



# State of Education in New Mexico 2018



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There are a great many things that make New Mexico enchanting—sunsets over the Sandia Mountains, adobe buildings with hundred-year histories, lush green bosque surrounding our life-giving Rio Grande and the hundreds of hot air balloons that dance in our October skies. But the most beautiful part of New Mexico is the promise of our children to reach their fullest potential.

The diversity of our people and their collective experiences add another layer of complex beauty to our great state. I am grateful to have two different versions of my New Mexican heritage. One side of my family has been in New Mexico for many generations. While on the other side, my great-grandfather crossed the border from Mexico as a sixteen-year-old seeking a better future. My ancestors and this land have done so much to make me the person I am today, which is why, after leaving for college and the start of my career, I chose to return home to help build a better future.

Our journey has brought us to a fork in the road, and we can choose to succumb to our history of lagging near the bottom in educational rankings, or we can unite and choose to do more for our children. I choose the latter and ask you to join me. The time is now for New Mexicans to prioritize education policies and practices that ensure our students become the future community, civic and business leaders we need. Imagine a New Mexico led by New Mexicans who choose to use the skills and competencies honed by our education system to create a better future.

Our future lies in the potential of our people. It is this foundational optimism and belief in the collective power of New Mexico's children that grounds my work as the founding Executive Director of NewMexicoKidsCAN.

This work cannot be done without knowing where we stand, which is why NewMexicoKidsCAN is pleased to release our first research report *The State of Education in New Mexico 2018*. My hope is that this report provides people across the state with a comprehensive and easy-to-understand summary of the current state of our education system. This report is a detailed resource addressing topics such as student and educator demographics, student, teacher and school performance and school funding.

We can and must do more. At NewMexicoKidsCAN we are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Are you ready to join us?

With hope and optimism—

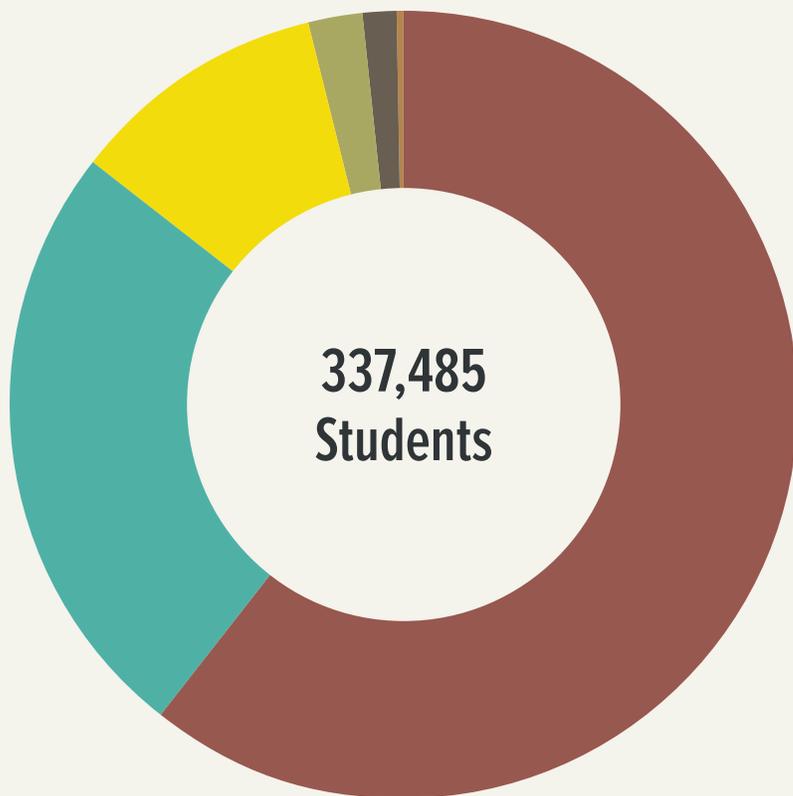
Amanda R. Aragon  
Founding Executive Director  
NewMexicoKidsCAN

# Student enrollment and demographics

The rich history and cultural diversity of New Mexico is reflected in our public school student population which, for the past five years, has enrolled about 340,000 students in traditional and public charter schools statewide.<sup>1</sup> Although New Mexico has the fifth largest landmass of all fifty states, nearly half (47 percent) of all students were enrolled in just five school districts across the state in 2016–17 (Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho, Gadsden and Santa Fe). Albuquerque Public Schools, the largest of the 89 public school districts, independently enrolled over 25 percent of all public school students in New Mexico in the 2016–17 school year.<sup>2</sup>

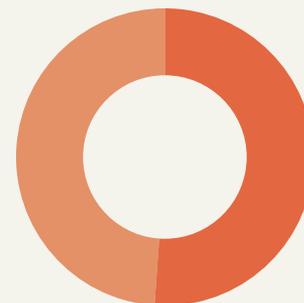
A vast majority of our public school students identified as Hispanic, accounting for nearly 61 percent of the student population in the 2016–17 school year, well over double the national average of 25 percent.<sup>3</sup> White students represented approximately 25 percent of the total student population, about half the national average. American Indian students in New Mexico accounted for about 11 percent of 2016–17 enrollees, compared with the national average of just one percent.<sup>4</sup>

**PRE-K–12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER, 2016–17**



**PRE-K–12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER, 2016–17**

51% Male  
49% Female



61% Hispanic  
25% White  
11% American Indian  
2% Black  
1% Asian  
<1% Pacific Islander

**Source:** Email exchange with Richard Trujillo, October 24, 2017, New Mexico Public Education Department Data Warehouse Manager.

**Note:** NMPED uses Caucasian and African American as subgroups in their demographic reporting. We have changed this to refer to these subgroups as white and black throughout this report.

**Note:** The total enrolled student figure here is less than NMPED’s official reporting by 822 students, less than 0.25 percent, because of an omission in the demographics dataset of students who attended schools categorized as “Misc. Private” and “Main Office.”

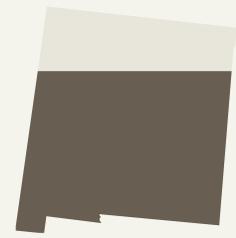
**PRE-K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY OTHER SUBGROUPS, 2016-17**



**15% Special Education**



**13% English Language Learner**



**71% Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch**

**Source:** Email exchange with Richard Trujillo, October 24, 2017, NMPED Data Warehouse Manager.

Over 71 percent of students in New Mexico participate in the federal free or reduced-priced lunch program, compared to the national average of approximately 52 percent in 2014-15.<sup>5</sup> Over 13 percent of students are English language learners and approximately 15 percent participate in special education programs.

Total public school student enrollment peaked in the 2014-15 school year, with over 340,000 students in New Mexico attending public schools. Since then, there has been a slight decline in the total student enrollment to approximately 338,000 students in 2016-17.<sup>6</sup>

Private school enrollment in New Mexico has stalled since 2011, when 22,680 students attended private institutions. As of 2015, the most recent data available, 22,230 students enrolled in approximately 170 New Mexico private schools.<sup>7</sup>

## Public charter schools

New Mexico public charter schools are authorized by one of two entities: the local school board in the district in which the charter school is located or the state-level Public Education Commission (PEC), which oversees state authorized charter schools.

The state's public charter schools have seen recent enrollment increases: in the 2012-13 school year, just under 20,000 students in New Mexico attended 84 public charter schools, representing less than six percent of all public school students. In 2016-17, though, this number had grown to over 25,000 students in 99 schools, representing about 7.4 percent of total public enrollment.<sup>8</sup>

**PRE-K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 2012-2017 — 40 DAY CALCULATION**



**Note:** The total enrolled student figure here is greater than NMPED's demographic reporting by 822 students, less than 0.25 percent, because of an omission in that dataset of students who attended schools categorized as "Misc. Private" and "Main Office."

The number of charter schools authorized by the PEC has grown significantly since the first four state authorized public charter schools opened in the 2008–09 school year. This number has expanded to 62 state charter schools authorized by the PEC in the 2015–16 school year, enrolling 15,650 students or about 66 percent of all New Mexico charter school students.

In comparison, 63 locally-authorized public charter schools were open in the 2008–09 school year. This figure has declined nearly 50 percent to just 37 locally-authorized charter schools in 2015–16, enrolling 8,215 students or about 34 percent of all charter school students in New Mexico.<sup>9</sup> Charter school authorization has stalled in recent years, however, with the total number of charter schools remaining relatively stable since the 2013–14 school year when 96 charter schools were in operation.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS BY TYPE AND ENROLLMENT, 2015–16

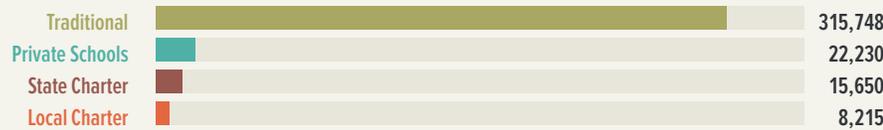
901  
Public schools (all)

170  
Private schools



802 Traditional      62 State Charter      37 Local Charter

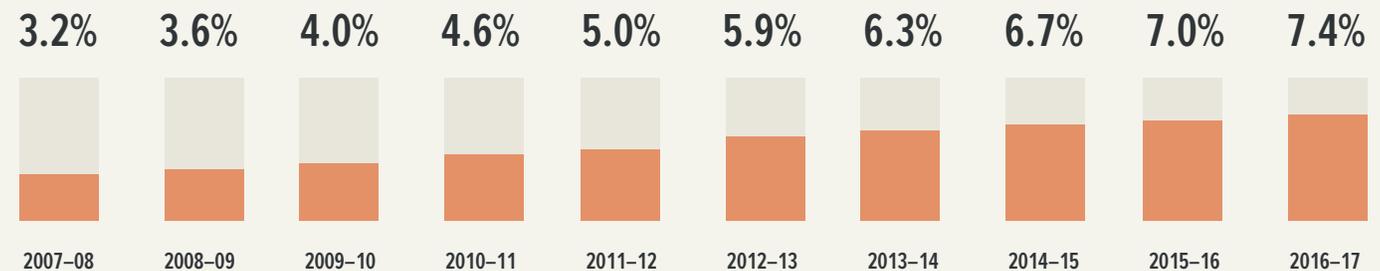
361,843 Enrolled students



**Sources:** Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) 2016 Data Guide, NMPED 2015–16 School Fact Sheet, National Center for Education Statistics Private Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2015.

