



DEAR MS. M

Gifted Education Questions Answered

Dear Ms. M,

Is New Mexico Leading the Way in Gifted Education?

Gifted education in New Mexico is on an exciting trajectory. Attending the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) conference this year, I gained fresh insights into how far we have come as a state and our potential to be leaders in this field. New Mexico is now more than just trying to catch up with national best practices; we are carving out our own innovative path.

One of the key highlights that emerged at the conference was the recognition of New Mexico's progressive stance in gifted education, particularly in light of the major changes brought about by new gifted rule and the publication of the Gifted Technical Assistance Manual Update (2023). This updated rule reflects a comprehensive and inclusive approach to identifying and serving gifted students, ensuring equity across diverse populations. The changes address long-standing challenges in access and opportunity, paving the way for a more robust and equitable gifted education system. Our state's emphasis on multidimensional identification processes and individualized supports stands as a model for others.

What also sets New Mexico apart is our state mandate for gifted education, a rarity across the nation. While many states struggle to find consistent funding and recognition for their gifted programs, New Mexico's mandate ensures that gifted services are not just an afterthought but a priority. The partial funding provided by the state, though not without its challenges, serves as a critical foundation for districts to build and sustain their gifted programs. Additionally, the future requirement for gifted funding to be accounted for and reported to the state by districts will be a game changer in ensuring that funds directly benefit our identified gifted students. This commitment by the state legislature signals an understanding of the importance of nurturing the potential of our most advanced learners.

The conference underscored the significance of these efforts, with many states looking to New Mexico as an example of what is possible when advocacy, policy, and practice come together. Our work is far from finished, but the strides we have made demonstrate that we are on the right path. From the Yazzie-Martinez court case emphasizing the need for equitable education to the dedicated professionals in our schools, New Mexico is proving that it is serious about meeting the needs of gifted learners.

As educators, parents, and policymakers, we have an incredible opportunity to capitalize on this momentum. By continuing to refine our practices, advocate for additional resources, and prioritize professional development, we can ensure that gifted education in New Mexico not only meets but exceeds the standards set by our peers. Together, we are shaping a future where all gifted students in our state can thrive.

Kate Morris, MEd Gifted Education

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