The Regional Partnership School of Northern New Mexico
A Demonstration Project

Introduction

Students in northern New Mexico chronically underperform, especially those students who are classified as at-risk. According to the 2018 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers only 21.6% of New Mexico students scored proficient or above in mathematics and 31.1% in English Language Arts.

Students who attend the Pojoaque Valley School District (PVSD) are no exception to underperformance. Only 19% of students in grades 7 - 8 scored proficient or above on the PARCC assessment in mathematics in 2018. The review of subgroup data is even more startling. Less than 5% of Native American students were proficient or above in mathematics, only 8% of students who are economically disadvantaged reached the same level, and less than 10% of students with disabilities, and 10% of English Language Learners.

Additionally, PVSD struggles to attract and retain teachers. At the beginning of the 2018-19 academic year, there were 15 teacher vacancies. This is not unique to PVSD: schools statewide and nationally are also facing a profound teacher shortage. New Mexico has the second-highest in teacher annual turnover rate in the nation at 23.2% (the national turnover rate is 14.2%).

In addition to chronically low student test scores, teacher shortages, and teacher attrition, there are severe problems within the systems that support education. These problems include:
- a lack of instructional programming and culturally relevant materials for at-risk students;
- a lack of communication between universities, school districts, and the communities they serve;
- unprepared teachers entering the profession; and
- teachers and administrators who do not have opportunities to collaborate or engage in effective professional learning and continuous improvement models.

To address these enormous challenges, a new approach is required. The partners behind the the Regional Partnership School (RPS) believe that by leveraging the strengths of their institutions and continuously learning from one another they can build a model of education that works for our unique context in northern New Mexico and can lead to better outcomes for teachers and students.

Description

The RPS is an educational partnership between Pojoaque Valley School District (PVSD), New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The primary goals of the RPS are to:

- increase the number and quality of new teachers through a multi-year teacher clinical residency program;
- improve teaching and learning in a public school system that is grounded in continuous professional learning; and
- create a model for educational leaders and policy makers.

The RPS is something new to New Mexico, integrating previously independent sectors of our educational system to provide a holistic approach to educator development and professional learning. The RPS will work collaboratively to develop a system that integrates coordinated professional development for 4th - 8th grade teachers and incoming teachers from the NMHU School of Education. The RPS is based on a national best-practice professional development school model and is intended to provide pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and principals the opportunity to improve their practices and to improve student academic performance. It is also intended to be a model of innovation for New Mexico educators and policy makers. The RPS is the first school in the state to partner strategically with a school district, university pre-service program, and a major employer.

Strategies
- ***Provide formal professional development***
  Provide formal professional development aligned to the collectively developed goals of the RPS and the PVSD Strategic Plans. This will include regular opportunities for teachers to deepen their content knowledge and learn best practices for teaching and learning. It will also be supported by all levels of leadership and driven by student and district data.

- ***Develop systems of professional learning and continuous improvement***
  Build systems of continuous improvement to improve teaching and learning at every level. For teachers this means building time into the structure of the school day to collaborate with each other by analyzing student work and acting on the results, observing one another's practice, and providing descriptive feedback.

- ***Develop a clinical teacher residency program***
  Make clinical practice the central framework for teacher preparation by integrating clinical preparation with every facet of teacher education. Teacher candidates will be assigned to the RPS for two full academic years and work under the mentorship of a highly-qualified mentor teacher who is being simultaneously supported by NMHU and Los Alamos National Laboratory professionals.

- ***Engage parents and families***
  Integrate parents and families as partners in the teaching and learning of their students. Provide the necessary supports for parents and families to help their students be successful.

- ***Provide opportunities for higher education***
  Provide opportunities for district staff to earn credit for professional development and to pursue advanced degrees and certificates.

