

The State of Education in Northern New Mexico

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In collaboration with the
Northern New Mexico Council for Excellence in Education
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This report presents information on public education in seven counties of northern New Mexico impacted by the presence of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The purpose of this report is to provide information to assist parents, education advocacy groups, professional educators, state agency officials and lawmakers in adopting strategies to improve and sustain the quality of education in northern New Mexico.

Education in New Mexico has been examined in a variety of venues from vastly different perspectives. Many different groups have been organized and convened to study and recommend changes to the educational system. Although this report only includes data on 20 school districts in northern New Mexico, they are sufficiently representative of school districts throughout the State and recommendations are appropriate for the State as a whole.

Information in this report is unique in that the recommendations are based on a compilation of information that is publicly and readily available. The data are organized with the intention of generating discussion and debate. The primary sponsors of this report, the LANL Foundation and the Northern New Mexico Council for Excellence in Education, believe this report will be a resource to support the improvement of education in northern New Mexico.

Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation

The LANL Foundation was established in 1997 through a collaborative effort of the US Department of Energy, University of California, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos Public Schools and the New Mexico Congressional delegation. The Foundation funds a broad range of educational and public service activities in the communities where LANL and corporate partner employees live and work. As a guiding principle, the Foundation is dedicated to enhancing community life and the overall learning environment in northern New Mexico with the goal of maintaining a level of educational excellence that will enable LANL to recruit qualified employees from within the region to engage in the national missions of the Laboratory.

Since its inception, the Foundation has invested approximately \$6.5 million dollars in community and educational programs in northern New Mexico. The LANL Foundation has had the privilege of partnering and working with the creativity, dedication and enthusiasm of northern New Mexico school districts universities, community colleges, Pueblo communities and community and educational nonprofits. To meet its purpose, the Foundation established

three priorities for funding support: Educational Enrichment, Educational Outreach and Community Outreach.

The Educational Enrichment Grant Program is designed to provide educational enrichment support to eligible school districts. Educational enrichment grants are offered to schools based on an allocation formula derived from the number of Laboratory employees and contractors working within a given school district. Districts are required to submit proposals to the Foundation defining what programs or equipment would enrich education within their district through a Foundation grant. Education and Community Outreach Grants are competitive funding programs designed to create strong partnerships with local nonprofit organizations that are making a difference in the communities of northern New Mexico. Additionally, the Foundation manages the Los Alamos Employees' Scholarship Fund and awards academic scholarships to qualified high school graduates needing financial assistance to continue their education in institutions of higher education. To date, the LANL Foundation has raised \$148,000 helping 78 students attend the college of their choice.

The Northern New Mexico Council for Excellence in Education

The Northern New Mexico Council for Excellence in Education (NNMCEE) is a catalyst and an advocate for education and workforce development in northern New Mexico. There were fifteen founding members that included all levels of education. The founding group included four public school districts: Española, Los Alamos, Pojoaque, and Santa Fe. Four-year post secondary institutions that helped to establish NNMCEE were: the University of California, University of New Mexico, New Mexico Highlands University and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. Two-year post secondary institutions that participated in the founding of NNMCEE were: Northern New Mexico Community College, Santa Fe Community College and the University of New Mexico, Los Alamos Campus. Also participating in the original organization of NNMCEE were the Los Alamos National Laboratory, State Department of Education, Santa Clara Pueblo and Century Bank of Santa Fe.

In August 1999 NNMCEE established four goals. The first goal was to collect data on educational institutions, prepare a gap analysis, and compile a report on the state of education in northern New Mexico. This report meets part of the first goal. The second goal was to recommend 4-5 educational initiatives for funding by the LANL Foundation, the New Mexico Legislature, and other funding agencies. Goal three was to partner with schools and colleges for the advancement of excellence in education, communicate NNMCEE activities, and assist in meeting high academic standards. The fourth goal was to establish the Middle School Science and Math Academy in northern New Mexico.

THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

The state of education in northern New Mexico is not significantly different from the general condition of education in the State as a whole. As with any assessments of quality, New Mexico's educational system has some strengths as well as areas that need improvement. This section of the report presents data used as a basis for recommendations for action. The following school districts are included: Bernalillo, Chama Valley, Cuba, Dulce, Española, Jemez Mountain, Jemez Valley, Las Vegas City, Las Vegas West, Los Alamos, Mesa Vista, Mora, Pecos, Peñasco, Pojoaque, Questa, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Taos, and Wagon Mound.

Student Characteristics and Achievements

K-12

- ✓ A majority of the New Mexico's school population is either Hispanic or Native American. Only 35.7% of the state's school population is Anglo. Nine of the twenty districts reviewed have over 80% Hispanic enrollment. Hispanics are 80.3% of the enrollment in the Las Vegas West district, and Native Americans are 92.6% of the student population in the Dulce district. Anglos represent 80.3% of the enrollment in the Los Alamos district.
- ✓ A significant number of children between the ages 5-17 are living in poverty in the districts covered by this report. This number represents approximately 12% of the statewide goal.
- ✓ The area covered by these school districts is 16.3% of the land area in the State with 16.1% of the school population. It is rural with an average of less than three students per square mile in the service areas of these schools.
- ✓ During the 1998-1999 school year, only the Jemez Valley district showed an improvement in writing assessments between the fourth and sixth grades.
- ✓ Nine districts improved their statewide ranking in CTBS 5 and Terra Nova standard-based scores between the sixth and eighth grades. Eight schools showed a decrease, and three districts showed no change.
- ✓ Ten districts showed improvement in CTBS 5 and Terra Nova normed scores between the sixth and eighth grades. An equal number of districts dropped in rank.

- ✓ The Jemez Mountain district had the lowest drop out rate for high school students, 0.7%, while the Española district had the highest rate at 17.8%.
- ✓ Los Alamos High School had the highest pass rate for all the subtests in the tenth grade competency exam, 95.8%, compared to the lowest rate by Cuba High School at 59.2%.
- ✓ In 1998-1999, Los Alamos High School had the highest participation rate in Advanced Placement (AP) courses totaling 10.7% of the statewide enrollment. The Dulce, Jemez Valley, Peñasco and Wagon Mound High Schools had no Advanced Placement courses. Smaller schools throughout the region have limited, and often erratic, AP course offerings that vary according to staff availability.
- ✓ Only Los Alamos and Santa Fe High School students consistently earn AP exam scores that are equal to or above the national average.
- ✓ The Chama Valley district had 100% of its entering seniors graduating at the end of the school year. The Cuba district reported the lowest graduation rate of 77.0%.
- ✓ The Los Alamos district had the highest ACT composite score in the state, 24.1, while the Jemez Valley district had the lowest composite, 15.3, in the State.

