

Info, HigherEd, NMHED

From: John Dyrz <john@nmaft.org>
Sent: Tuesday, July 16, 2019 2:18 PM
To: Info, HigherEd, NMHED
Cc: Kathy Chavez
Subject: [EXT] AFT New Mexico Comments on New Rule 5.7.35
Attachments: AFT NM Rule 5.7.35 Comments.pdf

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Secretary Dr. O'Neill:

Please accept the attached letter as AFT New Mexico's comments on the proposed new rule 5.7.35 NMAC *"Grow Your Own Teachers Scholarship Program."*

We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments and look forward to the successful implementation of this opportunity for New Mexico educational assistants.

Should you require more information or clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to our organization.

Best,
John Dyrz
AFT NM Staff

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John Dyrz || State Affiliate Political Organizer, AFT-NM
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July 16, 2019

Dr. Kate O'Neill, Secretary, NM HED
New Mexico Higher Education Department
2044 Galisteo Street, Suite 4,
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Re: *Rule 5.7.35 NMAC Grow Your Own Teachers Scholarship Program*

Secretary Dr. O'Neill:

Please accept the below comments on the proposed "*Rule 5.7.35 NMAC Grow Your Own Teachers Scholarship Program*":

On behalf of over 23,000 public educators we represent in New Mexico, AFT New Mexico would like to offer this letter of support for the proposed new rule.

Personally and professionally, this new rule is an important first step to address several issues within our New Mexico public education system, especially as it seeks to address historic levels of teacher vacancies and also makes a meaningful attempt to invest resources in cultivating a new cohort of educators from those who are already serving our students, their families, and the greater community.

As educational assistants, we know that when there is long-term instability in staffing levels or the availability of substitutes, many of those responsibilities fall to educational assistants. By providing opportunities for qualified educational employees already in our schools to step up and pursue licensure as a teacher is incredibly meaningful for the educator, and ultimately has the potential to provide better and more stable educational opportunities for the student.

Further, by providing scholarships and the much-needed flexibility in type of higher educational experience combined with the needed accommodations at an educational assistant's school site truly shows that New Mexico is seeking to make this program open and accessible to all who may want to pursue it.

As an educational leader – *and one who works primarily with classified public school staff* – I have heard countless stories about how educational assistants want to pursue a teaching degree, but one or two conditions (e.g. cost, time, availability) kept them from their dream. This new rule has the potential to change the narrative and make those dreams a reality for so many dedicated educators across our state.



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Overall, we are happy to see a real vision about what can be possible for New Mexico's public schools, and are looking forward to supporting this new rule, which is groundbreaking in so many ways and has already been cited as a potential national model for "Grow Your Own Teachers" efforts.

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We sincerely hope this feedback is helpful as you consider submissions from educational professionals across the state. We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on the proposed rule and appreciate the culture of professionalism and collaboration you are beginning to build at the NM HED. We look forward to deepening our partnership with your department and staff for the benefit of New Mexico's student, families, educators, and communities.

nm.aft.org

Sincerely,

Kathy Chavez
Executive Vice President, AFT NM
President, Albuquerque Federation of Classified Professionals #4129