



# Spring, 2018

[www.nmcape.org](http://www.nmcape.org) - [nmansinfo@gmail.com](mailto:nmansinfo@gmail.com)

## Textbook (IMF) case returns to State Supreme Court May 7

For the past two years NMANS has been keeping our non-public schools updated regarding the court battle to retain (and now recapture) our long-provided funding for textbooks and other instructional materials for our students and families.

A significant change occurred last summer when the U.S. Supreme Court remanded our case back to the New Mexico Supreme Court based upon their ruling in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer*. Our case is now back at the state level for oral arguments on May 7 in Santa Fe.

If overturned, this would return funding to all New Mexico K-12 private schools for instructional materials including textbooks. Over \$1.3 million in annual funding was lost due to this 2015 decision.

Our case is being presented by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty of Washington, D.C., along with a law firm in Albuquerque.

## 2018 Legislation Session Highlights

- **HB 25** - Provides college scholarships to survivors of Fire Fighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty.
- **SB 97** - Expedites teacher licensure for spouses of military families.
- **SB 119** – Increased minimum salaries for Level 1, 2 and 3A public school teachers.
- **SB 239** – Grant funding for school safety improvements. This bill was of great concern as the bill included only public and charter schools, private schools were excluded. The bill was sponsored by Senator George Munoz (D).

Prior to final signing, Senator Munoz and Governor Martinez were both contacted by NMANS asking that private schools be included in this important student safety bill. Unfortunately neither office returned our emails or phone calls.

## Troubling Statistics for our State

In multiple reports New Mexico (public) schools are now ranked the lowest in the nation (#50) in standardized test scores and college readiness, according to *Newscaper News* and *U.S. News and World Report*. A February 12 *Albuquerque Journal* article reported a related statistic showing that our state is now #1 in high school drop rates at 71%, an increase of 3% since last year.

As we continue into admissions season for our non-public schools, it is a great opportunity to inform prospective parents of the impressive statistics your school may be generating each year.

## Non-public schools again excel in 2018! National Merit Scholarship program

Last spring 1.6 million students from 22,000 high schools participated in PSAT testing, the qualifier for the National Merit Scholarship program. In New Mexico 100 students qualified as semi-finalists, of which 38% attend private schools including homeschooling. Statewide approximately 10% of all students attend non-public schools.

## SAVE THE DATE!

The annual NMANS administrative conference will be held on **September 14** in the Albuquerque area. More details soon!