



El Noticiero

Newsletter of the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education

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New Funding Formula Threatens Bilingual Education Programs in New Mexico

For the past 12 months, members of the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education (NMABE) and its affiliate Dual Language Education of New Mexico (DLeNM) have raised concerns about the impact of the Independent Comprehensive Study of the Funding Formula for New Mexico Schools conducted by the American Institute of Research of California (AIR) on bilingual education programs in the state. The newly proposed school funding formula reinforces the bilingual education community's concerns.

The formula that will be proposed to the Legislature in January includes funding to school districts for English Language Learners (ELLs) in New Mexico. It will **not** include funding for Hispanic, Native American and other students presently participating in dual language, heritage language, language revitalization, maintenance, and enrichment programs. This funding formula threatens the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act which authorizes funding for "linguistically and culturally different students, including Native American children and other students who may wish to participate" (NMSA 22-23-6). In other words, all non-ELL students currently receiving funding for bilingual education under the law will no longer continue to do so.

New Mexico has a long and proud history encouraging and supporting bilingual multicultural education, particularly among Hispanic and Native American populations. Funded under the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act since 1974, bilingual education programs have allowed tens of thousands of children to retain and develop their heritage language and culture as well as help ELL's acquire English. In 1989, the New Mexico Legislature adopted House Joint Memorial 16 declaring New Mexico as an **English Plus** state, the only one of its kind in the nation.

The new formula will change the way public schools are funded in New Mexico, and this threatens the very existence of bilingual multicultural education in the state. It proposes a significant increase in funding to all schools in New Mexico which members of NMABE and DLeNM fully support. **We are opposed to the formula's lack of funding for all**

students currently served in dual language, heritage language, language revitalization, maintenance, and enrichment programs.

The proposed formula threatens bilingual education in New Mexico because:

- It proposes a single formula with funds neither targeted for nor tied to the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (BMEA).
- In place of providing for students currently receiving bilingual education services in dual language, heritage language, language revitalization, maintenance, and enrichment programs, AIR will provide a minimal weight of .099 for only ELLs participating in these programs. The current formula funds all students at a .5 weight
- Even the minimal resources distributed through the .099 weight in the formula does not guarantee that the funds will actually be used to serve ELLs in bilingual education programs.

It is important to note that bilingual multicultural education is offered to school districts as an option. Currently 57 of 89 school districts in New Mexico choose to implement various bilingual education models authorized in statute and the regulations for the program. The proposed formula will distribute funding to districts with ELLs currently in bilingual education programs as well as those ELLs not in program. (See table below).

Using 2007-2008 reports from the Public Education Department

2007-2008 PED STARS REPORT Bilingual Education/ELL Students		
	Current formula, BMEA programs	New formula
Districts	57	89
Hispanic, Native American and Other non-ELL Students	25,064	0
ELL Students	32,537	61,171
Total	57,601	61,171

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ment STARS data base:

- **32,537** ELLs currently in bilingual programs would receive funding under the formula.
- **25,064** non-ELLs would not; yet,
- **28,634** ELLs in districts that do not offer the program this year would receive funding under the new formula. It must be noted that there is no requirement to serve these ELLs in an ESL or bilingual education program designed to help them acquire English.

Funding Formula Process used by AIR

AIR used a process of public engagement to gather information about the goals and priorities for New Mexico's public schools. As described on its website (<http://nmschoolfunding.org>.) public input was solicited in three ways:

1. A targeted web-based survey of principals, superintendents, representatives of teachers, and other key constituents. This survey solicited input on what these representatives consider priorities for the New Mexico education system and the means to achieve these priorities.

2. A publicly available web-based survey identical to the targeted survey above but directed more broadly to teachers, parents, business officials and community members.

3. A series of town hall meetings in different regions of the state. These town hall meetings were to gather input on what the public considers priorities for New Mexico's education system and to create a forum for discussion on the different components of the study.

