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SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF EDUCATION

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Dear NM STEM-Ready Collaborators,

As you know, New Mexico has been working to develop a comprehensive path forward on NM STEM-Ready for the last few years, and we are now at a critical inflection point for our state. Your leadership and partnership have been essential in getting New Mexico to where we are today, and your leadership on behalf of our state's students will matter greatly in the weeks and months ahead.

Your ongoing, constructive feedback has been incredibly helpful in advancing the state's proposal, and I would like to take the opportunity to share how your feedback continues to shape the New Mexico approach. In addition to what I have already shared, below you will find five areas where we will be responding directly to your input:

**The Importance of "The Framework" for Our Educators**

It was always our intent to capture the three-dimensional nature of the proposed standards, which include the Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas. While this level of detail was not included in the proposed rule, it should be assumed that the accompanying framework will follow and be front-and-center in our guidance and resources provided to educators. While the proposed rule change rightfully outlines only the standards (the performance expectations), the Public Education Department (PED) will publish an accompanying framework based upon the National Research Council's *Framework for K-12 Science Education*.

**The Alignment and Placement of the New Mexico-Specific Content**

Your input on the nature of the proposed New Mexico specific content standards has proven to be invaluable. You have noted that many of them do not follow the format of meaningful content standards, and that many belong in guidance or instructional resources instead. Given the concern about over-regulation, we are incorporating some of the New Mexico-specific content into clarifying statements, and strengthening the language where appropriate.

### **The Need for Increased Below-the-Line Funding for STEM**

We trust the advocacy for improved science standards will be matched with a similar show of support for increased targeted funding for critical STEM professional learning and support initiatives that put more resources into the classroom (including other below-the-line initiatives that invest in students and teachers where there is evidence that proves outcomes). Based on your input, the PED will propose an increase in funding to the classroom via this targeted investment. Please note that ultimately requires action from the Legislature. We fully understand the need for statewide, STEM-Ready professional development for teachers, for the building of open-source instructional materials with teachers, and for the ongoing training and support of our state's school leaders. Further, your feedback will help us analyze our state's instructional materials budget, and help us learn from districts that have already developed instructional resources to support the transition.

### **The Expansion of "Making Sense of Science" for Our State's Elementary School Teachers**

One of the state's most popular targeted investments is the "Making Sense of Science" institutes. If increased below-the-line funding is appropriated to send more resources to the classroom, this professional learning opportunity for elementary teachers will be expanded rapidly. As you know, these institutes focus on developing science content expertise for our K-6 teachers, with the sessions led by current and former New Mexico teacher-leaders. During the summer of 2017, 327 educators from across New Mexico participated. The PED has set a goal of no less than 500 New Mexico teachers in the summer of 2018, with the potential of growing even larger. Much like early literacy is critical for our student's long-term success, so is early science training. "Making Sense of Science" helps fill critical gaps in our elementary school teacher's preparation.

### **The Comprehensive STEM-Ready Agenda: Proposed Timeline for Full Implementation**

As we move ahead with the adoption of new standards, the PED looks forward to continued collaboration on the timeline for full implementation. This will include a statewide readiness survey (highlighting districts that are successfully implementing), a yearlong intensive professional development calendar, partnering with other leading states in developing assessments, a review of all end-of-course assessments, a rigorous instructional materials review process next summer, and ongoing stakeholder engagement on how to best incorporate STEM-Readiness into School Grades. This timeline will be released in full this winter based on ongoing input from our stakeholders. Please note that it will be a multi-year process with the appropriate blend of urgency and deliberation—and that New Mexico will be a leader amongst in this arena.

### **Next Steps**

As you know, the proposed regulation itself (the standards/performance expectations) is being finalized by the PED. We believe that we must move forward on behalf of our children, and we will continue to enlist the engagement of stakeholders as we move towards implementation.

Respectfully,



Christopher N. Ruszkowski  
Secretary-Designate, NM Public Education Department