**Note:** The total enrolled student figure here is greater than NMPED’s demographic reporting by 822 students, less than 0.25 percent, because of an omission in that dataset of students who attended schools categorized as “Misc. Private” and “Main Office.”

PRE-K–12 CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 2007–2017



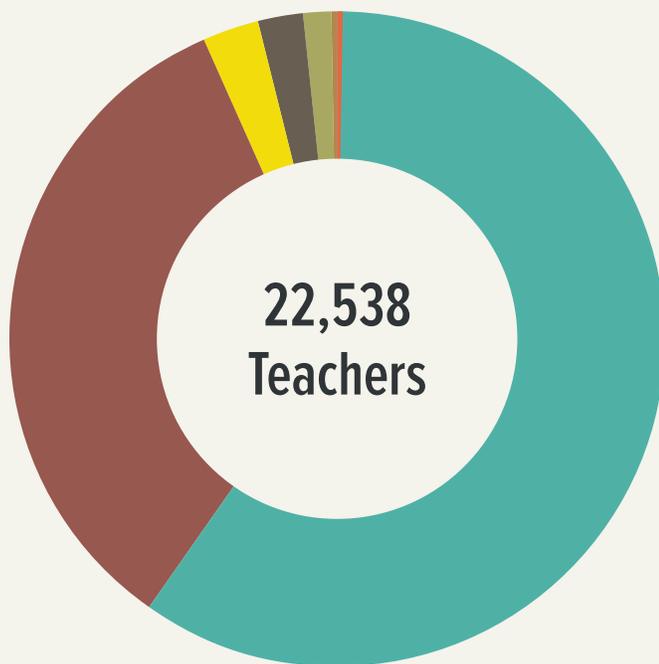
**Sources:** 2017 LESC Report to the Legislature and NMPED School Fact Sheets.

# Educators

As of the 2016–17 school year, there are approximately 23,000 educators teaching our students in New Mexico. According to the data provided in the educator gender survey for 2016–17, 25 percent of all New Mexico educators identify as male, while 75 percent identify as female. Among the charter school educators surveyed in New Mexico, 30 percent identify as male and 70 percent identify as female.

Of the New Mexico educators reporting their race/ethnicity in 2016–17, nearly 60 percent identified as white, well below the national average of 82 percent in 2011–12. Approximately 34 percent of educators in New Mexico identified as Hispanic in 2016–17, more than four times the national average of eight percent in 2011–12.<sup>10</sup> Roughly three percent of educators identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native and two percent identified as Asian. These figures contrast the racial distributions of students in New Mexico where 61 percent of students are Hispanic, only 25 percent are white, 11 percent are American Indian and one percent are Asian.

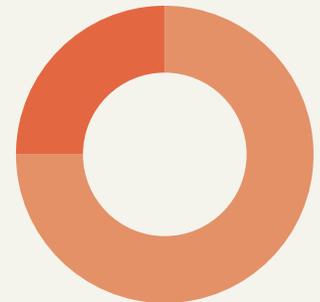
**TOTAL SURVEYED NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2016–17**



**TOTAL SURVEYED NEW MEXICO EDUCATORS BY GENDER, 2016–17**

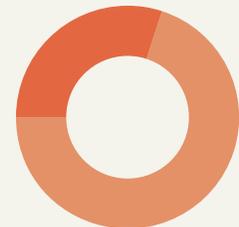
**All Public Schools**  
23,806

75% Female  
25% Male



**Public Charter Schools**  
1,732

70% Female  
30% Male



60% White  
34% Hispanic  
3% American Indian  
2% Asian  
1% Black  
<1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander  
<1% Multiracial

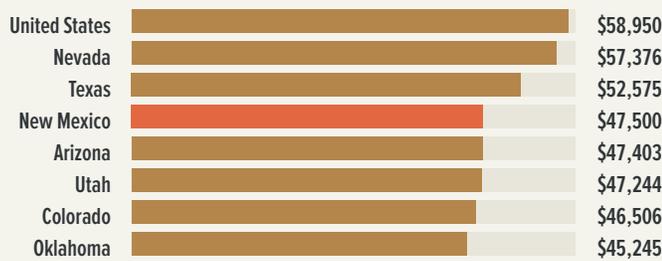
**Source:** Email exchange with Matt Montaña, November 14, 2017, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Teaching and Learning, NMPED.

**Note:** Percentages are based off of total number of public school teachers reporting gender in 2016–17 (23,806) in New Mexico.

**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Percentages are based off of total number of teachers reporting race/ethnicity in 2016–17 (22,538) in New Mexico.

In 2016–17, educators in New Mexico were paid an average salary of \$47,500, significantly below the national average of \$58,950. New Mexico educators were paid more on average, however, than educators in Arizona (\$47,403), Utah (\$47,244), Colorado (\$46,506) and Oklahoma (\$45,245). Texas (\$52,575) and Nevada (\$57,376) educators were on average paid more than teachers in New Mexico.

**ESTIMATED AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY OF TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SELECT STATES, 2016–17**



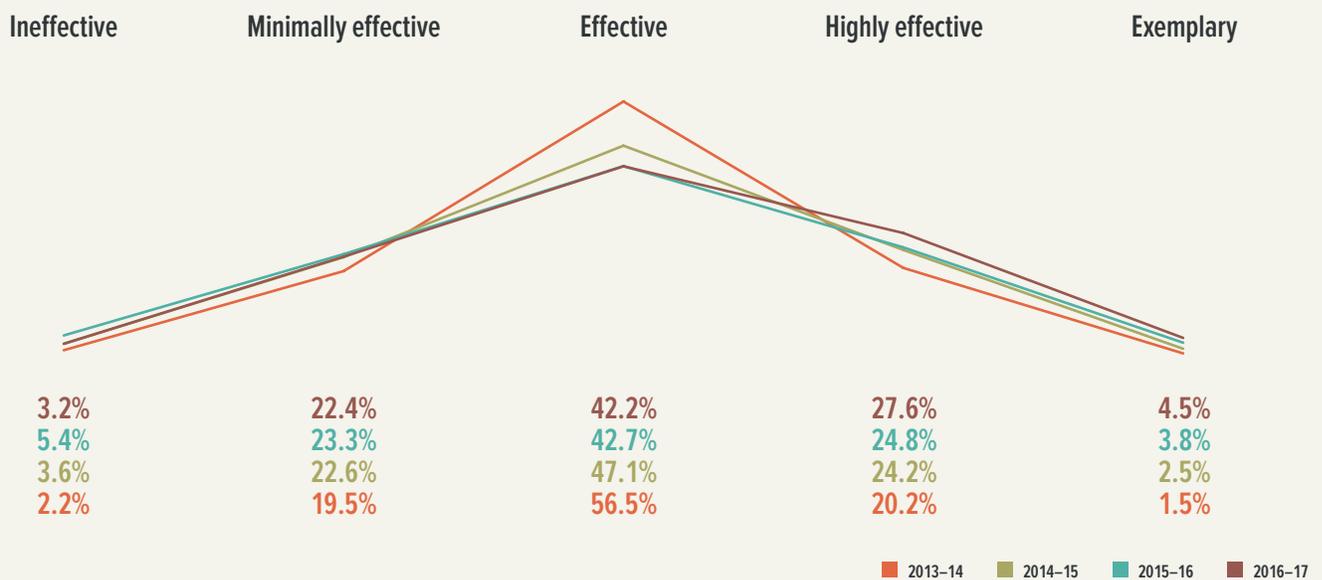
**Source:** NCES Estimated average annual salary.  
**Note:** Figures reported in 2016–17 constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), adjusted to a school-year basis, prepared by NCES.

Our teachers in New Mexico are evaluated annually to measure the impact of educators on student learning and their professional growth. Educators are assigned an effectiveness rating based on their students’ growth in assessment performance, classroom observation, attendance and surveys. The effectiveness ratings range from ineffective to exemplary.