Voices Not Heard in the Process

New Mexico is a rural state that does not guarantee a computer in every home. The town hall meetings were not well publicized, beyond the local English language newspapers. Translation services were not advertised nor provided.

Chronology of Actions and Advocacy

In **June of 2006**, the members of boards of NMABE and DLeNM met to discuss the progress of the new formula

study. Various members of the board had been approached by individuals in New Mexico regarding the public engagement process.

There were many concerns raised by the groups. For example:

- There was only one parent with bilingual education expertise appointed to the AIR stakeholder panel. This individual continually spoke out about the lack of attention to bilingual education.

- One teacher who had wanted to bring non-English speaking parents to a town hall meeting had been told not to bring them because there would be no translators available.

- Native American NMABE board members were concerned that no Native Americans were on the Project Advisory Panel, nor were these Native Americans aware of town hall meeting in their communities.

- As previously noted, limited access to home based technology restricted the amount of input many Hispanics and Native Americans provided on the web-based survey.

- Board members felt that the voice of bilingual students and their communities had not been heard in the process of gathering input on the formula. In fact, very few, if any, of the board members themselves knew about the study nor the public engagement process.

As a result of these discussions, NMABE and DLeNM board members jointly prepared a letter to Dr. Jay Chambers, Director of the AIR study, and to Representative Rick Miera, chair of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) voicing the concerns. Members of both Boards did not receive a response from Dr. Chambers until September; they felt the letter failed to directly address the concerns.

NMCSA meeting

The final version of the formula was presented to the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators (NMCSA) at their **November 1 & 2, 2007** meeting. Loretta Salazar, NMABE president and representative on the NMCSA, told mem-



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PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

- No. 32:1 Fall, 2007: October**
(Pre-conference issue)
 - No. 32:2 Winter, 2008: January**
(Board News, Bilingual Education Day, Call to Action)
 - No. 32:3 Spring, 2008: April**
(Conference Edition)
 - No. 32:4 Summer, 2008: July**
(Summer Activities, Institutes)
- Also, monthly inserts/wraps

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REGISTRATION FORM
NMABE 36th ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE
April 10-12, 2008
The Embassy Suites Hotel Albuquerque, New Mexico

Name: _____ Home Telephone: () _____

Home Address: _____
Number and Street City State Zip Code

E-mail Address: _____

School / District Name: _____ Position / Grade: _____

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES: Registration form must accompany your check, money order or purchase order. Purchase order must specify names of individuals to be registered and type of registration. **Refunds will not be made after March 21, 2008 (applies to purchase orders as well as advance payments). PRE-REGISTRATION MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN February 29, 2008.** *Your conference payment will include NMABE membership and a subscription to Language Magazine.*

PAID WITH:

Personal Check _____ Purchase Order # _____ District Check # _____

PRE-REGISTRATION FEE:

Postmarked on/or Before February 29, 2008 Full..... \$300 *Student Full.....\$ 100
 One Day.....\$225 *Student 1 Day.....\$ 75

*Please include verification of full time student status

ON SITE REGISTRATION FEE:

Postmarked After February 29, 2008 Full..... \$325 Student Full..... \$ 125
 One Day.....\$250 Student 1 Day.....\$ 100

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 NMABE 2008 CONFERENCE**

SEND PAYMENT AND REGISTRATION FORMS TO:

NMABE Conference 2008
 Attn: Rebecca Sánchez
 10212 De Travis Rd. SW
 Albuquerque, NM 87121

Visit the NMABE Website at: www.nmabe.net

<p>Book your rooms now at the Embassy Suites Hotel! The Host Hotel for the 36th Annual State Bilingual Conference! Call 1-800-EMBASSY (1-800-362-2779) and make your reservations today. <i>Let them know that you are registering for the NMABE Conference!</i> <i>You can also book your room on line at http://www.embassysuites.com/</i> You will need to use the "convention group code" BIL Embassy Suites Albuquerque Hotel 1000 Woodward Place NE</p>
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bers of the coalition that the formula did not account for all students currently in the bilingual program. Another principal concern of the bilingual education community is that without any requirements for the distribution and use of these new funds, it is unlikely that they will be dedicated to bilingual education programs.

