NEW MEXICO
HIGHER EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT

Fiscal Year 2026
Higher Education Department
IT STRATEGIC PLAN
September 3, 2024

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Acting Chief Information Officer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) seeks to promote accessibility to education for all New Mexicans. The Information Technology Services Division (ITS) is key to this mission by being part of every aspect of HED operations, from obtaining and configuring agency smartphones to managing the physical door access system to deploying and administrating desktop, laptop, and tablet computers to providing cloud-based services, public websites and web-based applications.

The ITS work that most effectively engages the higher education institutions and the public and which further empowers our staff and better protects our data, receives most of our attention. This includes (a) regular updates and new features for our applications, (b) offering archived school transcripts for students, (d) providing portals for uploading Capital Projects, Institutional Finance reports, and Financial Aid submissions (e) procuring and installing new network and server systems, (f) providing continuous high-level cyber security, and (g) facilitating legislative bill analysis. Therefore, the ITS work and goals are in alignment with the Higher Education Department's and the State's IT strategic goals. Specifically:

ITS is continuing to improve overall security and functionality by way of (a) robust Internet traffic management via our firewalls, (b) utilizing Zero Trust Architecture across all systems and services, and (c) implementing multi-factor authentication. Also, as part of our continuous integration and continuous delivery efforts, we are adding features and improving performance of all existing applications and deploying new ones. ITS continues to refine and expand services in the public cloud, increasing efficiencies, redundancy, performance, accessibility, and security.

Regarding inter-agency activity, ITS continues to work with the CIOs of all the New Mexico Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on cybersecurity, currently focusing on performing regularly penetration testing and assessments. We also continue to collaborate with Department of Information Technology's Office of Broadband, working in concert with University of New Mexico, the Public Education Department (PED), the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), to bring broadband connectivity to the Grants, NM region, including the Navajo Nation community. Also, we remain a key stakeholder on the New Mexico Longitudinal Data System project (NMLDS), which is a collaboration between HED, ECECD, PED, and the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS); ITS participates on the NMLDS Project Team, secures and oversees state and federal funding, execute and manages vendor contracts, and provides project management and IV&V services. NMLDS, a certified project, is currently initiating Phase 2 of NMLDS and we are on target to have this phase completed in September 2026.

Agency leadership continues to prioritize (a) better engagement and support of the State's students and teachers and (b) widely sharing the extensive information HED has collected and which ITS manages and protects. FY26 will, therefore, see ITS expand and harden our cloud-based Business

Continuity and Disaster Recovery solution and further and more efficiently integrate our cloud-based services, primarily Microsoft 365 and Azure Active Directory.

I. AGENCY OVERVIEW

A. AGENCY MISSION

The New Mexico Higher Education Department provides financial, academic, and policy oversight to the NM public higher education institutions for the purpose of promoting efficiency, accountability and student success.

B. AGENCY GOALS

HED fosters and guides a system of higher education that best meets the needs of the citizens of the state by providing financing to and oversight of all of the state's public universities and colleges. The agency also has regulatory authority over private for-profit institutions operating within the state.

C. VISION AND PRIORITIES

HED strives to position public New Mexico colleges and universities to be more student-focused, delivering personalization that engages students and ensures their needs are seen, addressed and exceeded. Equity, therefore, is the highest priority. HED in concert with the state colleges and universities is striving to open up paths to experiences, opportunities and careers to all students, especially from marginalized communities, and help students define their goals and careers on their own terms.

The mission of ITS is to facilitate the workflow of all HED divisions and enhance the overall efficiency of the agency in support of this vision and priority

D. AGENCY DESCRIPTION AND ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

HED has a staff size of 56 and offices in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Espanola, and Taos. The agency is comprised of seven main divisions that sponsor various education-related programs. These are as follows:

1. The Adult Education Division serves adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
2. The Financial Aid Division is dedicated to helping students in pursuing their educational goals by educating students, parents and the community about state aid opportunities.
3. GEAR UP's mission is to increase the number of underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and succeed in Postsecondary education.
4. The Institutional Finance Division is responsible for the fiscal oversight of 32 colleges, universities and special schools.