In 2013–14, the first year the NMTEACH Teacher Evaluation Framework was introduced, only 1.5 percent of educators were awarded the exemplary rating compared to 2.2 percent receiving an ineffective rating. By 2016–17, these proportions had increased to 4.5 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively. Meanwhile, the number of educators receiving an effective rating has declined from 56.5 percent in 2013–14 to 42.2 percent in 2016–17. Over the same time period, the proportion of teachers being assigned a minimally effective rating increased from 19.5 percent to 22.4 percent. Similarly, the proportion of teachers receiving a highly effective rating increased from 20.2 percent in 2013–14 to 27.6 percent in 2016–17.<sup>11</sup>

These variations in ratings could be due to changes in the evaluation formula, particularly the shift away from using student assessment scores as the primary measure of educator effectiveness. When the NMTEACH framework was first introduced, student assessment performance accounted for 50 percent of a teacher’s evaluation score for those with more than two years of student achievement data. Beginning in the 2016–17 school year, however, this measure accounted for only 35 percent of these teachers’ score. Classroom observations now make up a larger portion of a teacher’s effectiveness rating.<sup>12</sup>

**DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS, 2013–2017**



**Sources:** Email exchange with Matthew Goodlaw November 3, 2017, NMPED Assessment and Accountability Officer and 2016 NMTEACH Teacher Evaluation Briefing.

# Per-pupil spending

Since 2008, per-pupil spending steadily declined in New Mexico and across the nation. In the 2009–10 school year, New Mexico spent \$10,577 per pupil. By 2011–12 this number decreased by \$1,140 per student to \$9,437. Spending increased by \$97 per pupil from \$9,438 in 2012–13 to \$9,535 in 2013–14.<sup>13</sup>

According to the most recent data available, in 2013–14 New Mexico spent more per pupil on education (\$9,535) than did Arizona (\$7,562), Colorado (\$9,163), Nevada (\$8,391), Oklahoma (\$8,107), Texas (\$8,723) and Utah (\$6,638). All of these figures fall well below the national average, however, of \$11,222 per pupil for that year. Nonetheless, in each year from 2009 to 2014, New Mexico spent more per pupil than its neighbors despite lagging student performance, as we highlight below.<sup>14</sup>

The Public School Finance Act of 1974 created the public school funding formula in New Mexico which is designed to distribute operational funds to school districts to provide for local school district autonomy. The public school funding formula is aimed at addressing the geographic inequities which arise from relying solely on the local property tax revenue. The State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) distributes funds according to the formula's calculation of a school district's program cost, independent of geographic location or the local district's property wealth. The formula takes into account many factors including the size of the student population within a school district as well as the prevalence of student groups which could require additional resources including special education students, English language learners, students in poverty and districts with high rates of mobility.<sup>15</sup>

**CURRENT PER-PUPIL SPENDING IN SELECT STATES, 2009–2014 (IN CONSTANT 2015–16 DOLLARS)**



**Source:** NCES current expenditures per pupil in fall enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools.

**Note:** Figures reported in 2015–16 constant dollars based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), adjusted to a school-year basis.

**RANK OF PER-PUPIL SPENDING IN NEW MEXICO OUT OF ALL 50 STATES AND WASHINGTON, DC**



**Source:** NCES current expenditures per pupil in fall enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools.

# School performance

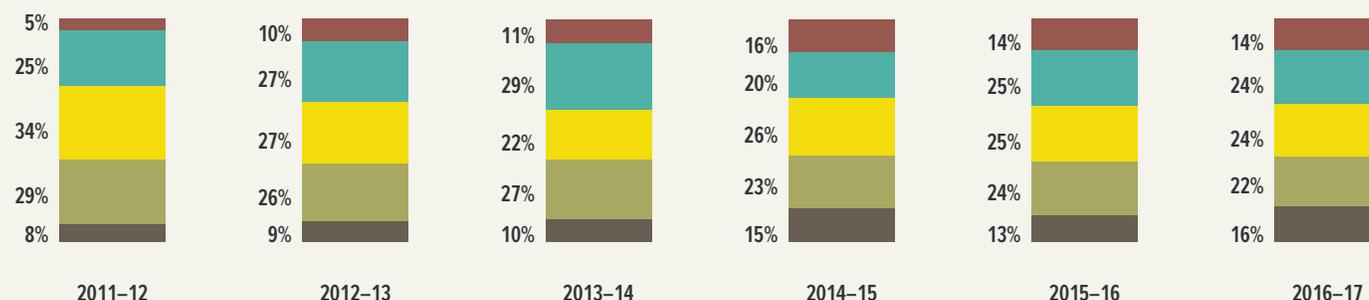
New Mexico public schools have been assessed annually to measure performance and provide public accountability since 2011. The new grading system was enacted to supplement the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to identify schools requiring additional resources. The grading system measures both current proficiency and growth in proficiency over time for each school, and includes different factors for high schools than elementary and middle schools, highlighting the differing objectives between school levels.<sup>16,17</sup>

The resulting A–F grades provide insight into each school’s ability to support student academic growth and achievement. Grades are assigned based on a variety of factors including

current student proficiency on state-level assessments, growth towards proficiency over time, student participation in college- and career-readiness exams and programs, attendance, parent and student surveys and graduation rates.<sup>18</sup>

Since the 2011–12 school year, school grades have shown a divergent trend with increases in both the number of schools graded A and F. In 2011–12, 37 schools (five percent) received A ratings, while 63 (eight percent) received an F. In the 2016–17 school year, these numbers had increased to 120 (14 percent) and 134 (16 percent), respectively. Over the same period, the number of schools receiving B grades remained approximately the same (about 24 percent) while the number schools receiving C and D grades both decreased.<sup>19</sup>

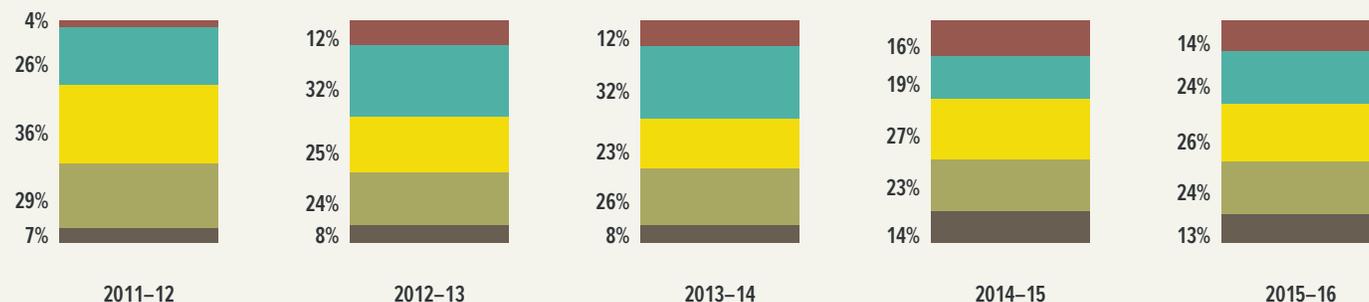
## DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS BY SCHOOL GRADE, 2011–2017



**Source:** Email exchange with Ryan Tolman October 31, 2017, NMPED Accountability Bureau.

**Note:** In 2012–13, there was one school that was open but not rated. In 2013–14, there were two schools that were open but not rated.

## DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL GRADE, 2011–2016



**Source:** 2017 LESC Report to the Legislature.

**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Includes all prekindergarten through grade 12 enrollment in schools that received a grade.

■ A ■ B ■ C ■ D ■ F

The proportion of students attending high-quality schools followed a similar trend. The percent of public school students attending schools receiving an A increased from 3.5 percent in 2012 to almost 14 percent of students in 2016. At the same time, however, the percent of students attending F rated schools has also increased from 6.5 percent to 12.6 percent of students. Meanwhile, the percent of students attending B-, C- and D-graded schools has declined over this time.<sup>20</sup>

School district performance grades, which are simply the weighted average of school performance grades within a district, highlight the progress being made by schools in our 89 districts. Albuquerque and Santa Fe, the first and fifth largest districts, respectively, improved their district grades from D in 2015–16 to

C in 2016–17. This is the first time Albuquerque has received a C grade since the 2013–14 school year. Las Cruces and Gadsden, the second and fourth largest districts in New Mexico both maintained their C grades from the previous year in 2016–17. Rio Rancho, the third largest district in the state, kept its B grade in 2016–17, the only of the state’s five largest districts to do so since Gadsden in the 2013–14 school year.<sup>21</sup>

