



NEW MEXICO  
**PUBLIC REGULATION  
COMMISSION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2023

**NMPRC unveils newly designed website for enhanced user  
experience**



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sept. 6, 2023**

**Contact:** Caroline Sweeney  
Office of the Governor  
[caroline.sweeney@exec.nm.gov](mailto:caroline.sweeney@exec.nm.gov)

**Governor announces plan for \$30 million literacy  
institute during literacy summit in Santa Fe**

*Announcement comes as preliminary data shows increase in reading  
proficiency for elementary school students in New Mexico*

SANTA FE - Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Wednesday announced plans to request \$30 million from the Legislature in the upcoming session to construct an institute focused on improving literacy skills for New Mexicans of all ages. The announcement comes on the heels of good news for New Mexico's elementary school students: preliminary data shows a 4.3% increase in reading proficiency for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

“The work we have done so far to implement evidence-based reading instruction in our schools is working, but we are not stopping there,” said **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham**. “Until every child in New Mexico can read proficiently at their grade level, we must keep deploying every tool at our disposal. I have no doubt that our strategy of bringing students, parents, teachers and higher education institutions up to speed in the Science of Reading will yield results.”

The summit focused on the state's efforts to improve literacy outcomes in students through making sure teachers, students, parents and higher education institutions are well-versed in Structured Literacy, also known as the "Science of Reading."

Guests at the summit included Antonio Fierro, Chief Academic Officer for Tools 4 Reading/Barksdale Literacy Institute, Dr. David Hurford, the Kansas Center for Reading Director, Pittsburg State University, and Dawn Brookhart from the AIM Institute for Learning and Research in Pennsylvania. Legislators, administrators, educators, advocates and tribal leaders were also in attendance.

Gov. Lujan Grisham and a group of education policy experts traveled to the Kansas Center for Reading to learn more about establishing a literacy institute in New Mexico. The team, sans the governor, has also visited programs in Florida and Pennsylvania and been in contact with other nationally leading programs.

"Hats off to the Governor for understanding that what we need in New Mexico is a systematic change in how we train teachers to teach reading," said **Pro Tem Mimi Stewart**. "All students can learn to read if we train our educators to use these evidence-based strategies. The Governor is convening the groups we need for this change: higher education, where this change needs to start, school personnel, tribal leaders, parents and teachers. We are all getting on board for this significant change that we must make for our New Mexican children."

"I'm grateful to Gov. Lujan Grisham and her administration for all of her investments in education in our state, which are giving schools the tools they need to improve outcomes for students," said **Sandia Pueblo Gov. Stuart Paisano**. "Making sure that all our children can read and honoring the significance of Native languages and cultures of Nations, Tribes and Pueblos, starting from a young age, continue that upward trajectory."

"In my time in classrooms, schools, and districts, I have seen the science of reading deliver results time and again. This is a bold, decisive direction for the state, and I am confident that our students and our state will benefit from the investment in Structured Literacy," said Cabinet Secretary of the **Public Education Department Arsenio Romero**.

Gov. Lujan Grisham's strategy includes making sure that New Mexico colleges and universities are adequately trained in the science of reading to students in its education program.

"The New Mexico Higher Education Department is proud to partner with Gov. Lujan Grisham and our sister education agencies to turn a new page on how our state teaches the essential skill of reading. Implementing evidence-based, results-driven examples of how best to teach reading will allow us to foster innovation in New Mexico's colleges of education to better prepare teachers to meet the needs of every student. We will also

continue to build the literacy skills of parents and adults through state-funded adult literacy programs to ensure that every New Mexican has the building blocks for lifelong learning,” said **Acting Higher Education Secretary Dr. Patricia Trujillo**.

“A child’s early learning years are when the foundations for literacy are laid,” said **ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky**. “Governor Lujan Grisham has ensured New Mexico is providing young children access to high quality, affordable early childhood programs – and ensuring that educators of our youngest children understand the importance of and how to teach early literacy.”

The Science of Reading is being implemented across the state at all levels of learning. The Early Childhood Education and Care Department began implementing LETRS-EC, a version of structured literacy tailored to the youngest learners, during School Year 2019-20. The Public Education Department launched a state-wide structured literacy initiative in the 2020-2021 school year and has 9,000 educators and staff enrolled in training. The Higher Education Department funds 18 adult literacy and 26 adult education programs statewide that teach essential literacy skills to adults. Mississippi has seen a 10% increase in literacy since the implementation of this program in 2013.

###

*The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) regulates the utilities, telecommunications, and motor carrier industries to ensure fair and reasonable rates, and to assure reasonable and adequate services to the public as provided by law. The PRC also promotes public safety through the Pipeline Safety Bureau and Transportation Division.*

---

#### **CONTACT**

Patrick Rodriguez  
Public Information Officer

Email: [patrickj.rodriquez@prc.nm.gov](mailto:patrickj.rodriquez@prc.nm.gov)

Phone: 505-490-7910

P.O. Box 1269

Santa Fe, NM 87504

[www.prc.nm.gov](http://www.prc.nm.gov)