New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee
Progress Report

Instructional Time and Extended Learning Opportunities in Public Schools

June 17, 2026

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NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Instructional Time and Extended Learning Opportunities in Public Schools

PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY JUNE 2026

TOP TAKEAWAY

The Legislature has invested a cumulative $2.6 billion for extended learning time in the wake of the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit, with the primary goal of improving outcomes for certain groups of at-risk students. However, schools have largely failed to increase instructional time, and it is not clear that additional time is being used to improve student outcomes.

THE ISSUE

In 2018, the 1st Judicial District Court found in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit that "funding has not been sufficient for all districts to provide the programs and services required by the state constitution" to certain groups of students. The court prescribed a variety of actions to be undertaken by the Legislature, the Public Education Department, and local education agencies (districts and charter schools), including adding time in the form of extended school years and days, as well as after school and summer programs. Research generally finds additional time in school can improve learning, although effects depend on how the time is organized and whether students are present and engaged.

A 2018 LFC evaluation of instructional time echoed those findings, and since then, the Legislature has appropriated a cumulative $2.6 billion for extended learning programs intended to increase the amount of student instructional time, with the goal of improving student outcomes. Despite this investment, districts and charter schools have failed to meaningfully increase instructional time for students.

New Mexico students continue to score years behind on national benchmarks, and LFC analysis finds the average student will not achieve proficiency in reading or math during their K-12 education. Time could significantly accelerate student learning, especially when bundled with other reforms, but currently students are not receiving meaningful opportunities to catch up, and achievement gaps persist among the groups identified in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit.

KEY FINDINGS

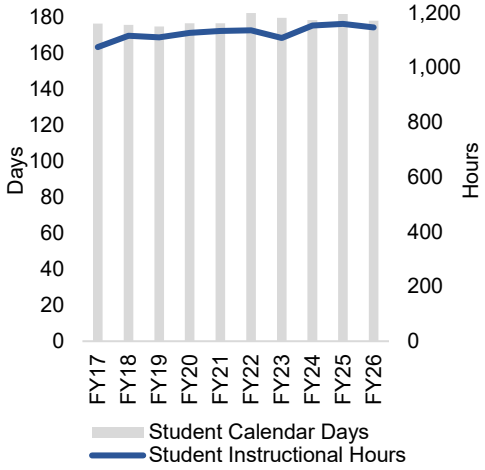
- The court prescribed more time and the Legislature invested $2.6 billion, but allocated student time has stagnated.
- Scheduled instructional time does not fully reach students, further eroding their opportunity to learn.
- Time-related interventions are not reaching the students who need them most.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Legislature should consider:

- Clarifying that "instructional days," as referenced in the K-12 Plus statute, are student instructional days;
- Amending the K-12 Plus formula to provide sufficient incentive for additional, high-quality student learning time while eliminating financial incentives that reward practices not likely to improve student outcomes;
- Articulating the educational purpose of out-of-school time programming in statute to distinguish it from childcare.

New Mexico Student Calendar Days and Instructional Hours



Note: Weighted by student enrollment

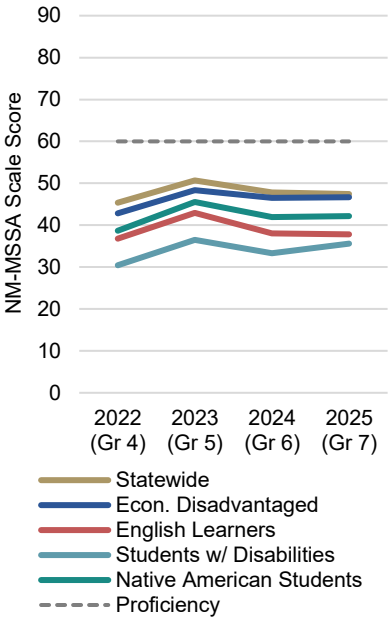
Source: LFC analysis of PED data

LFC Progress Reports are follow-ups to assess the implementation of previous recommendations.

Background

New Mexico has long-standing disparities in student outcomes. On average, students from low-income families, English learners, Native American students, and students with disabilities (collectively, at-risk students) have lower reading and math proficiency than their peers, who are also not proficient. The *Martinez-Yazzie* decision found that the state had failed to provide at-risk students with the programs, services, and resources necessary for a constitutionally sufficient education—including, among other inputs, extended learning time, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and adequate teaching capacity. National research supports the premise that more time improves learning, with the caveat that additional minutes and days tend to produce modest and uneven gains unless they are used intentionally for high-quality, targeted instruction. A 2018 LFC report on instructional time found that more time could help close the achievement gap for at-risk students when used well. Since FY18, the Legislature has invested $2.4 billion to add school days and hours and more than $150 million for time-related interventions including summer literacy, high-dosage tutoring, and out-of-school time programs. This report updates the 2018 findings in light of that investment.

Chart 1. Math Proficiency
2022 Grade 4 Cohort



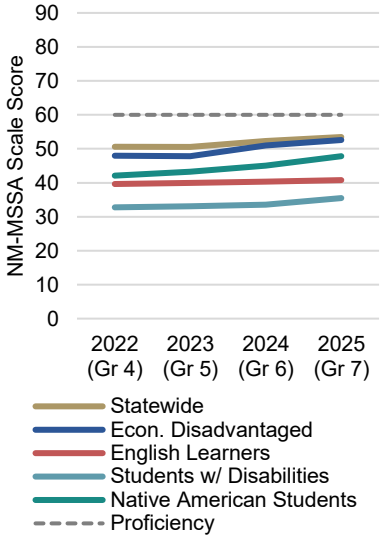
Source: LFC analysis of PED data

The average New Mexico student will not achieve proficiency in reading or math during their K-12 education, but extended learning time can help.