Public School Partner
Pojoaque Valley School District is situated in a valley just north of Santa Fe between the backdrops of the Jemez and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. PVSD serves the interconnected communities of the Pojoaque Valley that are rich in historical and cultural significance. The district has one high school, one middle school, one intermediate school, one sixth grade academy, and one elementary school serving a student population from various racial and ethnic backgrounds that is almost 90% minority, rural, and economically disadvantaged. The District serves approximately 2,000 students.

University Partner
New Mexico Highlands University School of Education prepares teachers, counselors, and administrators to work in diverse and inclusive environments through excellence in teaching, research, and service. The School of Education provides highly qualified, entry-level teachers in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and special education to serve New Mexico and/or national PK-grade 12 school districts. It also provides other professional personnel such as educational leaders and counselors. The president of NM Highlands University, Dr. Sam Minner, has extensive experience with university-school partnerships and is fully committed to the success of the RPS.

Research Laboratory and Workforce Partner
Los Alamos National Laboratory is a multidisciplinary research institution engaged in strategic science on behalf of national security and is operated by Triad, LLC. The mission of the Laboratory is to solve national security challenges through scientific excellence. As part of their commitment to the community, LANL supports education initiatives in surrounding communities in northern New Mexico for the purpose of developing an expanded and skilled workforce. The Math and Science Academy (MSA) has been a signature education program since 2000 and is dedicated to serving regional school districts with professional development designed to support continuous and sustainable improvement of teaching and learning mathematics and science in participating school districts in northern New Mexico. MSA has served eight school districts, six Bureau of Indian Education Schools, and one Bureau of Indian Education grant school, and has held strategic partnerships with regional universities and the NM Public Education Department.

Who is Directly Involved in the Work of the RPS?
- **PVSD Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Principals, & Teachers**
  The administrative team, principals, teachers, staff, and mentor teachers will be involved in all aspects of the RPS. Collaboration will take place at every level characterized by professional learning and continuous improvement.

- *NMHU School of Education Dean, Dept. Chair, Field Director, and Faculty Members*
  NMHU will dedicate one full time faculty responsible for coordinating all elements of the clinical residency program, training and supporting mentor teachers, and teaching seminar classes. Additional faculty and staff will be involved in research, curriculum development and alignment, teaching, and guiding action research.

- *LANL Math and Science Academy Education Specialists*
  Los Alamos National Laboratory has embedded four education professionals dedicated to supporting all aspects of the RPS. The LANL team brings expertise in professional development, professional learning systems, facilitation, instructional coaching, learning communities, the continuous improvement process, action research, and engaging parents and families.

- *Recognized education experts*

The RPS has a dedicated English Language Arts expert and a university mathematics content professor; both are members of the RPS Leadership team and responsible for providing guidance for the design and implementation of the RPS.

Outcomes
- Increased number and quality of new teachers
- Improved quality of teaching and learning in a public school system that is grounded in continuous professional learning
- A shared perspective on the core elements of highly effective educational systems
- A school partnership model for educational leaders and policy makers

Regional Partnership School (Strategies, Outcomes, & Impacts)

Partners/Resources	Strategies	Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes	Impacts
Pojoaque Valley School District	Provide Formal Professional Development	Enhanced Teacher Practices and Content Knowledge	Effective Learning Experiences for Students	**Increased Student Learning and Achievement**
NM Highlands University	Develop and implement continuous improvement systems.	Established Systems of Professional Learning and Continuous Improvement	Highly Skilled Teachers	
Los Alamos National Laboratory/TRIAD National Security LLC.	Develop and Implement a Teacher Clinical Residency Program	Highly Effective Teacher Clinical Residency Programs	Sustainable Professional Learning System are in Place	
Consultants	Engage parents and families as partners.	Leadership Capacity	Highly Prepared Teachers Ready to Enter the Profession	
Resource Partners	Provide opportunities to earn credit and pursue advanced degree and certificates.		High-demand Curriculum in Place	
Policy Makers	Influence Education Policy		Improved School-Based Policies and Practices	**Improved Workforce Pipeline** Increase the number of students who are prepared for the workforce.

RPS Graphic: 12/5/18