

Students At The Crossroads: A Study Of New Mexico's 12th Grade

Prepared For the Legislative Finance Committee, June 15th 2011

**Peter Winograd, Director,
Center For Education Policy Research
University of New Mexico**

**Charles Sallee, Deputy Director For Program Evaluation
New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee**

We Recognize The Hard Work Of The Students and The Educators In High School

- In New Mexico, over 84% of students graduated from high school or obtained their GEDs in SY2009-10.
- New Mexico's high school graduates went on to:
 - College
 - The military
 - A variety of careers
- These students will be the next generation of leaders and citizens in New Mexico and the U.S.
- High school educators have worked hard to retain students in high school. New Mexico's 12th grade enrollment, attrition rates, and high school graduation rates have improved across New Mexico.

- *“Every 12th grade kid has a transition that’s as big as the first grade.”* - Superintendent, NM School District
- *“Seniors are preparing to graduate from high school and move on to the next step in their lives. They need help and guidance transitioning to that next step regardless of whether they are going to college, the military, technical school, or directly into full-time employment.”* - NM High School Principal
- *“Students today probably change careers five times in their lives, and four of those may not even exist today. How do we prepare students for that? It’s a tightrope.”*
- Superintendent, NM School District

Acknowledgments

- New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee
 - Frances Maestas, Director
 - David Harrell
- New Mexico Public Education Department
 - Hanna Skandera, Secretary Designate
 - Ruth Williams
 - Minerva Carrera
 - Anya Dozier Enos
- New Mexico Higher Education Department
 - Jose Garcia, Secretary
 - Robert Watson
 - Dina Advani

The Report

- Executive Summary
 - The Study & Research Team
 - Methodology
 - Major Findings
 - Recommendations
- The Context
 - National Trends
 - New Mexico Trends
 - Challenges Studying the 12th Grade
 - Demographics of Student Participants
- The Five Major Questions
 - What is the 12th Grade?
 - What are 12th Graders Doing?

The Report

- The Five Major Questions (continued)
 - How Does The 12th Grade Impact Students' Readiness For College and Careers?
 - What Do Principals, Counselors, and Superintendents Say About 12th Grade?
 - What Do We know About the Financial Side of 12th Grade?
- Findings
- Recommendations
- Final Thoughts
- Appendices
 - Scope of Work, February 2011
 - Transcript data request, February 2011
 - Superintendent survey
 - Principal and Counselor survey

The Study

The UNM Center for Education Policy Research and the Legislative Finance Committee are conducting a study of the 12th grade. The goal of this study is to provide a portrait of New Mexico's 12th graders today, recognize what is working for these students, detect the challenges they face, and identify ways to make the 12th grade more effective and efficient in preparing them for the transition into college, careers, family life, members of community, and citizenship.

The Research Team

- Sarah Amador, LFC
- Tenley Ruth, CEPR
- Vicky Jo Morris-Dueer, CEPR
- Dawn Kenney, CNM
- Geneva Becenti, CEPR
- Carolina Aguirre, CEPR
- Jessica McCord, CEPR
- Beata Thorstensen, NMSLI
- Angelo Gonzales, CEPR
- Scott Hughes, CEPR

The Methodology

- The ten high schools in eight districts were selected to provide a representative sample of New Mexico's students and geographic regions.
- We received transcript data for School Year 2009-10 from 4,306 12th graders in ten participating high schools. This is approximately 22% of the 19,799 students who were in the 12th grade in 2009-2010.
- We conducted face-to-face or phone interviews with principals, counselors, and superintendents from all eight school districts and 10 high schools. Before these interviews, eight of ten high schools and two of eight school districts had responded to online surveys.
- We received financial and staffing data from Public Education Department and each participating school district.
- We are working with the Higher Education Department to gather information on how these high school graduates performed in their first year of college.
- We are working with Dr. Vi Florez of UNM's College of Education, and Research and Polling Inc., to conduct focus groups of high school students and employers to learn about their perspectives on high school.

Participating Districts and High Schools

- School Districts

- APS
- Belen
- Clovis
- Española
- Gallup
- Las Cruces
- Rio Rancho
- Silver

- High Schools

- La Cueva, Highland and Rio Grande High Schools
- Belen High School
- Clovis High School
- Española Valley High School
- Gallup High School
- Oñate High School
- Rio Rancho High School
- Silver High School

Executive Summary Findings:

12th grade is a complex time of transition

- 12th grade is a critical time of transition between high school and higher education and careers, between adolescence and young adulthood.
- 12th grade is complex in terms of the purposes it serves; the outcomes we expect; how it is defined; the diversity of students classified as 12th graders; the range of courses offered; how courses are scheduled; and the needs of the students, teachers and schools.

Executive Summary Findings:

12th Graders are offered a variety of courses and schedules

- High schools vary in academic courses, class scheduling patterns and non-academic opportunities. Different schedules determine how many credits a student potentially is able to earn each year.
- 12th graders took a high proportion of their courses in core subject areas including English (96%), mathematics (73%), and science (50%). Ninety-three percent (93%) of 12th graders also took elective courses, most of which directly support their transition to college and careers.
- High schools define full and partial loads according to block, hybrid and traditional class schedules. Approximately 71% of the students in 8 participating high schools took a full load; the average load was 7.8 courses.
- The most common reasons cited by participating schools for 12th grade students taking less than a full load was they only needed a partial load to graduate; they needed to work for a salary; or they had family obligations, such as taking care of younger siblings or elderly members.

Executive Summary Findings:

Graduation requirements vary in New Mexico, and some students graduate without meeting all course requirements

- Graduation requirements in participating high schools in SY2009-10 ranged from the state requirement of 23 credits to 29 credits.
- The results from this study indicate a significant percentage of students graduate from high school without meeting all state requirements in English, math, science and other disciplines.
 - Approximately 25% of Native American male students and 15% of Native American female students who graduated from high school did not earn the state requirement of 3 units in math.
 - A much higher percentage of African American, Asian, Hispanic and White students did earn the state requirement of 3 units in math.
 - A surprising number of students did not appear to meet the full state requirements in English, math, science, social studies, physical education, communication skills/business/foreign language or electives.

Executive Summary Findings:

The costs of the 12th grade are difficult to isolate and analyze

- New Mexico's funding formula allocates resources for upper grades, including 12th grade, that is consistent with other states.
- The costs of the 12th grade are not isolated from the rest of high school, and it is extremely difficult to accurately single out 12th grade costs from other high school costs.
- The funding formula generates more estimated revenue for the 12th grade than schools spend to deliver services. However, this finding needs to be viewed in context of the whole funding formula and with the understanding that these appropriations are disbursed by local administration based upon their overall high school needs, not just for the 12th grade.
- The estimated cost per student ranges from \$3,800 to \$6,300 per student, and \$530 to over \$1,100 per credit. Costs can vary depending on the size of student enrollment and class sizes.

Executive Summary Findings:

Educators identified three top strengths in the 12th grade

- Educators report that dual credit courses are one of the strengths of the 12th grade because they serve many sectors of the high school student population, including first generation college students, and dual credit courses provide opportunities to investigate career options and take career technical courses not available in high school.
- Educators report that the expansion of Advanced Placement courses is helping increase academic rigor for a broad student population.
- Educators report that internships, work experience, and service learning opportunities help connect required core content with the “real” world.

Executive Summary Findings:

Educators identified areas to improve in 12th grade

- Educators strongly recommend that dual credit be expanded in all districts for all students, through streamlined enrollment, and improved high school-higher education communication.
- Educators strongly recommend that remediation in college be better defined, practice tests made available, and communication between high schools and higher education strengthened.
- Educators feel that providing enough support for students to be successful in rigorous academic courses and ensuring that the curriculum is connected to the “real world” are among the most difficult challenges in 12th grade.
- Educators feel that the lack of alignment in curriculum and assessments between high school and higher education negatively impacts 12th graders’ successful transition to college and career.

Executive Summary Recommendations

- The PED should make sure that districts have the capacity to gather accurate data on high school students and that district personnel are trained to use this information to improve the education of students and to ensure more accountability for the state.
 - Enhance training for counselors, principals, and other staff so that they can better use transcript data while students are in school to ensure that all students receive a rigorous high school education.
 - Enhance training for staff working with electronic systems conducting the data entry/sharing to ensure the quality of the data.
 - Increase the use of electronic systems to reduce the workload associated with transcript reviews and student schedules.
- The PED should monitor the number of state required units students complete in order to graduate to ensure state standards are met.

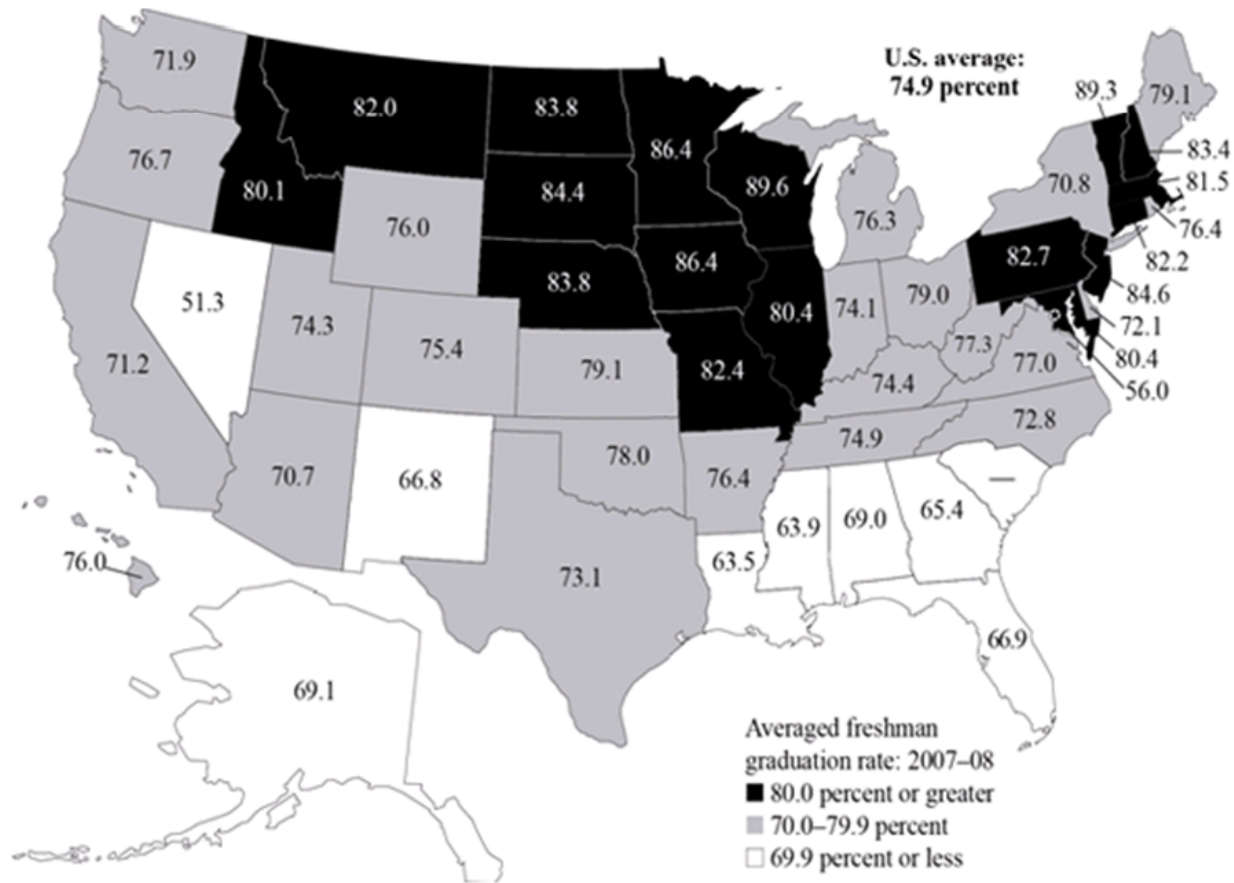
Executive Summary Recommendations

- The PED and HED should ensure that the work of the Education Data System Council created in statute [22-1-11, 2010 NMSA 1978] proceeds quickly so that the policy makers and citizens can better understand the impact of high school curriculum on success in both college and careers.
- The PED and the HED should ensure that the freshman year outcome reports from higher education to high schools are developed and implemented; they should ensure that additional efforts are made to improve the communication and collaboration between high schools and higher education.
- The state statute that defines how a student qualifies for funding [22-8-2, 2010 NMSA 1978] should be revisited. The state should strengthen the definition of how student membership is determined because the current lack of a uniform standard for how to classify a student in 12th grade makes it unclear whether a student qualifies for funding if they are not enrolled full time.

The National and New Mexico Context

Current research and policy trends
related to the 12th grade

Figure 6. Averaged freshman graduation rates of public high school students, by state: School year 2007–08



— Not available.

NOTE: The averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) is an estimate of the percentage of an entering freshman class graduating in 4 years. For 2007–08, it equals the total number of diploma recipients in 2007–08 divided by the average membership of the 8th-grade class in 2003–04, the 9th-grade class in 2004–05, and the 10th-grade class in 2005–06. See table 13 in this report for more information about these state rates.

SOURCE: Stillwell, R. (2010). *Public School Graduates and Dropouts From the Common Core of Data: School Year 2007–08* (NCES 2010-341), table 5.

National Trends

- The high school curriculum has increased in rigor:
 - In 2009, graduates earned over three credits more than their 1990 counterparts, or about 420 additional hours of instruction during their high school careers.
 - A greater percentage of 2009 graduates completed a more challenging curriculum than 1990 or 2005 graduates.
- The boundary between high school and higher education has become ‘blurry’ as more high school students take college level courses through dual credit and advanced placement, and more college students take high school level courses through remediation:
 - About 1 in 5 young people experiences a “blurry” transition from high school to college.
 - Higher achieving, economically advantaged students are more likely to complete post-secondary work in high school and to avoid remedial work in college.

Sources: America's High School Graduates: 2009 Study of High School Transcripts. NCES. Wruck, Warren, Arbeit, (2008). *The Blurry Line Between Secondary and Post-Secondary Schooling in the United States: Contours and Consequences*. Paper prepared for presentation at the American Sociological Association, Boston MA.