Most New Mexico students today are not learning fast enough to achieve reading or math proficiency during their kindergarten-to-12th grade (K-12) education. Without faster growth, students who start behind are likely to stay behind, limiting their future opportunities. The at-risk subgroups named in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit show faster growth rates than their peers, but even those faster rates are not enough to reach proficiency. Closing the gap will require students to grow faster than they currently do, and one evidence-based way to accelerate growth is to extend instructional time, particularly in concert with other educational reforms.

At-risk students tend to have faster growth rates in reading and math, but that growth is not fast enough to close the achievement gap or attain proficiency for most students. LFC has periodically examined student growth using statewide standardized test scores. In its 2018 instructional time report, LFC compared student growth rates to national benchmarks and found that growth rates were approximately what would be expected in an academic year. Replicating that analysis with FY22-FY25

Chart 2. Reading Proficiency
2022 Grade 4 Cohort



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

data, LFC finds the overall pattern persists. Students are still growing at roughly the same rate they were in 2018. As in the 2018 analysis, most groups of at-risk students identified in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit show faster growth than their peers not at risk, consistent with baseline differences that leave more room for improvement. However, the distinction between growth and proficiency is critical. Even when students improve at a relatively faster rate, starting from a lower baseline means they need additional gains over multiple years to catch up, and current growth rates fall short of that threshold. As a result, current growth rates are not sufficient to eliminate persistent proficiency gaps or ensure most at-risk students reach grade-level standards during their K–12 education.

Based on current rates of growth, the average New Mexico student will not achieve grade-level proficiency in reading or math during their K-12 education, curtailing their future opportunities. Based on LFC analysis of FY22-FY25 student data, it would take the average fourth grader over nine years to reach proficiency in reading and 22 years to reach proficiency in math—longer than they will be in school. Students who do not reach grade-level proficiency in reading and math by eighth grade are unlikely to be able to pass first-semester college courses and may struggle with skills essential for high-paying careers. However, even a slightly faster average rate of growth would dramatically increase the likelihood of students in New Mexico achieving proficiency.

Ways to Understand Student Performance

Growth to standards

- Necessary rate of growth to achieve proficiency vs. actual rate of growth
- Probabilistic projections of achieving proficiency based on past growth rates (proficiency targeting)

Growth compared to other students

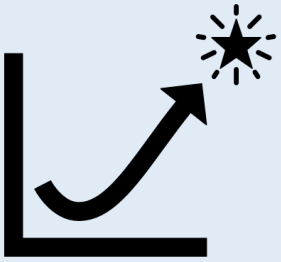
- Growth relative to New Mexico students starting at the same proficiency (student growth percentiles tracked by the Public Education Department)
- Growth relative to a large student sample (CREDO)

Proficiency

- Absolute performance on a standardized test benchmarked to state standards

A Small Percentage of New Mexico Students are Making "Heroic Growth"

The growth charts in this section represent average growth for students in the state, as well as for various subgroups. However, growth rates for individual students vary widely, and an analysis of student-level data shows some students experience much faster than average growth. Out of 54 thousand students with valid reading and math scores for all four years of the statewide standardized NM-MSSA test between FY22 and FY25, roughly 2,000 or 4 percent achieved what might be called "heroic growth," scoring at level one or two (below proficient) on their first one or two tests, but at level three or four (proficient or advanced) on their later tests. Many of those students fall into one or more at-risk subgroups. For example, 9 percent of students who made heroic growth were Native American, 9 percent were students with disabilities, 18 percent were English learners, and 38 percent were economically disadvantaged (categories are not mutually exclusive). Students with the fastest rates of growth were able to achieve 10 times faster growth rates than the average student in New Mexico, demonstrating that rapid growth is possible, even if it is not the norm.



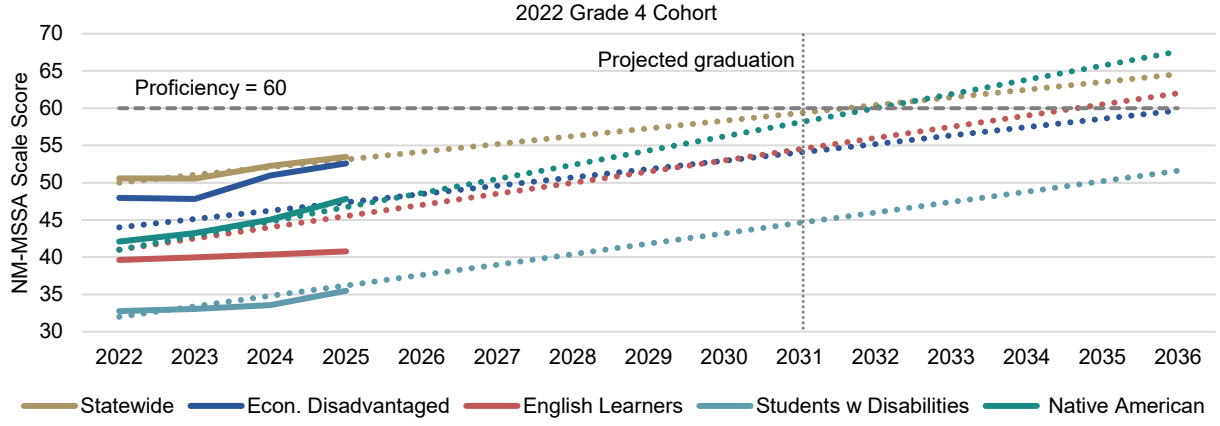
4% **of New Mexico students made "heroic growth"** between FY22 and FY25, climbing from Level 1 or 2 to Level 3 or 4.