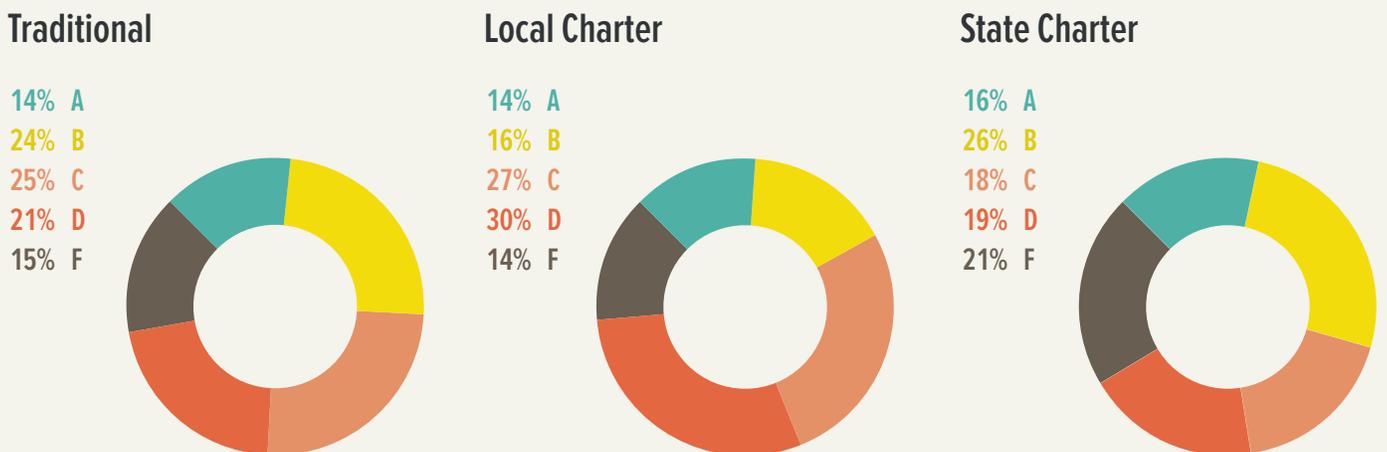
Both traditional public schools and public charter schools received an approximately equivalent distribution of school grades in the 2016–17 school year. Fourteen percent of traditional schools and 15 percent of public charter schools were graded A that year, while 15 percent of traditional schools and 18 percent of public charter schools were graded F.<sup>22</sup>

**SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADES FOR FIVE LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN NEW MEXICO, 2016–17**



**Sources:** NMPED District Report Cards, 2017 & NMPED School Fact Sheets, 2017.

**PERCENT OF TRADITIONAL AND PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS ACHIEVING EACH PERFORMANCE GRADE, 2016–17**



**Source:** 2017 NMPED School Grades List.

**Note:** Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

# Student performance

## PARCC performance

Since the 2014–15 school year, New Mexico public schools have administered the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) annual assessments to measure student proficiency in math and english language arts (ELA) in grades three through eleven. The PARCC exams replaced the previously administered Standards Based Assessments to better align with the New Mexico Common Core State Standards. Scores on PARCC exams are a key component in determining both teacher evaluations and school grades.<sup>23</sup>

Proficiency in both subjects varied widely among student subgroups in the 2016–17 school year, with over 46 percent of Asian students, 44 percent of white students, 24 percent of Hispanic students, 23 percent of black students and 18 percent of American Indian students achieving proficiency or better in ELA

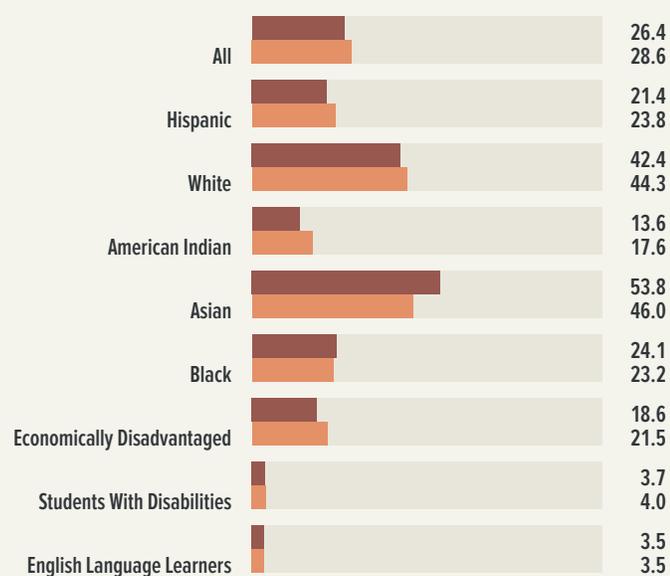
across all grade levels. Overall, just under 30 percent of students in New Mexico achieved proficiency or better in this subject.

For the same year, almost 20 percent of students achieved the same level of proficiency in math across grade levels. Thirty-three percent of white students, 38 percent of Asian students, 16 percent of Hispanic students, 13 percent of black students and 10 percent of American Indian students achieved proficiency or better on math assessments.

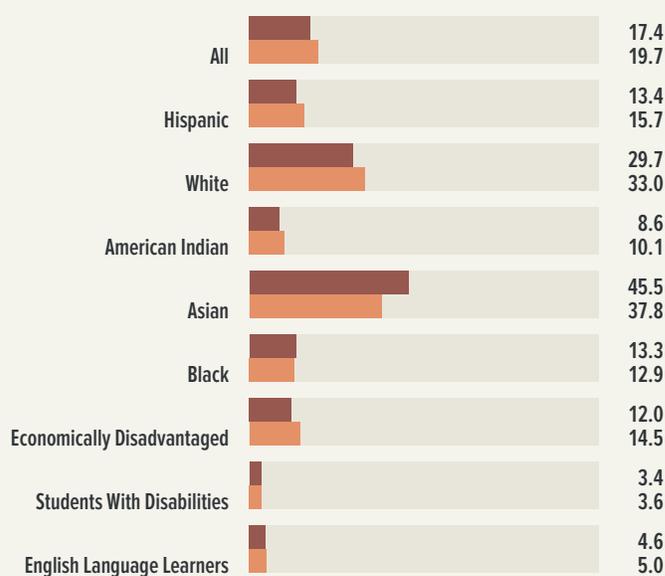
Since the introduction of PARCC assessments in New Mexico, overall proficiency in ELA has increased from 26.4 percent of students achieving proficiency or in 2014–15 to 28.6 percent in 2016–17. A similar improvement was achieved in math from 17.4 percent in 2014–15 to 19.7 percent of students achieving proficiency or above in 2016–17.

**PERCENT OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING PROFICIENCY OR ABOVE ON PARCC ELA AND MATH ASSESSMENTS, ALL GRADE LEVELS, 2014–2017**

### ELA



### MATH



Source: Email exchange with Pascal Buser, October 24, 2017, NMPED Accountability Bureau Officer.

■ 2014–15 ■ 2016–17

Students in New Mexico performed significantly lower than their peers when compared to other PARCC states for the 2015–16 school year. New Mexico ranked last among the seven states of-fering math and ELA assessments for grades three and eight.<sup>24</sup>

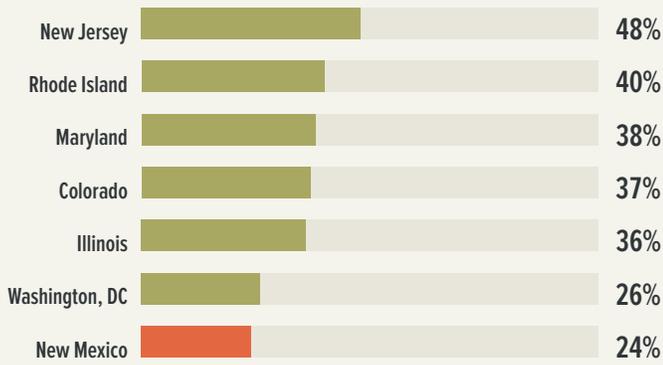
Twenty-four percent of students in New Mexico reached proficiency or above in third-grade ELA compared to 37 percent of Colorado students and 48 percent of New Jersey students in the same grade. A significant gap is also seen in eighth grade proficiency rates, with 26 percent of students in New Mexico reaching proficiency or above compared with 42 percent of Colorado stu-dents and 55 percent of New Jersey students.

Similar achievement gaps were seen in mathematics assess-ments for these grades, with 30 percent of New Mexico students, 39 percent of Colorado students and 52 percent of New Jersey students reaching proficiency in grade three. Eighth grade math proficiency rates were even more troubling with only 11 percent of New Mexico students, 20 percent of Colorado students and 26 percent of New Jersey students achieving proficiency or above in this grade level.<sup>25</sup>

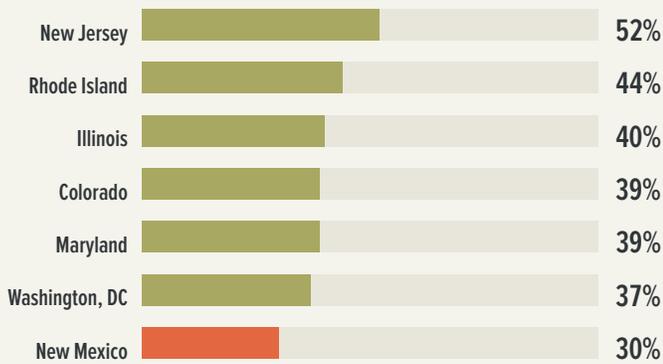
**PERCENT OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING PROFICIENCY OR BETTER ON SELECT PARCC ASSESSMENTS ACROSS ALL PARTICIPATING STATES AND WASHINGTON, DC, 2015–16**

**Grade 3**

**ELA**

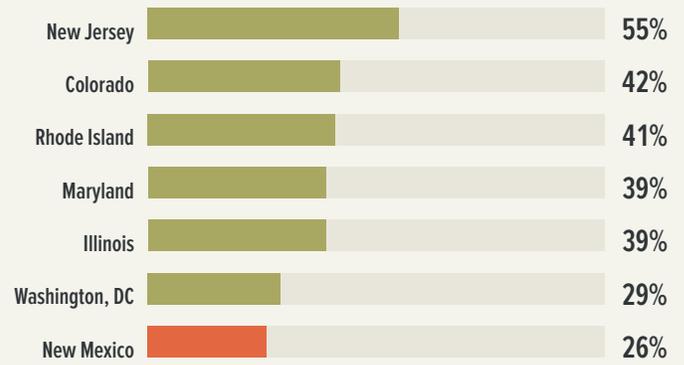


**MATH**

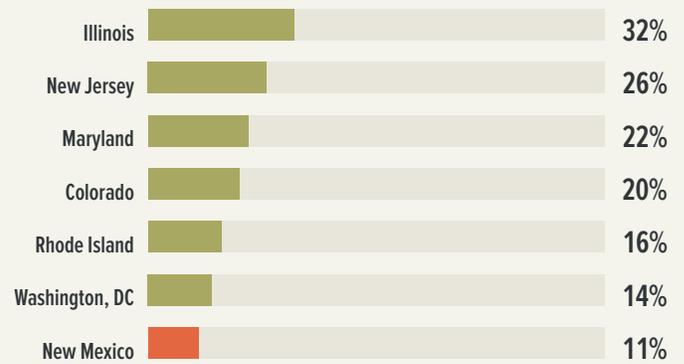


**Grade 8**

**ELA**



**MATH**



Source: PARCC cross-state comparison.