National Trends

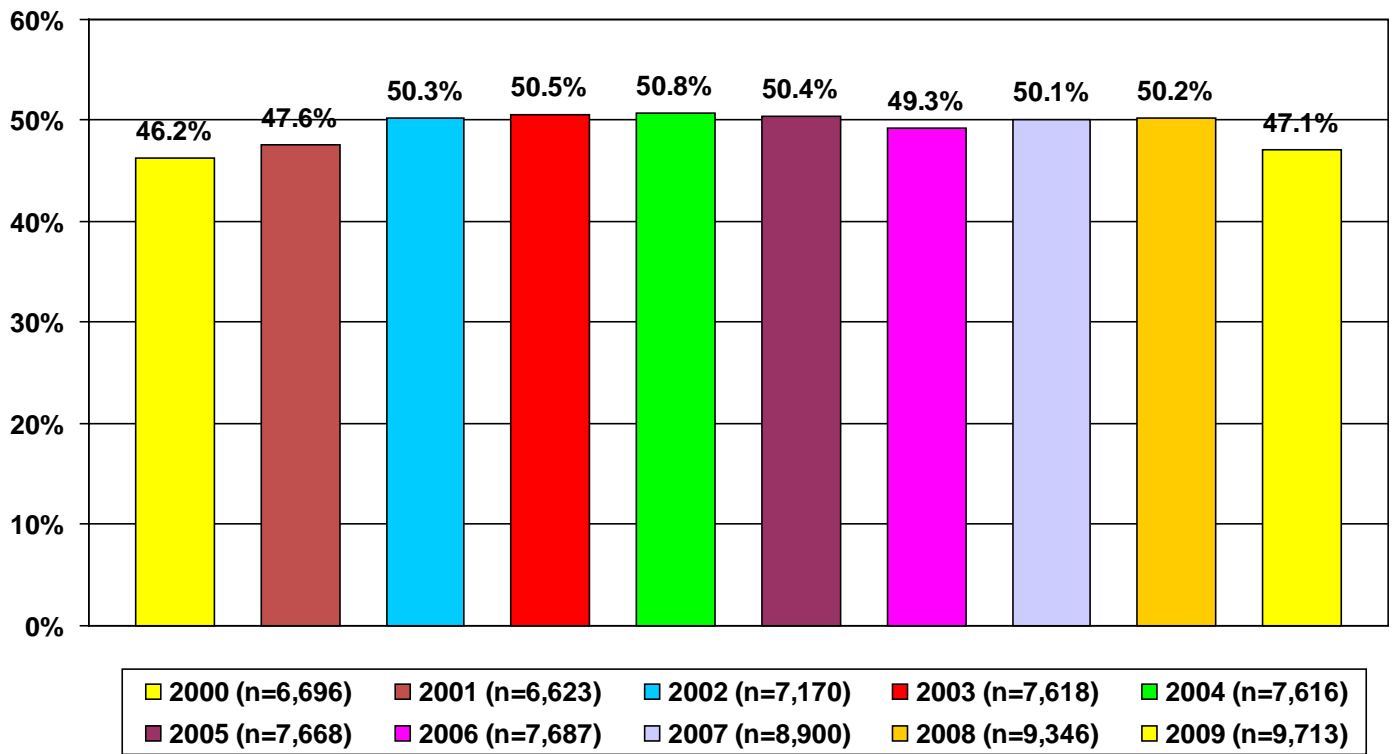
- NCSL, NGA, and other key education policy groups are focused on a number of critical topics related to high school including:
 - Dropout prevention and recovery
 - Graduation requirements
 - Dual credit
 - Teacher and principal quality
 - Use of technology
 - Assessments, data systems, and accountability
 - High school redesign

Sources: National Conference of State Legislatures; National Governors Association;
National High School Center

High School And The 12th Grade Is A Hot Topic In New Mexico

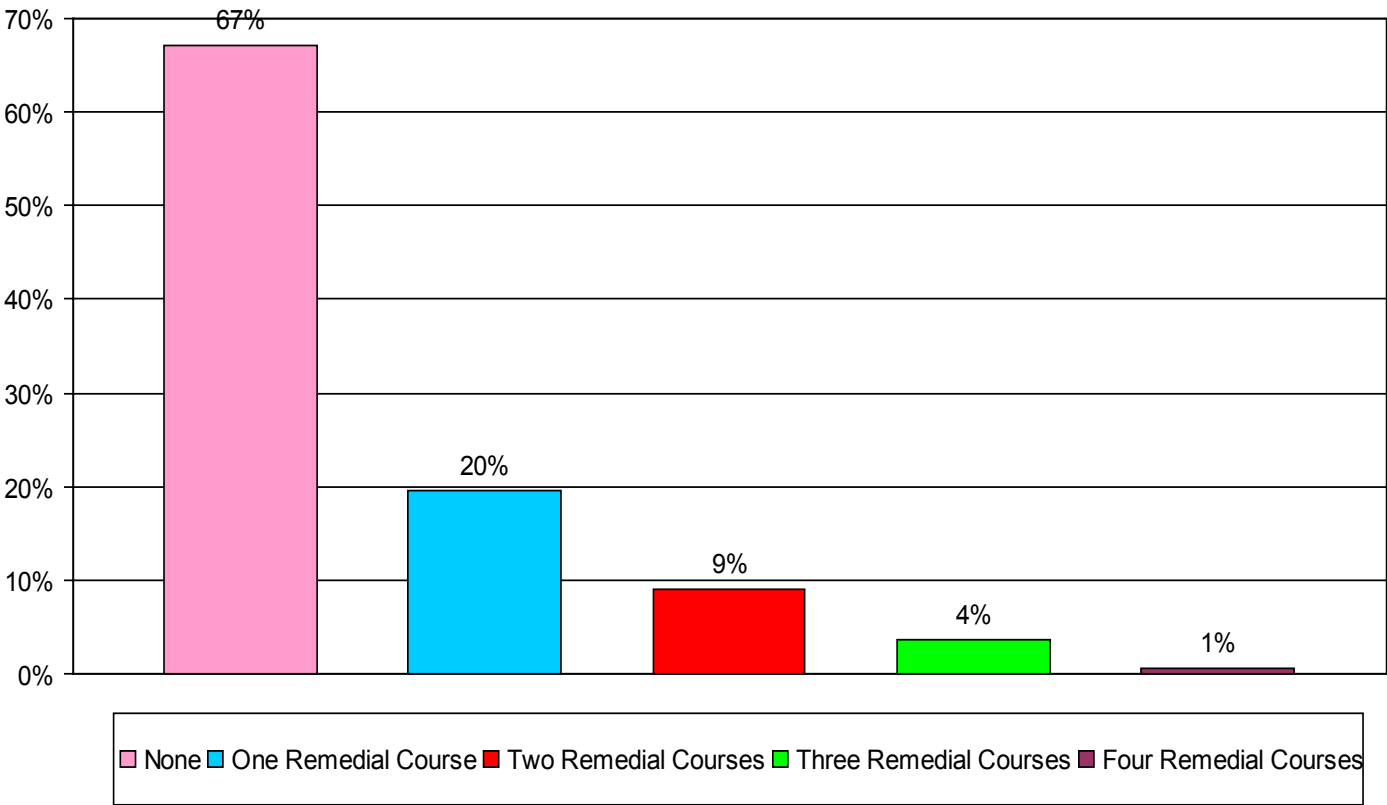
- Since 2002, the LESC and LFC have focused on the high rate of remedial coursework taken by college freshmen from New Mexico high schools and considered legislation to address this issue.
- In 2007 and 2008, the New Mexico Legislature passed a number of high school redesign measures intended to provide students with a rigorous and relevant high school curriculum that better prepared them to succeed in college and the workplace. These legislative initiatives included:
 - Increased graduation requirements
 - Required course offerings
 - Changes to assessment and testing
 - Additional minimum instructional areas
 - Changes to compulsory school attendance provisions

Percent of New Mexico Public High School Graduates Who Took Remedial Classes In Math And/Or Reading In New Mexico Colleges: 2000-2009



Note: Data does not include charter schools or alternative schools

Percent of Students Who Entered College In Fall of 2003 and Who Obtained Degrees or Certificates Within Six Years By Number Of Remedial Courses Taken During Their Freshman Fall (2003) Semester (n=2,976)



High School And The 12th Grade Is A Hot Topic In New Mexico

- Over the last five years, the LESC, LFC, the Governor and the Legislature have focused on a number of key topics related to high schools including:
 - Dual credit
 - Career clusters
 - Math and science education
 - High school assessments
 - Distance learning
- In 2011, the Governor and the Legislature focused a great deal of attention on dual credit and remediation in college. Those topics are likely to continue to receive a great deal of attention.

High School And The 12th Grade Is A Hot Topic In New Mexico

- In 2010, the Legislature passed HB 70: Education Data System in order to provide the Governor, the Legislature, and the citizens of New Mexico with accurate and timely information on the status of students from prekindergarten through post-graduate education including:
 - Report high school longitudinal graduation and dropout data;
 - Provide post-secondary remediation data, including assessment scores on exams used to determine the need for remediation;
 - Provide post-secondary remedial course enrollment history, including the number and type of credit and noncredit remedial courses being taken;
 - Report to New Mexico public high schools on their students who enroll in a public post-secondary educational institution within three years of graduating or leaving the high school regarding freshman-year outcomes;
 - Connect performance with financial information;
 - Establish and maintain a state data audit system to assess the quality, validity and reliability of data.

Nationally And In New Mexico, 12th Grade Is Seen As A Time Of Transition

The principals, counselors and superintendents interviewed believed that the 12th grade is a time for students to:

- Prepare for college and career
- Apply what they learned in 9-11 grades
- Develop leadership skills further
- Catch up (credit recovery)
- Explore college and career options
- Take steps toward young adulthood with adult support and structure

Studying the 12th Grade is a Challenge: High School Transcript Data

- The completeness, quality and format of the transcript data received for this study varied considerably among districts. In the following charts and tables “N/P” means the data was not provided by the district.
- Transcript evaluations are often done by non-instructional staff: counselors, assistant principals, the principal and the registrar. Counselors spend more than 50% of their time reviewing student transcripts, particularly with 11th and 12th grade students. Reviews are most often done on paper and then entered electronically.
- The interviews indicated that graduate transcript evaluation processes are time consuming and labor intensive. Principals and counselors felt the time spent on transcript evaluations prevented them from being able to respond to students’ socio-emotional needs and career preparation adequately.
- The district with the most accurate graduate transcripts for SY2009-10 met individually with each junior and senior student and their families once to twice each year for 15-30 minutes each.

Studying the 12th Grade is A Challenge: District-level High School Data

- The quality of data systems, data collection and IT expertise varies by school district, making it difficult to conduct comparative analyses across high schools and districts.
- The majority of districts in this study reported changing their data systems in the last three years. Data systems include School Max, PowerSchool, and Genesis.
- The lack of uniformity of the data made it challenging to conduct analyses of the number of students meeting graduation requirements and course-taking patterns.

Studying the 12th Grade Is A Challenge:

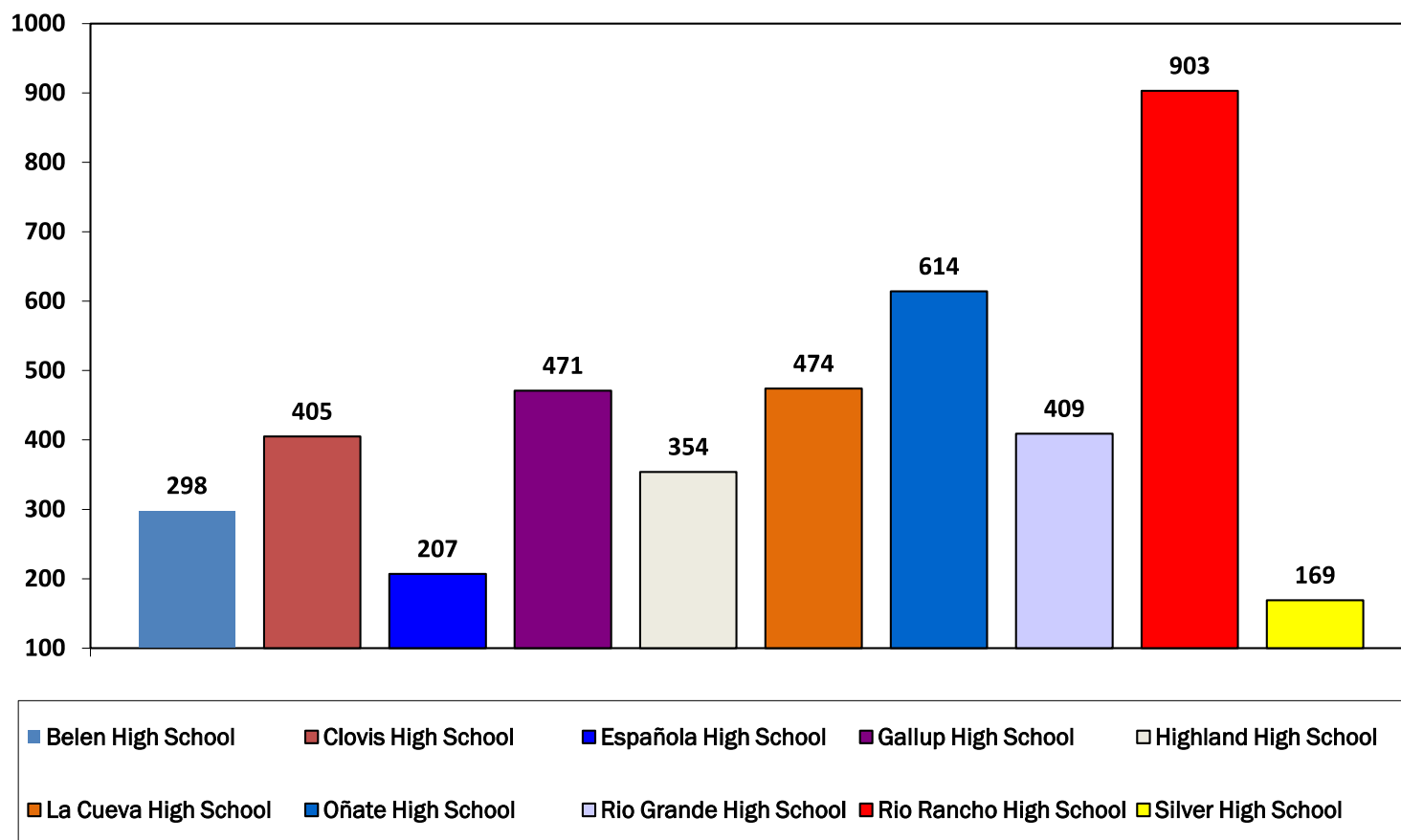
PED High School Data

- PED does not collect information regarding required credits earned by student. This allows a significant percentage of students to unknowingly graduate and receive a diploma without the required credits in certain content areas.