5. The Academic Affairs and Policy Division is involved with a number of activities, including monitoring the transfer and articulation operation and the associated General Education Core Course listings.
6. The Private Postsecondary Schools Division (PPSD) issues licenses or letters of exemptions to private postsecondary Institutions allowing these institutions to legally operate in the state.
7. The Research and Planning Division provides quality assurance, reporting and planning support to the higher education community through collaborative data collection, analysis and reporting.

The Information Technology Services Division supports the efforts of the above and facilitates and transforms the business processes of the agency and provide the highest possible value to all internal and external stakeholders.

For the organization chart and division-level staffing information, go to Appendix A-I. For the IT Division organization chart, see Appendix A-II.

II. IT ENVIRONMENT

1. Major Applications

Our primary applications deal with supporting NM higher education institutions directly and indirectly by (a) providing financial aid to students, teachers and graduates, (b) funding projects, (c) overseeing projects and finances, (d) managing course and program changes and standards, (e) collecting enrollment and graduation information, and (f) providing transcripts. All of these work with sensitive information. Therefore, along with functionality, cybersecurity is the highest priority. Secondary priorities are intuitive, easy-to-use interfaces and strong customer support.

2. Infrastructure

All physical HED network and server systems are located at the 2044 Galisteo Street HED Office complex and are comprised of a HP x64 server system, Aruba network switches, a Palo Alto firewall, and Aruba wireless access points. Our primary infrastructure is cloud-based, including primary Active Directory domain controller, primary Palo Alto firewall. It also includes application containers and PostgreSQL and SQL Server databases.

3. Security

Security remains a high priority and takes approximately 20% of our time. It is built into every IT aspect, from application development to VPN upgrades. As such, it is a mandatory consideration when any change, purchase or request is made, and it is and has been a key driver of our move to cloud-based services. This includes redundant back-ups, deployment of Zero Trust Architecture, and required use of multi-factor authentication on applications and services.

Other aspects of our security include tiered Active Directory permissions, robust VPN and VPC services, and multi-level end-user protection, including local anti-malware and firewall services.

4. **Agency IT Certified Projects**

HED has one certified IT project, the NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS).

NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS)	
Project Description	In partnership with DWS, ECECD and PED, implement a central data and reporting system containing all student and workforce information to track students' progress accurately through the education and workforce systems.
Estimated Project Costs	$9.9M (FY21 – FY24)
Current Funding	$8.3M (FY21 – FY23)
Certified Project Phase	Implementation
Estimated Completion	September 2026
Strategic Priority	To identify what programs, services, interventions, education practices, and other factors have an impact on student success and thereby help improve New Mexico's high school graduation rate, college enrollment and completion rates, workforce preparedness and retention, employment rate, career longevity, and ultimately broader social indicators such as poverty and health outcomes.

TABLE II.1: Current Certified IT Projects

5. **Workforce**

   A. **Full Time Employees**

   ITS has six authorized IT full time employees (FTE) of which currently four are filled and two are vacant.

   B. **IT Professional Services Contractors**

   We currently have two contractor teams supporting IT projects.

6. **Challenges**

ITS has the same major challenge as last year: migrate our traditional, standalone Active Directory and Shared File services to Azure Active Directory and integrate them with our Microsoft 365 services.

III. FY25 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In FY25 ITS developed and deployed a major new application, procured and deployed a new on-premises server system, improved and hardened our firewall services, continued the Implementation Phase for the NMLDS project, and continued close collaboration with State and higher education partners.

A. FY25 STRATEGIC IT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY – Better leverage and share institutional and student information

STRATEGY STATEMENT – Further expand capabilities to foster collaboration and knowledge management	
FY25 Strategy 1	Continue to improve inter-agency data sharing and increase transparency by way of secure, on-demand access technology
Accomplishments	Currently implementing the NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS)
Outcomes/Metrics	The NMLDS project's Phase II is in the Initialization Phase and on for completion Sep'26.

TABLE III.1: FY24 Strategic IT Accomplishments

B. OTHER KEY IT ACCOMPLISHMENTS – FY24

We funded cybersecurity initiatives in all thirty public higher education institutions in New Mexico

SECURITY	
Accomplishments	In collaboration with DoIT, Ivanti and all NM public college and university CIOs, systematically funded cybersecurity assessment and penetration testing services for all NM public higher education institutions.
Value or Impact	Began or augmented existing cybersecurity programs at all NM public higher education institutions.

