

B i t e - S i z e

New Mexico is part of the new cohort of states in the [Arts Education Data Project](#), an initiative that takes data gathered by each state department of education, standardizes the data, and then transforms it into a publicly available interactive dashboard, updated annually to reflect the true status of arts education in every school, at every grade level. The Arts Education Data Project is a partnership between the [State Education Agency Directors of Art Education](#) and [Quadrant Research](#).

LESC staff attended site visits for schools planning to apply for standards based awards in November 2022. Potential applicant districts include Pojoaque Valley, Santa Rosa, Estancia, Hobbs, and Truth or Consequences. Each district has schools among the 150 worst ranked schools in the state according to the weighted New Mexico Condition Index, which includes measures of facility condition as well as whether the schools are “adequate” for students’ education.

Research published in Educational Researcher indicates the national cost of addressing pandemic-related learning loss may be between \$325 billion and \$930 billion, depending on the proportion of students who were in virtual learning environments for extended periods of time. These estimates dwarf the \$189.8 billion in federal relief funds that were disbursed to local education agencies.



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a publication of the Legislative Education Study Committee

Senator William P. Soules, Chair / Representative G. Andrés Romero, Vice Chair / Gwen Perea Warniment, Director / November 2022

From the Chairman

With Time Comes Change

The LESG recently visited Tombaugh Elementary in Las Cruces. Our committee was able to see evidence based practice in action. Students in kindergarten, first, and fifth grade were engaged in elements of structured literacy. They were eager to learn and a little shy while being observed by a room full of adults, but demonstrated strong literacy skills across the board.

In 2019, the legislature passed a law that transformed New Mexico’s approach to literacy and literacy instruction by implementing student screenings, expanding professional development for educators, and requiring school districts and charter schools to develop literacy plans.

Literacy should be at the forefront of our conversation on improving education in New Mexico. Without strong literacy skills, children will fall behind in their academic journey. Importantly, literacy is far more than having the ability to read and write; it is also listening, speaking and the ability to evaluate and communicate through a wide range of sources. Research has proven that low literacy rates among children have long-term consequences; children who are not proficient in reading are four times more likely to drop out of high school. These consequences often extend into adulthood, deeply affecting important factors of life including health, income and employment.

Early skill development in literacy matters. That is why a foundation in reading and comprehension skills at the start of a child’s academic education is pivotal to building a successful life. The children of our state can change the trajectory of our success and cultivate a generation of excellence. While change takes time for us as legislators to see the benefits of strong policy, our students benefit immediately.

Addressing Unfinished Learning: Math in New Mexico

Students in New Mexico need access to high quality, equitable math instruction and educators need access to preparation and development in order to address unfinished learning in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, but that must begin with a coordinated vision amongst education stakeholders according to Legislative Education Study Committee staff.

Current assessment data shows about one-in-four students are proficient in math in New Mexico. The results also confirmed the presence of a broad achievement gap for students identified in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* education sufficiency lawsuit.

Math proficiency rates have consistently been low in New Mexico. According to national data, in 2015, only 24 percent of fourth-grade students were proficient in math, compared to 17 percent in 2022, a 7 percent drop across seven years.

Similarly, in 2015 only 24 percent of eighth-grade students

were proficient in math, compared to 17 percent in 2022. It is important to note that The National Assessment of Education Progression (NAEP) scores represent only a sampling of students in each state.

The state has also had a long-struggle with proficiency in literacy. Presently, in 2020, PED unveiled a statewide literacy framework focused on helping students gain foundational reading skills early in their academic journeys after years of discussions on how to address the learning gaps.

Education stakeholders might consider the way the state is addressing literacy and create a similar action plan for math, not only to address unfinished learning onset by the pandemic, but also to reform a system not meet the needs of all students across the state.

New Mexico has made strides towards addressing inequities in math. In 2021, The Public Education Department issued [the New](#)

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State Must Address Symptoms of Uncoordinated System

The state needs to remedy several issues if it is going to make substantive progress in addressing the findings of the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit, staff told the Legislative Education Study Committee at its October meeting in Hatch.

