



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

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EDUCATION

EDUCATION POSITION (1998, 1999, and 2011)

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (LWVGLC) supports public schools as the primary method of educating students, K-12. Further the League believes that education is the corner stone to perpetuating a strong and viable democracy. The public education system should establish as important goals for all students an understanding of the nature of democracy and the responsibilities of citizenship, the ability to think critically, and the acquisition of skills necessary to continue to learn and function as adults in a complex society.

In addition, the LWVGLC supports the following strategies to ensure the greatest possible academic success for all students:

Innovative Practices for Student Success:

- The use of accepted national standards for a common core curriculum that provides a uniform body of knowledge and academic skills for all students, accompanied by flexibility for local school systems to determine how this body of knowledge and skills is imparted to students.
- Alternative educational options for parental choice within the public education system that fit the individual abilities and learning needs of their children.
- Project-based learning focused on developing critical thinking and problem solving skills of students, as well as the use of technology for self-paced learning.
- The engagement of local businesses in formalized one-on-one relationships through partnerships with individual schools that benefit student preparation for the workforce.
- Business initiatives that offer incentives to encourage students to develop career skills, graduate from high school, and seek work schedules that support student attendance at school.

Early Childhood Education and Community and Parent Involvement:

- Collaboration among a broad base of community organizations, social service agencies and the local school system to provide parents with programs to assist their children from birth to age 5 in acquiring the language experiences that prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond.
- Programs that encourage increased parental involvement in the education of their children that are welcoming and inclusive of parents from economically

(Continued on page 2)

A nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

EDUCATION POSITION *(Continued from page 1)*

disadvantaged families.

Evaluation of Teachers, Students and School Performance

- Student evaluation that focuses on student academic progress rather than rigid standards of proficiency.
- Standardized testing that is focused on measuring student progress in all core academic subject areas over frequent intervals and provides timely results to the teacher to guide the design of instruction to aid individual student progress.
- Teacher performance evaluations that demonstrate the teacher's in-depth knowledge in core academic subjects and pedagogy.
- Evaluation of teachers based on achievement of personal professional goals in the performance evaluation plans developed at the local school system level that includes job performance observations and consideration of student academic progress.
- Termination of teachers and principals using a due process procedure when they no longer meet minimum standards.

Finances and Funding

- Funding for public education positioned as the highest of state budget priorities.
- A funding formula that provides for a high quality education for all students that is consistently and fairly applied across the state.
- Public education funding being limited to public schools or alternative options that fall within the public school system.
- Funding of programs that foster children's language development, from birth to age 5, for success in kindergarten and beyond.
- Full funding of all state and federal mandates, so as not to place an undue burden on the local school system.

The League recommends that the assessment of the performance of schools and of teachers be based on multiple factors that indicate not only the overall quality of the education provided to the students, but also improvements in student academic growth measured through multiple methods, not solely through standardized tests.

Approved October 5, 2011 by Board of Directors
League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

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Education Position - Background Information

Based on the age of the 1999 revision of the education position, members approved a new study at the Annual Meeting in 2010 and an education Study Committee was formed. The Committee Members consisted of Jane Asche, Sue Cain, Sally Christman, Erika Graf-Webster, Roberta Gran, Judy McGuire, Betty Pool, and Bonnie Burn, Chair and President, LWV/GLC.

The Scope of Work was: 1) to review the local League education position, last amended in 1999, and 2) to determine if it is adequate and reflects the current situation in the Las Cruces Public School District. In addition, points of interest (e.g., funding, curriculum, educational structure, to name a few) were identified for inclusion in the study.

The committee members decided the 1999 position statement was outdated because of the numerous school reform initiatives that have occurred during the last 12 years. As a result, a complete study of the local public school system, K-12, was begun.

Study Process - occurred between April 2010 and September 2011 **and** included four components:

1. Literature search – on general education issues.
2. Study of local public education system – K-12
 - a. Interviewed individuals of interest, a broad array of stakeholders
 - b. Identified topics for in-depth review (NM Core Curriculum Standards, charter schools, standardized testing and teacher performance.)
 - c. Read seminal books (Diane Ravitch and Linda Darling-Hammond)
 - d. Wrote papers
3. Education of League members – Unit Meetings – 10-11:30 a.m.
 - a. State and Federal Government regulations & how they impact our local schools – July 18, Good Samaritan Social Center, Conference Room
 - b. Education reform movement and its relevance to our local school system – July 25 Unitarian Universalist Church, 2000 S. Solano Dr
 - c. It takes a community to build good schools – August 1, Good Samaritan Social Center, Conference Room
4. Consensus process - Mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion Everyone has an opportunity to express their viewpoints, and each issue is examined from all sides. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has been or cannot be reached on specific issues. The study committee analyzes the consensus responses and, using this information, creates a position statement.
 - Study Committee members created consensus questions that were discussed at the September 12, 2011 Lunch with a Leader meeting.
 - Committee members reviewed and calculated the results of the survey questionnaire.
 - Committee members reviewed and commented on a proposed position statement.
 - The Board of Directors at its October 5 Board meeting approved the position.
 - Advocacy follows approval
 - All League members will approve the new position when all local League positions are approved at Annual Meeting, April 2012.

With Much Gratitude

for help and support the Education Study Committee acknowledges

New Mexico State University - College of Education

Luis Reyes, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director, Curriculum and Instruction
Cristobal Rodriguez, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Educational Management and Development

Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS)

Stan Rounds, Superintendent
Steven Sánchez, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent, Division of Learning, Teaching, & Research
Terry Dean, Assistant Superintendent of Finance.

School Board

Dr. Connie Phillips, President
Dr. Bonnie Votaw, Secretary

High School Government Student Leadership

Las Cruces High School - Salvadore Estrada, Coordinator
Mayfield High School - Donna Rosati, Coordinator
San Andres Learning Center - Pamela Lyles-Saenz, Coordinator
To the students who participated, thank you.

LCPS District Advisory Council

Andrea Fletcher, Special Liaison to Superintendent and Coordinator
Members of Council: Carli Aquilera, Dr. Hiranya S. Rouchowdhury, Janel Ortiz, & Gerri Tumblin

National Education Association (NEA)

Patrick Sánchez, President and Mary Parr-Sánchez, Alternate Director
Debra Hanson, UniServ Consultant
Kathy Porter, Director of NEA of New Mexico
Irma Valdespino, President, NEA, New Mexico CSEC
Teresa Ybarra, Representative for Education Assistants

New Mexico Public Education Committee

Eugene Gant, Commissioner, District 7

Chambers of Commerce

Bill Allen, President/CEO, Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
Jesus Lozoya, Chair, Education Committee, and Gabriel Vasquez, Director, Hispano Chamber of Commerce

Other who made special contributions

Stephen H. Fischmann, Senator, State of New Mexico, Member Education Committee
Melanie Goodman, Field Representative, U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman
Irene Oliver Lewis, Artistic Producer/Founder, Alma d'arte Charter High School
Michelle Valverde, Project Director, Building Community Capacity for Educational Excellence

Education Study Committee, League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces:

Jane Asche, Sue Cain, Sally Christman, Roberta Gran, Erika Graf-Webster,
Judy McGuire, Betty Pool, and Bonnie Burn, Chair.