Post Secondary

- ✓ About 95% of the State's population lives within 35 miles of a college or university campus.
- ✓ Over 106,000 students attended public colleges and universities with 53% enrolled in two-year institutions, and 47% enrolled in four-year institutions.
- ✓ Women comprised 56% of the enrollment in four-year institutions, and 60% of the enrollment in two-year institutions. Overall, women accounted for 58% of the enrollment in higher education.
- ✓ Approximately 50% of the college enrollment in the state is Anglo; 34% Hispanic; 7% Native American; 2% Black and 2% Asian.
- ✓ The average age for undergraduate students attending four-year institutions was 24 years, while the average age for those attending two-year institutions was 31 years.
- ✓ Slightly more than 50% of students enrolled in a research university completed their undergraduate degree in a ten-year period. Fewer than 33% of students enrolled in a regional/comprehensive university earn a degree.

- ✓ Over 55% of students enrolled in two-year institutions accomplished individual learning goals (30%) or moved to higher level of instruction (25%).
- ✓ Community colleges report that 47%-61% of students enrolling are academically under-prepared, and require developmental or remedial courses.
- ✓ Community colleges provided contract training for 535 employers.
- ✓ Approximately 90% of the businesses in New Mexico have fewer than 25 employees. To better serve the needs of these employers and prospective employers, the New Mexico Small Business Development Center network was established. The network was strategically established at our community colleges throughout the state in 1989. In the period July 1, 1997 to June 30, 1998, NMSBDC helped 271 businesses open throughout the state creating 798 full-time jobs and 275 part-time jobs.

School Personnel

K-12

- ✓ Public schools employ approximately 21,000 classroom teachers. Over the next 10 years, public schools will need approximately 1,850 new teachers per year.
- ✓ State institutions graduate 1,200-1,300 new teachers per year. Some go out of state to teach, others choose not to join the profession, and 30% of those who enter the profession leave within three years.
- ✓ The State Department of Education granted 125 licensure waivers to personnel in the 20 school districts. There were 102 waivers granted due to lack of coursework.
- ✓ The average teacher salary without increments statewide was \$32,004. By comparison the average salary for Los Alamos teachers was \$38,859, and the lowest average teacher salary was \$30,235 earned by teachers in the Las Vegas City district.
- ✓ Average teacher loads range from 9.1 students per teacher in the Wagon Mound district to 19.6 students per teacher in the Española district.

Post Secondary

- ✓ The average salary statewide for community college faculty for two-year institutions is \$34,075. Within the region, UNM Los Alamos has the lowest average salary at \$32,000 and Luna Vocational Tech has the highest average salary at \$34,908.
- ✓ The average faculty salary for New Mexico Highlands University is \$42,326 while the average faculty salary in its peer comparison group is \$46,313.

Funding

K-12

- ✓ State appropriations account for 90% of the total operational funding for schools.
- ✓ Public schools receive slightly less than half, 46.6%, of the state general fund appropriation.
- ✓ The average per pupil expenditure in net operating costs for schools in the region was \$5,253. Wagon Mound has the highest average expenditure at \$7,844 per student, with Rio Rancho the lowest expenditure per student at \$ 3,991. The average per pupil expenditure for the United States in 1997-1998 was \$6,189.

Post Secondary

- ✓ State appropriations fund 67% of the revenues for universities and 60% of the revenues for two-year institutions. The balance of operating revenues are from tuition and fees, local mill levy (two-year institutions), land and permanent fund income (four-year institutions), and miscellaneous revenue.
- ✓ Higher education receives 16.9% of the general fund appropriations.
- ✓ The average expenditure in instructional and general per full time equivalent (FTE) student was \$9,391 at the university level, and \$6,089 at the two-year institutions.

Policies and Priorities

K-12

- ✓ Since 1998, statutes have been enacted which require school districts and the New Mexico Department of Education to publish local and statewide accountability reports according to various indicators.
- ✓ The State Board of Education requires school districts to undergo accreditation process according to “*Standards for Excellence*”.
- ✓ The State Board of Education requires all school districts to submit *Educational Plans for Student Success* that specify district educational goals.

Post Secondary

- ✓ Federal law requires states to provide data on teacher preparation standards and procedures.
- ✓ The New Mexico Commission on Higher Education has adopted Principles for Accountability in Higher Education to encourage state-level accountability in assessing the effectiveness of higher education in achieving state goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

During this election year the condition of education is a hot political topic. *The Albuquerque Journal* recently reported on a poll that indicated 40% of the voters in New Mexico ranked education as the number one priority for the State. Over half of the State's general fund is spent on education. Yet in spite of the level of expenditure and employees that are caring, compassionate, and committed, the education provided many students in northern New Mexico schools is sub-standard and in crisis.

Students do not have the same access to opportunities for success. Many school physical facilities are not safe and conducive to a supportive learning environment. Schools cannot provide students with access to modern technology to ensure participation in the information revolution. Schools are unable to hire and retain qualified employees due to financial constraints.

Although many solutions are being proposed to improve the condition of education, this report advocates two fundamental actions. First, citizens, parents, and students must come together to focus on actions that will result in improved student achievement. Second, more money will need to be allocated to adequately fund education in the State. Options for increasing state revenues to support education at a higher level must be exercised.

Based on the data presented in this report, commitment and money are needed to pursue the following recommendations:

1. Communities must perform their own evaluation of the condition of education based on an understanding of their students' characteristics, achievement levels and resources.
 - A. District personnel must use their knowledge of the community to establish annual goals for student achievement that are widely publicized and supported by the community-at-large.
 - B. Schools must institute rigorous curricula that focus on the individual and challenge all students. For example, studies indicate that Algebra and science are critical subjects for all students in high school.
 - C. All high school students must have access to Advanced Placement courses, concurrent enrollment courses, or Internet-based courses provided by colleges and universities to enhance and enrich curriculum, encouraging higher-level learning.