TABLE III.2: Other Key IT Accomplishments – FY24

IV. FY26 IT STRATEGIC GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Being a small division, ITS must remain responsive, efficient and to continue to achieve quality results. Our two FY25 strategic goals have that in common.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – Strategy Name	
Goal Statement	
FY26 Strategy 1	Strengthen cyber security measures to protect against evolving cyber threats by implementing robust firewalls, encryption, threat intelligence, and employee training programs.
Outcomes/Metrics	Robust Firewalls Outcome: Enhanced network security and reduced unauthorized access. Metrics: 1. Number of firewall rule violations or breach attempts. 2. Reduction in successful intrusion attempts. 3. Firewall uptime and availability. 4. Average time to detect and respond to firewall alerts. Encryption Implementation

Outcome: Protection of sensitive data in transit and at rest.

Metrics:

1. Percentage of data encrypted.
2. Number of encryption-related incidents (e.g., data breaches).
3. Compliance with encryption standards (e.g., PCI DSS, HIPAA).

Threat Intelligence Integration

Outcome: Improved threat detection and proactive threat mitigation.

Metrics:

1. Number of actionable threat intelligence reports integrated.
2. Reduction in time to detect and respond to threats.
3. Number of false positives/negatives in threat alerts.
4. Percentage decrease in successful attacks due to threat intelligence.

Employee Training Programs

Outcome: Increased cybersecurity awareness and a reduction in human-related security incidents.

Metrics:

1. Employee participation rates in cybersecurity training.
2. Frequency and success rates of simulated phishing attacks.
3. Number of reported security incidents by employees (e.g., lost devices, suspicious emails).
4. Decrease in security incidents caused by employee negligence.

Incident Response Effectiveness

Outcome: Efficient and effective response to security incidents.

Metrics:

1. Mean time to detect (MTTD) and mean time to respond (MTTR) to security incidents.
2. Percentage of incidents contained before causing significant damage.
3. Post-incident analysis to identify areas for improvement.

Compliance with Security Standards

Outcome: Alignment with industry-specific security standards and regulations.

Metrics:

1. Compliance audit results (e.g., PCI DSS, ISO 27001).
2. Number of security policy violations.

	Percentage of security controls implemented according to standards.

TABLE IV.1. FY26 IT Strategic Goals and Strategies

V. IT FISCAL AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Information Technology (IT) Operating Budget (C1)

(To update this table, please double click on the embedded spreadsheet and add the required information. Before exiting the spreadsheet, please make sure to scroll up. Otherwise, the entries of this table will not be fully previewed.)

Agency Name				**Agency Code**	
NM Higher Education Department				950	
Base Request Operational Support of IT. Check one of the options below:				**Flat Budget**	**Expansion from previous year**
Yes/No				yes	
Revenue IT Base Budget (dollars in thousands)					
Appropriation Funding Type	**FY23 Actual**	**FY24 Actual**	**FY25 OpBud**	**FY26 Request**	**FY27 Estimate**
General Fund	1,380.0	850.0	880.0	950.0	950.0
Other State Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Federal Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Internal Svc Funds/Interagency Transfer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**1,380.0**	**850.0**	**880.0**	**950.0**	**950.0**
Expenditure Categories *(dollars in thousands)*					
Category or Account Description	**FY23 Actual**	**FY24 Actual**	**FY25 OpBud**	**FY26 Request**	**FY27 Estimate**
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	1,195.0	588.0	610.0	650.0	650.0
Contractual & Professional Services	110.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
IT Other Services	75.0	140.0	150.0	150.0	150.0
Other Financing Uses	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**1,380.0**	**828.0**	**860.0**	**900.0**	**900.0**

	Print Name	**Phone**	**Email Address**	**Date**
Agency Cabinet Secretary/ Director (Mandatory)				
Chief information Officer or IT Lead(Mandatory)				
Chief Finance Officer (Mandatory)				

Agency Cabinet Secretary/Director Signature ________________________________

Chief Information Officer/IT Lead Signature ________________________________

Chief Financial Officer Signature ________________________________

VI. SPECIAL FUNDING, SUPPLEMENTAL, COMPUTER SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT (C2) FUNDING AND REAUTHORIZATION OF C2 APPROPRIATIONS