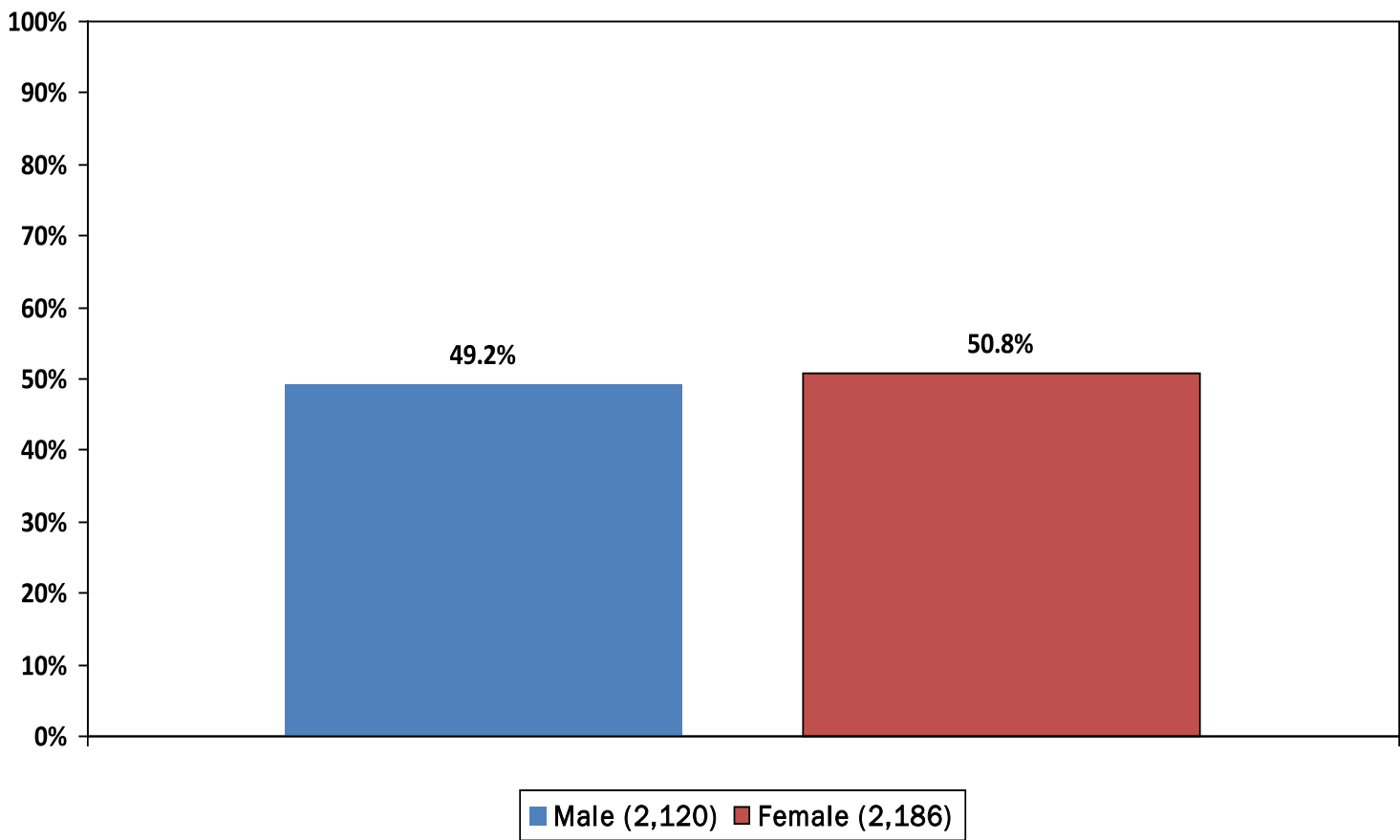
This Study's Five Major Research Questions

1. What is the 12th Grade?
2. What are 12th Graders Doing?
3. How Does The 12th Grade Impact Students' Readiness For College and Careers?
4. What Do Principals, Counselors, and Superintendents Say About 12th Grade?
5. What Do We know About the Financial Side of 12th Grade?

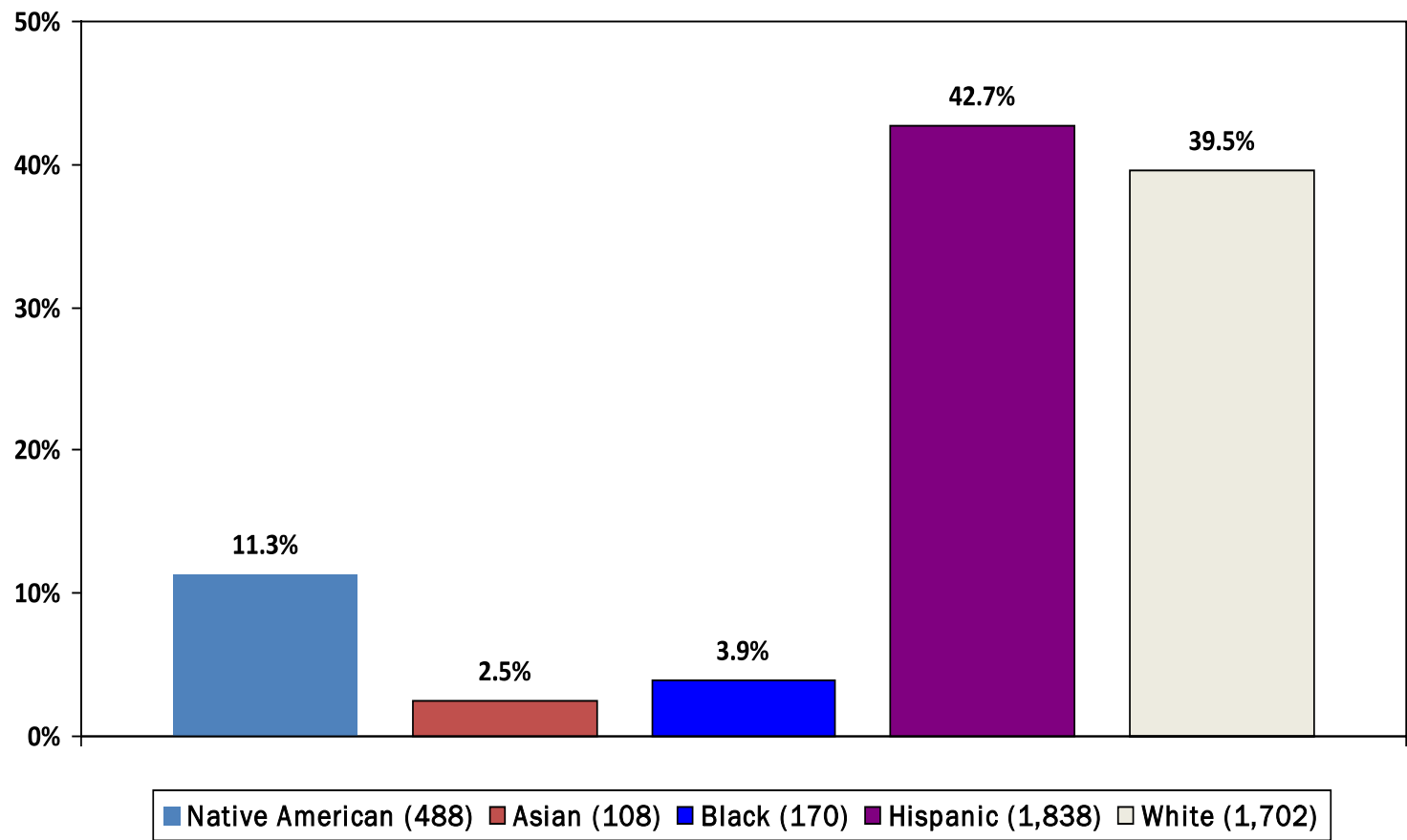
Total Number of Students Included In Transcript Part of Study, By High School (N=4,306)



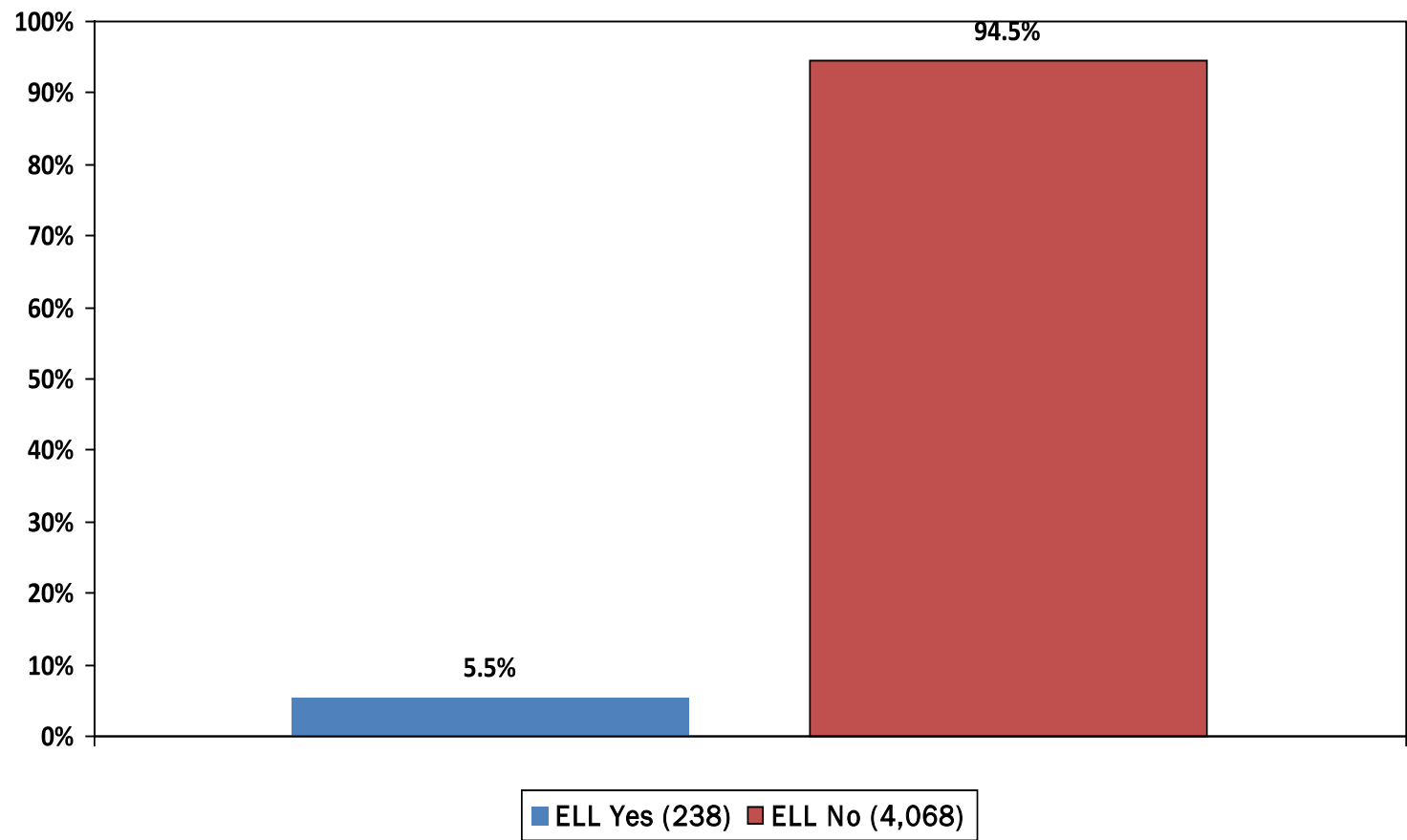
Total Number of 12th Grade Students Included In Transcript Study, By Gender (N=4,306)



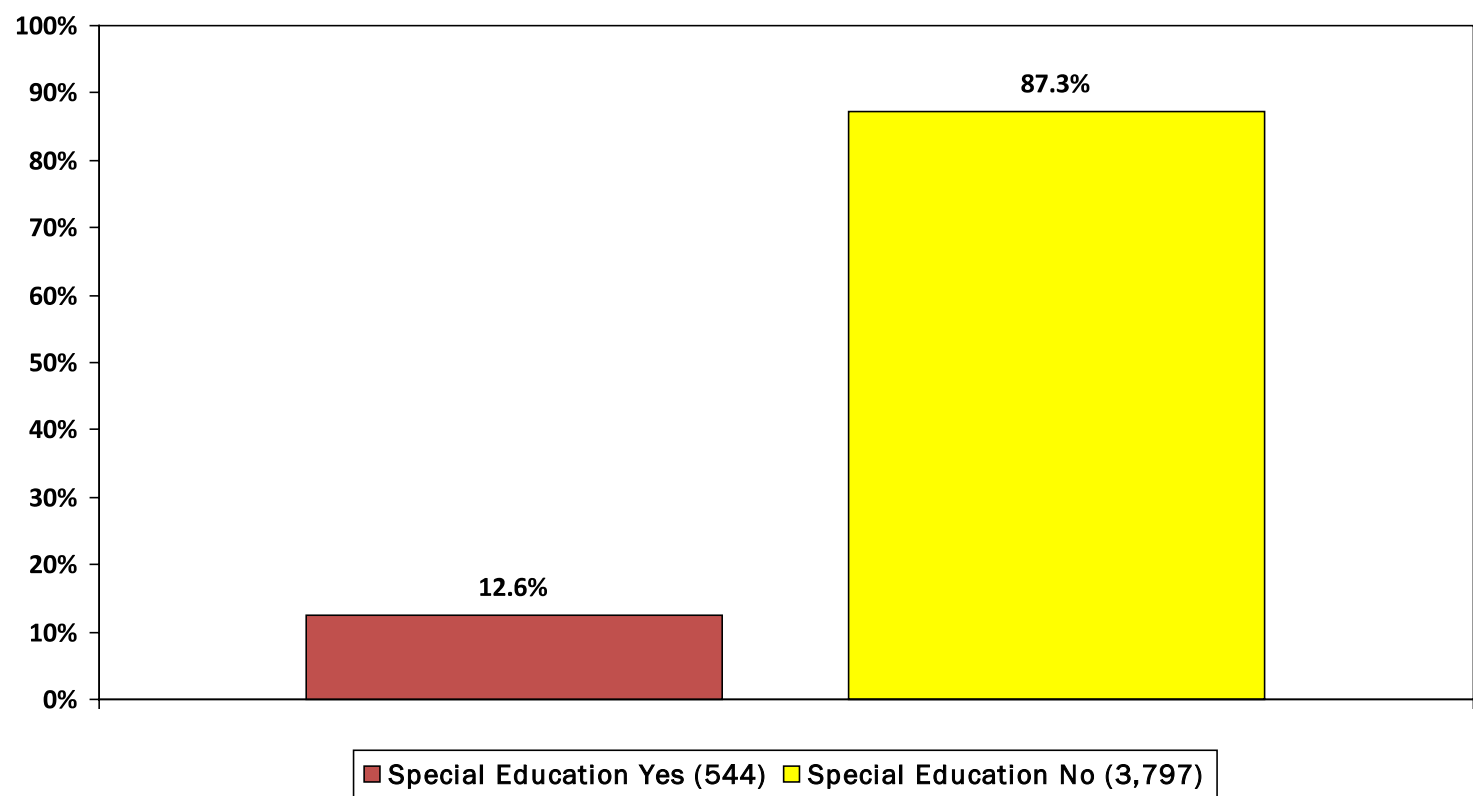
Total Number of 12th Grade Students Included In Transcript Study, By Ethnicity (N=4,306)