2. Public involvement in education must increase, and accountability must be established at all levels.
 - A. Voters must require Board candidates to declare data-based goals for improvement of the condition of education.
 - B. Boards must hold school superintendents and college presidents accountable with a written performance contract that stipulates specific conditions of education that must be improved within a given time frame. Compensation for superintendents and presidents and their continued employment must be tied to meeting these performance goals.
 - C. Principals and school-based advisory boards must work collaboratively to develop data-based annual performance goals evolving from the school's specific needs. A system must be instituted to reward principals and teachers who achieve stated goals.
 - D. Individual teachers must prepare written goals for student achievement at the beginning of the school year. Goals must be articulated from one grade to another. Teachers must be supported in meeting these goals through participation in professional development or mentoring programs.
3. Public education must engage in partnerships and collaborate with employers to ensure that needs of workforce development are met.
 - A. The schools must be able to implement employability skills standards across the high school curriculum.
 - B. The Commission on Higher Education must require all colleges and universities to report employment rates and employer satisfaction for students receiving certificates or degrees from institutions of higher learning as an indicator of success in workforce development.
 - C. The Commission on Higher Education must require all two-year programs whose primary goal is employment to be evaluated by an advisory group of employers.
 - D. The higher education funding formula must provide incentives for institutions to actively solicit and deliver contract-training programs for employers.

4. Teacher and other salaries must be increased to the regional average with the long-term goal of increasing salaries to the national average. In 1999 the average teacher salary in the United States was \$40,600 compared to the New Mexico average teacher salary of \$32,000.
 - A. Teacher contract days must be increased to include time for mandatory professional development activities.
 - B. Teacher salaries should be pro-rated based on performance evaluation and classification in three tiers: beginning, experienced and master teacher.
 - C. Licensure standards must be evaluated for appropriateness, and reciprocal agreements negotiated with neighboring states.
 - D. Financial support must be provided to encourage teachers to undertake additional education, achieve national licensure, and attain national certification.
 - E. Salaries for all education employees must be increased so that school districts and colleges are able to recruit and hire highly effective and qualified employees.
5. Advances in information technology must be applied to improve education and mitigate rural isolation.
 - A. Teaching and learning in all schools should incorporate resources available through the Internet.
 - B. Teacher training and staff development using information technology must be increased to deliver programs locally and at times convenient to participants.
6. Accountability must be meaningful and appropriate for each institution.
 - A. Measurements of progress and indicators of performance must be defined and reported in the same manner to ensure validity and comparability.
 - B. Monetary incentives must be provided for institutions that improve.

THE COMMUNITIES

The US Department of Energy's contract for the management of the Los Alamos National Laboratory included a section on "regional initiatives" which committed the University of California to contribute to the economic diversification to reduce the region's economic dependence on federal expenditures. Seven counties in northern New Mexico were included in the region of influence by LANL: Los Alamos, Mora, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Miguel, Santa Fe and Taos. These counties have approximately 14.3% of the state's population, and represent the full spectrum of New Mexico's diversity. Although the state's population is primarily rural, the counties included in this report include some of the larger as well as smaller populations. The per capita income for these counties also spans the range including representation at both the highest and lowest levels. The unemployment rates of these counties are also indicators of the diversity of the economic characteristics of the region.

Table 1
County Profile

County	Population July-98	Per Capita Income 1997	Unemployment Rate October-99
Los Alamos	18,344	\$32,095	2.0%
Mora	4,861	\$12,153	14.1%
Rio Arriba	37,787	\$12,858	7.1%
Sandoval	8,049	\$18,453	4.3%
San Miguel	28,996	\$13,363	7.0%
Santa Fe	123,386	\$25,453	3.1%
Taos	26,815	\$16,540	11.6%
New Mexico	1,736,931	\$17,689	5.3%

Source: Bureau of Business & Economic Research

The following table profiles the ethnic composition of this region. With the exception of Los Alamos and Sandoval Counties, all have a majority Hispanic population. Los Alamos County has a significant Anglo population, while Sandoval has a high number of Native Americans.

Table 2
Ethnic Composition by County

County	White Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Other Ethnic Minority
Los Alamos	84.1%	11.7%	4.2%
Mora	14.1%	85.4%	0.5%
Rio Arriba	12.4%	73.5%	14.1%
Sandoval	49.3%	28.9%	21.8%
San Miguel	18.2%	79.9%	1.9%
Santa Fe	45.6%	51.0%	3.4%
Taos	26.9%	66.3%	6.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

A significant indicator of the economic viability of the region is the diversity of employment opportunities. As indicated by Table 3, this region is characterized by a high dependence on two employment sectors. A little over 68.8% of the employment in this region is provided by government employment or occupations in service and miscellaneous services. Los Alamos National Laboratory and the State government are significant employers in the region. Retail trades is the third significant employer group for the area. Unfortunately, jobs in services and retail trades tend to pay among the lowest average annual wages.

Table 3
Workforce Profile
1998 Annual Average

County	Manfctrng	Mining	Contract Constr	Transp Public Utilities	Whlsl Trades	Retail Trades	Fin, Ins Real Est	Svces & Misc	Govt	Total
Los Alamos	84	0	2	56	72	1,001	396	5,150	10,474	17,235
Mora	9	0	0	54	47	0	11	271	339	731
Rio Arriba	392	57	4	337	123	1,531	296	2,975	4,255	9,970
Sandoval	***	27	12	773	326	4,410	651	9,338	5,144	20,681
San Miguel	155	***	3	173	81	1,504	290	2,005	4,199	8,410
Santa Fe	1,879	61	33	1,276	1,308	12,672	3,107	16,789	14,583	51,708
Taos	219	***	7	262	88	2,519	546	3,970	1,902	9,513
Total	2,738	145	61	2,931	2,045	23,637	5,297	40,498	40,896	118,248

*** Included in Services and Misc.

Source: NM Department of Labor

Clearly, if the goal of independence from government employment is to be accomplished, community development efforts must be launched to diversify the employer pool by attracting new business or encouraging entrepreneurship and the creation of new business. A significant factor in this process is the educational system.

The quality of the educational system provides at least two indicators for economic development. First, it is an indicator of the caliber of work force that is readily available for new or emerging enterprises. Second, the quality of education can be a catalyst or deterrent for businesses that may require families with school-age children to relocate.

