




B i t e - S i z e

 By reprioritizing awards for schools in need of “more rigorous interventions,” the Public Education Department increased the number of “comprehensive support and improvement” schools receiving awards but decreased the average per-student amount from \$422 in FY19 to \$233 in FY20. In FY19, PED distributed \$10.7 million for FY18 planning awards and FY19 implementation awards to 52 schools, about half the applicants. In FY20, all 89 schools received a piece of the \$7.4 million pie.

 The number and share of public school students participating in bilingual and multicultural education programs shrank slightly between FY18 and FY19, from 48,368 students and 14.8 percent in FY18 to 46,766 students and 14.4 percent in FY19. For FY20, the Legislature appropriated \$7 million to increase access to bilingual programs, but only Silver Consolidated Schools added a new program. Silver schools had a funded bilingual program in FY17 but not in FY18 or FY19.

 Only five traditional public schools lack fiber optic Internet connections, the Public School Facilities Authority reports – Penasco Elementary School (Artesia Public Schools), Mesa Elementary School (Central Consolidated School District), Tse’Yi’Gai High School (Gallup-McKinley County Schools), Lybrook Elementary School (Jemez Mountain Public Schools), and Arrey Elementary School (Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools). Three of the schools are pursuing upgrade funding.



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a publication of the Legislative Education Study Committee

Representative Christine Trujillo, Chair / Senator Mimi Stewart, Vice Chair / Rachel S. Gudgel, Director / September 2019

From the Chairwoman

Front of the Class

Attracting teachers to tribal lands and other rural areas is tough, but few teacher recruitment issues are as tough as attracting Native Americans to the classroom.

Less than 1 percent of teachers nationally identify as Native American, Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian. Native American educators suggest a variety of causes, with the inter-generational damage of forced attendance at boarding schools not least among them. Some say Native American communities value education but are suspect of public schools, and they note colleges of education don’t generally offer the communal support typical of Native American culture.

Supporting this anecdotal information is new research that finds Native American students who attend a tribal college or university are twice as likely as Native American students nationally to receive the necessary supports to complete an undergraduate degree. In turn, Native American students who graduate from a tribal college have a higher likelihood of using their degrees to work in their community and directly serve their tribes.

For New Mexico colleges, this suggests efforts to recruit and train Native American teachers must go beyond scholarships or pay-for-service programs. It must start early with culturally sensitive classrooms that ensure Native American students feel valued and have a voice.

The University of New Mexico is working on a Native American educator pipeline that starts with recruitment and engagement of Native students at the elementary level and ends with efforts to promote administrator licensing and doctorates in education leadership among Native American educators.

New Mexico adopted the Indian Education Act in 2003, but it wasn’t until this year that policymakers and educators, with a push from the district court, started taking multicultural education seriously.

We know a multicultural classroom serves all students and minority students do better when they see themselves in their teacher. We must recognize we need more Native Americans in front of the class if we want Native American students to succeed.

Agency Seeks Funds for Greater Oversight

The Public Education Department is overseeing the \$4.3 billion public school system with less state money than it received 10 years ago, despite a court-driven effort to improve the department’s oversight role, LESL staff reports.

The department is asking for a 3 percent increase in its FY21 operating budget, \$1.4 million over its \$48 million operating budget for the current fiscal year.

The committee is scheduled to hear more about the agency’s request at 11:45 a.m. on September 25 during its meeting in Silver City.

The department, which gets about 60 percent of its operating budget from the federal government, is asking for about \$15.1 million from the state general fund, a \$1.5 million increase over the current year.

The department’s general fund appropriations over the past dozen years peaked at \$17.1 million in FY09, a staff brief on the hearing says. However, general funds for the agency dropped almost \$7 million over the next four years, bottoming out at \$10.5 million in FY12.

Until this year, when the general fund appropriation grew to \$13.6 million, the amount bounced

between that low and \$12 million.

The increase this year was prompted, in part, by the finding in the consolidated *Martinez* and *Yazzie* lawsuit that the department has failed to exercise its power to monitor or audit schools districts’ use of funds, insufficiently monitored programs for English learners, and failed to ensure implementation of the Indian Education, Bilingual Multicultural Education, and Hispanic Education acts.

Further, the 1st Judicial District Court found the department has failed to provide school districts with the technical assistance needed to ensure students are sufficiently educated.

The court rejected the department’s argument that it cannot control district spending or force districts to provide programs to benefit students at-risk of failure, finding the department has interpreted its authority under state statute too narrowly and has broad powers to ensure schools use state funding effectively.

The brief notes the court has made it clear student success – as measured by test results, graduation rates, and college remediation rates – is the evidence the court continued on back

NW Schools Will Lose Funds With Shutdown

Officials from the Central Consolidated School District, which encompasses both the San Juan Generating Station and the coal mine that supplies it, say the district will lose \$5.1 million a year if the power plant shuts down.

In a [presentation](#) to the committee in August, Terrian Benn, superintendent, said a study by Economic Modeling Specialists concluded closure of the plant and mine would result in a loss of over \$53 million annually in state and local tax revenues and over 1,500 jobs.

Benn said Four Corners Economic Development estimates Farmington schools would lose \$1.7 million for oper-

Increase Sought

continued from front

will use to determine if the state is providing a sufficient education as required by the state constitution.