Correspondence and contacts

In recent weeks, members of NMABE and DLeNM have sent letters and supplementary information on the impact of this formula on the bilingual education community to the legislative task force, known as the Project Advisory Panel (PAP), to Representative Rick Miera, Chair of the Legislative Education Study Committee, Representative Mimi Stewart, Legislative chair of the formula study committee, Dennis Roch, Chair of the Public Education Commission, Dick Poole, Co-Chair of the Funding Task Force, and members of the LESC.

Special meeting

On **Dec. 5, 2007**, a small group of educators representing NMABE, DLeNM, the State Bilingual Advisory Committee and the Linguistic Institute for Native Americans (LINA) met with Representative Rick Miera, Representative Mimi Stewart, and Bud Mulcock, NMCSA lobbyist to discuss the impact of the formula on current programs. While districts with ELL students will receive funding, including those that do not implement bilingual education, the non-ELL students in dual language, heritage language, language revitalization, maintenance, and enrichment programs will not.

Unfortunately, Representative Stewart felt the concerns of the bilingual community were not warranted since the new formula provides much more funding in

general to all schools. As previously noted, without any requirements for the distribution of these funds, it is unlikely they will be dedicated to bilingual education programs.

LESC meeting

NMABE and DLeNM board members and more than 100 parents, teachers, bilingual education directors and school administrators from across New Mexico were in attendance at Representative Mimi Stewart's presentation on the formula to the LESC on **December 13, 2007**. David Rogers, Executive Director for DLeNM, served as spokesperson for the group, presenting questions and concerns to the committee. Representatives of the bilingual community provided the LESC a packet of information that summarized the community's concerns and research done that highlighted those concerns.

Of the LESC membership, five legislators expressed similar concerns and questioned the proposed formula's ability to distribute adequate funding for bilingual education programs and/or preserve the Bilingual/Multicultural Act. They were Rep. Mary Helen García (Doña Ana-34), Rep. Thomas García (Colfax, Guad., SM, Mora, Taos-67), Rep. John Heaton (Eddy-55), Rep. Ray Begaye (San Juan-4), and Senator Mary Jane García (Doña Ana-36).

PAP meeting

On Tuesday **Dec 18, 2007** members of NMABE and DLeNM were invited to the AIR Studies' Project Advisory Panel (PAP) meeting to continue the conversation around our community's concerns. The PAP is important to this dialogue because PAP members must give final approval on the formula before it is drafted into legislation. The PAP listened intently to the bilingual education community's concerns and seemed interested in finding

some solution. However, no solution was proposed. Instead, the group was invited to meet with them again on **January 3, 2008**. After this meeting, the organizations hope to have some resolution to these issues and a subsequent copy of the legislation for the formula. However, as this newsletter goes to press, the issues remain unresolved.

NMABE and DLeNM will continue to work diligently in the upcoming weeks to ensure that the new formula preserves the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act and guarantees funding is directed to **all** students currently in the program throughout the state.

As you finish reading this story, please plan to speak out for these critical issues locally to parents, colleagues and most importantly to those representatives and senators elected to serve you. Our collective message needs to be:

- Guarantee that the new funding formula distributes funding for all students served in bilingual education programs.
- Preserve New Mexico's Bilingual Multicultural Education Act.

A call or letter to your senator/representative is imperative at this point. Legislators must respond to their constituents. In fact, letters from individual constituents (you) have far more impact than communications from your respective professional organization. Remember that you vote and elect your representative in order for them to speak and act for you.

Updates on the work being done on these critical issues will be posted on the following websites: <http://www.nmabe.net>, and <http://www.duallanguagenm.org/air.html> Continue to check these sites in the upcoming weeks of the 30-day legislative session.