A. HED will be making one special funding request for approximately $10M

B. HED will be submitting one C2 funding request for

C. The agency is not requesting reauthorization of prior C2 appropriations.

REQUEST FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF C2 APPROPRIATIONS

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">Information Technology Request for Reauthorization of C2 Appropriations</th></tr>
<tr><td>Agency Name</td><td></td><td>Agency Code</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Lead Agency Name Listed on Appropriation</td><td></td><td>Project Name</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Source of Authorization
(e.g. Laws 2022, Chapter 54, Section 7 (12) or Grant/Federal Fund #)</td><td>Appropriation Amount
(in thousands)</td><td>Remaining Balance
(in thousands)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td></tr>
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<tr><td colspan="3"></td><td>0.0</td><td>0.0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total amount appropriated for project life
(in thousands)</td><td></td><td colspan="2">Will the project be completed within the next fiscal year?</td><td>☐ Yes
☐ No</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reason for Requesting Reauthorization</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
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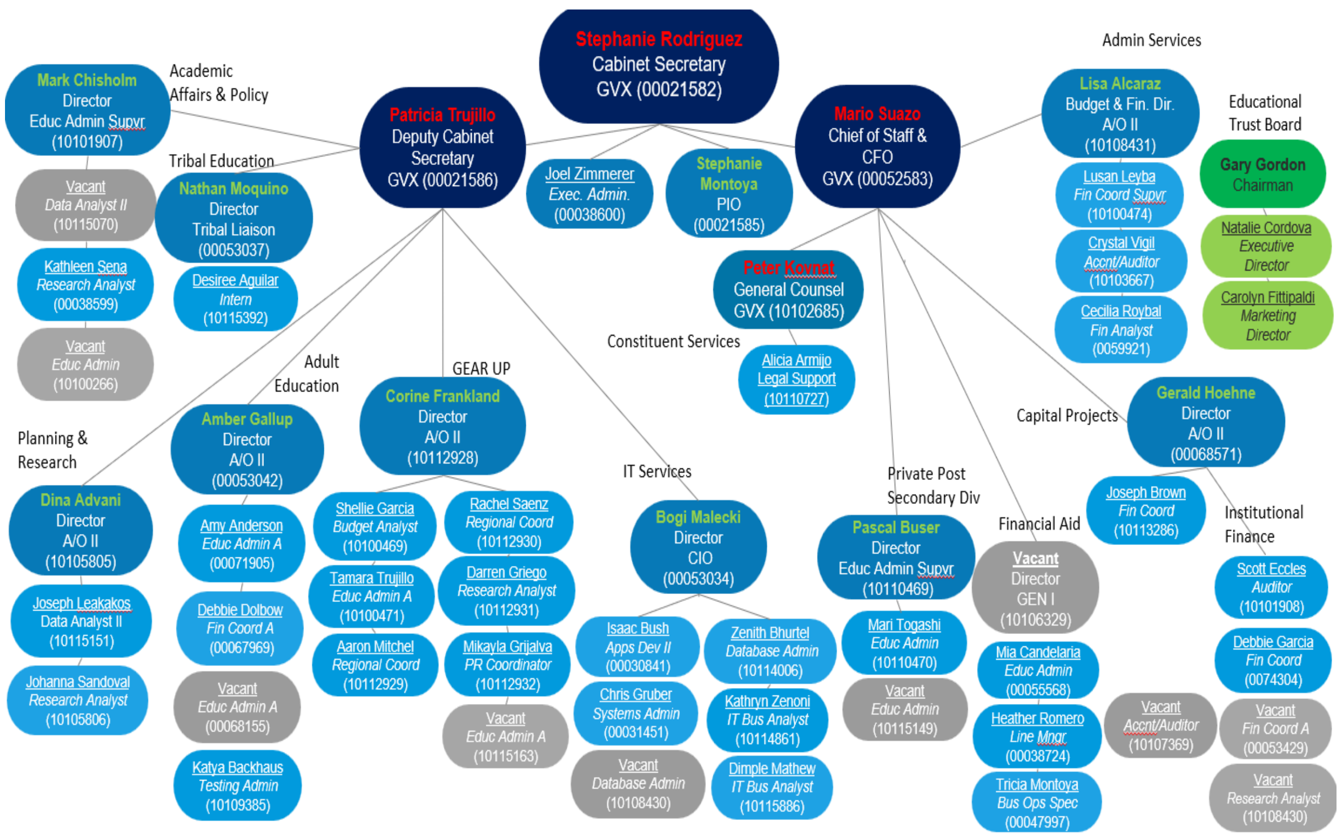
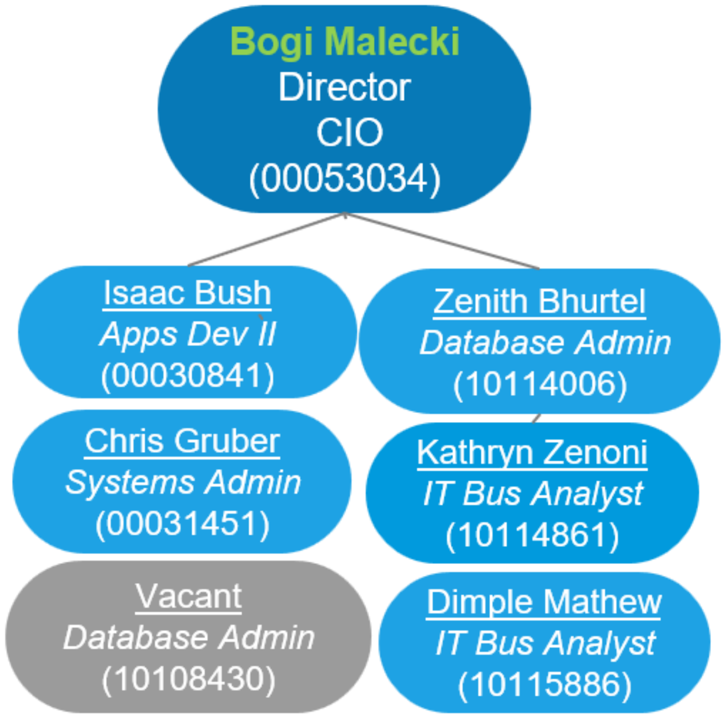
TABLE VI.1: Request for Reauthorization of C2 Appropriations