9% **of these students were Native American;**
9% **had disabilities;**
18% **were English learners; and**
38% **were economically disadvantaged.**

LFC 2026 Student Proficiency Dashboard

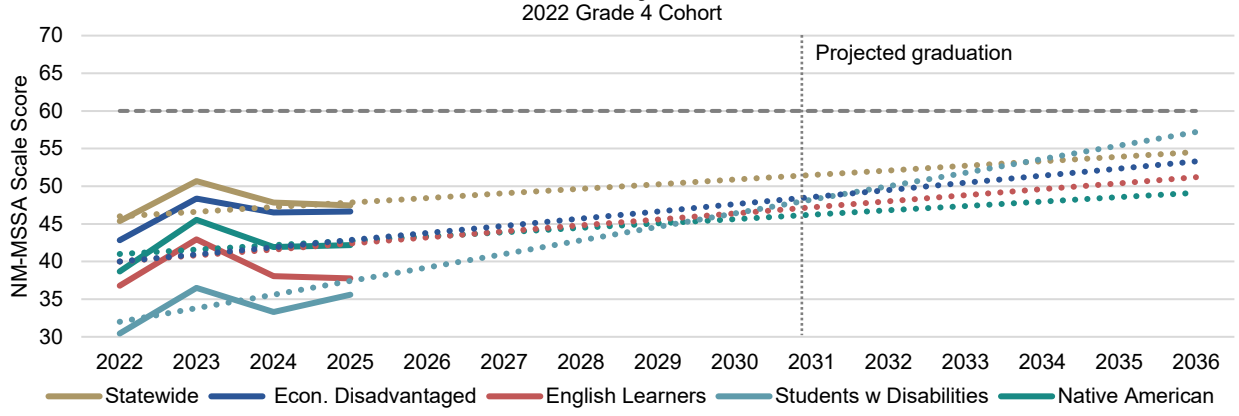
Scan the QR code above to explore LFC's interactive student proficiency dashboard.

Chart 3. Growth Projections for Reading
2022 Grade 4 Cohort



Source: LFC analysis of PED data; see Appendix B for methdology.

Chart 4. Growth Projections for Math
2022 Grade 4 Cohort

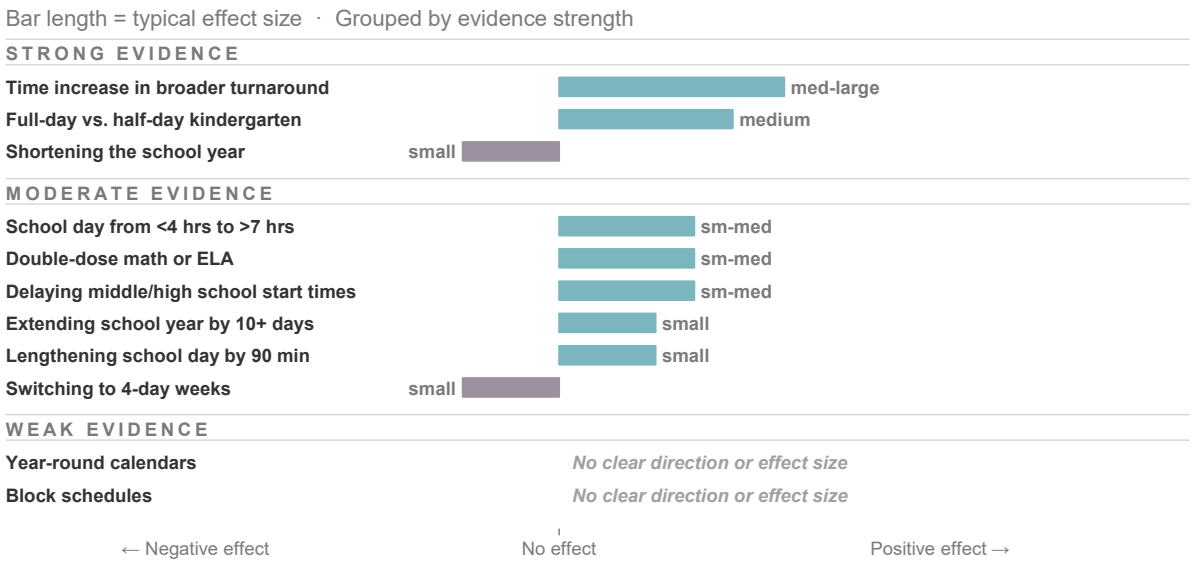


Source: LFC analysis of PED data; see Appendix B for methdology.

A substantial body of research indicates that additional time in school generally improves learning outcomes. A 2024 *American Educational Research Journal* paper synthesized causal research on time in school, pairing it with a conceptual framework to clarify how time intersects with learning.[1] The authors reviewed 74 studies with designs capable of causal inference and found a clear pattern: adding time typically has small-to-medium effects on student achievement, with the size of the effect depending on the dosage and how the time is implemented (Figure 1). In general, the study found that large additions or subtractions of time tended to have a larger effect than smaller changes.