# NAEP performance

Students in New Mexico also lag behind their peers on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), or the “Nation’s Report Card,” which is administered every two years to a sample of students in selected grades from across the nation. Recent NAEP scores, in both reading and math, highlight the work needed to be done in New Mexico.

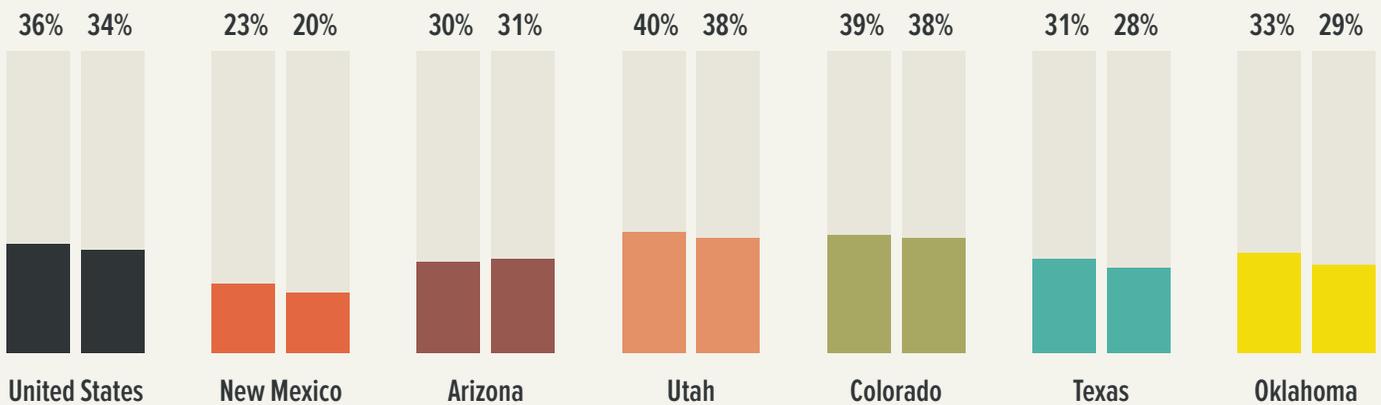
Compared to neighboring states and the national average, fourth grade students in New Mexico achieved substantially lower proficiency rates in both reading and math in 2015. That year, 23 percent of New Mexico’s fourth graders reached pro-

ficiency or above on the reading assessment, compared to 39 percent of Colorado fourth graders and the national average of 36 percent. Similarly in math, 27 percent of New Mexico fourth graders achieved proficiency or above compared to 43 percent of fourth graders in Colorado and 40 percent of students across the nation.

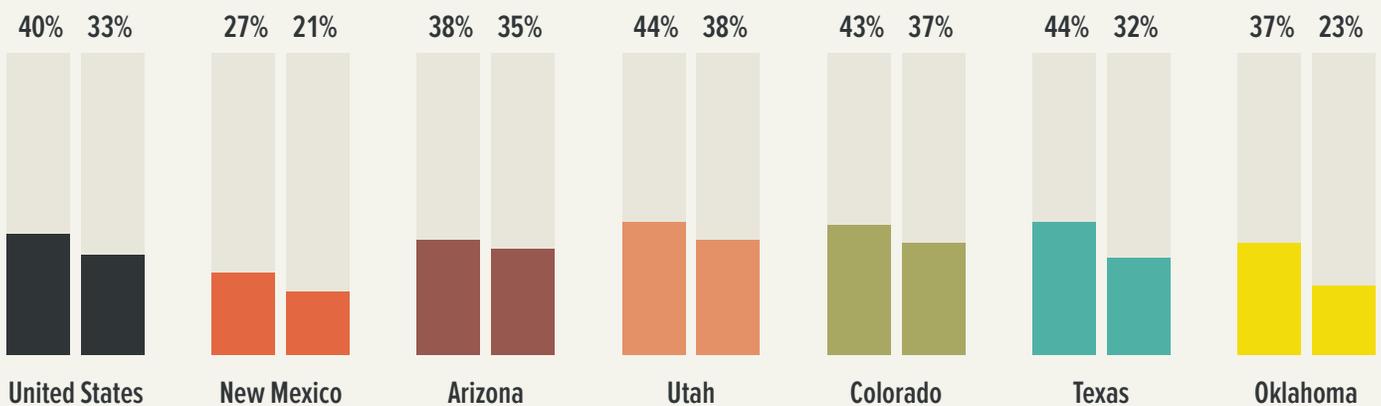
Eighth grade proficiency rates in 2015 show similar disparities. In reading, 20 percent of eighth graders in New Mexico achieved proficiency or above on the NAEP, compared to 38 percent in Colorado and 34 percent nationwide. In math, 21

## PERCENT OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING PROFICIENCY OR ABOVE IN SELECT STATES ON NAEP, 2015

### READING GRADE 4 / GRADE 8



### MATH GRADE 4 / GRADE 8



Source: Individual NAEP state profiles, 2015.

percent of eighth graders in New Mexico, 37 percent of eighth graders in Colorado and 33 percent of eighth graders nationwide achieved proficiency or above.

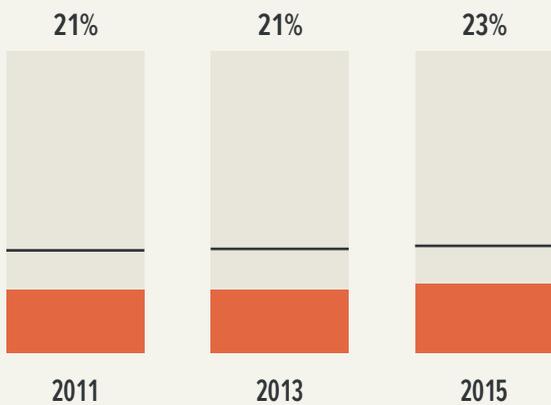
Over time, student performance on NAEP has shown little to no improvement in New Mexico. Between 2011 and 2015, fourth-grade reading proficiency rates increased two percent while math proficiency declined three percent. At the same time, eighth-grade reading proficiency declined two percent while math proficiency declined three percent.

This progress closely mimics the national trends, with national fourth-grade reading proficiency rates increasing by two percent between 2011 and 2015. Over the same period, national fourth-grade math and eighth-grade reading proficiency rates remained the same. Nationally, eighth-grade math proficiency rates declined two percent between 2011 and 2015.

**PERCENT OF STUDENTS ACHIEVING PROFICIENCY OR ABOVE ON NAEP IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO, 2011–2015**

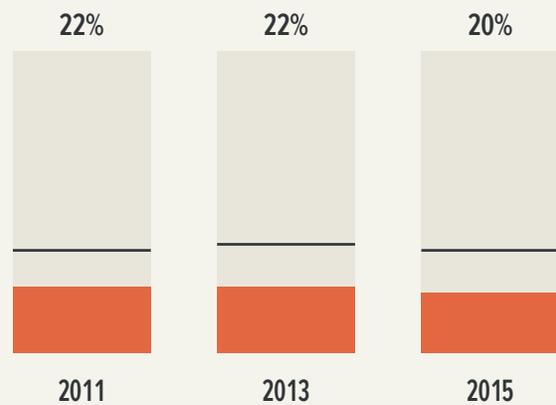
### Grade 4

#### READING

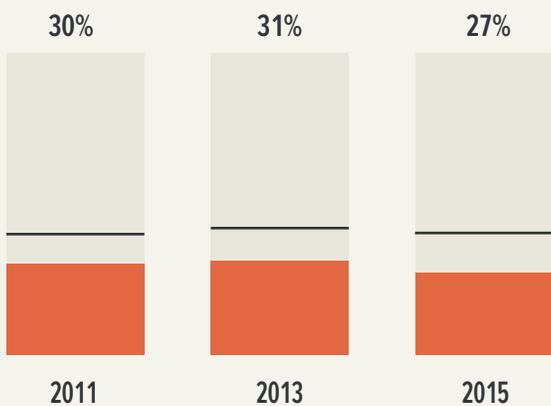


### Grade 8

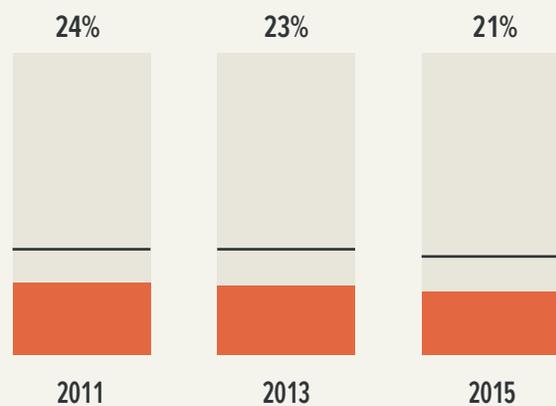
#### READING



#### MATH



#### MATH



Source: NAEP state profile, 2015.