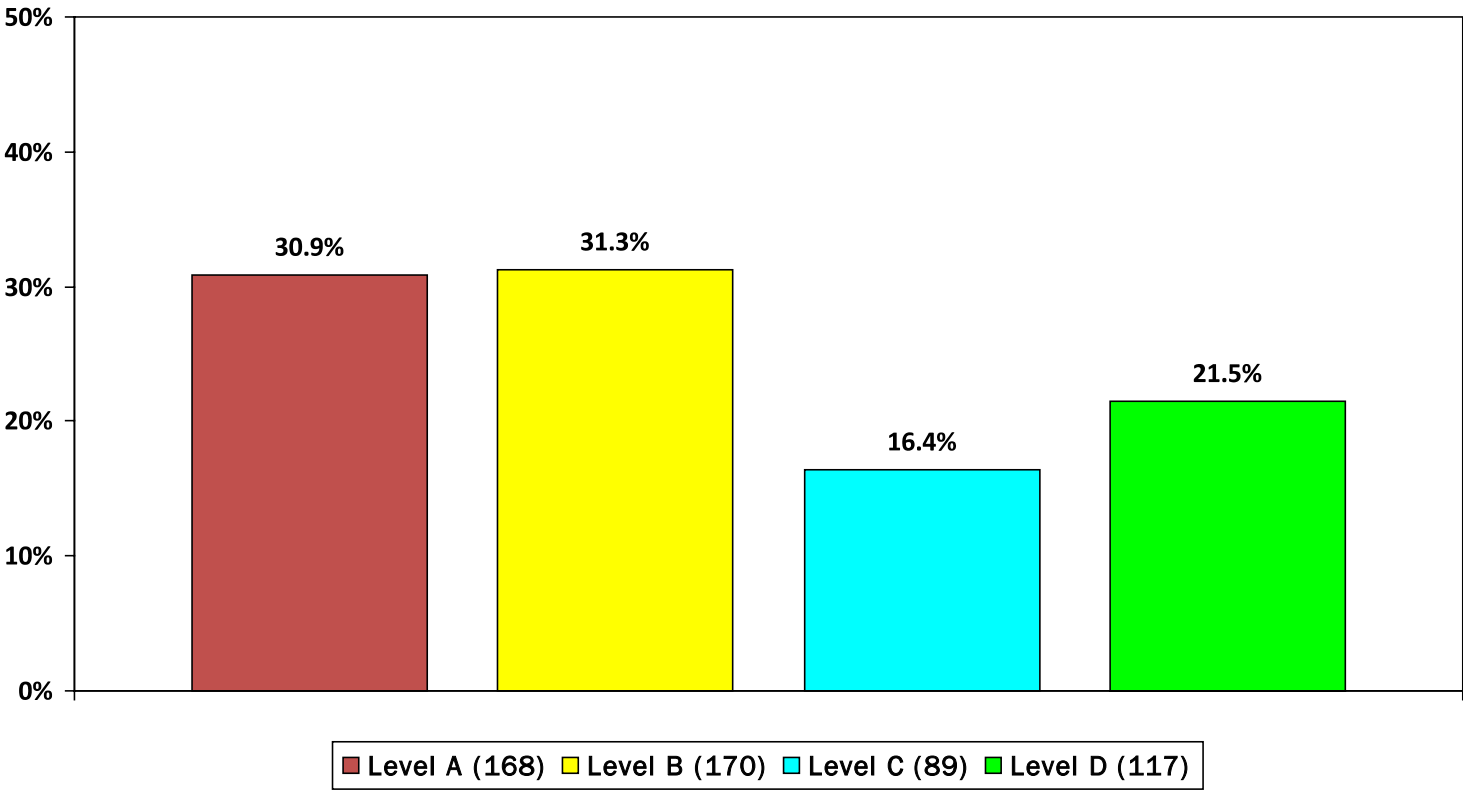
Total Number of 12th Grade Students Included In Transcript Study, By English Language Learner (ELL) Status (N=4,306)



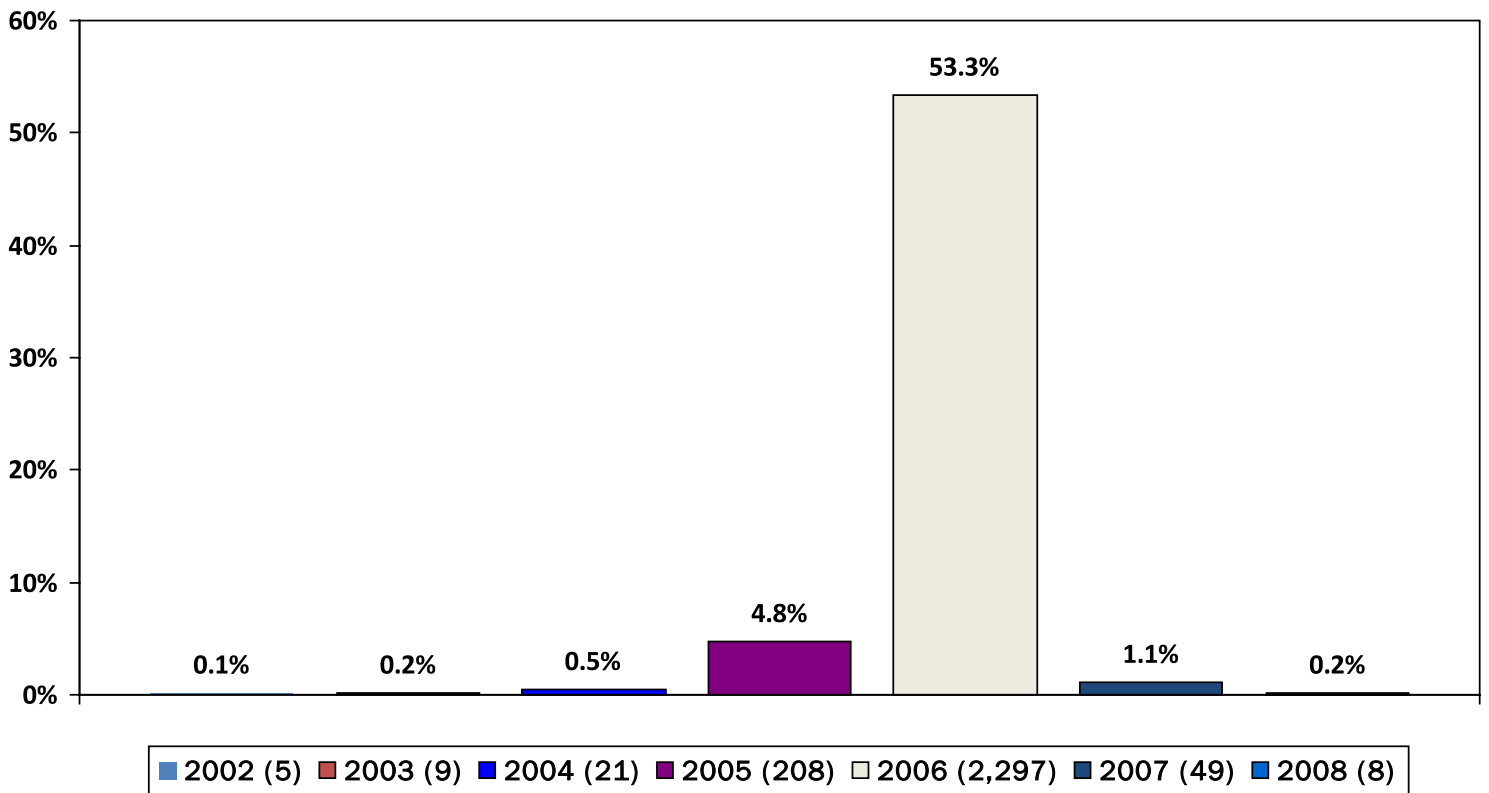
Total Number of 12th Grade Students Included In Transcript Study, By Special Education Status (N=4,306)



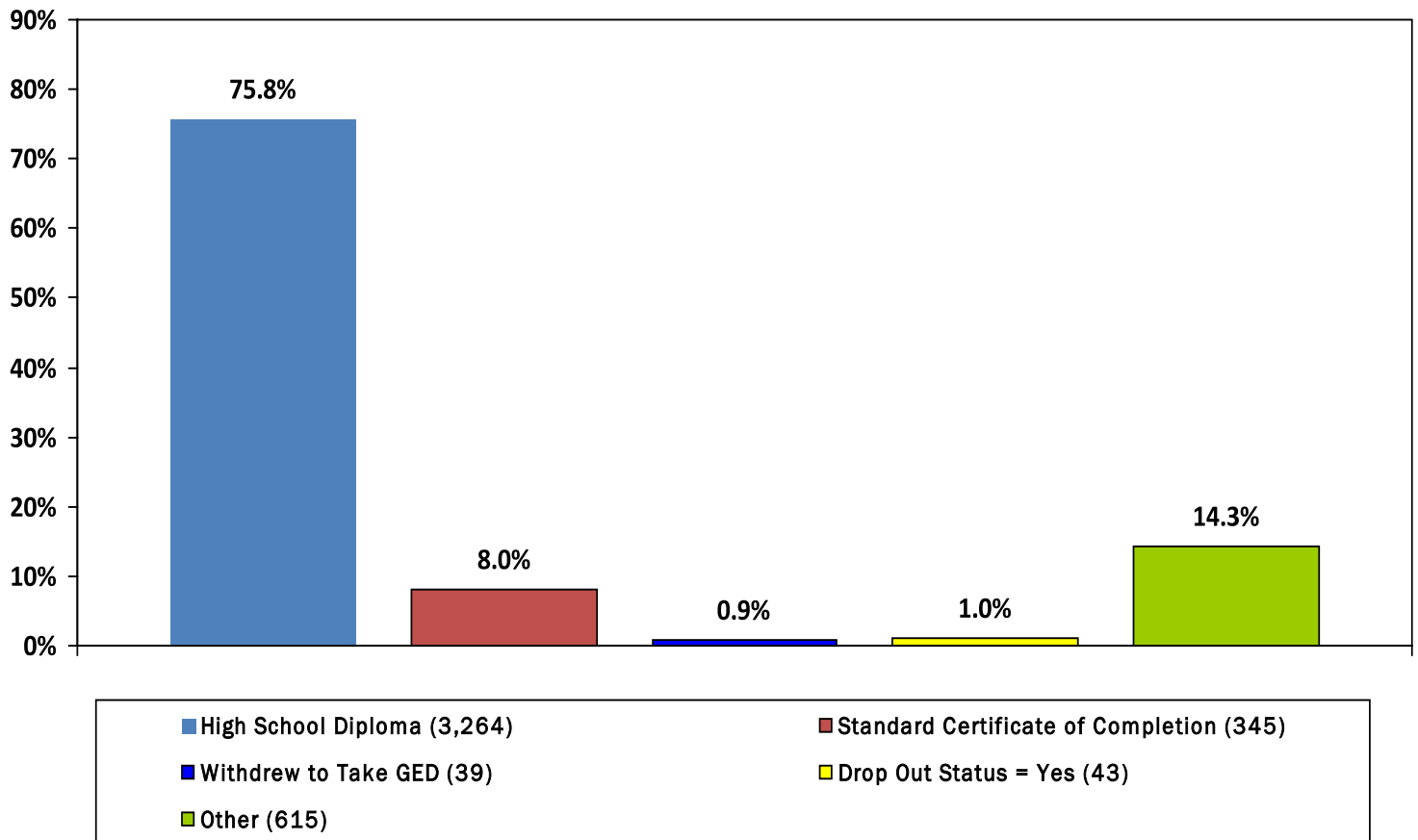
Total Number of Students, By Special Education Status (N=544)



Year of 9th Grade Enrollment For 12th Graders In The Class Of 2009-10 (N=2,597)



Completion Information For The 12th Graders In The Class Of 2009-10 (N=4,306)



Question 1: What Is The 12th Grade?

“That last year [of high school] is much more than giving the students a high school diploma. Our intent is to provide a smooth transition either educationally or into the work force, and the work force has an educational piece, too. We have kids going to a 4-year college, to the local community college, the military, kids who are transient and living on the streets, kids coming from Mexico to continue their education and return to Mexico to play a leadership role, or stay here and play a strong citizenship role. Our kids face all kinds of realities and futures.”

- Superintendent, NM School District

“It’s a great opportunity for kids to really become leaders. . It’s an opportunity for them to broaden everything they’ve learned – and they may have fulfilled the state requirements, and so forth, but I would like to see – it’s an opportunity for 12th graders to develop and take all they’ve learned, and apply those. [They say] ‘I’ve done all the tough stuff, all the academic course work, and now I can apply all I’ve learned.’ I see the senior year that way.”

- Superintendent, NM School District

Question 1: What Is The 12th Grade?

Sub-questions:

- How do high school schedules vary in the 12th grade?
- How are 12th graders defined?
- What were the graduation requirements for 12th graders in SY2009-10?

How Do High School Schedules Vary In 12th Grade?

Block Schedule

- Classes up to 90 minutes each
- Classes not taught every day
- Teachers must be highly trained to be effective
- Students earn up to 8 credits per year
- Educator Comments:
 - Expensive because it requires highly trained teachers
 - Difficult to use learning time effectively if not trained

Traditional “Bell” schedule

- Classes are 45 minutes each
- Same schedule every day
- Least expensive scheduling option
- Students can earn up to 6 or 7 credits per year
- Educator Comments:
 - Leaves little room for courses beyond requirements; little time for credit recovery

Note: The terms “unit” and “credit” are used interchangeably in this report

How Do High School Schedules Vary In 12th Grade?

The “Hybrid” Schedule

- Also called “A/B block with a skinny”
- Two days per week, 4 classes up to 85 minutes each
- “Fifth period” or skinny is 45 minutes
- English, social studies, and science receive longer blocks of time for projects, labs, discussions, etc.
- Courses that require ongoing practice (like math) are taught each day
- Educator Comments
 - Students forget what happened last class when several days pass in between.
 - Difficult to keep track of A/B schedule on weeks with less than 5 days, or other scheduling interruptions

Course Schedules Used SY2009-10 By The Ten Participating High Schools

High School	Block	Traditional	Hybrid
Belen High School	√		
Clovis High School		√	
Española Valley High School	√		
Gallup High School		√	
Highland High School			√
La Cueva High School			√
Oñate High School	√		
Rio Grande High School	N/P	N/P	N/P
Rio Rancho High School		√	
Silver High School		√	

High Schools Were Asked, “For the Graduating Class of 2010, How Did Your High School Define 12th Grader?”

High School	Definition of 12 th Grader at the beginning of the SY	Credits possible / year
Belen High School	20 credits; 24 credits at semester	8
Clovis High School	18 credits or more	6
Española Valley High School	Students in English 4	8
Gallup High School	18 credits or more	6
Highland High School	21 credits or more	7
La Cueva High School	17 credits or more	7
Oñate High School	21 credits or more	8
Rio Grande High School	N/P	7
Rio Rancho High School	Completed 28 credits	7
Silver High School	17 credits or more	6

Type Of Course Schedules, Number Of Units Possible Per Year, And Total Number Of Units Required To Graduate By High School

High School	Course Schedule	Units possible / year	Total Number of Units Required to Graduate
Belen High School	Block	8	28
Clovis High School	Traditional	6	24
Española Valley High School	Block	8	23
Gallup High School	Traditional	6	25
Highland High School	Hybrid	7	28
La Cueva High School	Hybrid	7	23
Oñate High School	Block	8	29
Rio Grande High School	N/P	7	24
Rio Rancho High School	Traditional	7	28
Silver High School	Traditional	6	23

What Were the Graduation Requirements For The Class of 2009-2010?

- The state required the Class of 2009-2010 to have 23 units in order to graduate.
- The state will require the Class of 2013-2014 to have 24 units in order to graduate.
- The state also outlined additional course requirements as of May 1, 2011.
- New Mexico High Schools vary in the number of units required to graduate.