[1] Kraft, Matthew A., and Sarah Novicoff. (2024). "Time in School: A Conceptual Framework, Synthesis of the Causal Research, and Empirical Exploration." (EdWorkingPaper: 22-653).

Figure 1. Impact Spectrum: Time-in-School Interventions



Source: Kraft, Matthew A., and Sarah Novicoff. (2024). "Time in School: A Conceptual Framework, Synthesis of the Causal Research, and Empirical Exploration."

The authors also analyzed the general structure of schooling in the United States, finding the typical school was in session for 6.9 hours per day and 178.59 days per year during the period analyzed, totaling 1,231 hours per year. However, they noted large variations across schools—schools at the 90th percentile for time provided nearly 200 hours more annually than those at the 10th percentile. That translates into approximately 5.5 weeks over a year or two full school years over a K-12 education. The authors concluded by arguing that actual learning time (e.g., how time is used in the classroom) has the most impact on student performance but noted that this time is extremely hard to measure. They suggested that, because adding time is costly for the typical size of the effect, schools may see higher returns from strategies that improve how existing time is used, including by delaying school start times for middle- and high-schoolers and reducing absenteeism. However, in New Mexico, which has directed considerable funding to additional time, the constraint may be less the cost of adding time than ensuring appropriations actually translate into more and better time for students. The review echoed the findings of previous meta-analyses, which have generally found positive but variable impacts of increasing time, depending on the intervention and its implementation.

"Extended learning time through longer school days, longer school years, and tutoring have a positive causal effect on student achievement."

- 1st Judicial District Court Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit

In the* Martinez-Yazzie *lawsuit, the court's recommended remedies included the expansion of instructional time to help close persistent achievement gaps. In its 2018 ruling, the 1st Judicial District Court found

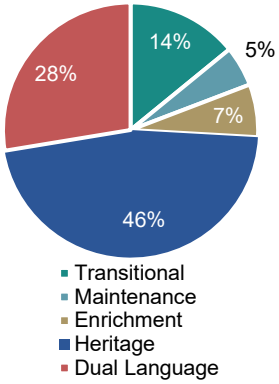
that at-risk students needed more instructional time than was being provided. Although the court's findings regarding the need for additional instructional time were relatively broad, the ruling specifically called out the K-3 Plus program, designed to provide 25 additional instructional days for kindergarten through third-grade students in high-poverty schools. Critically, the court did not define what levels of student achievement or funding would be sufficient, instead deferring to the policymaking roles of the legislative and executive branches to define both input and outcome sufficiency.

The court also found the state had a duty to increase access to and the quality of bilingual education programs; one factor in providing quality bilingual education is having sufficient instructional time. A 2022 LFC evaluation of the state's bilingual multicultural education programs found that these programs may not be producing students who are proficient in a second language. The gold standard of these programs is dual-language immersion, which high-quality longitudinal studies show produces higher proficiency in both English and the second language. Dual-language immersion programs require students to receive at least three hours of instructional time in the target language and three hours in English every day, while other models require as few as one hour per day in the target language. In the 2024-2025 school year, only 28 percent of students in a bilingual education program were enrolled in dual language immersion. However, in FY26, school districts and charter schools generated over $53 million through the funding formula's bilingual multicultural education factor and approximately $125 million through the formula's English learner factor.

A 2018 LFC evaluation of instructional time found that prior investments in extending time had not been translated into additional days of learning. The report found that, despite the addition of $14 million into the public education funding formula for additional instructional days in the 2008-2009 school year, the average student attended school for 176 days in FY18, down from 178 in FY09. The report attributed the decline primarily to policy choices that allowed schools to substitute longer school days for fewer school days. It also noted that between FY09 and FY18, the number of New Mexico districts and charter schools with a four-day week increased by over a third, and some districts, including three of the state's five largest districts, had weekly early release days for some or all students, reducing stated instructional time. It further found the Public Education Department (PED) did not specifically require districts or charter schools to report early release days, making it difficult to verify whether districts were accurately accounting for lost instructional hours.

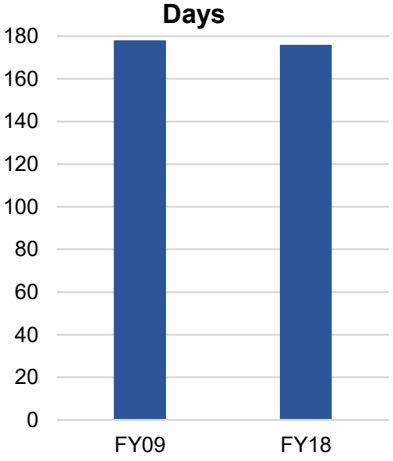
The 2018 report concluded that the K-3 Plus program cited by the court was rarely carried out according to the specific evidence-based program design. In 2015, Utah State University published an independent

Chart 5. Bilingual Multicultural Education Program Model Usage
School Year 2024-2025



Source: PED Bilingual Multicultural Education Report, 2024-25, Nova 80th Day

Chart 6. 2009 and 2018 Average Annual Student Instructional Days



Note: Weighted by student enrollment

Source: Instructional Time and Extended Learning Opportunities in Public Schools (2018)

evaluation of the K-3 Plus program, finding that students enrolled in the program the summer prior to kindergarten were more ready for school and outperformed their peers—an effect that persisted four years later. A subsequent LFC report found that stacking prekindergarten and K-3 Plus doubled rates of reading proficiency for low-income students (12 percent to 26 percent). However, the Utah State study also found that K-3 Plus was most effective when certain conditions were met, including running the program for 25 days, ending within two weeks of the beginning of the school year, and having students continue with their K-3 Plus teacher into the regular school year. The 2018 LFC report found that in FY18 the voluntary program only reached 22 percent of students at eligible schools and that many programs did not follow the best practices identified by the Utah State study. The report recommended making funding contingent on correct implementation of the program.