WORKFORCE NEEDS

As part of its efforts, NNMCEE convened two workshops to solicit feedback on employer needs, and make recommendations on how education could respond to these needs. The first session was held on December 16, 1999, and a follow-up session was held on March 8, 2000.

The results of these sessions established the following five categories of skills wanted by employers: employability, interpersonal, personal, content knowledge and advanced life skills. Most of these are socialization skills learned primarily in the home. A general consensus was that employers favored an individual with basic life skills who was willing and able to learn.

Included in the employability skills favored by employers were good work habits. These included behavior such as being prompt, dressing appropriately and completing tasks according to acceptable standards. A strong work ethic was also a desired quality. Good time management skills were thought to contribute a high level of job productivity.

Employers also felt that good interpersonal skills would improve an individual's work performance. In today's employment market there is a strong reliance on working as part of a team as a member of an organization. The inability to work well with other people is seen as a detriment to successful participation in the workforce. Employers would also like individuals who are culturally sensitive and accepting of diversity in the workplace.

Personal skills such as attitude, disposition, common sense and understanding of appropriate behavior in the workplace were seen as requisites for successful sustained employment. Accountability and responsibility were other traits included in this category.

Employers also expressed expectations that graduates of either high school or post secondary educational institutions would have some basic knowledge that would help in performing entry level responsibilities. Equally important was the expectation that educational institutions must teach the student to learn so that training opportunities provided by employers would be successful. Employers would like to know that all job applicants have basic skills in speaking, reading, writing and mathematical computation.

Finally, the ideal employee would also have advanced life skills. This characteristic is the creative aspect of an individual. Employers would like to see employees "think out of the box", arrive at creative solutions to existing situations, and contribute to the general development of the organization. Advance life skills would also include the ability to take risks and learn from errors or mistakes.

The educational institutions' response to the employers' needs are categorized in two areas. One is knowledge of content, and the other is in the socialization of students to introduce or reinforce employability and life skills. Employers strongly voiced expectations, for example, that if a student successfully completed an accounting course, they would have a basic knowledge of accounting principles. Employers also suggested that post-secondary institutions improve their preparation of students for employment. One example cited to hold students accountable for meeting established rules and standards.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

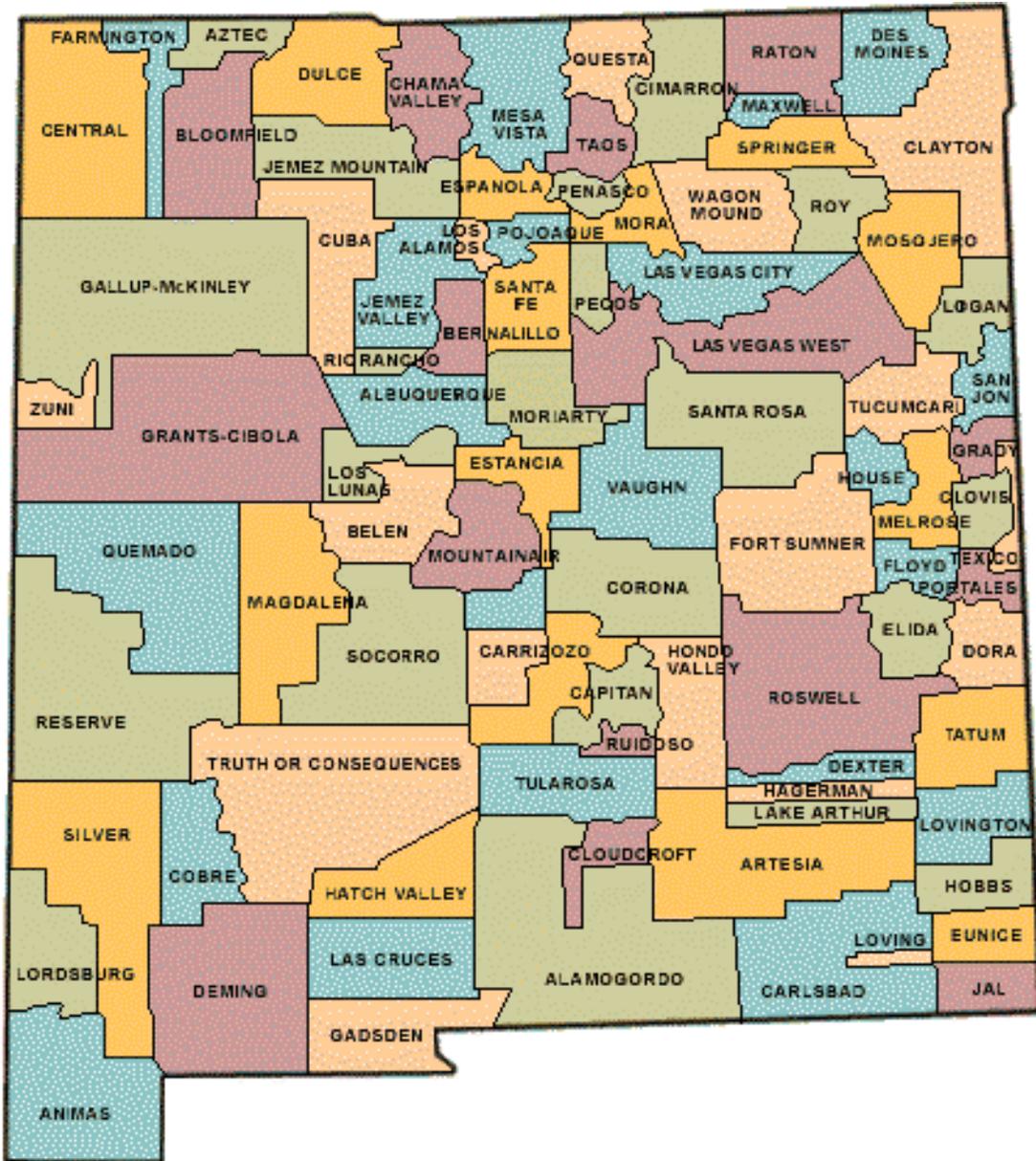
The 20 school districts included in this report are: Bernalillo, Chama Valley, Cuba, Dulce, Española, Jemez Mountain, Jemez Valley, Las Vegas, City, Las Vegas, West, Los Alamos, Mesa Vista, Mora, Pecos, Peñasco, Pojoaque, Questa, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Taos and Wagon Mound.