Graduation Unit and Exit Exam Requirements for Students Entering High School from 2006-2007 through 2010-2011

2006-2007 Class of 2010	2007-2008 Class of 2011	2008-2009 Class of 2012	2009-2010 Class of 2013	2010-2011 Class of 2014
23 units to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units English • 3 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 1) • 3 units science (1 w/lab) • 3 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics • .5 unit New Mexico history • 1 unit physical education • 1 unit communication skills or business education or language other than English • 7.5 units electives For NM Diploma, must take and pass all sections of the NM High School Competency Exam	23 units to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units English • 3 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 1) • 3 units science (1 w/lab) • 3 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics • .5 unit New Mexico history • 1 unit physical education • 1 unit communication skills or business education or language other than English • 7.5 units electives For NM Diploma, must take and pass all sections of the NM High School Competency Exam	23 units to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units English • 3 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 1) • 3 units science (1 w/lab) • 3 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics • .5 unit New Mexico history • 1 unit physical education • 1 unit communication skills or business education or language other than English • 7.5 units electives For NM Diploma, must meet threshold for high school exit on 11 th grade SBA or demonstrate competence through portfolio of standards-based indicators	24 units to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units English • 4 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 2) • 3 units science (2 w/lab) • 3.5 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics, and .5 unit New Mexico history • 1 unit physical education • 1 unit career cluster, workplace readiness or language other than English • 7.5 units electives <i>One of the above units must be honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or distance learning</i> For NM Diploma of Excellence, must meet threshold for high school exit on 11 th grade SBA or demonstrate competence through portfolio of standards-based indicators	24 units to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 units English • 4 units math (one unit = or > than algebra 2) • 3 units science (2 w/lab) • 3.5 units social science, including United States history and geography, world history and geography and government and economics, and .5 unit New Mexico history • 1 unit physical education • 1 unit career cluster, workplace readiness or language other than English • 7.5 units electives <i>One of the above units must be honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or distance learning</i> For NM Diploma of Excellence, must meet threshold for high school exit on 11 th grade SBA or demonstrate competence through portfolio of standards-based indicators

NMPED- Additional District Requirements for High School Course Offerings as of May 1, 2011

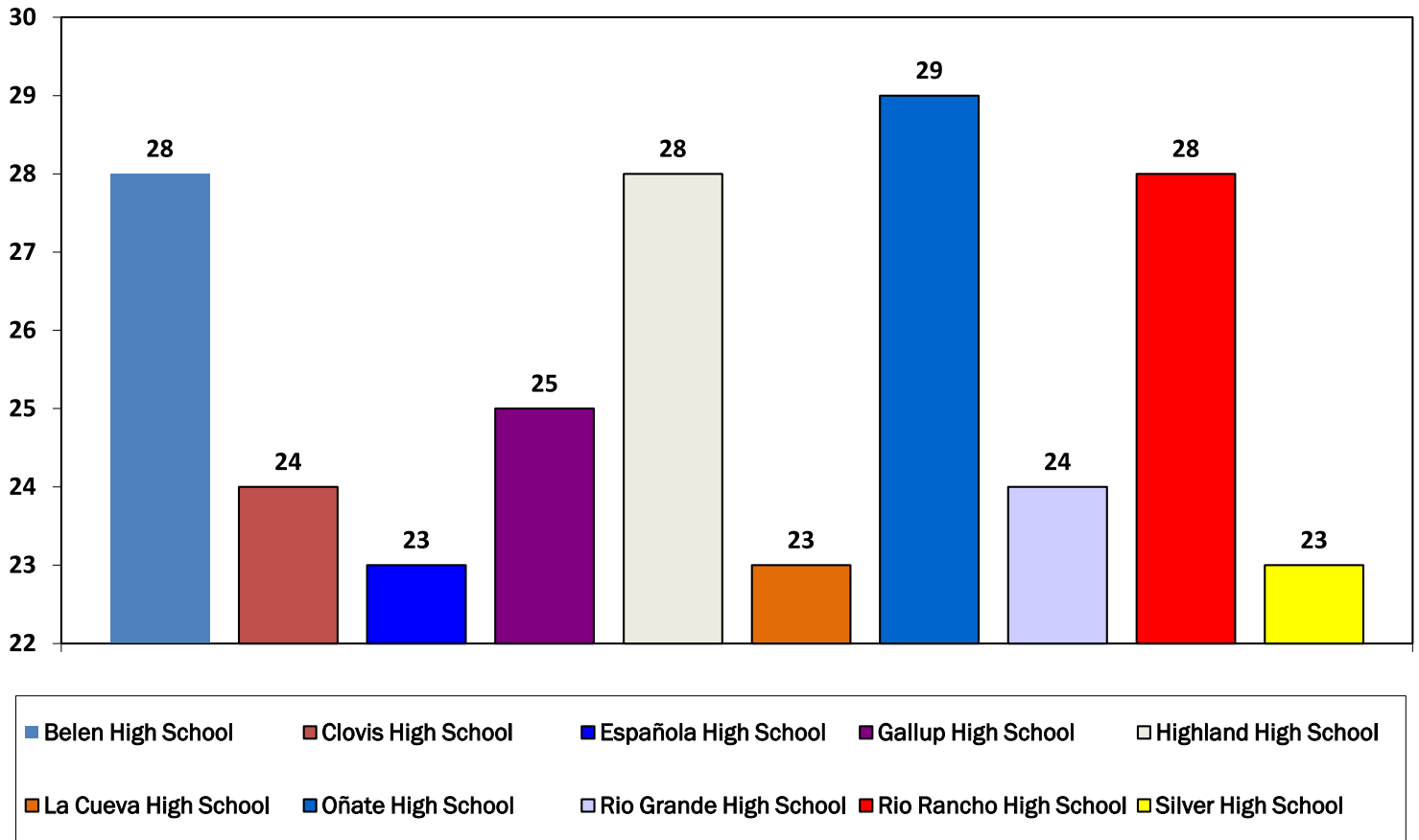
Classes required for districts to offer (each year) as elective classes	Other offerings required for districts to offer	Classes that may be offered as elective classes	Class that may be offered as a Mathematics requirement	Health Education is required prior to graduation for students entering the 8th grade in the 2012-2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver Education* • Financial Literacy as an elective* • Student Service Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one Honors or similar academically rigorous class each in Mathematics and Language Arts** • A program of courses for Dual Credit, in cooperation with an institution of higher education • A program of distance learning courses* • At least 2 years of a language other than English* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Apprenticeship Programs • Media Literacy* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Literacy as a high school mathematics requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Education may be required in either middle school or high school, as determined by the school district. • Each school district shall submit to the department by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year: • a Health Education implementation plan for the 2012-2013 and subsequent school years; • include in which grade Health Education will be required and how the course aligns with department content and performance standards; • For more information, please go to: http://www.ped.state.nm.us/sfsb/index.html or call Dr. Kristine Meurer at 505-222-4748.

*Districts may offer these courses through IDEAL-NM.

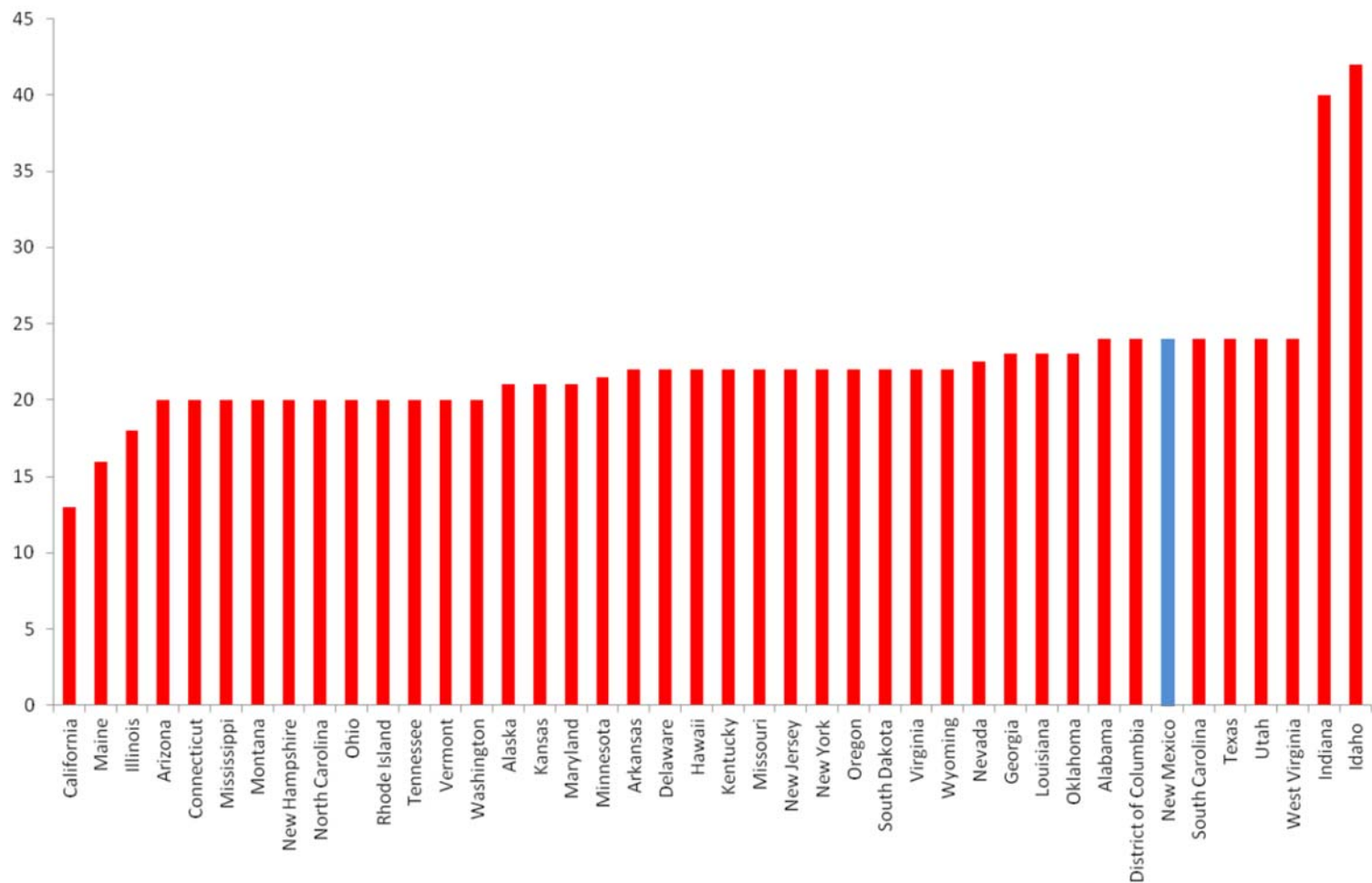
**Districts may offer AP Calculus and Honors English 2 through IDEAL-NM

2011 Legislative Watch: SB 360 suspends the requirement for students to pass a high school exit exam for graduation in 2012.

Units Required To Graduate For The 12th Grade School Year 2009-10



Credits Required To Graduate From High School In 2008 By State



(Source: Council of Chief State School Officers (2008))

Questions that arise from these findings

- The wide range of high school class schedules across the state raises key questions for further study:
 - What are the effects of block, hybrid and traditional schedules on student performance at high school? On college readiness?
- The wide range of credit requirements across the state raises also raises key questions for further study:
 - What are the effects on student readiness for college and careers when they meet more graduation requirements than the state requires
 - How can New Mexico redesign its high school and higher education system so that students can graduate from high school and enter college when they are ready, rather than being held in a lockstep progression based on an traditional model of schooling.

Question 2: What Are 12th Graders Doing?

- *“12th grade is necessary. It gives students the extra time they need. Two things. Lower end students can catch up, and finish their high school career. The other thing: we need more options in internships, and having students get started in college earlier, with dual credit. We need options, we need choices at the 12th grade level, rather than have the standard of those who are advancing in AP and college courses. We need to work hard with students on the lower end, too. Those kinds of changes all of us would advocate. It could be revamped.”*
- Assistant Superintendent, NM School District

In addition to their academic responsibilities, many 12th graders in New Mexico have varied adult responsibilities.

- *“Their stories are incredible. One: ‘No one has a job so I’m working to help us keep our apartment.’ Two: ‘My little brother is sick and mom’s at work, so I have to stay home.’ Three: ‘My baby is sick, mom had to work, so I’m staying home.’ Four: we have a large percentage of kids who are not with parents, technically homeless. One student just came to me all excited the other day, saying, ‘I just found some new people to live with.’ She was really excited, because she had found a place to stay, for now.”*

– NM High School Principal

Question 2: What Are 12th Graders Doing?

- The 12th graders in this study – the cohort studied

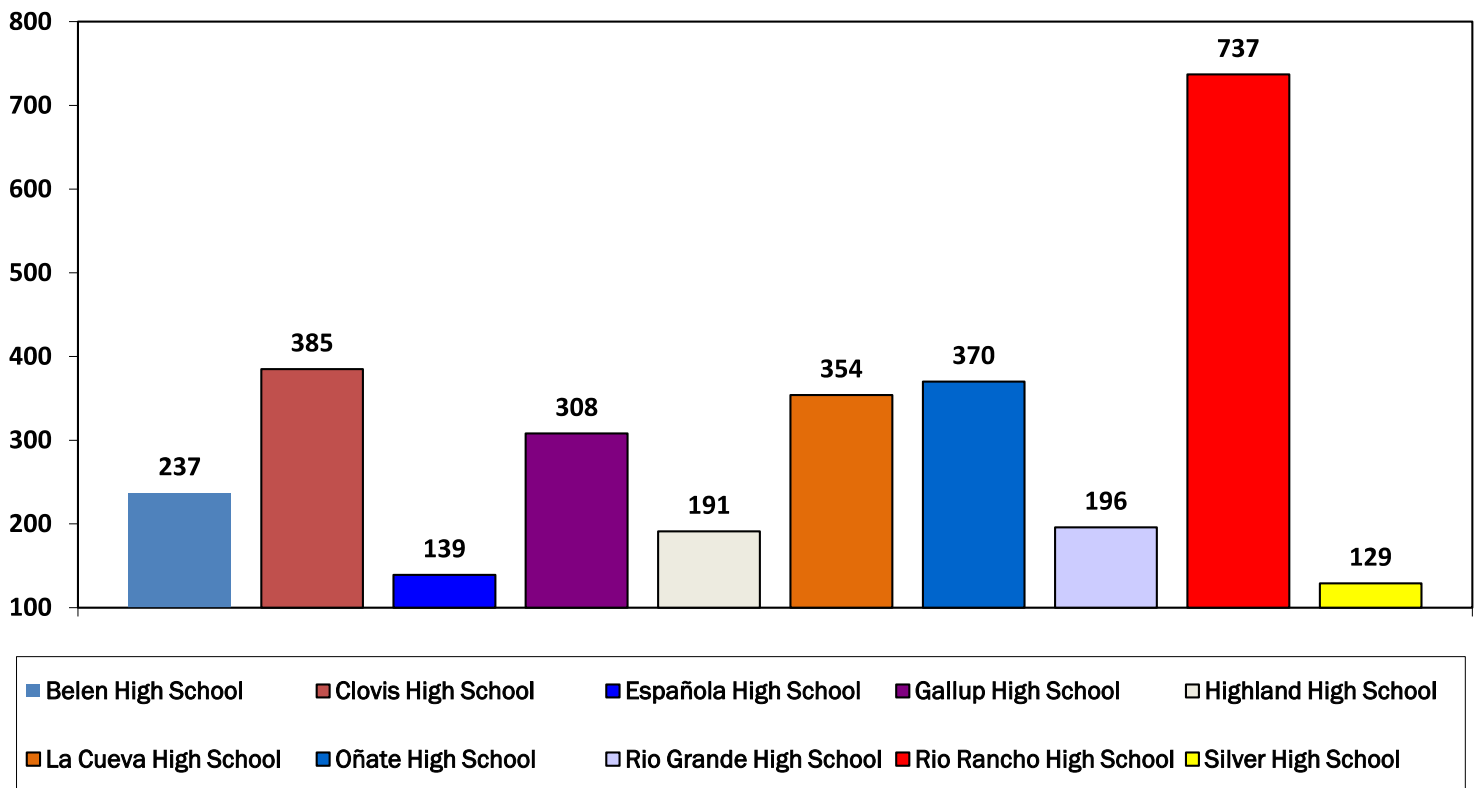
Sub-questions:

- How are “full load” and “half load” defined?
- What percentage of students took a full course load? Is this affected by dual credit courses taken?
- Why do students take less than a full course load?
- What is the range of credits that students graduate with by high school in New Mexico?
- Are all students meeting the 2009-2010 state graduation requirements?
- What classes did 12th graders take?
- What adult responsibilities do 12th grade students have in New Mexico?
- What school activities do 12th grade students participate in outside of the regular class schedule?

