

Gov. creates state's first Office of Special Education

Written by gallupsun
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ALBUQUERQUE — Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham created the Office of Special Education, the first dedicated office of its kind in New Mexico, through an executive order May 25. The governor also announced that a national search is underway for the director of the new office.

The Office of Special Education will operate within the Public Education Department to make sure school districts are providing the best possible special education services that align with state and federal laws.

“This office creates an opportunity for collaboration between state agencies, districts and families of students that we desperately need, and that the 50,000 New Mexico children in special education deserve,” Lujan Grisham said. “We are doing more to improve the quality of special education students receive by ensuring families are better supported in navigating a complicated system and that teachers receive consistent, up-to-date training.”

The PED is now required to:

- Establish a new Office of Special Education within PED, with an appointed director
- Require special education professional development for a wider range of education professionals
- Better coordinate special education with the agency
- More actively promote recruitment and retention of special educators
- Ensure comprehensive data collection, including on student disciplinary actions
- Require state technical assistance to districts and schools on key special education issues, including appropriate disciplinary actions and behavior management

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- Transfer special education preschool to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department

Lujan Grisham signed the executive order after legislation (House Bill 285) intended to codify the changes stalled in the last session. During the signing today at Lowell Elementary School, a Special Education HUB in the Albuquerque Public School district, the governor also announced a national search for a director position to lead the office.

“This position is vital to the success of the office and to moving the needle on improving our special education services,” Lujan Grisham said. “I am looking for someone committed to turning our current system on its head to better serve families and educators in special education.”

