

Empowering New Mexico's Schools With Connected Learning Opportunities



In 2015, New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez announced plans to bring high-speed Internet access to every New Mexico classroom by 2018. To meet this goal, state agencies—including the [Public Schools Facility Authority](#), the [Public Education Department](#) (PED), and the [Department of Information Technology](#)—have been working with the [EducationSuperHighway](#) to develop recommendations to support the buildout of infrastructure required to deliver high-speed Internet to New Mexico's classrooms. This initiative—the [Governor's Broadband for Education Initiative](#)—has enabled the state's school districts to rapidly expand their broadband connectivity, but the principal focus remains on creating strong educational opportunities for New Mexico's students.

SERVING AS A KNOWLEDGE BASE

The PED and the Department of Information Technology seek to empower New Mexico's schools with the ability to make well-informed decisions that meet their specific learning objectives while still serving as a knowledge base the schools can rely on for assistance. Establishing price transparency is a principal component of that goal.

During the program's first year, the state reissued a statewide request for proposal for E-rate Category Two internal broadband and internal connection services to drive down costs and improve overall price transparency. In addition, the PED created a public mini-quote system that enables New Mexico's school districts to review the quotes of all vendors responding to bids around the state. This information is tracked internally to ensure school districts are receiving adequate wireless coverage for the best value.



We don't have specific parameters around monitoring or tracking our schools because we are a locally controlled state. However, the work we are doing surrounding price transparency and reviewing wireless network plans ensures that everyone is getting the best value for their money."

— Dr. John Chadwick, Education Technology and E-rate Coordinator, New Mexico Public Education Department

MAKING THE DIGITAL LEAP

Below are two schools embracing the governor's vision and transforming their campuses into comprehensive digital learning environments:

- **Deming Public Schools** in Deming, New Mexico serves approximately 5,200 students. The district is building a new high school to replace its old campus. When constructing the campus, school leaders included factors such as wireless design and connectivity in the school's overall layout and design.
- **McCurdy Charter School** in Espanola, New Mexico recently underwent a major renovation and is now completely wireless.



We know what is possible, and we know we have a lot of work to do. It's incumbent upon us to share our school districts' successes and demonstrate the positive impact this program is having to ensure other programs like this are well-supported in the future. Ultimately, the PED's goal is to help educators identify their specific instructional vision and help them determine what technology is needed to support that vision."

— Brett Turner, Director of the Blended Learning Bureau, New Mexico Public Education Department

RECOMMENDATIONS

Like other states, New Mexico is still determining how to best assist schools with their wireless needs.

The PED leadership team shared the following recommendations they put together in the hopes of assisting other states and school districts with their internal broadband initiatives:

- States should establish a fund or plan to offset the undiscounted portion of E-rate.
- Districts should adopt a long-term, flexible approach to technology because its capacity to support rigorous teaching and learning amplifies continually, requiring students and teachers to adjust to shifting learning environments.
- Districts should form relationships with public libraries to create solutions that benefit the entire community.