Additionally, the report found that demand for out-of-school time exceeded the supply and that unpredictable state funding had stymied New Mexico's efforts to provide high-quality enrichment outside of school. After-school and summer learning programs can have positive academic benefits for students, but the 2018 report found that funding for these programs in New Mexico fluctuated from year to year and was inadequate to meet demand. For example, the percentage of grant applications that received state funding decreased from 56 percent in FY16 to 19 percent in FY18 due to an increase in applications and a decrease in state appropriations for after-school and summer programs.

The report recommended targeted investments in more instructional days and after-school programming totaling an additional $235 million a year. The 2018 report recommended adding 25 additional instructional days for 100 thousand students in kindergarten through fifth grade, at an estimated total cost of $120 million annually. In addition, the report recommended creating a funding formula option for districts and charter schools to extend their school year by 10 days beyond 180 instructional days, extend daily learning time through after-school programming, and provide high-quality professional development time. The report estimated that the cost for implementation in all public schools would be approximately $144 million annually after a five-year phase-in period of adding $28.8 million each year.

Key Findings from LFC's 2018 Instructional Time Program Evaluation

1. Additional learning time can help offset achievement gaps for low-income students.
2. Fewer than 20 percent of all local education agencies had at least 180 instructional days in FY18, and on average, students had fewer days in school in FY18 (176) than FY09 (178).
3. Summer and after-school programs can have positive benefits, but funding was historically inadequate to meet demand and fluctuated significantly from year-to-year.

Source: Instructional Time and Extended Learning Opportunities in Public Schools (2018)

Attempts to Enforce a Minimum Number of School Days

Thirty-seven states define the minimum number of school days per year in statute. New Mexico has twice attempted to implement a similar mandate.

In 2009, the Legislature amended state law to require at least 180 school days per year (or 150 days for schools on variable, or four-day week, calendars). However, the statute was never enforced, and the Legislature repealed the mandate in 2011.

In March 2024, PED announced it was amending **New Mexico Administrative Code 6.10.5** to require **180 instructional days**, with exemptions for schools meeting certain proficiency and growth targets. The new rule also specified additional constraints on time, including day-length minimums and maximums and limits on remote days.

In April 2024, the New Mexico School Superintendents Association, 53 districts, and four charter schools filed suit in the Ninth Judicial District Court (Curry County) challenging PED's authority to impose the new rule. In May, the court issued a preliminary injunction and in February 2025, Judge Dustin K. Hunter issued an order granting summary judgment to the plaintiffs and declaring core parts of the rule **invalid or unenforceable**. The 9th District's ruling stands while the case remains in dispute in appellate court.

Meanwhile, lawmakers introduced House Bill 65 during the 2025 legislative session, which would have clarified that local entities could determine the number of days in a school year if they complied with the minimum number of hours. The bill passed unanimously in each chamber, but the governor vetoed it.

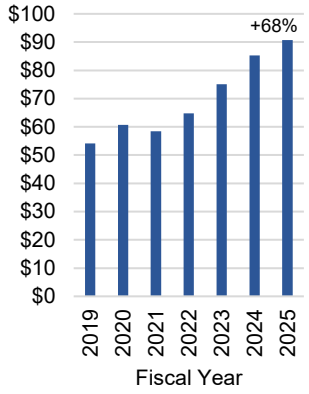
The court in *Martinez-Yazzie* found at-risk students need additional learning time to catch up; the Legislature has allocated $2.6 billion to extending learning time since FY18.

Over the past two decades, the Legislature has invested heavily in initiatives intended to extend time in school for New Mexico students. However, as the 2018 LFC evaluation on instructional time found, students had less allocated instructional time in FY18 than a decade earlier, in FY09. The report recommended the expansion of K-3 Plus and the creation of a broader funding program for additional days that would be open to all schools regardless of student at-risk status. The report's release coincided with the *Martinez-Yazzie* ruling, which had similar findings about the value of extended time for vulnerable students and the need for additional funding to incentivize those changes. In subsequent years, the Legislature has dramatically increased appropriations to extended learning time programs, using multiple mechanisms to add money with the goal of raising instructional time. The biggest change came in 2023 with the passage of House Bill 130, which increased the statutory minimum number of instructional hours per year and shifted funding for additional days to the K-12 Plus program.

The Legislature has surpassed the sufficiency benchmark cited by the plaintiffs in* Martinez-Yazzie *by more than $500 million. Recurring support for public education nearly doubled between FY08 and FY27. The overall increase far surpasses sufficiency benchmarks recommended by a 2008 American Institutes of Research (AIR) study cited by the plaintiffs in the *Martinez-Yazzie* case. The 2008 study concluded that its benchmark cost projection would allow districts to extend the school year, add additional after-school hours, provide summer programs, reduce class sizes, and hire additional school personnel to support at-risk students. Adjusted for inflation, current funding surpasses the projected program cost by more than $500 million.

Current annual investments in extended learning total more than $300 million, or a quarter more than the 2018 report recommended. After direct investments in teacher salaries, investments in instructional time represent the largest share of the overall increase in education spending. These investments address three distinct levers for expanding student learning time: higher statutory minimum instructional hours, incentives for additional instructional days, and special appropriations for time-related interventions like summer literacy programming and out-of-school time.

