the needs of underserved rural counties and increase the supply of Hispanic and Native American teachers. It identified as policy *leaders* legislators, especially members of the Legislative Education Study Committee, principals and district superintendents, the New Mexico Teacher Education Accountability Council, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Commissioner for Higher Education. Their impact on key initiatives was found to be (a) expansion of teacher preparation programs and (b) “expansion of program capacity and access” in the direction of quality teacher recruitment and retention.

In a similar vein, the national publication *American Teacher*, in an article entitled “Hard Work Pays in the NCLB Era: New Mexico Gets it Right,” published in April 2004, commends the achievements of the State of New Mexico in the transition to both alignment with NCLB and a new licensure system:

. . . [T]he state has worked hard the past few years in revamping its teacher licensing system and has made teaching quality a statewide priority—the focus of dozens of community meetings, legislative hearings, rallies, and, importantly, successful ballot initiatives that will make sure schools have the resources to prepare teachers and fairly judge quality in the classroom.

. . . New Mexico does show the value—the necessity—of making the connection between state-level reform and NCLB mandates . . . the new licensing dovetails with NCLB’s teacher quality provisions. Under . . . the HOUSSE (high, objective uniform state standard of evaluation) provision included in the law, thousands of teachers across the state will be able to take advantage of a regulatory “two-for-one”: Not only will they be able to earn a license through a process that draws heavily on observation, feedback and encouragement from veteran teachers, they will also meet the new federal teacher quality mandates at the same time, in the same process.

Another cross-state review, by Eric Hirsch, praises New Mexico for its participatory and proactive approach to compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act, and New Mexico voters for their commitment to education reform. As Hirsch (2003), policy director of the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality, attests,

States have not used [the NCLB] highly qualified [criteria] to engage policymakers, stakeholders and practitioners in a discussion about what teachers need to know and be able to do systematically. The notable exception is New Mexico. Beginning in the late 1990s, the state now has integrated NCLB standards into a state derived (HB 212) tiered licensure system. Teachers will complete online professional development dossiers, aligned with the state HOUSSE system, to move up to a new licensing level and receive a higher salary. The HOUSSE evaluation uses multiple data sources, multiple external and expert assessors, and is based on actual classroom performance. Voters authorized the proceeds from the state’s land grant permanent fund to pay for the system.

One performance/outcome measure prescribed by NCLB, high-school graduation rate, requires that high schools make annual improvements in graduation rates until all pupils who enter high school graduate, with 2013-2014 as the target school year for attainment. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB will be determined in part by high school graduation rates.

Though not discussed as often as the issue of standardized test scores, improvement in school retention or dropout prevention outcomes is a crucial educational performance concern for the State.

Concluding Review and Recommendations

Several policy recommendations can be taken from the preceding considerations of issues surrounding teacher quality, evaluation, and certification.

Firstly, “high-stakes,” standards-based teacher evaluation methods, which evaluate teachers on the basis of the standardized achievement test score gains of their students, may not be readily applicable in New Mexico; however, the PED, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders might consider ways to encourage incorporation of student achievement in standardized tests in the teacher dossier, for the sake of comparability of evaluation outcomes, and for general purposes of accountability. The North Carolina licensure device of requiring student standardized test results, when available, in applications for certification as an “Experienced Teacher” could be one option—there, teaching efficacy, as demonstrated *in part* by such test scores, is associated with attainment of the most advanced stage of certification and recognition.

Accountability determinations can be made about educational programs, personnel, or licensure. They can be based in schools and school districts, teacher education programs, and teacher licensure systems singly or in combination. The PED has the statutory authority to make accountability decisions related to teacher education programs (accreditation decisions) and its own teacher licensure system, including such matters as the evaluation, retention, and advancement of teachers.

Teacher licensure is a type of accountability subsystem that should be assessed in relation to the entirety of the educational system of which it is part. If legislators or other policymakers want to gauge the impact of teacher quality on student success, that may be best accomplished by an education-system-wide evaluation, rather than assessment of teacher licensure in isolation. The new teacher evaluation and licensing mechanisms could be used as a means to collect multi-source, state-wide educational outcome data, and conduct state-wide teacher quality assessments, on the basis of the operational definitions of student success, especially those found in the PDD.

Referent criteria could then be used in program evaluation efforts involving sampling and other methods that would not be appropriate for individual teacher evaluation or licensure decisions but that could serve to assess the impact of teacher evaluation and licensing as a whole on state educational outcomes. A comprehensive evaluation of system implementation at the one-year mark, building on data generated by the state accountability system and a research base created for the specific purpose of program evaluation, is recommended.

There should be therefore independent follow-up—program monitoring and evaluation—related to the first-year implementation of the new licensure system. Evaluation should also address the adequacy of performance measurement and reporting for public education in the state. Existing means to measurement and reporting should be reviewed in relation to the need (a) to satisfy both federal and state reporting requirements, (b) to align state, district, and school accountability, and (c) to ensure that performance measurement is methodologically sound, rigorous, and consistent, as well as serviceable to policymakers.

Contemporary educational accountability efforts for public schools began in 1997 when the New Mexico Legislature amended provisions of the Public School Code to provide

the then State Department of Public Education with the tools to develop a system of accountability for the state's public schools. In 2002, in response to concerns raised by the House Appropriations and Finance and Education Committees, the Senate Education Committee, the Legislative Finance Committee, the Legislative Education Study Committee, the Department of Finance and Administration, and the State Board of Education, put in motion the development of comprehensive performance measures for public schools. The ensuing education accountability system was included in the FY03 General Appropriation Act.

State licensure criteria in New Mexico must complement and align with the state's still-evolving accountability program, since the U.S. Department of Education now requires state reporting to the Secretary of Education of (1) licensure requirements, (2) licensure standards, (3) the extent to which K-12 standards and licensure requirements coincide, (4) the percentage of teaching candidates who passed each required teaching examination, and other information. In this context, there needs be sufficient specification of educational outcome data as well as provision for its reliable collection and retrieval. The State's Accountability Data System, though successfully deployed since 2001, needs continued improvement to allow for the consistent retrieval of accountability data, including teacher licensure data.

The PED and its Licensure Unit have produced, through an exemplary, and consultative, process, a well designed and implemented approach to teacher evaluation and licensure, promising substantial gains in teacher quality, as well as gains in educational outcomes. Their efforts are gaining recognition for the State of New Mexico, which therefore stands to become a national model for integrated teacher licensure reform; they and the OEA were also invaluable in providing information used in the preparation of this report. The PED, and especially its Professional Licensure Unit Director, is therefore strongly commended for a dedicated effort in the development, deployment, and dissemination of the new Three-Tiered Licensure System.

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