This Set Of Analyses Focused On A 12th Grade Cohort

- The 4,306 students included in the transcript study included a number of students who moved in and out of high school, did not graduate, or had other characteristics that made the analyses more complex.
- For this set of analyses, we identified a “cohort” of 12th graders who had graduated with a high school diploma four years after entering that school in the 9th grade. This cohort included about 71% of the full sample of students included in the transcript study.
- In particular, the following 12th grade students were excluded from this cohort study:
 - Special Education Students – D Level
 - Students who were still enrolled in 2011
 - Students who did not receive a High School Diploma in 2010
 - Students who did receive a Standard Certificate of Completion
 - Students who withdrew to earn a GED
 - Students who withdrew from high school in 2010
 - Students whose enrollment date in 9th grade was other than 2006

**The Cohort: Total Number of Students Who Received A Regular Diploma,
Were Enrolled In The High School For Four Years, And Were Not Classified As
Special Education Level “4” or “D” (N=3,046)**



Definitions Of “Full Load” And “Half Load” Differ By District And By High School

- “Full load” often depends on the high school schedule.
- “Full load” in 12th grade depends exclusively in some districts on how many credits each 12th grader needs to graduate. In other words, the total number of credits needed to graduate is each students’ unique “full load.”
- Analyses done here are based on each school’s schedule:
 - A block schedule’s full load = 8
 - A traditional or hybrid schedule’s full load = 6 or 7.

Percent Of 12th Grade Students Taking A Full Load With And Without Dual Credit Courses

High School	N	Definition: Full load for 12 th graders	Definition: Half load for 12 th graders	Percentage of 12 th Grade Students	
				Taking a Full Load - All Courses	Taking a Full Load - Dual Credit Courses Excluded
Belen High School	237	8 classes	4-7 classes	46%	42%
Española Valley High School	139	8 classes	**	10%	**
Gallup High School	308	5+ classes	4 classes	95%	90%
Highland High School*	191	7 courses	4-6 courses	93%	93%
La Cueva High School*	354	7 classes	4-6 classes	71%	70%
Oñate High School	370	8 classes	**	48%	**
Rio Grande High School*	196	7 classes	4-6 classes	59%	58%
Rio Rancho High School	737	7 classes	**	89%	**

*District definition of full load for 12th graders = the classes needed to graduate; half load is half that number

**Data analysis pending

Percent Of 12th Grade Students Taking A Half Load With And Without Dual Credit Courses

High School	N	Definition: Full load for 12 th graders	Definition: Half load for 12 th graders	Percentage of 12 th Grade Students	
				Taking a Half Load, All Courses	Taking a Half Load - Dual Credit Courses Excluded
Belen High School	237	8 classes	4-7 classes	54%	47%
Gallup High School	308	5+ classes	4 classes	5%	10%
Highland High School*	191	7 courses	4-6 courses	7%	7%
La Cueva High School*	354	7 classes	4-6 classes	29%	30%
Rio Grande High School*	196	7 classes	4-6 classes	40%	41%
*District definition of full load for 12th graders = the classes they need to graduate; half load is half that number; Española, Oñate and Rio Rancho half load analyses are pending.					

Principals' Reasons Why Students Take Less Than A Full Load

Response	N	Ranked as #1	Ranked as #2	Ranked as #3
Only Required Partial Load To Graduate	9	4.5	2	2
Employment	9	3	3	3
Family Obligations	9	0	2	3
Dual Credit	9	1	2	0
Internship	9	.5	0	0
Extra-Curricular Activities	9	0	0	1

Note: Belen, Clovis, Española Valley, Gallup, Highland, La Cueva, Oñate, Rio Rancho, and Silver High Schools responded to this survey question.

Total Number Of Earned Credit Hours Upon Graduation By High School, SY2009-10

High School	N	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Credits Required By State To Graduate	Credits Required By District To Graduate
Belen High School	237	29.5	27.25	35.25	23	28
Clovis High School	385	N/P	N/P	N/P	23	24
Española Valley High School	139	20.0	16	34.5	23	23
Gallup High School	308	31.3	22	41	23	25
Highland High School	191	30.4	24.5	39.75	23	28
La Cueva High School	354	25.7	23	40	23	23
Oñate High School	370	31.2	24.5	51.25	23	29
Rio Grande High School	196	25.5	23.5	37.5	23	24
Rio Rancho High School	737	29.3	24	43.5	23	28
Silver High School	129	25.2	23	36.7	23	23

Average Credit Hours Taken In 12th Grade, SY2009-10

High School	N	Number of Credits Required By The District To Graduate	Average total credits earned upon graduation	Average Number of Course Credits Earned in 9-11 Grade	Average Number of Credits Required in 12 th grade to reach district requirements	Average Number of Course Credits Earned In 12 th Grade
Belen High School	237	28	29.5	25.6	2.2	4.8
Clovis High School	385	24	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P
Española Valley High School	139	23	20.0	16.0	7.0	4.0
Gallup High School	308	25	31.3	22.9	2.1	8.4
Highland High School	191	28	30.4	23.6	4.4	6.9
La Cueva High School	354	23	25.7	19.5	3.5	6.3
Oñate High School	370	29	31.2	23.8	5.2	7.4
Rio Grande High School	196	24	25.5	20.1	3.9	5.3
Rio Rancho High School	737	28	29.3	23.0	5.0	6.3
Silver High School	129	23	25.2	19.3	3.7	5.9

Percent of 12th Grade Students Who Received A High School Diploma And Met State Requirements For Graduation

High School	N	23 Total Units	4 Units of English	3 Units of Math	3 Units of Science	3 Units of Social Science	.5 Unit NM History	1 Unit Physical Education	1 Unit Comm Skills/Business / Foreign Lang	7.5 Units of Electives
Belen High School	237	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%
Clovis High School	385	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P
Española Valley High School	139	97.8%	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P
Gallup High School	308	99.7%	91.2%	77.9%	97.4%	98.4%	99.1%	99.7%	99.3%	99.1%
Highland High School	191	100.0%	99.0%	99.0%	100%	99.5%	100%	94.8%	*31.4%	99.5%
La Cueva High School	354	100.0%	100%	99.7%	100%	99.4%	100%	96.3%	*46.6%	85.6%
Oñate High School	370	100%	92.2%	94.3%	93.2%	85.9%	99.2%	94.7%	97.0%	98.9%
Rio Grande High School	196	100%	99.0%	99.0%	99.5%	100%	99.5%	98.5%	*13.8%	97.4%
Rio Rancho High School	737	100.0%	99.2%	99.2%	99.6%	99.7%	100%	99.6%	100.0%	97.3%
Silver High School	129	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	96.1%

Notes: *APS Received A Waiver For Communication Skills/Business/Foreign Language

Percent of 12th Grade Students Who Received A High School Diploma And Met State Requirements For Graduation, By Ethnicity And Gender

Ethnicity	Gender	N	23 Total Units	4 Units of English	3 Units of Math	3 Units of Science	3 Units of Social Science	.5 Unit NM History	1 Unit Phys Ed	1 Unit Comm Skills/Bus/Foreign Lang	7.5 Units of Elect
Native American	Male	148	100%	91.7%	75.2%	98.6%	98.6%	99.2%	100.0%	91.2%	91.7%
	Female	141	99.3%	93.4%	84.8%	97.8%	97.8%	99.1%	100.0%	94.8%	92.0%
Asian	Male	41	100%	95.1%	100%	97.1%	100%	100%	100.0%	70.7%	75.6%
	Female	34	100%	97.1%	97.1%	100%	97.1%	100%	97.0%	76.5%	73.5%
Black	Male	42	100%	100%	100%	95.2%	92.9%	100%	97.6%	66.7%	81.0%
	Female	51	100%	96.0%	100%	100%	96.0%	100%	93.9%	83.7%	72.0%
Hispanic	Male	497	99.4%	96.8%	95.9%	96.2%	95.9%	99.8%	98.6%	71.7%	81.8%
	Female	597	99.8%	98.5%	97.7%	99.2%	97.1%	99.4%	97.3%	72.9%	82.4%
White	Male	503	100%	98.6%	98.4%	99.2%	97.8%	100%	98.0%	82.0%	76.9%
	Female	607	100%	98.0%	99.2%	99.5%	98.8%	100%	98.2%	86.2%	76.5%

Percent of 12th Grade Students Enrolled In Credit–Earning Courses By Type Of Course (N=1,658)

Course Type	N	%
English	1,584	96%
Mathematics	1,211	73%
Science	831	50%
Social Studies	1,584	96%
New Mexico History	68	4%
Physical Education	539	33%
Communication Skills/Business Education/Foreign Language	706	43%
Electives	1,534	93%
General electives	249	16%
Consumer sciences	252	16%
Career and college preparation	1,078	70%
Career technical preparation	222	14%
Fine arts	678	44%
Health	61	4%
Humanities	51	3%
Military	93	6%
Technology	175	11%

Note: Data Includes Highland, La Cueva, Rio Grande, Belen, Gallup-McKinley CS, Oñate High Schools

What Percentage Of 12th Graders Participated In School Activities Outside The Regular Class Schedule?

High School	Tutoring	After school classes	Evening classes	Athletics	Local Company Partnerships, Job Placement, and Internships	ROTC
Belen High School	18%	9%	0	16%	41%	3%
Clovis High School	3%	8%	20%	17%	3%	3%
Española Valley High School	0	0	0	60%	22%	0
Gallup High School	14%	22%	15%	21%	9%	6%
Highland High School	11%	16%	9%	14%	20%	11%
La Cueva High School	44%	29%	9%	29%	22%	11%
Oñate High School	6%	7%	2%	35%	33%	2%
Rio Grande High School	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P
Rio Rancho High School	1%	7%	5%	25%	7%	5%
Silver High School	24%	0	0	59%	3%	0

What Percentage Of 12th Graders Had Adult Responsibilities In Addition To School?

High School	Working for a Salary	Primary Family Caretakers	Living Independently Without Parental Support	Are Parents Raising Their Own Children
Belen High School	2%	16%	5%	1%
Clovis High School	5%	4%	3%	5%
Española Valley High School	5%	5%	1%	6%
Gallup High School	18%	11%	3%	6%
Highland High School	25%	14%	6%	11%
La Cueva High School	9%	6%	2%	0
Oñate High School	12%	25%	12%	2%
Rio Grande High School	N/P	N/P	N/P	N/P
Rio Rancho High School	3%	1%	1%	1%
Silver High School	13%	0	2%	0

Educators: Students' Adult Responsibilities Can Interfere with High School Responsibilities

- “We have a lot of kids, a lot of seniors work, not because they want to, but because they have to. Sometimes that pay check is more important than a high school diploma. [We have] A lot who are working full-time. We also have kids working on their own, without a parent. Sometimes they have the younger siblings living with them to get them out of the family situation, rather than staying in an abusive family situation. So they want to finish school, but it's not feasible, because their priority isn't, it has to come down to am I going to feed my little brother and sister.”

- NM High School Assistant Principal

Educators: Student Athletics Programs Keep High School Students Engaged

The percentage of 12th grade students involved in athletics ranges from 14% to 60%. Most educators commented on the leadership and collaborative skills students learn through sports as well as the academic incentive to keep their GPA high to continue playing.

“We have a huge sports emphasis, a lot of community pride. I’m going to tell you, our athletics programs, I believe, help kids stay in school. That might be the only reason we have some kids coming to school...There are kids who I know come to school solely to play a sport they love. And to play, they need to meet the GPA requirements.

- NM High School Assistant Principal

Student Mobility Is An Important Factor In The Lives Of Many 12th Graders

- Principals estimated that over 950 students in the 10 participating high schools moved in or out of their schools between 2006-2010. This is 22.2% of the student body in this study's sample.
- Educators interviewed indicated that:
 - Some high school students attend at the beginning of each semester, then leave for weeks or even months.
 - Tracking of students in and out of districts can be difficult to impossible.
 - Transcript evaluation becomes more time consuming.
 - Teaching is more challenging with student mobility.
 - Support to students being successful is more challenging and costly.

Principals' Reasons For Student Mobility In And Out of High School

Response	N	Ranked as #1	Ranked as #2	Ranked as # 3
Economic Necessity	9	6	1	2
Family Obligations	9	1	5	2
Military Obligations	9	1	2	3
Student Choice	9	1	0	1
Transfer Students From Arizona	9	0	1	0

Note: Belen, Clovis, Española Valley, Gallup, Highland, La Cueva, Oñate, Rio Rancho, and Silver High Schools responded to this survey question.

Question 3: How Does The 12th Grade Impact Students' Readiness For College and Careers?

- *“The other thing I’d really like to see about 12th grade students is career pathways, career opportunities, where our kids will go in their careers, and what that can look like [is reflected] in a high school schedule. Aligning the need of the community and state should be dictating what course requirements should be. So how would we know, as someone who develops the high school course schedule, we’d say, OK, our students graduating in 2014, most jobs will be in this area, so let’s help them develop these skills, and we would develop the requirements accordingly.”*
-Superintendent, NM School District
- *“We feel that dual credit opportunities have really helped our students with the transition from high school to either universities or technical schools, because they’re learning how to study at that level.”*
- New Mexico High School Principal

Question 3: How Does The 12th Grade Impact Students' Readiness For College And Careers?

Sub-topics:

- What do principals, counselors, and superintendents say about the impact of the 12th grade on student's readiness for college and careers?
- What do we know about high school and its impact on readiness for service in the armed forces?
- How did the students in this study perform in their first year in college? CEPR and LFC are planning to conduct these analyses based on data to be provided by the HED.

What Do Educators Say About The Impact Of The 12th Grade?

- All educators would like to increase the impact of 12th grade by increasing rigor in 12th grade courses. They underscore that with increased rigor in the high school curriculum, including the 12th grade, students will need more academic support than currently available.
- All educators express concern that particularly in tight financial times they will not be able to offer the additional support needed to help “middle performing students” be successful in achieving the higher academic rigor that will be expected of them as the new high school requirements are implemented. Educators cited examples of increased support including the increased needs for credit recovery, tutoring, and access to technology.