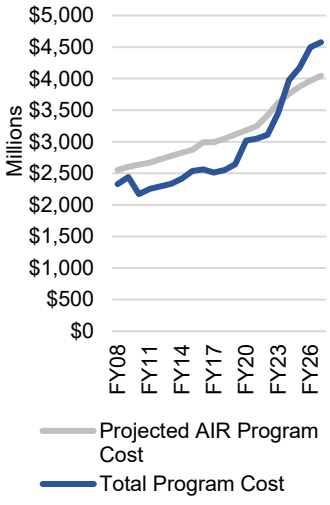
Chart 7. New Mexico Average Expenditures Per Pupil, Per Day



Note: Variable costs only; weighted average

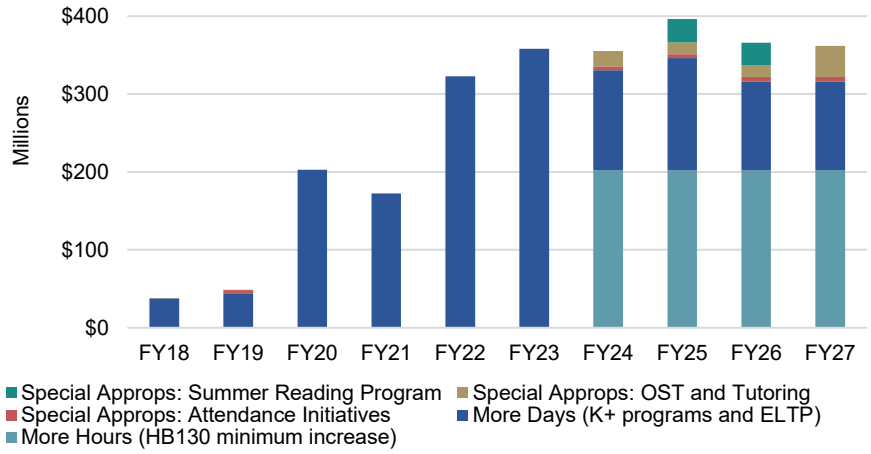
Source: LFC analysis of school spending data

Chart 8. AIR Projected Program Cost to Actual Program Cost



Source: LFC analysis of PED Final Funded Runs and AIR Cost Estimates; AIR estimates updated using FRED Consumer Price Index

Chart 9. New Mexico cumulatively invested $2.6 billion in extended time and time-related interventions from FY18 to FY27

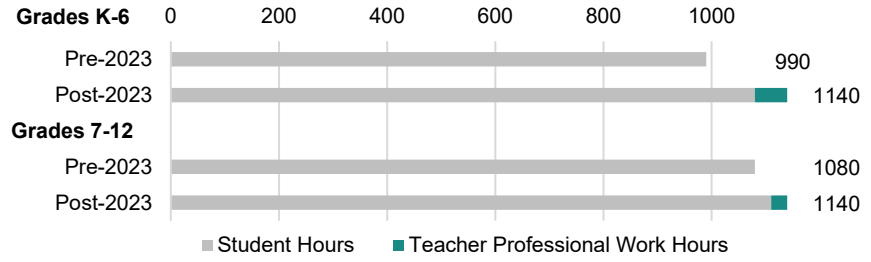


Source: LFC files

Changes to statute in 2023 raised the number of minimum instructional hours statewide while continuing to allow districts and charter schools to set the number of instructional days. Since 1986, New Mexico has mandated students spend a minimum number of hours in schools annually but has never enforced a mandate on the minimum number of instructional days. House Bill 130 (Laws 2023, Chapter 19), raised the minimum to 1,140 instructional hours, and redefined instructional hours to include up to 60 professional work hours for teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade and 30 hours in seventh through 12th grade.

New Mexico has never enforced an instructional day minimum but raised the annual instructional hour minimum to 1140 in 2023.

Chart 10. Minimum Instructional Hours: Before and After House Bill 130 (2023)

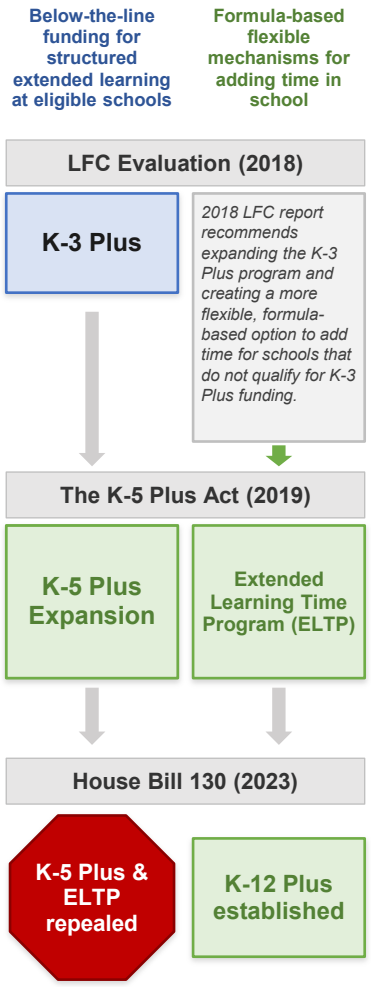


Source: LFC files

The 2023 legislation also expanded funding for extended days through a flexible funding mechanism embedded in the public school funding formula. In FY20, in response to the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit, the Legislature expanded K-3 Plus to K-5 Plus and appropriated sufficient funding for every at-risk elementary student statewide to attend school for 205 instructional days or 25 additional days for five-day week schools and 175 instructional days or 20 additional days for four-day week schools (whichever required the fewest days), consistent with the K-3 Plus design. Also in FY20, the Legislature created the Extended Learning Time program (ELTP), providing additional funding to districts and charter schools that offered a minimum of 190 days for five-day week schools (or 10 additional instructional days) and 160 days for four-day week schools (or eight additional instructional days), 80 hours of professional development for teachers, and after-school programs. In 2023, the Legislature restructured previous incentives by replacing K-5 Plus and ELTP with K-12 Plus factors in the public school funding formula.

