



Office of the Governor

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Back To School: What is new this year for New Mexico K-12 students

As doors open for the 2023-2024 academic year, students in New Mexico, their families, and their teachers will have a stronger, more supported and well-rounded experience in schools across the state. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham highlights the advancements made during the legislative session that students, parents and teachers will see as school doors open this month.

“We’ve made great strides in the last year to reinforce the hard work educators across New Mexico already do in the classroom,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “The changes everyone will see as they enter classrooms this month are designed to support students, teachers, administrators and parents, bolster the effort to improve test outcomes, and put New Mexico on the map as a national leader in the education movement centered on students.”

The governor implemented the following changes in the last year:

[K-12 Plus Program](#) – House Bill 130 gives students more time to learn by increasing annual classroom hours in public schools to 1,140 hours and financially encouraging school districts to provide more opportunities such as after-school and summer school programs, tutoring, enriched learning opportunities and career technical education. The bill provides teaching professionals guaranteed development work time to improve professional practices and collaborate with other teachers.

[Increasing teacher pay](#) – House Bill 127 increased the minimum salary for educational assistants to \$25,000. [A grant](#) paved the way for teachers in pre-K programs to receive a higher minimum wage – increasing the wage floor to \$15 an hour for entry-level workers and \$20 an hour for lead teachers. These wage increases follow [the 2022 announcement](#) that teacher pay in New Mexico would go up by 20%, on average.

[Universal free and healthy school meals](#) - Senate Bill 4 establishes the Healthy Hunger-Free Students Bill of Rights Act which ensures that all 320,000 K-12 students have free-of-cost breakfasts and lunches beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

[Creating the Office of Special Education](#) – This new office, in the Public Education Department, will support more effective and timely services by requiring special education professional development for a broader range of education professionals, better coordinating special education across state agencies, more actively promoting recruitment and retention of special educators, improving state accountability and oversight, and ensuring more consistent, statewide data collection.

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