Staff Director Gwen Perea Warniment outlined five symptoms illustrating an uncoordinated system of education in New Mexico. First, proficiency levels in reading and math, especially for students named in the lawsuit, are abysmally low. And, Warniment said, the state does not have consistent metrics for ensuring quality in instruction or in educator preparation programs.

Perea Warniment said student well-being is also a significant concern

in New Mexico. The Annie E. Casey Foundation ranked New Mexico last for student well-being in its 2022 report. She also noted the lack of a cohesive statewide data system to help stakeholders identify and understand educational issues.

Lastly, she said leadership turnover remains a burden to the state, individual school districts, and schools across the state. More than two-thirds of all school district superintendents have been on the job for less than two years, and the Public Education has had three secretaries in the last four years.

Perea Warniment and staff offered several policy and budget considerations to address the symptoms, including investing in the educator profession through teacher resi-

dencies and educator salaries, as well as investing in programming that supports a whole child education, such as community schools and career technical education.

She also proposed the creation of a statewide data, information, and accountability system, to ensure accurate and timely data.

Lastly, she recommended a review the state's education funding formula to evaluate whether schools are receiving adequate funding and ensure funds are spent appropriately.

The LESC policy brief on the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* lawsuit roadmap can be found [here](#).

State must address unfinished learning in math with urgency

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[Mexico Math Framework](#), intended to provide clear guidance on how to implement and strengthen math instruction in New Mexico. PED also launched the "Math is Me" initiative for the 2022-2023 school year, intended to build math appreciation at every grade level.

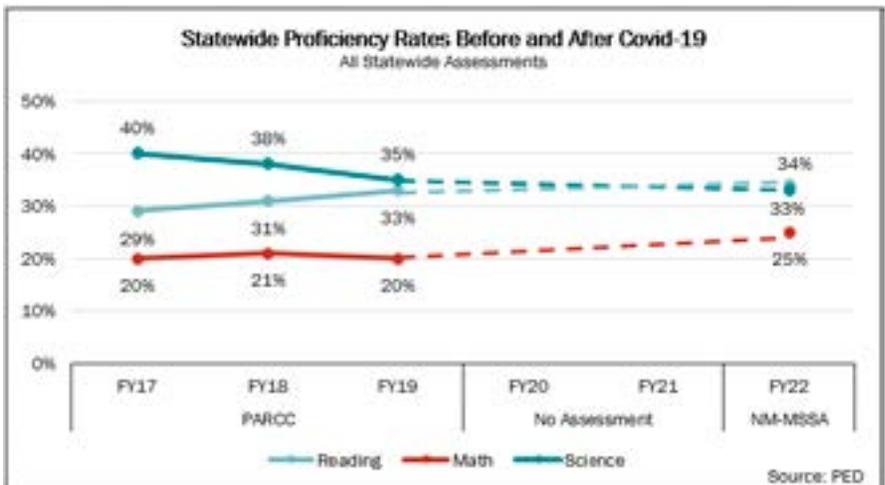
Although the state is working to address unfinished learning in math, it must do so with a sense of urgency. Data shows that students moving through the New Mexico public education system are missing fundamental math components by the time they

reach high school. The state must identify areas where students are missing key mathematical components and address it through rigorous accelerated learning.

LESC staff will give legislators an overview of the status of math in New Mexico and math assessments on Tuesday, November 15 beginning at 8:30.

Statwide Proficiency Rates Before and After Covid-19

After two years with no assessments, students participated in three brand new assessments in spring 2022, the NM-MSSA, the NM-ASR and the SAT. Because the assessments are new to the state, the results are not perfectly comparable to results from the PARCC assessment administered before the pandemic. The results of the new assessment suggest about one in three students is proficient in English language arts (ELA), about one in three students is proficient in science, and about one in four students is proficient in math.



i n f o r m E D

November 2022

Published monthly in the interim by the
Legislative Education Study Committee
325 Don Gaspar, Suite 100
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 986-4591

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LESC/Default>

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