Logically, the racial/ethnic distribution of students in northern New Mexico reflects the overall population of their respective counties. Nine of the school districts have over 80% Hispanic enrollment. Native Americans are 92.6% of the enrollment in the Dulce district and Anglos are 80.3% of the student population in the Los Alamos district.

Table 4
Student Body Racial/Ethnic Composition

District	Anglo	Hispanic	Native Amer	Black	Asian	Other
Bernalillo	10.7%	47.1%	41.3%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%
Chama Valley	14.6%	82.3%	1.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
Cuba	5.5%	36.8%	57.6%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Dulce	1.4%	6.0%	92.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Española	5.0%	89.8%	4.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Jemez Mountain	13.2%	73.6%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Jemez Valley	14.5%	26.8%	58.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Las Vegas City	12.7%	85.8%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%
Las Vegas West	4.9%	94.6%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Los Alamos	80.3%	14.0%	0.7%	0.5%	3.8%	0.7%
Mesa Vista	12.8%	80.8%	3.7%	1.0%	0.2%	1.5%
Mora	4.6%	95.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Pecos	10.3%	88.5%	1.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Peñasco	5.0%	87.8%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Pojoaque	9.8%	72.2%	17.1%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%
Questa	12.2%	87.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.0%
Rio Rancho	60.2%	30.6%	3.1%	3.3%	2.5%	0.3%
Santa Fe	29.3%	64.8%	2.9%	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%
Taos	21.1%	71.7%	6.5%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%
Wagon Mound	21.5%	71.5%	5.8%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
New Mexico	35.7%	49.3%	11.0%	2.3%	1.0%	0.7%

Figure 1
Map of New Mexico School Districts



Source: State Department of Education

As indicated by Figure 1, there are eighty-nine school districts in the state of varying shapes and sizes. Each is governed by a locally elected school board. The 20 districts covered in this report represent almost one-fourth of the districts in the State. Table 5 illustrates the variety in geography and size of the school districts.

Table 5
District Size and Student Population

School District	Square Miles	Students
Bernalillo	648	3,592
Chama Valley	1,178	588
Cuba	1,764	861
Dulce	1,294	730
Española	712	4,854
Jemez Mountain	1,655	386
Jemez Valley	1,115	598
Las Vegas City	1,261	2,547
Las Vegas West	3,065	2,149
Los Alamos	109	3,705
Mesa Vista	1,740	594
Mora	753	706
Pecos	383	889
Peñasco	262	700
Pojoaque	309	2,015
Questa	659	225
Rio Rancho	147	9,998
Santa Fe	1,016	13,534
Taos	637	3,408
Wagon Mound	1,153	172
Total	19,860	52,251
New Mexico	121,596	324,520

Source: NM Department of Education

Many studies on assessing educational progress have linked socio-economic conditions with student success. Three of the school districts in northern New Mexico are ranked among the State's top 10 school districts with children living in poverty.

Table 6
Children Living in Poverty

School District	Children Ages 5-17		Rank
	Number	Percent	
Bernalillo	1,627	30.6%	51
Chama Valley	252	37.5%	29
Cuba	1,117	63.3%	3
Dulce	266	30.2%	52
Española	2,474	33.2%	39
Jemez Mountain	258	31.4%	44
Jemez Valley	453	30.6%	50
Las Vegas City	794	27.9%	63
Las Vegas West	1,298	54.5%	6
Los Alamos	100	2.8%	89
Mesa Vista	235	43.0%	14
Mora	351	42.8%	16
Pecos	316	40.3%	24
Peñasco	384	45.6%	10
Pojoaque	279	13.8%	85
Questa	189	22.5%	73
Rio Rancho	388	4.5%	88
Santa Fe	2,986	17.5%	83
Taos	1,420	39.3%	25
Wagon Mound	77	41.8%	18
Total	15,264		

Source: NM Department of Education

As part of State School Board's effort to demonstrate accountability, a variety of strategies have been implemented to report student progress. The following tables represent measures of student achievement as presented in *The Accountability Report, 1999* issued by the State Department of Education.

Scores indicating writing skills showed a decrease between the fourth and sixth grades in all but one of the school districts. Only the Jemez Valley district showed an improvement.

Table 7
Writing Assessment
Scorable Papers with Holistic Score
3.0 or Greater
1998-99

School District	Grade 4	Grade 6	Change
Bernalillo	80.5%	27.6%	(52.9)
Chama Valley	75.6%	70.9%	(4.7)
Cuba	88.5%	63.0%	(25.5)
Dulce	45.6%	43.3%	(2.3)
Española	70.4%	58.4%	(12.0)
Jemez Mountain	70.3%	62.1%	(8.2)
Jemez Valley	47.6%	62.9%	15.3
Las Vegas, City	81.7%	71.8%	(9.9)
Las Vegas, West	86.4%	66.0%	(20.4)
Los Alamos	89.1%	85.2%	(3.9)
Mesa Vista	94.1%	42.8%	(51.3)
Mora	84.7%	80.4%	(4.3)
Pecos	80.9%	29.1%	(51.8)
Peñasco	92.3%	86.9%	(5.4)
Pojoaque	86.0%	60.7%	(25.3)
Questa	69.7%	55.8%	(13.9)
Rio Rancho	89.7%	73.4%	(16.3)
Santa Fe	82.6%	69.5%	(13.1)
Taos	83.9%	54.2%	(29.7)
Wagon Mound	100.0%	50.0%	(50.0)
Statewide	81.4%	67.1%	(14.3)

Table 8
 CTBS 5/Terra Nova
 Standards Based Proficiency
 Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
 1998-99

School District	Grade 6	Grade 8	Change
Bernalillo	73	80	7
Chama Valley	60	50	(10)
Cuba	83	78	(5)
Dulce	88	88	0
Española	79	79	0
Jemez Mountain	86	34	(52)
Jemez Valley	47	65	18
Las Vegas, City	66	48	(18)
Las Vegas, West	72	73	1
Los Alamos	1	1	0
Mesa Vista	56	79	23
Mora	46	62	16
Pecos	81	70	(11)
Peñasco	74	49	(25)
Pojoaque	55	67	12
Questa	48	46	(2)
Rio Rancho	23	9	(14)
Santa Fe	25	42	17
Taos	52	56	4
Wagon Mound	87	72	(15)

