



Office of the Governor

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Retired educators now eligible to return to work without losing pension benefits

*Education Retirement Board now accepting return to work
applications*

SANTA FE, NM – New Mexico’s 48,000 retired K-12 and higher education educators now have the opportunity to return to the classroom without losing their retirement benefits thanks to a new law enacted by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham this year.

Retired teachers and college faculty receiving pension benefits from the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board can now return to teaching for an additional three years within a New Mexico public school district, college, or university without forfeiting their retirement benefits.

“This is a win-win for New Mexico teachers and New Mexico students, as retired educators can now go back into classrooms without losing their hard-earned retirement benefits,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “I thank the dedicated professionals who go back to the classroom.”

“This law is one of the many ways that Gov. Lujan Grisham is supporting teachers and ensuring that New Mexico’s students can benefit from having caring and experienced educators in their classroom,” Public Education **Secretary Kurt Steinhaus** said. “This law is a great move for teachers who yearn to be back in the classroom and for all of public education in New Mexico.”

“Many retired teachers and professors are ready and willing to return to work, and with this program, we are recognizing them for their continued commitment to serving New Mexico students,” Higher Education **Secretary Stephanie M. Rodriguez** said. “Making it easier for experienced educators to reenter the classroom and not penalizing them for that decision will go a long way toward meeting the needs of our students and schools today.”

Retired educators who wanted to return to the classroom were previously forced to suspend their retirement or work quarter time and earn less than \$15,000. The new return-to-work program allows retirees to go back to work without salary or work hour limits. Applicants must observe a 90-day layoff period prior to becoming eligible for the program.

The Lujan Grisham administration is pursuing every available avenue to recruit new teachers. In addition to raising pay to the highest in the region earlier this year, the state now offers

scholarships and tuition-free education options for education assistants and other students in teacher preparation programs, loan forgiveness, alternative licensing and support and mentoring for high school and early college students interested in teaching careers.

Educational Retirees Returning to Work Act (House Bill 73) was sponsored by Representatives Garratt, Figueroa, and Lane, and was signed into law by Gov. Lujan Grisham this May.

“House Bill 73 is a great example of proactive legislation addressing New Mexico's urgent need to staff our schools with quality educators. The result of strong bipartisan collaboration, this legislation, led by Rep. Garratt and supported by the Lujan Grisham administration, will ease restrictions around return-to-work policies for retired educators, while maintaining the financial security of our educational pension fund,” said AFT New Mexico president **Whitney Holland**. “We already know this legislation is working, with many of our retired members actively pursuing a return to the classroom, which is a win for our students, our communities, and our profession.”

“This law ultimately supports New Mexico students with the gift of an experienced educator and provides a new pathway for these educators to return to work without penalty to their retirement. We thank Gov. Lujan Grisham and Rep. Garratt for implementing strategies to support New Mexico students and educators,” said National Education Association New Mexico President **Mary Parr-Sanchez**.

“House Bill 73 creates an immediate mechanism for recently retired teachers and professors to return to work quickly with quality pay. These professionals are one of our best resources for filling educator openings, particularly in high-need positions,” said bill sponsor **Rep. Joy Garratt**. “I’m delighted that our recently retired teachers who want to come back to the classroom can return without sitting out for an extended period.”

To participate in the program, retirees must apply with the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board (NMERB) and be approved prior to beginning work. Applications can be obtained via the ERB website at nmerb.org/forms. The NMERB offices are open to the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Staff is available to assist members with any questions regarding their return-to-work options to help members and schools prepare for the school year. If you have questions about eligibility or an existing pension, please visit the office or contact the NMERB at 866-691-2345 or member.help@state.nm.us.

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