— United States ■ New Mexico

# Postsecondary preparedness

## Graduation rates | ACT participation and performance

### Graduation rates

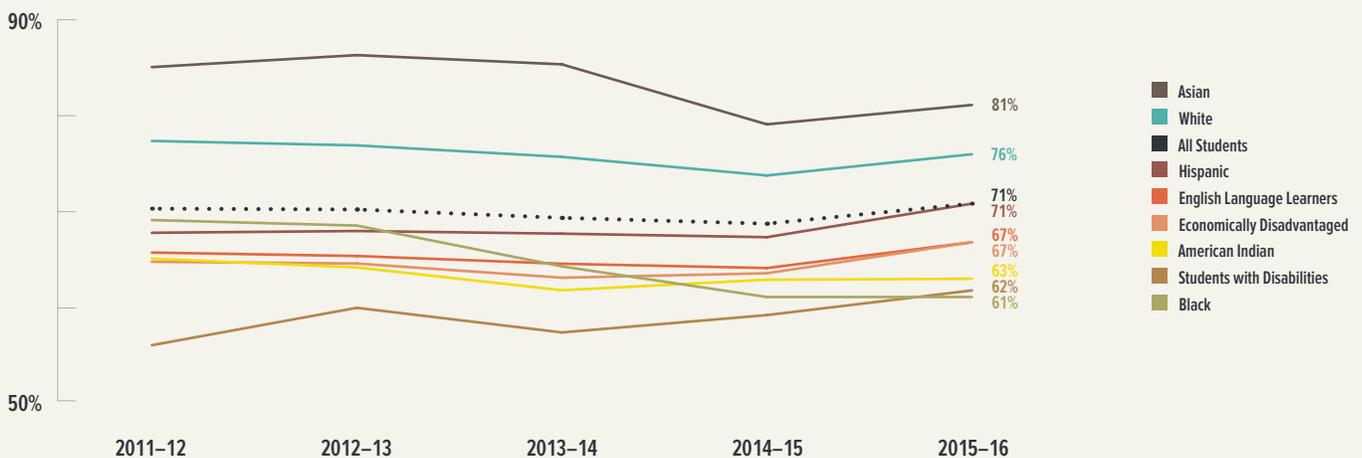
Students in New Mexico are required to demonstrate competency in reading, writing, math, science and social studies in order to receive a high school diploma. This is generally accomplished through achieving a minimum score on PARCC assessments (for reading, writing and math), a science state based assessment and a social studies state-developed end-of-course exam.<sup>26</sup>

Four-year high school graduation rates in New Mexico have overall remained steady at about 70 percent since the 2012 class. The graduating class of 2015 saw a decline in graduation rates to 68.6 percent overall. The decline from 2014 to 2015 was particularly pronounced among white (2.1 percent decrease), black (3.3 percent decrease) and Asian students (6.5 percent decrease). The 2016 cohort made gains in the graduation rate to 71 percent overall. The improvement was seen especially among Hispanic

students (3.8 percent increase), students who were economically disadvantaged (3.5 percent increase) and English language learners (three percent increase).

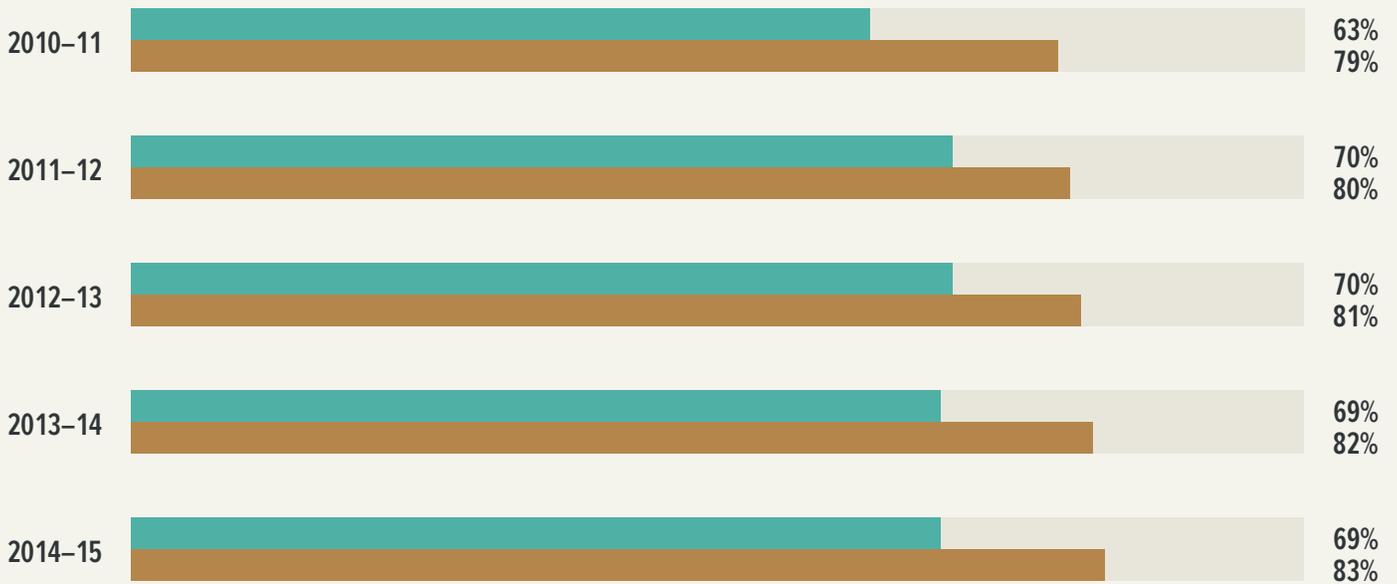
In 2016, Asian students graduated at the highest rates (81 percent) followed by white students (76 percent), Hispanic students (71 percent), American Indian students (63 percent) and black students (61 percent). Despite the improvements made for this cohort, graduation rates nonetheless fell short of the national average for the prior five years.<sup>27</sup> The national average graduation rate for the 2015 graduating class was 83 percent, with 88 percent of white students, 75 percent of black students, 78 percent of Hispanic students, 90 percent of Asian students and 72 percent of American Indian students completing high school within four years.<sup>28</sup>

**FOUR-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATES IN NEW MEXICO BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2011–2016**



Source: NMPED Graduation Statistic Reports.

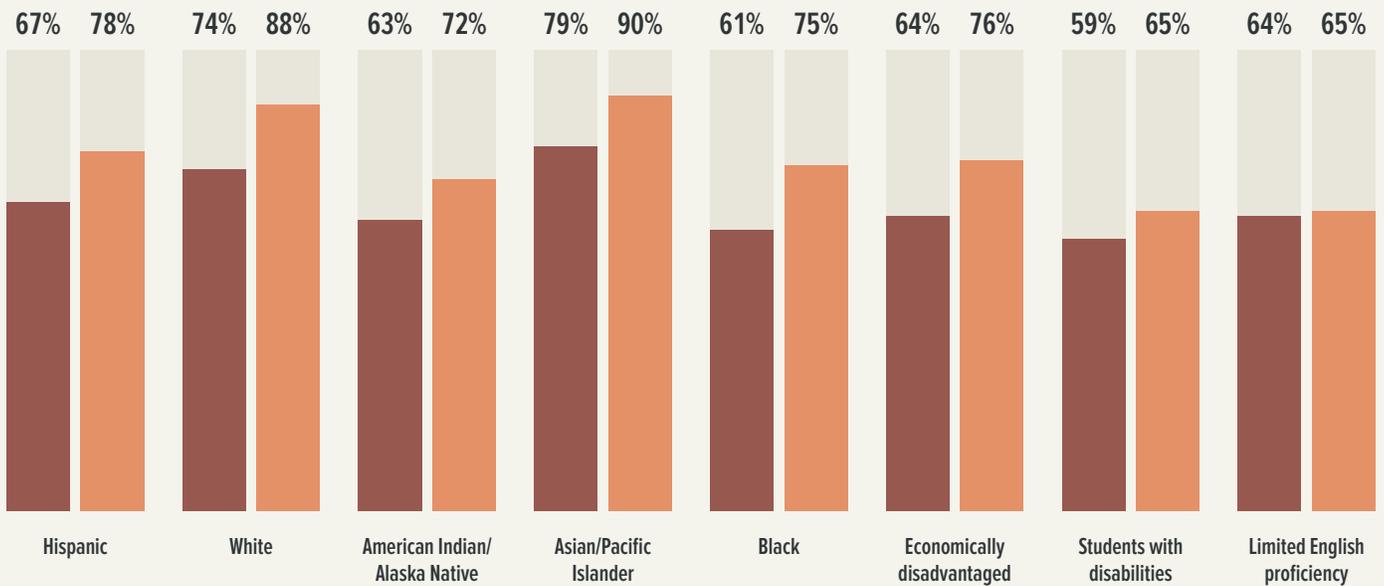
**FOUR-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATES IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO, 2010–2015**



Source: NCES four-year cohort graduation rates.