APPENDIX A-I: AGENCY ORGANIZATION CHART





APPENDIX A-II: IT ORGANIZATION CHART

APPENDIX A-III: C2 IT DATA PROCESSING CSEF

APPENDIX A-III: C2 IT Data Processing CSEF

C2: Information Technology
Data Processing - Computer Systems Enhancement Fund (CSEF)

Agency Name	Agency Code	Project Name			
Higher Education Department	95010	Shared Services ERP			
Multi-Agency Project	**Participating Agencies**		**Priority**	**Projected Start Date**	**Projected End Date**
Yes/No			1	10/1/21	9/30/27

Revenue Project Cost *(dollars in thousands)*					
Category or Account Description	**FY24 & Prev Actual**	**FY25 Budget**	**FY26 Request**	**FY27 Request Estimate (If any)**	**Total**
General Fund (CSEF)	16,125.0	7,000.0	25,032.0	0.0	48,157.0
Other State Funds *(*specify funds below)*	13,695.0	3,000.0	3,000.0	3,000.0	22,695.0
Federal Funds	7,407.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,407.6
Internal Svc Funds/Interagency Transfer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**37,227.6**	**10,000.0**	**28,032.0**	**3,000.0**	**78,259.6**
***If Other State Funds, Specify Funding Source/Fund Name**					

Expenditure Categories *(dollars in thousands)*					
	FY24 & Prev Actual	**FY25 Budget**	**FY26 Request**	**FY27 Estimate**	**Total**
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	11,782.5	4,056.7	4,611.7	2,611.7	23,062.6
Professional Services	20,943.3	9,788.9	7,890.0	5,829.7	44,451.9
Travel/Lodging	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	300.0
IT Hardware	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
IT Software	5,114.8	2,557.4	2,557.4	2,557.4	12,787.0
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	**37,840.6**	**16,503.0**	**15,159.1**	**11,098.8**	**80,601.5**

	Print Name	Phone	Email Address	Date
Agency Cabinet Secretary/ Director (Mandatory)				
Chief information Officer or IT Lead(Mandatory)				
Chief Finance Officer / Budget Director (Mandatory)				

Agency Cabinet Secretary/Director Signature ______________________

Chief Information Officer/IT Lead Signature ______________________

Budget Director Signature ______________________