

2005 Achievement GAP in New Mexico Executive Summary

As we review student performance in New Mexico, one concern remains the same – equity. If there is equitable distribution of goods, services and resources to our schools as our funding formula for education seems to indicate, do we get our equitable return on our investment for all students? Is there a good return on our investment regardless of socioeconomics or ethnicity?

What do we see in the following pages? Equity or inequity? Do we respond in the affirmative to the Ron Edmonds statement that “inequity in American education derives first and foremost from our failure to educate the children of the poor.”

How did we educate our children in New Mexico school year 2002-2003? How did your neighborhood school rank? Was your child at the 30th, 50th or 75th percentile in math?!

Key Findings:

- 3rd grade: Dennis Chávez scored at the 83rd percentile; Los Padillas at the 31st percentile—**gap 52**
- 4th grade: S.V. Jackson scored at the 82nd percentile; Navajo at the 26th percentile—**gap 56**
- 5th grade: Dennis Chávez scored at the 86th percentile; Lavaland at the 32nd percentile—**gap 54**
- 6th grade: Desert Ridge scored at the 77th percentile, Washington at the 31st percentile—**gap 46**
- 7th grade: Desert Ridge scored at the 78th percentile; Washington at the 31st percentile—**gap 47**
- 8th grade: Desert Ridge scored at the 77th percentile; Truman at the 37th percentile— **gap 40**
- 9th grade: La Cueva scored at the 79th percentile; Río Grande at the 42nd percentile—**gap 37**

Dropouts by Ethnicity

Analyzing the cohort dropout rates by high school, for the years 1994 through 2002, reveals little change in the gaps among the 11 public high schools. From 2000-2001 to 2001-2002 there were improvements in all schools but the 47.7 percent dropout rate for Río Grande is still high.

- Río Grande High School still has the highest dropout rate. 47.7% of the students who enter the 9th grade do not graduate four years later. To illustrate, a freshmen class of 700 would yield only 325 graduates in four years.
- The gap between the school with the lowest dropout rate (La Cueva 6.2 percent) and highest (Río Grande 47.7 percent) is 41.5 percentile points.

Statewide, 9 of the state’s 750 schools were rated exemplary (1.6 percent), 42 were rated exceeds standards (5.6 percent), 523 meets standards (70.5 percent) and 164 probationary (22.1 percent), 43 new schools qualified for more corrective action.

In APS the number of “probationary” schools increased from 20 to 28 or 24.1 percent of all schools. The number of “exemplary” fell from 12 to 4 (3.4 percent) and those rated “meets standards” increased from 71 to 91.

Key Findings:

The national percentiles of the norm-referenced test results for the state, grades 3-9, is the measurement of a student's (or school, or ethnic group) results, which can be compared to others taking the same test under the same conditions. The following is a sample of the gap differences among the different ethnic groups.

- Hispanic, African American and Native American students' scores are significantly lower than Anglo students' scores in all grades and all content area, with Native Americans scoring the lowest.
- Comparing the gap for Hispanics and Anglos in the 3rd grade and the 9th grade in reading, there is an achievement gap of 20.7 percentile points in the 3rd grade and 20.9 in the 9th grade.
- Comparing the gap in the 3rd and 9th grade in mathematics for Anglos and Hispanics, we find a gap of 16.1 percentile points in the 3rd grade and 21.5 in the 9th grade.
- The Native American/Anglo gap in the 3rd and 9th grade in reading is 30.2 and 28 percentile points.
- In mathematics, the 3rd and 9th grade gap for Native American/Anglo is 24 and 27.1 percentile points.
- The achievement data indicate that, for the 2001-2002 school year, there is a significant achievement gap among Anglo students and Hispanic and other minority students.

The University of New Mexico Profile

We look at the University of New Mexico's (UNM) performance with regards to enrollment, retention rates and graduation rates by ethnicity and compare UNM's performance to national data. In addition, we review a specific program within UNM that is geared towards the retention and graduation of students. We will look at New Mexico's merit based scholarship, the New Mexico Lottery Success Scholarship, and analyze its impact on the enrollment rates as well as assess its impact and whether it has benefited those who are in need of the assistance. Finally, students stress the importance of role models in higher education. What is the faculty representation at the University? We analyze hiring practices and retention of people of color for faculty positions. The research shows that too few people of color are being hired and kept at UNM.

Recommendations

UNM is not enrolling enough Hispanics and Native Americans, relative to the population of both groups in the state. In addition, UNM is not graduating students at the national rate and. African Americans are graduating at a higher rate than their state percentage (1.8% compared to 1.4% population), Native Americans graduate less than half in comparison (4.2% compared to 8.6% population), Asian Americans are graduating three times their presence (3.3% compared to 1.1% population), Hispanics are under the parity bar (26.3% compared to 43.1% population), and Anglo-Americans are above parity (58.6% compared to 44.1% population).

Recommendations: revisit the funding formula of the New Mexico Lottery Success Scholarship and distribute the funds in another manner, using merit as a consideration, and in addition consider income:

- 1) Distribute 50 percent of the funds in the manner they were originally planned to be distributed: on merit.
- 2) Utilize 50 **percent** of the funding to create a need-based scholarship program with the purpose to enroll students from low-income households who meet UNM requirements.

The Governor's Reform

The 2003 Legislature approved the “wide-ranging” educational improvement package with bipartisan support and the voters provided the administrative control and the funding to support it. With an appointed cabinet secretary and an advisory Public Education Commission, Governor Richardson has unprecedented power over public education.

Most of the extensive legislative provisions attempt to align education in New Mexico with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in terms of assessment and accountability and the measurement of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for each student, school, and districts. AYP will be determined primarily by student academic achievement on statewide standards-based tests and selected indicators including graduation rates at high school and attendance at elementary and middle schools. AYP and academic performance, mandated by NCLB, will be measured and reported by ethnicity, race, English proficiency skills, disability status, and poverty.

As we continue to assess student performance in our public schools, our intent is to see where we are and what we need to do for improvement. Trying, movement reform plans, special elections do not count. In the year 2003 the only thing that really matters is student performance in our schools. Can she/he read, compute, write and graduate? Again, we strongly urge the consideration of the following:

- The pay increase proposed by HB 212 and Amendment 2 should be based on merit with a major part determined by student performance. In each classroom, what was the learning improvement made by each student comparing his/her performance in August and in May at the end of the school year. All school support services personnel should be connected to student learning outcomes. The Tennessee Value Added Assessment System is recommended.
- Pilot a school-based governance council at probationary and corrective schools with parents and community members making up 51 percent of the membership.
- Attract experienced teachers to schools in need of improvement with incentive pay and other benefits. Teachers often prefer to work at high-performing schools or on campuses close to their homes. Under the current union agreement, teachers cannot be transferred to such schools.
- Amend the state funding formula to factor in students in probationary and corrective schools. Monies should go directly to schools, not to the districts' operational funds. The New Mexico funding formula for education may not reflect current educational needs. The first step: review the funding formula.
- Continue current accountability measures, but after three years of probationary status take management of a school's corrective action away from the school district and give it to outside educational administrators working in collaboration with the local school board. HB 212 section on private management elimination should be revised.
- Develop accountability measures for district support staff and parents based on student performance and attendance.
- Pilot Parental Choice Program