■ New Mexico ■ United States

**FOUR-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATES IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2014–15**



Source: NCES four-year cohort graduation rates.

■ New Mexico ■ United States

# ACT/SAT participation

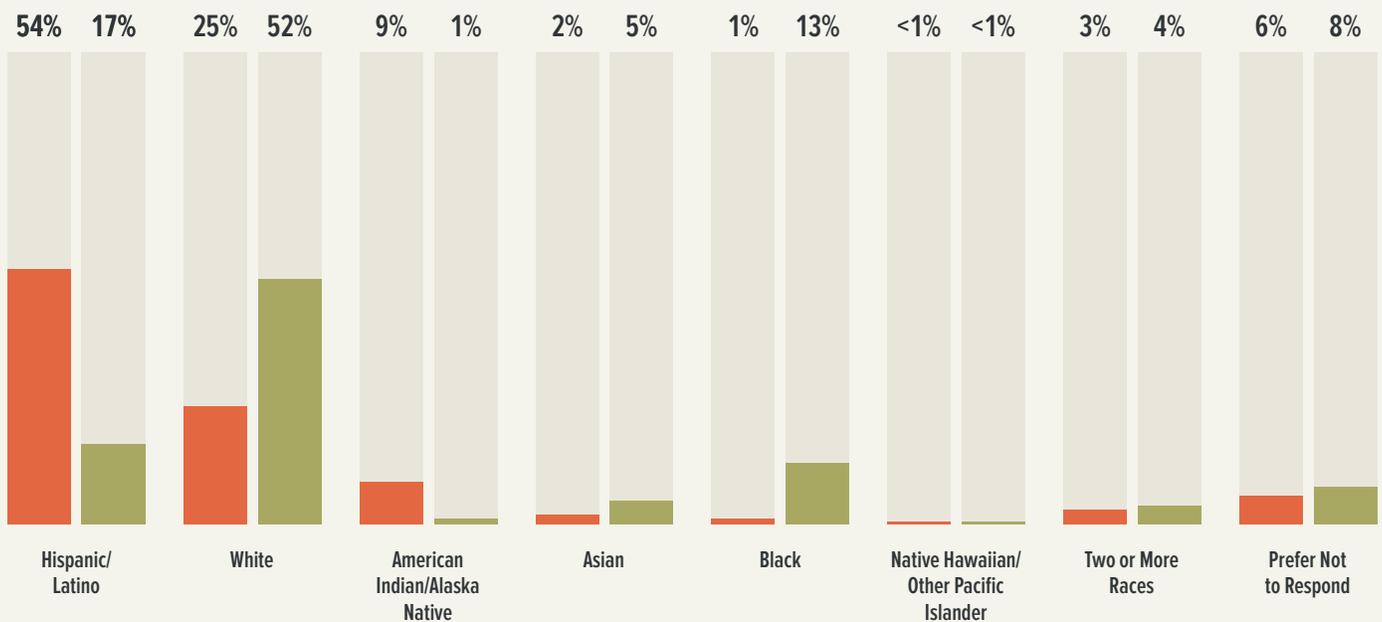
High school students heavily favor taking the ACT college entrance exam over the SAT, with 2017 participation in the former exceeding the latter by a factor of nearly six.

Participation in college entrance exams has steadily increased in New Mexico since 2013 when 13,423 students took the ACT exam and 2,303 students took the SAT. As of 2017, these numbers had increased modestly to 13,523 and 2,342 respectively.<sup>29,30</sup>

Participation in the ACT closely mirrors the larger student demographics, with most test takers identifying as Hispanic students, accounting for 54 percent of all ACT exams taken in 2017.

White students accounted for 25 percent of test takers, black students for one percent, American Indian/Alaska Native students accounted for nine percent and Asian students accounted for two percent of all New Mexico ACT test takers. These figures unsurprisingly differ from the national statistics where student demographics vary. Nationally, white students accounted for 52 percent of test takers, Hispanic students for 17 percent, black students for 13 percent, Asian students for five percent and American Indian/Alaska Native students for just one percent of nationwide ACT test takers in 2017.

DISTRIBUTION OF ACT TEST TAKERS IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2017



Source: ACT New Mexico Profile Report.

Note: Percentage may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Legend: New Mexico (orange), United States (green)

# ACT performance

Students in New Mexico achieved lower average composite scores on the ACT (19.7) than the national average in 2017 (21) out of a possible score of 36. This is an achievement gap which has varied little since 2013 when New Mexico students averaged a composite score of 19.9 compared to the national average of 20.9.

The ACT establishes college-readiness benchmarks to identify students who have an approximately 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher in a credit-bearing course in a higher education institution in the United States.<sup>31</sup> These benchmarks are established for each section of the exam: English, math, reading

and science. The percent of students reaching these benchmarks provides a reasonable indication of how well students in New Mexico are prepared for college courses. These figures highlight a significant achievement gap among the race/ethnicity groups present in New Mexico, with white and Asian test takers regularly meeting these benchmarks at higher rates than black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native test takers.

This achievement rate varied substantially across subject areas and between subgroups in 2017 testing. Test takers in New Mexico met the English benchmark at the highest rate, with 50 percent of test takers overall achieving this score. White test takers met this benchmark at the highest rate of 74 percent, with Asian test takers (71 percent), Hispanic test takers (43 percent), black test takers (41 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native test takers (22 percent) trailing.

Test takers in New Mexico reached the ACT math benchmark at much lower rates, with 29 percent of all test takers achieving this mark. Sixty percent of Asian test takers, 49 percent of white test takers, 22 percent of Hispanic test takers, 23 percent of black test takers and 10 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native test takers met the benchmark.

The ACT reading benchmark was met by 39 percent of all test takers in New Mexico in 2017, with white test takers achieving this score at the highest rate (62 percent), followed by Asian (52 percent), black (32 percent), Hispanic (32 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (16 percent) test takers.

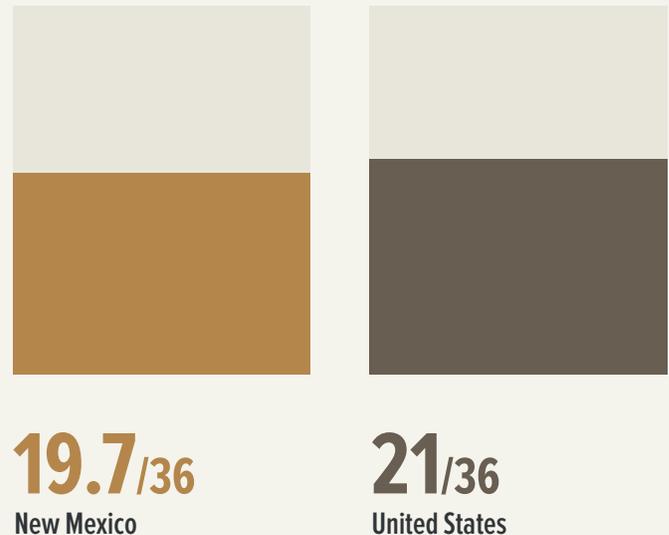
Twenty-eight percent of all test takers in New Mexico met the ACT science benchmark in 2017, with 49 percent of white test takers meeting this score, followed by Asian (47 percent), Hispanic (20 percent), black (19 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (9 percent) test takers.

Eighteen percent of test takers in New Mexico met all four of these benchmarks in 2017. Asian test takers accomplished this at the highest rate (37 percent), followed by white (36 percent),

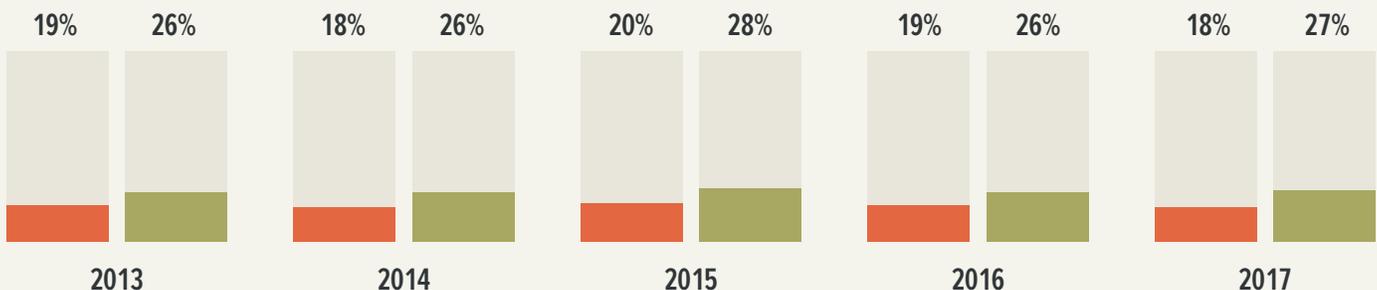
black (12 percent), Hispanic (11 percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native (4 percent) test takers.