Since FY18, New Mexico has invested $150 million in out-of-school time, summer enrichment, and in-school tutoring, which can help close student achievement gaps when implemented well. Research literature shows that time-related interventions like out-of-school time have small but statistically significant effects for students who need the most support. However, national surveys show low-income students typically have less access to structured enrichment outside of school, including during the summer. For example, the National Survey of Children's Health reports substantially lower rates of youth sports participation among children in households below the federal poverty level than among higher-income households. The 2018 LFC report found that inconsistent funding led to vacillating out-of-school program availability and that demand outpaced supply for these kinds of enrichment programs.

Figure 2. Evolution of Extended Learning Time from Structured to Flexible



Source: LFC files

Understanding the impact of time on student outcomes depends on reliable data and the Public Education Department has not consistently collected it.

PED has collected school calendar data for decades, but the scope and rigor of that collection have evolved considerably over time. Historically, PED gathered data primarily at the district level, operating under the assumption that school-level calendars were uniform within districts and that instructional day length did not vary meaningfully across schools. That approach obscured significant underlying variation. Beginning in FY22, PED began collecting some school-level calendar data and in FY24, it began requiring much more detailed calendar submissions, in line with the increased funding flowing to districts based on their calendars. For the current fiscal year (FY26), PED has begun collecting school-level data in a

more standardized format through its operating budget management system and has also begun manually cross-referencing submitted data against publicly available calendars.

Inconsistency in how PED has collected calendar data over time limits year-over-year comparisons. Since FY22, PED's School Budget Bureau has made significant changes to its accounting for time, with reporting fields changing from year to year and becoming increasingly detailed (Figure 3). In FY24, the department adopted new accounting rules distinguishing between full and half days of instruction, and in FY26, it switched from collecting summary data from districts in individual spreadsheets to a more sophisticated day-by-day accounting. Those changes mean that more recent data is likely to be more accurate, but the changes also introduce a structural break in the data series. Earlier data reflect simplified, district-level averages, while more recent data capture significant school and grade-level differences within districts. LFC staff standardized field definitions over time for the purposes of longitudinal analysis, but even with those standardization efforts, differences observed across years may reflect changes in data collection and methodology as much as, or more than, actual changes in instructional time.

In FY26, PED began validating submitted calendar data, but calendars were not validated historically. As a result of that validation, the School Budget Bureau recorded errors associated with more than one-third of calendars. While that indicates FY26 data is likely accurate, it raises questions about the validity of historical data, which was not similarly reviewed, and which contains many obvious, uncorrected errors. Even with validation, it remains the case that calendar data submitted to PED does not always map cleanly to on-the-ground realities.

Even Accurate Data Does Not Always Capture Student Experience

LFC staff selected several schools to visit based on their outlier status in PED's FY26 calendar data, but the school that appeared to have had the largest increase in instructional days had reclassified a recurring early-release day as a full day by adding one hour, satisfying PED's rules (a full instructional day is at least 5.5 hours) while not significantly changing actual instructional time. In another instance, a school reported instructional hours for both its day and evening programs in a single submission; because the two programs serve different students, the combined total does not represent the hours received by any one student. PED is requiring separate reporting for FY27.

Figure 3. Evolution of PED school-calendar data collection, FY18–FY26

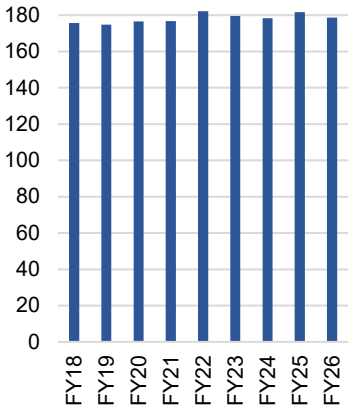
	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Instructional hours tracked by grade			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
School-level data (vs. district-only)					Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Full vs. half day distinction							Y	Y	Y
Hours tracked for professional work							Y	Y	Y
Remote / async / sync day classification								Y	Y
Day-by-day accounting for every school day									Y

Source: LFC analysis of PED calendar data collection templates, FY18–FY26

The Court Prescribed More Time and the Legislature Invested $2.6 Billion, But Allocated Student Time Has Stagnated

In response to the court's findings in *Martinez-Yazzie*, the Legislature has appropriated $2.6 billion to extend learning time since FY18. However, New Mexico districts and charter schools have not used that money to expand student instructional time proportionately to the investment. Student instructional days have risen only slightly, from 176 in FY18 to 179 in FY26, even with more than $100 million per year dedicated to incentivizing additional days. Schools likewise now provide about 30 more student instructional hours per year than in FY18, a modest return on the roughly $200 million annually added to the funding formula for instructional hours. Both statute and PED implementation contribute to a weaker-than-intended incentive for expanding student instructional time, but district and charter school leaders ultimately determine how money allocated through the public school funding formula is used. LFC surveys suggest several reasons they have made limited changes, including that some administrators are unaware their schools receive K-12 Plus funding, and roughly one-third of superintendents and charter school leaders do not believe additional instructional time would benefit struggling students in their schools, despite evidence that well-designed extended learning time can improve outcomes and help narrow achievement gaps. The result is a funding structure that distributes resources broadly without producing the meaningful impact for students envisioned by the Legislature.