Table 9
CTBS 5/Terra Nova
Norm Referenced Median Score
1998-99

District	Grade 6	Grade 8	Change
Bernalillo	33.0	26.1	(6.9)
Chama Valley	44.0	58.4	14.4
Cuba	27.5	22.3	(5.2)
Dulce	12.9	20.4	7.5
Española	32.7	27.8	(4.9)
Jemez Mountain	37.2	53.8	16.6
Jemez Valley	56.0	40.0	(16.0)
Las Vegas, City	39.8	47.4	7.6
Las Vegas, West	34.5	36.4	1.9
Los Alamos	85.0	82.6	(2.4)
Mesa Vista	49.7	33.2	(16.5)
Mora	51.3	34.0	(17.3)
Pecos	29.5	40.0	10.5
Peñasco	38.0	48.0	10.0
Pojoaque	47.2	39.4	(7.8)
Questa	54.0	58.0	4.0
Rio Rancho	53.4	60.1	6.7
Santa Fe	52.5	47.5	(5.0)
Taos	44.0	46.5	2.5
Wagon Mound	16.0	26.0	10.0
Statewide	47.4	49.3	1.9

Table 10
 High School Competency Exam
 Grade 10 Students Passing All Subtests
 Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
 1998-99

District	Percent	Current Rank	Prior Yr Rank	Change in Rank
Bernalillo	73.4%	79	82	(3)
Chama Valley	80.4%	61	82	(21)
Cuba	59.2%	88	89	(1)
Dulce	75.8%	75	56	19
Española	77.1%	73	74	(1)
Jemez Mountain	87.9%	32	58	(26)
Jemez Valley	76.5%	74	86	(12)
Las Vegas, City	87.5%	34	31	3
Las Vegas, West	82.7%	53	44	9
Los Alamos	95.8%	7	11	(4)
Mesa Vista	94.0%	12	78	(66)
Mora	84.7%	40	77	(37)
Pecos	73.8%	78	65	13
Peñasco	91.3%	20	51	(31)
Pojoaque	82.1%	55	48	7
Questa	86.0%	36	18	18
Rio Rancho	94.7%	10	21	(11)
Santa Fe	79.8%	66	49	17
Taos	91.2%	21	75	(54)
Wagon Mound	90.5%	24	37	(13)
Statewide	88.0%			

Table 11
Drop Out Rates
Grades 9-12
Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
1997-98

District	Current Rate	Prior Yr Rank	Change In Rank	
Bernalillo	10.8%	82	74	(8)
Chama Valley	2.1%	28	41	13
Cuba	5.8%	58	76	18
Dulce	7.8%	70	55	(15)
Española	17.8%	89	87	(2)
Jemez Mountain	70.0%	17	80	63
Jemez Valley	14.4%	86	39	(47)
Las Vegas, City	9.4%	78	78	0
Las Vegas, West	3.9%	41	61	20
Los Alamos	1.4%	21	27	6
Mesa Vista	1.0%	20	13	(7)
Mora	80.0%	18	21	3
Pecos	4.0%	44	33	(11)
Peñasco	1.7%	24	12	12
Pojoaque	4.6%	51	49	(2)
Questa	16.4%	87	80	(7)
Rio Rancho	4.5%	49	NA	NA
Santa Fe	10.8%	82	69	(13)
Taos	6.6%	63	67	4
Wagon Mound	6.3%	61	29	(32)
Statewide	7.1%			

Table 12

Statewide Enrollment in
Advanced Placement Courses
1998-99

District	Enrollment	Participation Rate
Bernalillo	27	0.3%
Chama Valley	16	0.2%
Cuba	18	0.2%
Dulce	0	0.0%
Española	90	1.2%
Jemez Mountain	10	0.1%
Jemez Valley	0	0.0%
Las Vegas, City	113	1.5%
Las Vegas, West	71	0.9%
Los Alamos	834	10.7%
Mesa Vista	8	0.1%
Mora	8	0.1%
Pecos	56	0.7%
Peñasco	0	0.0%
Pojoaque	67	0.9%
Questa	23	0.3%
Rio Rancho	57	0.7%
Santa Fe	220	2.8%
Taos	78	1.0%
Wagon Mound	0	0.0%
Statewide	7,784	100.0

Table 13
 ACT Composite Scores
 Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
 1998-99

District	Median Score	Current Rank	Prior Yr Rank	Change In Rank
Bernalillo	18.9	47	72	25
Chama Valley	17.3	71	44	(27)
Cuba	15.6	88	86	(2)
Dulce	16.5	79	86	7
Española	17.9	64	57	(7)
Jemez Mountain	16.9	76	47	(29)
Jemez Valley	15.3	89	76	(13)
Las Vegas, City	20.0	23	26	3
Las Vegas, West	17.2	73	66	(7)
Los Alamos	24.1	1	1	0
Mesa Vista	19.8	29	43	14
Mora	17.9	64	76	12
Pecos	17.8	66	57	(9)
Peñasco	19.2	43	68	25
Pojoaque	19.2	43	57	14
Questa	18.9	47	69	22
Rio Rancho	19.9	27	NA	NA
Santa Fe	20.5	15	20	5
Taos	19.8	29	33	4
Wagon Mound	17.7	68	79	11
Statewide	19.2			

Table 14
 High School Graduation Rates
 Rank Order Among 89 School Districts

District	Entering Seniors	Graduating Seniors	Current Rank	Prior Yr Rank	Change in Rank
Bernalillo	172	96.5%	19	74	55
Chama Valley	34	100.0%	1	50	49
Cuba	87	77.0%	88	54	(34)
Dulce	24	87.5%	69	28	(41)
Española	235	77.9%	87	68	(19)
Jemez Mountain	24	79.2%	86	42	(44)
Jemez Valley	35	94.3%	35	39	4
Las Vegas, City	168	94.0%	38	20	(18)
Las Vegas, West	115	98.3%	12	30	18
Los Alamos	286	91.3%	49	66	17
Mesa Vista	33	97.0%	17	1	(16)
Mora	65	90.8%	51	32	(19)
Pecos	62	93.5%	42	77	35
Peñasco	46	95.7%	22	23	1
Pojoaque	124	83.9%	82	22	(60)
Questa	40	85.0%	78	36	(42)
Rio Rancho	447	93.7%	41	NA NA	
Santa Fe	729	83.0%	83	79	(4)
Taos	232	90.1%	54	60	6
Wagon Mound	4	100.0%	1	1	0