What Do Educators Say About The Impact Of The 12th Grade?

- Educators unanimously cite dual credit as critical to 12th graders' transition into college and careers. "It's about them aligning for their future, going into the next step to wherever their interests lie," explained a high school counselor.
- Most districts are increasing dual credit opportunities, while some have begun to restrict dual credit opportunities because of textbook costs.
- High schools and community college coordination has improved mostly through conversations about dual credit. High schools and community colleges are coordinating around dual credit and career pathways, such as nursing, pre-medical, culinary arts, trades, and other career and college preparation courses.
- The high school educators interviewed indicated that difficulties in communication between participating high schools and four-year colleges were mostly in central and northern New Mexico.

What Do Educators Say About The Impact Of The 12th Grade?

- Educators felt the 12th grade is not well-aligned with higher education. The results from this study and previous studies including “Ready For College” indicate that collaborative efforts by high schools and higher education institutions are necessary for addressing this issue.
- The educators interviewed raised a number of questions about remediation in college including:
 - What is remediation?
 - Do all students need remediation or do some need only refresher courses?
 - Do colleges have a built-in incentive for students to take remedial courses?
 - Would practice tests for remediation exams contribute to more accurate placement in remedial courses?

What Do Educators Say About The Impact Of The 12th Grade?

- All participating districts follow the New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks, and state-mandated course graduation requirements. High school assessments are aligned with these Standards and Benchmarks.
- Higher education does not follow these same Standards and Benchmarks.
- High school educators call for greater coordination among districts and higher education to align assessments as a concrete contribution to providing a seamless transition for 12th graders into college.
- Educators believe that the current status of high school assessments is unclear.
 - The pending status of the New Mexico High School Competency Exam (NMHSCE) and mandated short-cycle assessment in 11th grade under the high school redesign initiative was cited in interviews as causing uncertainty among educators.
 - Educators cited unclear procedures and lack of definition in human resources necessary to comply with the Alternative Demonstration of Competency portfolios in the high school redesign initiative.

What Do We Know About High School And Its Impact On Readiness For Service In The Military?

- In December 2010, the Education Trust released a report, *“Shut Out Of The Military: Today’s High School Education Doesn’t Mean You Are Ready For Today’s Army.”*
- The report analyzed how high school graduates from 2004-2009 performed on the U.S Army’s Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The ASVAB is the test that determines if applicants qualify for enlistment, and, if they do, what occupations and what levels of those occupations they are prepared for.
- The findings from that report include:
 - Among young high school graduates, about one in five do not meet the minimum standard necessary to enlist in the U.S. Army.
 - On average, young people of color are far more likely to not pass the qualifying exam than other applicants.
 - Candidates of color who pass often have lower scores than their white peers, excluding them from high-level training and advancement opportunities.
 - Wide disparities in eligibility by race/ethnicity occurred between and within states.
 - Because the test assesses many occupational skills, low scores also suggest that these applicants are unlikely to succeed in the civilian workforce.

ASVAB Ineligibility Rates by Race/Ethnicity High School Graduates 2004-2009

State	Total	% Ineligible	African- American Applicants	% Ineligible	Hispanic Applicants	% Ineligible	White Applicants	% Ineligible
New Mexico Total	2,652	28.2%	91	37.4%	984	32.4%	1,056	17.5%
U.S. Total	348,203	22.6%	64,084	38.7%	40,771	29.1%	201,501	16.4%

Source: The Education Trust, Shut Out Of The Military, December 2010.

Question 4: What Do Principals, Counselors, and Superintendents Say About 12th Grade?

Sub-questions:

- What are the strengths of 12th grade in New Mexico?
- What are the challenges of 12th grade in New Mexico?
- What are educators' recommendations for improving the 12th grade in New Mexico?

What Do Educators Say Are The Strengths Of The 12th Grade?

- Academic and career technical dual credit courses provide opportunities for high and middle performing students, including first generation college students, to investigate career options.
- Advanced Placement courses, with tutoring to ensure student success, increase academic rigor for a broad student population.
- Internship, work experience and service learning opportunities help connect core content classes with the “real” world.
- Instituting four-year planning from 9th grade on or middle school helps students take the courses they need to graduate and prepares them to achieve their future goals.

Why Educators Consider Dual Credit A Strength

- Dual credit serves students in multiple ways
 - It exposes students to young adult responsibilities and learning challenges.
 - It allows students to investigate several career options that schools and districts cannot provide.
 - It provides students the benefit of high school staff support while taking their first college courses.
 - It provides students a low cost/no-cost pathway to earning college credits before they graduate from high school.
- Dual credit has improved communication between high schools and community colleges in the last five years
 - Communication has facilitated registration and monitoring of student progress.
 - Communication in some districts includes curricular alignment.
 - Communication has permitted an increase in the number of students who are taking dual credit courses.

What Educators Say About Dual Credit

“Dual enrollment classes have given students the opportunity to experience post-secondary education, which builds their confidence and preparation for the post-secondary experience.”

-Superintendent, NM School District

“If we could keep anything, and I truly believe all counselors believe this, it’s our dual credit. It is very important to us, and it has kept some kids in school. It helps them be motivated in their regular classes. If they drop or fail a class, then we put them on suspension for one semester, and so it helps them all stay motivated. And when they leave, those kids are very prepared.”

- New Mexico High School Counselor

“We could do a lot more...giving them hands on, tangible experiences: communication with college and university advisors, that connection, articulation with secondary and College. It’s not just, “Here’s a list of courses,” but experience connecting with post-secondary folks, having more intimate conversations that will create motivation for students for that track.”

– Assistant Superintendent, NM School District

Why Educators Designate Advanced Placement (AP) As A Strength

- AP courses are College Board certified.
- AP courses increase the rigor of course offerings in high school.
- Teachers must participate in professional development to teach AP courses.

Why Educators Consider Internships, Work Experience And Service Learning Opportunities A Strength

Internships, work experience and service learning serve students in multiple ways:

- They help students experiment with a potential career of interest.
- They allow students to experience the responsibilities of the work place.
- They expose students to the realities of a local work environment in the private, public and non-profit sectors.
- They help students confirm if they will enter into a career or not.
- They motivate some students to continue their academic formation.

Why Educators Consider Internships, Work Experience And Service Learning Opportunities A Strength

- I think that when we don't have all the career tracks and the focus on vocational setting, we are remiss. Not every student, in fact the students who go to college are the minority, and yet we are focusing on requirements for college. So we are remiss in not focusing on vocational aspects.
- Superintendent, NM School District
- Service learning includes "those projects that would allow students to grow in their own ability to interact, to advocate, and collaborate with others, not just themselves. .We expose kids to ways they could look at their world around them, and others in it, without focusing just on themselves.
- Assistant Superintendent, NM School District
- We need to do more regarding career education, entrepreneurship, viable and sustainable ways students can open businesses. I know our students want to stay in the area. We need to connect them with industry. ..career awareness and education is huge for us. I would also like it to not just be local because we do need people in our hospitals, schools, etc., and we also need to provide opportunities to our students for careers in the region and across the nation.
- Superintendent, NM School District

What Do Educators Say Are The Major Challenges Of The 12th Grade?

- Students who enter high school with below grade level math and reading proficiency have an extremely hard time catching up. Educators felt they don't have sufficient resources to address this challenge, causing some students to reach the 12th grade still below proficiency while others drop out before reaching 12th grade.
- Classrooms, curriculum, courses and teaching methods are in the process of being transformed to respond to diverse student learning needs. Educators talk about how complex this process is to provide adequate learning opportunities for students to attain their future goals and be successful in careers and college.
- Students need sufficient support – academically, emotionally and technically - to finish 12th grade. Educators cite the challenge of developing the school-family support and communication necessary.
- Providing all students a seamless transition from high school into college and careers is a shared responsibility that needs to be strengthened in order to increase student success. Educators provided several recommendations.

Why Educators Consider Low Proficiency A Major Challenge Of The 12th Grade

- Educators cite the large number of students entering high school with below grade level math and reading proficiency as a primary challenge. Educators feel their high schools do not have the resources to address these student achievement gaps in time.
- Research indicates that low math and reading achievement in 8th grade negatively impacts math and reading achievement into 12th grade. In addition, high schools do not have the time or resources to address these issues (Crawford, M., 2008. Think Inside the Clock, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90 (4), p. 251-255).
- Participating high schools in New Mexico indicate that they do not have sufficient resources to ensure that students who enter high school with low levels of achievement are successful in the rigorous high school courses needed to transition into college and careers.
- Educators are concerned about the insufficient and decreasing resources needed to help “the middle students” succeed. These students are not in Special Education or gifted programs, and yet they also need extensive additional tutoring or teacher support.

Why Educators Consider Low Proficiency A Major Challenge Of The 12th Grade

- *“I’m thinking about our students that struggle with math and Algebra II. We need tutors, need added support, a lot [of teachers] work through their lunch to offer tutoring. Students need that extra support...”*

– NM High School Counselor
- *“Our NMSBA scores are terrible. The main reason is because, not to point a finger, but as we start their lives at school, there’s not an aligned math curriculum that brings kids through and holds them. When they hit 9th grade, they’re not ready for algebra, so we have all this credit recovery, just trying to get them to earn the credit. But then you look at AYP data, at 25% at proficient, and next year, with juniors’ tests being the graduation test, we’ll see more of the lack of that systematic or integrated approach to math.”*

- NM High School Assistant Principal

Why Educators Consider “Real” World Relevancy A Major Challenge

- Educators cite concern that school and courses are not as connected to the “real” world as they should be.
- To these educators, who are backed by extensive research, increased relevance in the school curriculum, teaching, and courses available increases student engagement and learning.
- Some educators cite concern that the current curriculum and course-taking requirements do not meet the pace of changing careers and workforce needs in New Mexico and the nation.

Why Educators Consider Providing Students Sufficient Support A Major Challenge

- Educators are concerned about how to best support students in graduating from high school. They specifically cited the following:
 - Addressing student anxiety about completing high school and their transition post-high school.
 - Addressing low student attendance with enforceable policies.
 - Providing high quality career counseling, through increased job placement, internship, and local company partnerships.
 - Providing high quality college counseling to students and families.
 - More teacher and family financial resources for credit recovery.
 - Address decreasing flexibility and time for credit recovery: increasing graduation requirements means less time for credit recovery, particularly for schools on a traditional bell schedule.
 - Counselors spend up to 75% of their time reviewing transcripts, helping 12th graders with FAFSA and financial aid packets, letters of recommendation, university applications, and other academic needs. Little time is left to address students' socio-emotional needs or the career preparation needs for the up to 50% of students in some districts who do not attend college immediately following high school.

Why Educators Consider Providing Students Sufficient Support A Major Challenge

- Educators cited weak school-family relationships to maintain student engagement and keep students on track together.
- *“Sometimes the kids don’t find a significant adult that works well with them, that can help them. That’s crucial to helping kids get through school. To find one significant adult that will work with them.”*
- NM High School Assistant Principal

Why Educators Consider Providing Students Sufficient Support A Major Challenge

- To some educators the basic premise of the Next Step Planning (NSP) process works. However, those educators who commented on the NSP felt that its initial implementation was not as robust as it could be and it requires more development to meet its goals.
- *“I don’t think it is strong enough. They basically said, “Here’s the template and we’re asking you to do it,” and we’re doing it every year. It might be more beneficial and more relevant to students if it involved more than just the high school years. It’s relevant to high school when they’re in the 7th grade, for example. You can’t have an 8th grader who skips through 8th grade without thinking about their course work, and wants to be a successful pre-med student. They have to be thinking about the courses they should be taking in middle school, to make their high school experience successful for their future goals. We might look at taking the next step plan to lower grade levels.”*

- Assistant Superintendent, NM School District

Why Educators Say Alignment Is A Major Challenge Of The 12th Grade

- The lack of consensus among school districts, higher education institutions, PED and HED regarding how to work towards a seamless transition from high school into college and careers negatively affects students in their transition from high school.
 - It contributes to student placement in remediation.
 - It impacts college access and college degree attainment.
- Educators cited the following specific challenges:
 - Lack of curricular and assessment alignment preK-12 and post-secondary.
 - Lack of accountability at every grade level in middle and high school.
 - Lack of consensus about purpose, objectives and outcomes of high school.

“We do shared standards among 89 districts and cannot among 5 higher education institutions.”

– Superintendent, NM school district

Why Educators Say Alignment Is A Major Challenge Of The 12th Grade

“One [challenge] would be to increase the technology skills of our students. We’re not at the level where we need to be in the state, especially with e-textbooks. We need to get technology into our students’ hands, and get them using that technology... Also, giving more opportunities [for students] to develop [their] strengths, to understand what their strengths and abilities are, what they want to do for their future. We don’t necessarily have enough career tracks, so I’d like to see more of that. From a global perspective, we need more focus as a state – where is our focus at high school? Is it a work track? A college track? What is the goal? And how are we going to get there? It’s unclear. Are we going to have common course standards? It’s disjointed, unclear. What does that look like, and how are we going to get there?”

– Assistant Superintendent, NM school district

“One issue is the examination or assessments used to determine if students should be placed in remediation. It varies from institution to institution. There is no consistent metric about when or how they should be placed. There are no placement exams that are based on New Mexico Standards, so that makes it tough to gather information.”