Compared to the rest of the nation, test takers in New Mexico have achieved all four ACT benchmarks at lower rates over the last five years. In 2017, 18 percent of test takers in New Mexico met all four benchmarks compared with 27 percent of all test takers nationwide. This figure has varied only slightly since 2013 when 19 percent of test takers in New Mexico and 26 percent of national test takers achieved this benchmark. Both figures peaked in 2015 when 20 percent of test takers in New Mexico and 28 percent of national test takers met all four benchmarks.

#### AVERAGE ACT COMPOSITE SCORE OF STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO, 2017



#### PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO MET ALL FOUR ACT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARKS IN THE UNITED STATES AND NEW MEXICO, 2013-2017



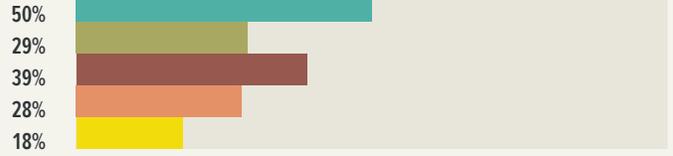
Source: ACT New Mexico Profile Report 2017.

New Mexico United States

**PERCENT OF NEW MEXICO TEST TAKERS WHO MET ACT COLLEGE READINESS BENCHMARKS BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2017**

- English (BM = 18)
- Math (BM = 22)
- Reading (BM = 22)
- Science (BM = 23)
- All Four

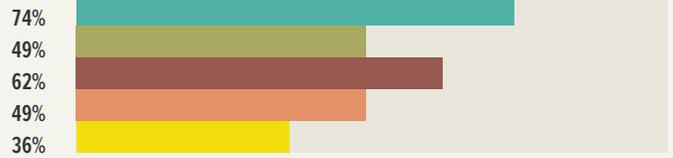
**13,523**  
Total (All) Students



**7,366**  
Hispanic/Latino Students



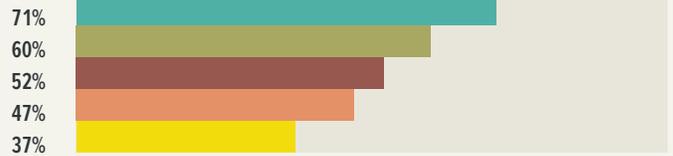
**3,318**  
White Students



**1,187**  
American Indian/Alaska Native Students



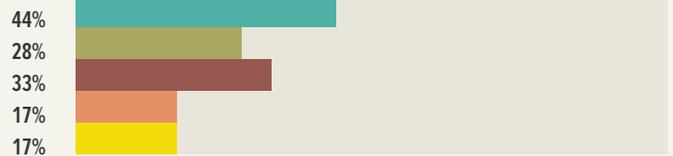
**310**  
Asian Students



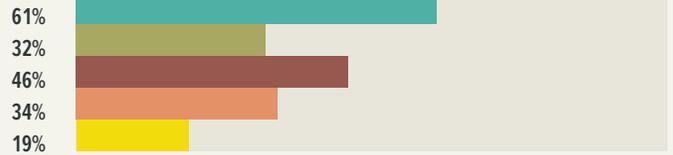
**186**  
Black Students



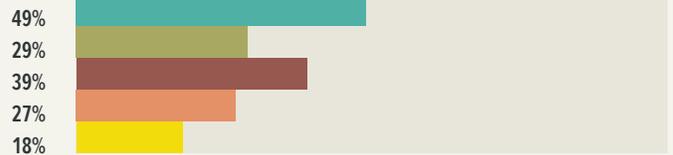
**18**  
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander Students



**394**  
Students of Two or More Races



**744**  
Students of Unknown Race (Did Not Respond)



Source: ACT New Mexico Profile Report 2017.

# Conclusion

This report is intended to be a clear-eyed assessment of our potential and not an incrimination of our failures. While this report helps us understand the state of education in New Mexico and how our students, educators and schools are doing, this information is just the first step to improving our education system.

One thing is clear: we can and must do more to ensure that we are preparing every student in New Mexico with the knowledge and skills they need to reach their full potential. While New Mexico's public education system has areas in need of improvement, the good news is that we are also home to many schools, educators and school and district leaders that are achieving incredible results, and proving that any student, no matter where they come from, is capable of success. We must celebrate and champion our successes when we experience them and call upon our elected, community and education leaders to intervene and provide support when there are failures.

We ask you to explore and share this report and use the information within to spread our successes and tackle our gaps head on. We believe that our schools can change lives and that delivering on the promise of an excellent education for every child is within reach. We hope you will join us in our deep belief that all kids can succeed and that great schools can be the agents of change. The time is now to put our kids first.



**#NMSTATEOFED2018**

## ENDNOTES

- 1.** New Mexico Public Education Department, "School Fact Sheets: Total Student Enrollment," accessed October 17, 2017, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/it/schoolfactsheets.html>.
- 2.** New Mexico Public Education Department, "School Fact Sheets: Total Student Enrollment 2016–17," accessed October 17, 2017, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/it/2017/Enrollmentpercent2040dpercent201617SY.xls>.
- 3.** Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and state or jurisdiction: fall 2004 and fall 2014, Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, accessed October 20, 2017, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_203.70.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_203.70.asp?current=yes).
- 4.** Note: American Indian student population figures do not account for students attending schools on the state's American Indian reservations, which report to the federal Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). These schools are federally funded and are excluded from all state-level data throughout the report. It is not clear whether BIE students are included in SAT and ACT figures for New Mexico or in national-level NAEP data.
- 5.** Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: Selected years, 2000–01 through 2014–15, Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, accessed November 6, 2017, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_204.10.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_204.10.asp?current=yes).
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- 8.** New Mexico Public Education Department, "School Fact Sheets: Total Student Enrollment," accessed October 17, 2017, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/it/schoolfactsheets.html>.
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- 11.** 2016 Teacher Evaluation Release, NMTEACH, New Mexico Public Education Department, accessed October 20, 2017, [http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/NMTeachDocs/Toolbox/2015-2016\\_NMTEACH\\_Briefing.pdf](http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/NMTeachDocs/Toolbox/2015-2016_NMTEACH_Briefing.pdf).
- 12.** NMTEACH Steps, New Mexico Public Education Department, accessed November 7, 2017, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/NMTeachDocs/Toolbox/NMTEACHStepsChart2.0.pdf>.
- 13.** Current expenditure per pupil in fall enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: Selected years, 1969–70 through 2013–14, Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, accessed October 27, 2017, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_236.65.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_236.65.asp?current=yes).
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- 15.** Modernizing the Public Education Funding Formula Progress Report, Legislative Finance Committee and Legislative Education Study Committee, September 2017, accessed November 8, 2017, [https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Documents/Program\\_Evaluation\\_Progress\\_Reports/Funding%20Formula%20Progress%20Report%20-%20September%202017.pdf](https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Documents/Program_Evaluation_Progress_Reports/Funding%20Formula%20Progress%20Report%20-%20September%202017.pdf).
- 16.** New Mexico ESEA Flexibility Request December 8, 2015, US Department of Education, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/nmrequest12082015.pdf>.
- 17.** Private schools, home schools and BIE schools are all exempt from the grading requirements. Staff Report: A–F Schools Grading System: Background, Legislative Education Study Committee, July 10, 2013, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/Item%203%20-%20A-F%20Schools%20Grading%20System%20Background.pdf>.
- 18.** "New Mexico A–F School Grading Technical Guide 2017," New Mexico Public Education Department Assessment and Accountability Division, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://aae.ped.state.nm.us/SchoolGradingLinks/1617/Technicalpercent20Assistancepercent20forpercent20Educators/Technicalpercent20Guidepercent202017.pdf>
- 19.** Email exchange with Ryan Tolman October 20, 2017, NMPED Accountability Bureau.
- 20.** "Annual Report & Data Reference Guide to the First Session of the Fifty-Third Legislature January, 2017," New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee, accessed October 21, 2017, [https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LESC/Documents/Reports\\_To\\_The\\_Legislature/LESCReportTo\\_Legislature\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LESC/Documents/Reports_To_The_Legislature/LESCReportTo_Legislature_2017.pdf).
- 21.** School District Report Cards, New Mexico Public Education Department, accessed October 17, 2017, <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/DistrictReportCards.html>.
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- 23.** General mathematics assessments are administered to students in grades three through eight. In grades nine, ten and eleven, students take math assessments corresponding to the level of math completed in that year. (i.e., students will be assessed in Geometry, Algebra or Integrated Math in the year they were enrolled in these courses.)
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- 27.** 4-Year Graduation Rates Cohort of 2016, New Mexico Public Education Department, Accessed October 17, 2017, [http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/Graduation\\_data.html](http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/Graduation_data.html).
- 28.** Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by selected student characteristics and state: 2010–11 through 2014–15, Digest of Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, accessed October 17, 2017, [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_219.46.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_219.46.asp).
- 29.** The 2017 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report New Mexico, College Board, accessed October 24, 2017, <https://research.collegeboard.org/programs/sat/data/2017-sat-suite-annual-report>.
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# About us

Launched in 2018, NewMexicoKidsCAN: The New Mexico Campaign for Achievement Now is a local non-profit organization that advocates for community-informed, student-centered and research-backed education policies. Connecting policy, instructional practice and politics we work to reimagine what is possible in New Mexico's public education system to ensure our students become the future community, civic and business leaders we need.