The department “will need to pay careful attention to the programs and services that have been proven to demonstrate results for students and increase support and oversight to ensure school districts and charter schools implement these programs with fidelity,” the brief says.

The department is asking for 10 new positions for FY21 for staff to upgrade data systems, inspect school buses, expand school district audits, and other activities. Department staff indicated they considered more positions, but they reduced the number at the request of the Department of Finance and Administration.

Department managers say they do not have adequate staffing to meet the requirements of the court ruling, and LESC analysis shows staffing levels remain below those of a decade ago, when budget shortfalls led the department to lay off 33 employees.

ations; Aztec schools, \$165 thousand; and Bloomfield schools, \$77 thousand.

Central Consolidated schools, where 91 percent of the students are Native American and 72 percent are economically disadvantaged, would lose \$1.5 million for operations and another \$3.6 million in property tax revenue, Benn said.

She also said the loss of jobs will prompt families to move and enrollment in the district, which has decreased by 300 students since 2017, is likely to continue to decline, forcing staff cuts and school closures. However, public school enrollment statewide has been declining steadily since 2016 and is now below 2010 levels, legislative figures show.

Public Service Company of New Mexico, which owns the plant, has

already closed two of the four units but intended to keep the remaining two open until 2053, investing \$150 million in pollution controls in 2015, Benn said.

However, the state Energy Transition Act, enacted this year, calls for PNM to shut down the plant by 2022 and to move to clean energy sources.

The act compensates local governments and school districts through several processes, including payments in lieu of taxes, a mechanism for funding severance packages and job training for displaced workers, and a requirement that PNM locate any replacement facilities in the same school district as the abandoned plant.

New Mexico environmental groups say the coal plant emits 6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, the equivalent of 1.27 million vehicles.

Forty Districts Providing K-5 Plus Services

Less than half of the state’s 89 school districts included K-5 Plus in their spending plans for FY20, the first year funding for the extended school year program proven to help at-risk students was included in the funding formula and available to any school.

Of the 40 districts with K-5 Plus programs this year, seven are serving 90 percent or more of the number of students that budget analysts expected they would need to serve, based on enrollment in schools that would have qualified under old rules on poverty levels.

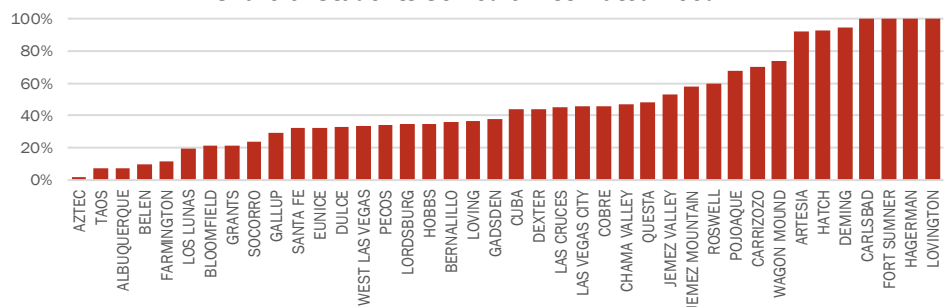
Statewide, 24 percent of the expected students are being served. Among the 49 that did not apply, three districts – Ruidoso, Silver City, and Truth or Conse-

quences – had programs in FY19 but do not in FY20.

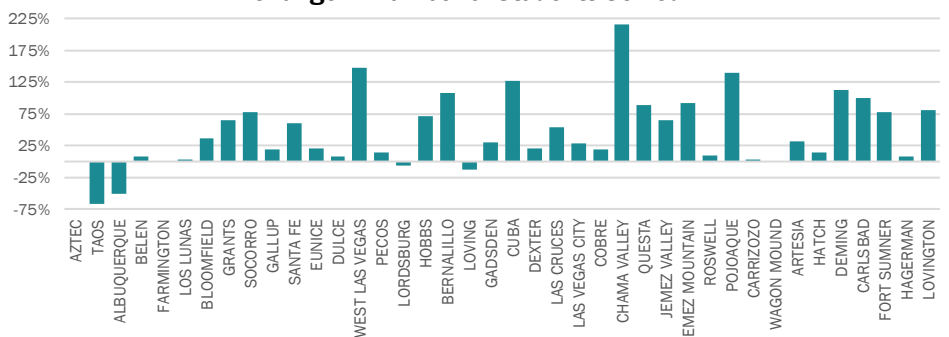
While some districts with K-5 Plus are serving fewer students this year, Carlsbad and Bernalillo schools doubled the number of students they are serving; West Las Vegas, Cuba, and Pojoaque more than doubled their K-5 Plus enrollment; and Chama tripled the number of students.

Deming Public Schools, which increased enrollment by 112 percent, and Hatch Public Schools, which saw an increase of 14 percent, have both set up the program in every elementary school. In both districts, all kindergarten through fifth graders are in schools that would have qualified under the old rules.

Share of Students Served of Estimated Need



Change in Number of Students Served



Note: Aztec and Farmington did not provide K-5 Plus services in FY19.

i n f o r m E D

September 2019

Published monthly in the interim by the
Legislative Education Study Committee
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Santa Fe, NM 87501
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