Table 15
Average Salaries for Returning Teachers
Without Increment
Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
1998-99

District	Rate	Current Rank	Prior Yr Rank	Change in Rank
Bernalillo	\$34,179	15	15	0
Chama Valley	\$30,611	67	65	(2)
Cuba	\$37,613	6	4	(2)
Dulce	\$31,784	47	81	34
Española	\$31,552	52	48	(4)
Jemez Mountain	\$32,032	39	11	(28)
Jemez Valley	\$33,782	20	18	(2)
Las Vegas, City	\$30,235	73	72	(1)
West Las Vegas	\$30,390	70	69	(1)
Los Alamos	\$38,859	3	2	(1)
Mesa Vista	\$31,872	44	41	(3)
Mora	\$32,476	34	40	6
Pecos	\$30,381	71	54	(17)
Peñasco	\$35,511	9	10	1
Pojoaque	\$31,037	59	49	(10)
Questa	\$33,018	28	42	14
Rio Rancho	\$31,096	58	61	3
Santa Fe	\$31,702	48	70	22
Taos	\$32,153	37	35	(2)
Wagon Mound	\$32,022	40	52	12
Statewide	\$32,004			
United States	\$40,600			

Table 16
 Net Operational Expenditures
 Per Student Membership
 Rank Order Among 89 School Districts
 1998-99

District	Rate	Current Rank	Prior Yr Rank	Change in Rank
Bernalillo	\$5,195	39	46	7
Chama Valley	\$5,661	25	27	2
Cuba	\$4,960	45	40	(5)
Dulce	\$5,266	38	48	10
Española	\$4,393	64	59	(5)
Jemez Mountain	\$5,965	19	NA	NA
Jemez Valley	\$5,603	26	39	13
Las Vegas, City	\$4,272	69	66	(3)
Las Vegas, West	\$4,893	47	50	3
Los Alamos	\$6,883	7	9	2
Mesa Vista	\$5,785	23	14	(9)
Mora	\$5,018	43	41	(2)
Pecos	\$5,061	42	45	3
Peñasco	\$5,372	34	34	0
Pojoaque	\$4,561	56	58	2
Questa	\$5,858	21	12	(24)
Rio Rancho	\$3,991	81	74	(7)
Santa Fe	\$4,220	73	71	(2)
Taos	\$4,654	52	54	2
Wagon Mound	\$7,844	5	4	(1)
Statewide	\$4,394			

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There are two-year institutions, which serve the northern New Mexico region. These are Luna Vocational Technical School, Northern New Mexico Community College, Santa Fe Community College, UNM Los Alamos and UNM Taos; New Mexico Highlands University is the only regional/comprehensive institution located in the area. The research universities, University of New Mexico, New Mexico State and New Mexico Tech provide educational services to the region's graduates.

Table 17
Ethnic Composition of Student Population

	Anglo	Hispanic	American Indian	Black	Asian	Other
Luna Voc-Tech	11%	86%	1%	0%	0%	2%
Northern NM	17%	74%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Santa Fe CC	49%	38%	3%	1%	1%	8%
UNM Los Alamos	56%	29%	6%	1%	3%	5%
UNM Taos	32%	52%	6%	1%	1%	8%
NMHU	29%	58%	5%	3%	1%	4%
NM Tech	70%	16%	3%	1%	2%	8%
NMSU	51%	39%	3%	2%	2%	4%
UNM	56%	27%	5%	3%	3%	6%
Statewide	50%	34%	7%	2%	2%	4%

Table 18
Average Faculty Salaries

Institution	Average Faculty Salary	Average for Group
Luna Voc-Tech	34,908	
Northern NM	32,309	
Santa Fe CC	33,342	
UNM Los Alamos	32,000	
UNM Taos	32,800	
		33,072
NMHU	42,326	42,326
NM Tech	51,647	
NMSU	49,813	
UNM	55,900	
		52,453

Table 19
Net Expenditures Per FTE Student

Institution	FTE	Dollars Per FTE
Luna Voc-Tech	823	9,288
Northern NM	1,148	7,452
Santa Fe CC	2,122	7,263
UNM Los Alamos	390	7,285
UNM Taos	399	6,104
Total Two-Year	4,882	7,478
NMHU	2,036	11,914
NM Tech	1,269	16,673
NMSU	12,656	8,585
UNM	18,152	9,375
Total Four Year	32,077	11,544

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

The condition of education in northern New Mexico is not significantly different from the general condition of education in the State as a whole. As with any assessments of quality, New Mexico's educational system has some strengths as well as areas that need improvement. As an example, Education Weekly assesses the education of each of the fifty states on an annual basis in its report, *Quality Counts*.

New Mexico Education Report Card, 1999.

Subject Area	Grade
Academic Standards, Assessments and Accountability	A
Efforts to Improve Teacher Quality	C+
School Climate Conducive to Learning	D+
Adequacy of Education Funding	C-
Allocation of Education Funding	D-
Equity of Educational Funding	C

Source: <http://www.edweek.org>

The report card ratings are indicators of the state's educational system based on one set of performance criteria in comparison to the rest of the country. It provides one insight on areas of strengths and weaknesses.

The high grade in academic standards and accountability are the result of the efforts in establishing standards in core academic subjects such as English, mathematics, science and social studies. Contributing to the high score was the requirement of grade 10 mastery and accountability reports by school districts. The efforts to improve teacher quality also received above average marks. This grade was partially based on the adoption of new teacher competency standards and written tests for basic, general and professional knowledge of teaching. Also included in this criterion were characteristics of the teacher education

programs, and opportunities for professional development. Equity of educational funding also received an average grade.

Two categories received grades of below average. The criterion school climate received a D+. Factors considered in this area are: class size, student participation, parent involvement and school autonomy. The allocation of funding received the lowest grade of any category. The grade is based on the percent of annual education expenditures that are spent on instruction.

Many other measures for the quality of education are available on both a national and state level. In the end, however, the best measure is whether students learned according to what the community expected from the schools.

As part of the accountability process established for public schools, each district was to identify focus areas and goals for student success. Following is a summary of the Educational Plans for student success for the school districts in northern New Mexico.