– Assistant Superintendent, NM school district

Educators Expressed Concerns About Policies That Affect The 12th Grade

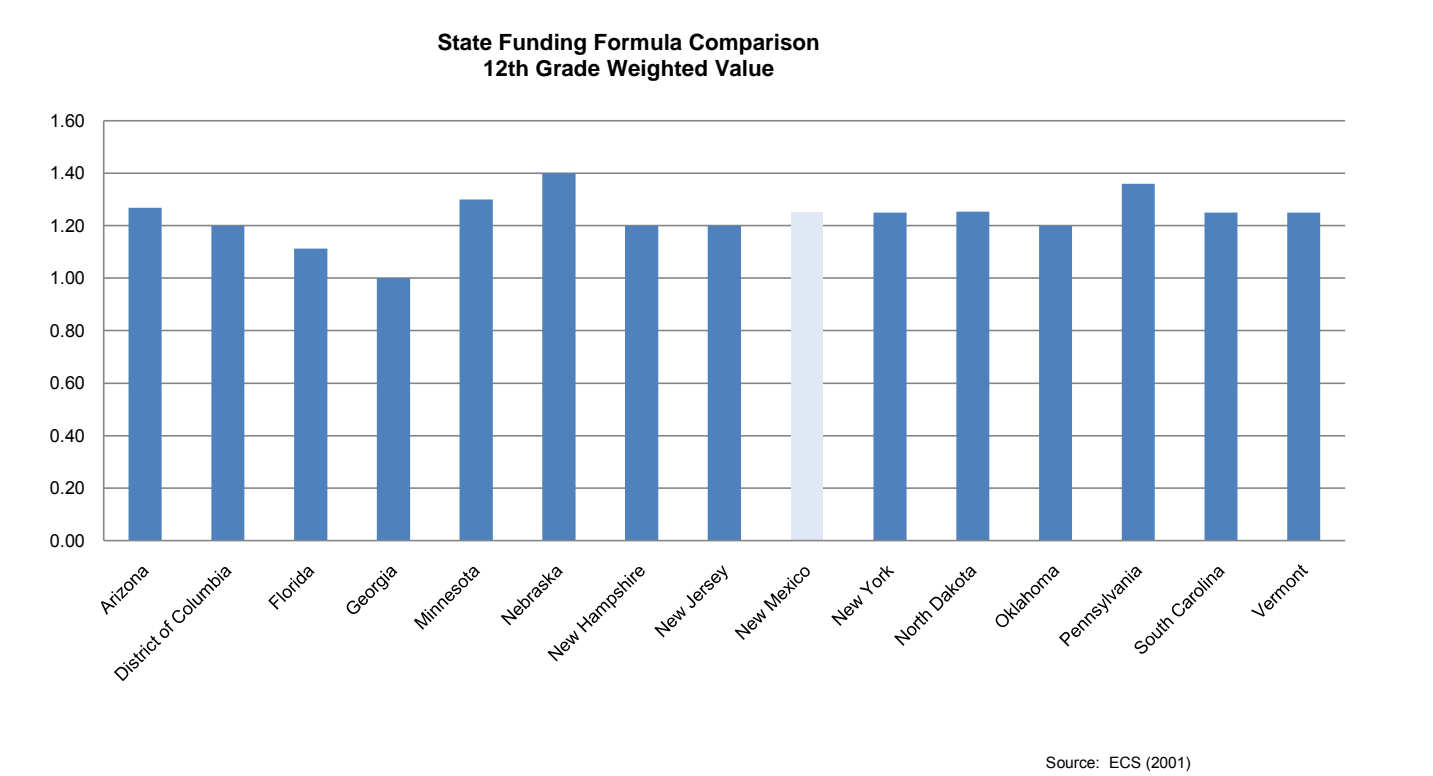
- Some educators expressed concerns about parts of the High School Redesign Initiative that they feel are not yet funded or need more definition. These concerns included:
 - Conflicting and unclear expectations and requirements about the 11th grade assessments .
 - Unclear procedures to comply with the Alternative Demonstration of Competency portfolios.
 - Implementing the new math requirement with no funding means less flexibility in course offerings, less resources for tutoring, and less time for credit recovery to ensure middle performing students successfully comply with the new requirements.
- Some educators cite a focus on prescriptive regulations – rather than measurable outcome goals - with little to no room to develop options for students that respond to students' needs. The current statutory design “becomes an impediment for redesigning what is most appropriate for students” (Superintendent, NM School District).
- Many educators feel there is an almost exclusive focus on preparing students for college, rather than ensuring career technical readiness as well.
- New Mexico’s high school educators cite how not all grade levels are held equally accountable for student learning. This leads to extra challenges with students who enter 9th grade with low math and reading achievement.
- “They should..hold us to standards of completion, performance, or outcomes, rather than being prescriptive about how to get it done.”
- Superintendent, NM School District

Question 5: What Do We Know About the Financial Side of 12th Grade?

Sub-questions:

- How Does New Mexico's Funding Formula For The 12th Grade Compare With Other States?
- What Do We Know About New Mexico's Enrollment, Attrition and Graduation Rates?
- How Are 12th Grade Allocations Disbursed?
- What Is The Cost Per Student Across Schools?
- What Is The Cost Per Student Per Credit?
- What Is The Relationship Between The Revenue Generated And The Cost Of 12th Grade?
- What Have High Schools And Districts Cut Because Of Decreases In Funding?

New Mexico’s Funding Formula Allocates Additional Resources For Upper Grades, Including 12th, That Is Consistent With Other States



What Do We Know About The Financial Side Of 12th Grade In New Mexico?

- In FY11, the New Mexico funding formula allocated \$96.5 million based on enrollment of about 20,300 12th graders.
- High schools have maintained more students in school, which has helped boost 12th grade enrollment.
- Statewide 12th grade enrollment has increased from 19,387 in FY05 to 21,088 in FY11, or about nine percent.
- The attrition rates of enrolled 9th graders in FY05-FY08 show improvement.
 - For example, 9th grade enrollment in FY05 was about 29,500 and four years later this cohort of students' enrollment was about 19,700, or 33 percent lower in 12th grade.
 - This attrition rate has declined over time to 27 percent for the class of 2011. These changes are consistent with the state improving its graduation rates as well.
- Statewide graduation rates increased from 60 to 67 percent between the class of 2008 and 2009.

What Do We Know About The Financial Side Of 12th Grade In New Mexico?

- The costs of the 12th grade are not isolated from the rest of high school, and it is difficult to single out 12th grade costs accurately.
- Few course sections and few teachers are dedicated solely to 12th graders based on data reported to New Mexico's PED.
- New Mexico's funding formula allocates resources for upper grades, including 12th grade, that is consistent with other states.
- New Mexico's funding formula generates more estimated revenue for the 12th grade than schools spend to deliver services. However, it is important to place this initial finding in the context of a complete study of the funding formula allocations and district distribution for all grades.

What Do We Know About The Financial Side Of 12th Grade In New Mexico?

School	12th Grade Estimated Formula Revenue	Cost of 12th Grade	Net Gain (Loss)	Percent Gain (Loss)
Belen	\$1,210,122	\$1,100,277	\$109,845	9%
Clovis	\$2,489,069	\$2,705,703	(\$216,634)	-9%
Española	\$877,753	\$906,323	(\$28,570)	-3%
Gallup	\$2,071,380	\$2,040,756	\$30,624	1%
Highlands	\$1,226,333	\$1,023,310	\$203,023	17%
La Cueva	\$2,002,176	\$1,439,183	\$562,993	28%
Oñate	\$1,967,858	\$1,598,561	\$369,298	19%
Rio Grande	\$1,572,163	\$1,198,797	\$373,366	24%
Rio Rancho	\$3,664,731	\$4,089,690	(\$424,959)	-12%
Silver	\$628,169	\$786,725	(\$158,557)	-25%
Total	\$17,709,754	\$16,889,326	\$820,428	5%

What Do We Know About The Financial Side Of 12th Grade In New Mexico?

- The cost per student ranges from \$3,800 to \$6,300 per student
- The cost per student per credit ranges from \$530 to over \$1,100 per credit.
- Costs can vary depending on the size of student enrollment and class sizes.

Educator Concerns About Funding Cuts And Their Impact On Student Learning

- Principals and superintendents reported that they have cut counseling staff, core teachers, Advanced Placement and dual credit course offerings, remediation support, and career technical opportunities.
- The majority of educators reported that cuts in counseling staff has decreased their capacity to identify students at risk of dropping out.
- The majority of educators cited concerns about increasing class size. As one Assistant Principal said, *“We’ve seen the studies. If we have three consecutive years of overcrowding and not enough resources, we can tighten our belts and get by, but by three years it will have some permanent effects on student learning.”*

Educator Concerns About Funding Cuts And Their Impact On Student Learning

- “One issue is we were paying for textbooks. The district already can’t pay for textbooks. So beginning in summer, the district will pay for one set of textbooks, for one dual credit class.”
– NM High School Assistant Principal
- “With previous cuts, we lost 3 secretaries, 2 custodians, an assistant principal, 4-5 teachers – and that doesn’t include support services, social workers, nurses.”
– NM High School Principal
- “I need more math teachers, and I just got cut 5%, so either they cut days, which is I think where we’re at because there’s only so much room in a classroom. We can’t increase class sizes any more.”
– NM High School Principal

Recommendations

Recommendations

- The PED should make sure that districts have the capacity to gather accurate data on high school students and that district personnel are trained to use this information to improve the education of students and to ensure more accountability for the state.
 - Enhance training for counselors, principals and other staff so that they can better use transcript data while students are in school to ensure that all students receive a rigorous high school education.
 - Enhance training for staff working with electronic systems conducting the data entry/sharing to ensure the quality of the data.
 - Increase the use of electronic systems to reduce the workload associated with transcript reviews and student schedules.
- The PED should monitor the number of state required units students complete in order to graduate to ensure state standards are met.

Recommendations

- The PED and HED should ensure that the work of the Education Data System Council created in statute [22-1-11, 2010 NMSA 1978] proceeds quickly so that policy makers and citizens can better understand the impact of high school curriculum on success in both college and careers.
- The PED and the HED should ensure that the freshman year outcome reports from higher education to high schools are developed and implemented; they should ensure that additional efforts are made to improve the communication and collaboration between high schools and higher education.
- The statute that defines how a student qualifies for funding (Section 22-8-2) should be revisited. The state should strengthen the definition of how student membership is determined because the current lack of a uniform standard for how to classify a student in 12th grade makes it unclear whether a student qualifies for funding if they are not enrolled full time.

Educator Recommendations: Expand Dual Credit And Study Remediation

- Educators unanimously and strongly recommend that dual credit be expanded in all districts for all students, that the dual credit enrollment process be streamlined, that communication about dual credit between high schools and higher education be strengthened.
- Many educators suggested that dual credit be studied to identify who it benefits, in what ways, how best to improve those benefits, and how its benefits compare with AP benefits.
- Educators strongly recommend that remediation in college be better defined, that practice tests be made available before taking a remediation placement test, and that communication about remediation between high schools and higher education institutions be strengthened.

Educator Recommendations: Increase Alignment Between High Schools And Higher Education

- Define the priority issues facing high schools and higher education and increase the discussions to address those issues.
- Reach consensus regarding the purposes and goals of high school and the skills and knowledge required for college and careers, and address remediation together.
- Strengthen coordination among the higher education institutions in New Mexico.
- Develop local collaborations among high schools, 2-year and 4-year higher education institutions to:
 - Align curriculum
 - Align assessments
 - Monitor student progress in dual credit courses together
 - Increase collaborations in career pathways
 - Institutionalize ongoing communication

Educator Recommendations: Increase Learning Opportunities

Increase student learning and engagement:

- Increase academic rigor in 12th grade.
- Increase content variety and relevance to students' lives.
- Expand research-based teaching methods.
- Increase the use of technology in the classroom and with families.
- Increase internships and service learning opportunities.
- Align electives with core content and career pathways.
- Organize "Why Try?" / goal-setting or other student motivation and study skills groups.

Educator Recommendations: Define Accountability

- Define relevant accountability at every grade level.
- Improve assessment alignment from grade to grade.
- Require proficiency in reading, math, science and communication.
- Ensure schools have the resources required to help “middle” performing students to be successful.
- “We have an antiquated system where everything is based on one test. And little application is done, it’s all written. So we need to start here: why can’t we give credit to students who can frame a house but not pass geometry, when framing a house is all about geometry? Why can the math teacher say ‘They can’t do math’ when the CTE teacher is saying ‘They’re amazing in framing a house.’ Assessments are a good tool, but in our system it’s one test and that’s it. That’s not how the real world works. This is not how the real world works. We are not put in a room and told, ‘Figure out this problem, and if I don’t like this answer, you’re fired.’ But the kids sit in front of a computer by themselves, and they have no opportunity to discuss it.”
- NM High School Assistant Principal

Educator Recommendations: Strengthen Transcript Data Evaluation Process

- The current transcript evaluation process is intensive:
 - Counselors: spend 50 - 75% of their time for 12th graders.
 - Assistant Principals: check transcripts and help with scheduling based on transcript review.
 - Principal: does a final check.
 - Registrar: enters information, often from notes on paper copy.
- Most schools evaluate transcripts by hand & electronically:
 - School personnel take notes by hand when meeting with student/family.
 - Data systems may not be adequate for complexity of information.
 - School personnel need more training to use their data system more effectively and efficiently.

Educator Recommendations: Strengthen Transcript Data Evaluation Process

- One high school counselor explained what we repeatedly heard about the current transcript evaluation process in virtually all the participating schools:
“Transcript evaluation is a constant process... We do every class, for every student, by hand... my emphasis is on the Seniors. So we are neglecting the 1st year students, and it’s showing in their grades. We have a lot of failures for the freshman class. They just needed support, and we just didn’t have it. The case load is too large.”
- A School District Accountability staff person provided the following recommendation: *“Districts need to be able to invest the time in training principals, assistant principals, and most importantly registrars and counselors in using the student information systems that are in place. Most of these systems make interpretations according to carefully thought out business rules that the district establishes and inputs into the system. These rules then are applied to course taking so that the transcript has the correct display and course credit.”*

- NM School District Accountability Personnel

Educator Recommendations: Improve Data Collection And Analysis

- Track students after graduation to inform curriculum analysis by employer, vocational schools, college, university, scholarships, ACT scores, and other relevant information.
- Study the effects of AP and Dual Credit on student success to inform schools and families about the advantages of each.
- Compare what successful first-year college students and college graduates did in high school, particularly those who begin college course work their first semester and those who begin college taking remedial courses.
- Study the relationship between the high school assessment scores and ACT/SAT scores, grades in college, etc.
- Study the effects of the new math requirement on all students.
- Study the impact of schedules – traditional, block and hybrid – on student success in high school and beyond.

Final Thoughts

- This study is one of the largest ever conducted on 12th grade in New Mexico and it raises as many questions as it answers.
- We need to find a balance between recognizing students and educators for the hard work they do and celebrating their successes AND facing the fact that too many students do not graduate and that too many of those that do graduate are unprepared for college or careers.
- High school in general and the 12th grade in particular are complex issues and we clearly need to better understand the diversity of students who attend high school and how to better meet the wide range of needs and nurture the talents they bring to schools.

Final Thoughts

- One of the clearest trends nationally and in New Mexico is the “blurring” of the line between high school and higher education. One of the clearest findings is that the collaboration among New Mexico’s high schools and colleges needs to improve.
- New Mexico also needs to improve the data that is gathered on high school students and ensure that it is accurate and available for timely use by both educators and policy makers.
- We understand the financial challenges that the state faces and clearly New Mexico must find ways to use its limited resources in a more effective and efficient manner.
- We believe that the time is right to change how New Mexico educates its young adults in ways that better meets the students’ needs, ensure that all students are better prepared for both college and careers, and use resources more effectively.

The Most Important Question In This Study

If We Conduct A Study Of The 12th Grade In New Mexico In 2020, What Will Have Changed?

Late 1800s



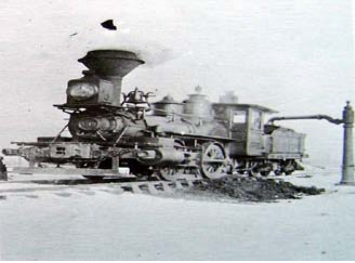
Early 1900s



Mid-1900s



Early 2000s



Source: Adapted From Gordon Freedman, personal communication, 2010

Appendices

1. Scope of Work, February, 2011
2. Transcript data request, February 2011
3. Superintendent survey
4. Principal and Counselor survey

Contact Information

Peter Winograd, Director, University of New Mexico Center For Education Policy Research

Website: <http://coe.unm.edu/cepr>

Telephone: 505-277-1180

Email: peterwin@unm.edu

Charles Sallee, Deputy Director for Program Evaluation
New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee

Website: <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lfc/lfcdefault.aspx>

Telephone: 505-986-4550

Email: charles.sallee@nmlegis.gov