



PRESS RELEASE

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Report: NM Public Schools Suffered 5 Percent Funding Cut for Current Year Education sector saw employment decline of 5 percent

ALBUQUERQUE—New Mexico’s public schools are having to do more with less money—5 percent less than they had last year. The drop in funding has led to a 5 percent decline in public education jobs. To exacerbate the issue, student enrollment has increased over the last three years.

These are some of the main conclusions in a report, *Funding Public Schools in New Mexico in the Great Recession*, released through New Mexico Voices for Children’s Fiscal Policy Project.

“The bottom has dropped out of the state’s public education budget,” said Gerry Bradley, NM Voices’ Research Director and the report’s author. “Even though state funding for public schools has been in decline for several years, it was replaced by increased federal funds via the federal stimulus package of 2009. But that funding is now gone and lawmakers chose not to make it up by putting any new revenue measures in place,” he added.

One reason that K-12 funding is so precarious in New Mexico is that a much larger percentage of the overall budget comes from general fund revenues than in most states. Almost all other states rely more heavily on property taxes for funding public education.

“Property taxes tend to be ‘sticky’ in a recession,” said Bradley, “meaning the revenue doesn’t decline the way revenue from income and sales taxes does. But about half of our total K-12 education expenditures come out of our general fund budget, which relies very heavily on income and sales taxes.”

The report recommends that, in the absence of greatly increased revenues, the Legislature should raise new revenue next year rather than continue to cut K-12 funding.

The report is available online at: <http://www.nmvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/public-school-funding-in-recession-10-11.pdf>

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.
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