



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

Education Consensus Questions (Board approved final – 9/7/2011)

“Before any great things are accomplished, a memorable change must be made in the system of education, and knowledge must become so general as to raise the lower ranks of society nearer to the higher. The education of a nation, instead of being confined to a few schools and universities for the instruction of the few, must become the national care and expense for the formation of the many.” John Adam’s letters

A. General questions that apply to the overall focus of the study:

A-1. Public schools should be the primary method of educating students.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

A-2. A standardized national education system is a good idea.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

A-3. New Mexico should continue to cooperate and participate with the National Governors Association (NGA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and other states’ efforts in supporting and developing common state standards for core curriculum and other educational improvement activities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

A-4. Alternate options within the public school system such as charter schools, special focus schools or magnet schools should be available so that parents may choose the option that best fits their children’s abilities and learning needs.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

A-5. Alternate options to enroll children in private and religious schools, using public money, should be available so that parents may have additional choice options to fit the abilities and meet the learning needs of their children.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

A-6. A quality public education is important to perpetuating a strong and viable democracy in NM.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

B. School Funding Questions

B-1. If public education is the cornerstone of a democracy, then should it be funded so that access to a “sufficient” education is afforded to all school age children?

Note: “Sufficient” is included but not defined in the NM statute.

Yes No No Opinion

B-2 Because New Mexico’s education funding formula was instituted in 1974 and for 25 years was considered among the top three models in the nation at one time, it should be restored to its original principles.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

B-3 What priority should school funding have among the General Fund budget allocations?

Highest High, but not first Low No Priority

B-4 What should citizens of the school district be willing to do to ensure appropriate funding for the schools?

- Make donations
- Increase property taxes
- Increase sales tax
- Change the state budget priorities
- Other – Describe:

C. Mandated Standardized Testing

C-1 Current NM standardized testing of students under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) only provides a single annual assessment for each student’s skill/knowledge level in mathematics and language arts. Tests that measure student improvement over time should be utilized instead.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

C-2 Currently, much of the time in classrooms in Las Cruces Public School (LCPS) is focused on the teaching of the knowledge areas that are covered in standardized tests. The curriculum instead should be balanced to include teaching students critical thinking, problem solving, and other curriculum areas.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

C-3 Standardized test results should be a major component in the state’s newly initiated rating system of A-F for the performance of schools.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

C-4 Standardized test results should be used as a major component for the evaluation of teachers performance that leads to salary increases and promotions.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

C-5 Decisions about retaining or dismissing teachers should be based on student progress demonstrated in standardized tests.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

D. No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top

D-1 New Mexico should expand the knowledge areas that are tested in standardized tests.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

D-2 New Mexico should utilize a variety of approaches for testing students, including essay questions.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

D-3 What innovative approaches to education would you like to see in the LCPS system?

Test each individual student's PROGRESS, not % of proficiency

Test knowledge in every subject taught in each grade, not just reading and math

Establish self-paced automated courses, as one teaching method

Enable students to form small teams for developing and executing projects that demonstrate understanding and promote problem solving

Institute and fund a program that fosters children's language development for success in kindergarten

Other - describe

E. Teacher Performance

E-1 Successful education requires competent teachers; therefore, public school districts, including charter schools, should be required to adopt a teacher performance evaluation framework that is focused on improving student achievement.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

E-2 Which of the following criteria should be used as components of the teacher performance evaluation? (Check as many as apply)

Achieving goals of the personal performance plan

Student Performance

School Performance

Some Combination of the above

Other (Describe)

E-3 As the leader of the school, the school principal's evaluation should be based in part on school achievement, specifically the results from Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

E-4 Teachers and principals should be terminated following due process when they no longer meet minimum performance standards.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

F. LCPS and Business Involvement

F-1 Las Cruces businesses are doing all that they can do to support schools.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

F-2 Individual businesses should engage in a formalized one-on-one relationships and support of individual schools, as, for example, in an “Adopt a School” program.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

F-3 The chambers of commerce should allocate more resources to the development of coordinated programs with LCPS.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

F-4 What could businesses do to encourage students to graduate?

- Offer internship programs
- Guarantee higher starting pay for graduates
- Only hire graduates
- Offer college tuition support to their employees who are high school graduates
- Offer “school-work” programs as graduation incentives
- Offer “school-work” programs for high school students in the early college high school program
- Other - describe

G. Early Childhood and Community and Parent Involvement:

G-1 Because educational research shows that academic success of all students is strongly dependent on active parent involvement, early childhood education and socioeconomic status, New Mexico should provide adequate funding for public schools to develop and maintain tested and proven programs that address these critical issues.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

G-2 LCPS should collaborate with a broad base of community citizens and social service agencies to provide parents with tools to assist their children from birth to age 5 in acquiring the language experiences that prepare them for success in kindergarten and first grade.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

G-3 State agencies should provide incentives to support a broad base of local citizens and social service agencies in collaborating with LCPS to offer creative programs to increase parent involvement.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion

G-4 Separate programs should be instituted for parents of children from economically disadvantaged families.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No opinion