Educational Plans for Student Success by School District

Bernalillo

1. Every student will demonstrate competency in the general and advanced skills and strategies of the writing and reading process outlined in the District Benchmarks.
2. Every student will apply basic and advanced concepts of mathematics, and will use a variety of strategies for problem solving.
3. All students will be given opportunities in accelerated instruction at the elementary, middle school and high school levels in all areas of the curriculum.
4. The district will assist parents in accessing service providers and agencies that address the physical, emotional and social needs of students.

Chama

1. Mathematics
 - All students will improve their math skills across the curriculum
 - Students will use basic math skills in critical thinking, problem solving and application
 - Students will build on and apply basic mathematics skills
2. Technology

- Students will use technology skills in all areas of the curriculum
 - Students will use technology as an integral component in all subjects
3. Caring for Self and Others
 - Students and staff will model and practice positive character attributes to enhance a sense of well-being and encourage responsible living
 - All students will increase and implement character building skills

Cuba

1. All students will improve in Literacy (Reading, Writing, Oral Language) based on state and/or local assessments Pre-K-Grade 12 vertically aligned scoped and sequence curriculum pursuant to the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks.

Dulce

1. Language Arts, Math and Science.
2. Student's academic achievement in Language Arts, math and Science will increase on a yearly basis. Results will be measured by district norms, criterion-referenced assessments, and other assessments.
3. Technology
 - Student's technological capabilities will continue to improve on a yearly basis. On site assessments and graduate follow up will measure results.
4. Cultural Awareness.
 - Student awareness and appreciation for the diversity and unity of cultures will increase. Results will be measured through various surveys, including needs assessment, quality of education surveys, parental involvement, and other assessments.

Española

1. All children will read, understand and evaluate a variety of written materials, and communicate in various ways.
2. All children will show respect for self, other individuals, and all cultures.

Jemez Mountain

1. To increase student achievement in Reading
2. To increase student achievement in Math.

Jemez Valley

1. Students will increase their academic performance in core areas (voc and tech).
2. Students will learn through increased access to technology.
3. Students will learn in a positive, safer, healthier and disciplined environment

Las Vegas City

1. Students in the Las Vegas City Schools will improve student achievement in the core academic areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
2. Students in the Las Vegas City Schools will prepare students to make more meaningful career choices.

Las Vegas West

1. Improved literacy skills
2. Producing bilingual and biliterate students
3. Parent involvement and character education
4. Professional development
5. Technology

Los Alamos

1. All students will improve their level of content knowledge, writing and thinking skills as defined by state and district standards.
2. All students will improve their level of academic performance based on information from LAPS assessment data that is used to make decisions and changes in curriculum and instruction.

3. Student achievement, as defined by state and district standards, will increase as a result of improved communication among all stakeholders.
4. All students will improve in knowledge and application of technology-related skills.
5. LAPS facilities will be improved to provide a suitable, long-term environment for student education.

Mesa Vista

1. Students will improve reading comprehension across the curriculum.
2. Students will improve in writing across the curriculum.
3. Students will improve math computation across the curriculum.

Mora

1. All Mora Independent School students will develop healthier behaviors and lifestyles per the implementation of the Healthier Schools model.
2. All students will increase English and Spanish Communication skills.

Pojoaque

1. Math/Science - All students will improve their math and science skills and understanding of concepts.
2. Literacy - All students will demonstrate competency in reading, speaking, writing, and listening.
3. Bilingual/Multicultural Education – District will provide eligible students a bilingual education program, which will afford them equal educational opportunities.
4. Technology - Students will utilize current technology in all content areas through the delivery of K-12 technology curriculum.
5. Student safety and wellness - to provide a safe and drug free school environment.

Questa

1. All students will improve their achievement in mathematics across the curriculum.

2. All students will improve their achievement in Reading Comprehension across the curriculum.

Rio Rancho

1. Student Achievement/Teaching and Learning
2. Assessment and Reporting of Students Progress
3. Dropout Prevention and Student Support
4. Organizational Support for Student Success

Santa Fe

1. Literacy: All students will demonstrate improvement in literacy skills as measured by performance on Standardized Assessments and/or mastery of Performance Standards and increased graduation rates.
2. Safe School and Student Wellness: All students will attend school in a safe learning environment and demonstrate mastery of Wellness Performance Standards as measured by a decrease in discipline referrals, decrease in out-of-school suspensions, increase in attendance and increase in graduation rates.
3. Technology: All students will demonstrate competence in technology as measured by mastery of Technology Performance Standards.

Taos

1. All students will increase communication skills.
 - GOAL: All students will increase communication skills across the curriculum in the areas of reading, writing, and oral communication, in order to live and work productively in society.
2. All students will increase their knowledge of holistic wellness (emotional, social, physical, nutritional and character development) as it relates to becoming a healthy and productive member of a culturally and technologically diverse society.
 - GOAL: Students will show a measurable improvement in the knowledge and understanding they have of their body as it relates to nutrition, health, physical exercise and well-being.

- **GOAL:** Students will show measurable improvement in Social Life Skills and the capability to identify and solve social problems.

Wagon Mound

1. Students will achieve to their full potential in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and application of the structure and use of two languages, English and Spanish.
2. Students will achieve to their full potential in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and practical application of science and mathematics and in their interconnection through the modes of reading, writing, observing, speaking and listening.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to work with a broad range of educators with the Northern New Mexico Council for Excellence in Education to look closely at the “State of Education” in northern New Mexico. We wanted to compile a document that would enable us to review data and progress, and identify gaps in education. This report does not represent any new findings: we have simply gathered what is public information and disseminated the facts for public comment and query.

New Mexico is not alone in its quest for better schools. It is a national dilemma. This report marks the first year that the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation and NNMCEE will chart the progress of regional schools. It is the intention of the Foundation to continue reporting for many years to come.

The LANL Foundation first began its Educational Enrichment giving program in 1998. As we worked with school districts to improve educational performance, we were able to see that northern New Mexico schools were facing a deep crisis. The expectations for our children and the people who serve them must be raised if today’s students are going to have a future filled with promise. No one foundation, school district, or legislator will be able to bring about reform. It must be a collective voice coming from corporate board rooms, editorial boards, and most importantly, parents sitting around kitchen tables calling for critical changes in educational policy.

It is our hope that this report adds to the call for changes in education heralded throughout New Mexico.