Chart 11. Average New Mexico Student Calendar Days



Note: Weighted by student enrollment

Source: LFC analysis of PED data

The average student's school is in session for just three more days in FY26 than in FY18 and one more than in FY09.

In its decision, the court cited K-3 Plus, an evidence-based program that sought to shorten the time high-poverty students spent out of school by adding 25 summer days to the school year. The K-12 Plus program that replaced it was similarly meant to encourage schools to increase the length of the school year, in alignment with research finding that more time in school generally equates with better outcomes and that students do not learn during summer break. However, even though most schools generate K-12 Plus funding, the average number of days students spend in school has not changed appreciably over the past two decades, and momentum to extend the school year appears to have stalled.

Key Elements of Evidence-Based K-3 Plus Program Design

- 25 additional school days
- Classes no larger than those in the regular school year
- Meals and transportation provided consistent with the way those services are provided during the school year
- Instruction centered on literacy and numeracy
- Instruction delivered by certified teachers who have completed professional development in literacy

Source: 2015 Utah State K-3 Plus Study

In FY26, the average student in New Mexico attended school for 179 calendar days, compared to 178 in FY09 and 176 in FY18. LFC staff constructed a longitudinal series by mapping shifting PED instructional day fields to a single concept: student calendar days, defined as days when a student attended school, regardless of whether it was a full or half day. By that measure, students attended school for an average of 179 days in FY26, compared to 178 days in FY09 and 176 days in FY18. Applying PED's current methodology, which counts days shorter than 5.5 hours as half days, lowers the FY26 figure to 177—still within the same narrow range. Under either approach, the number of days students spend in school has remained essentially flat for nearly two decades. The number of days also does not vary considerably by age group or demographic.

Even though most schools generate K-12 Plus funding, the average number of days students spend in school has not changed appreciably over the past two decades.

No school currently implements the K-3 Plus evidence-based model for adding learning time to help at-risk students close the academic achievement gap. In 2015, researchers at Utah State University published the results of a randomized controlled trial analyzing K-3 Plus student outcomes. For programs that adhered to the program design, the report found statistically significant improvements in multiple kindergarten-readiness measures (including early reading and math measures) among participants and outcomes that were substantially stronger for students who stayed with the same teacher from the summer session into the regular school year. The report's analysis was based on seven districts that had implemented K-3 Plus for at least two years (plus Belen and Las Cruces, which had implemented it for a single year). However, once the state relaxed requirements around K-5 Plus and added the Extended Learning Time Program (ELTP) in FY20, six of the original seven K-3 Plus study participants dropped the more rigorous K-5 Plus program and switched to ELTP. Today, no school in the state offers programming comparable to the original K-3 Plus.

Table 1. Most Original K-3 Plus Participants Had Dropped the Program by FY22

Participating Districts in 2015 K-3 Plus Study	Avg. K-5 Plus Days FY22
Albuquerque	0
Deming	13.6
Gallup-McKinley	0
Gadsden	0
Hobbs	0
Roswell	0
Santa Fe	0

Source: LFC analysis of PED data

The Tradeoff Between Strict Program Design and Uptake

The original 2019 legislation authorizing K-5 Plus required the program to run before the regular school year with the same teacher and cohort, drawing on specific research about what makes additional instructional time effective. However, those requirements constrained which schools and students could participate. In 2021, the Legislature amended statute (Laws 2021, Chapter 134), to redefine eligibility for K-5 Plus and the Extended Learning Time Program. Among other things, the legislation removed the requirement that K-5 Plus take place prior to the start of the regular school year and softened the requirement that students stay with the same teacher during the regular school year. Those changes were made partly in response to low uptake of K-5 Plus in FY20, when only 16 thousand students participated, despite an appropriation sufficient to cover close to 90 thousand. Relaxing the requirements increased uptake but fundamentally changed the nature of the K-Plus programs.

In FY22, for example, several four-day districts implemented K-5 Plus by counting Fridays as instructional days. Central Consolidated Schools, previously a five-day district with 175 instructional days in FY21, switched to a four-day calendar in FY22 and treated every Friday as an extended learning day, for the same total of 175 instructional days. In other words, the district received additional funding for time that was additional only in name.

While the district no longer implements K-3 Plus, Albuquerque's Transformational Opportunity Pilot Schools program also uses extended time as a lever to improve student outcomes. Since 2018, Albuquerque Public Schools has been scaling up an initiative to provide extended days, extended years, and more teacher development time to the district's lowest-performing schools. The initiative, called the Transformational Opportunity Pilot Schools program, or TOPS, started with three schools and now includes 22. The schools operate on extended school-year and school-day calendars that are intended to provide additional time for professional development ("supporting quality teachers") as well as in-school enrichment activities ("genius hour").

Lavaland Elementary: A TOPS school

Lavaland Elementary, in southwest Albuquerque, tries to use extended time intentionally to improve both student engagement and teacher satisfaction.

Student instructional days: 184
Student instructional hours: 1,286
Supporting quality teachers: 7:40 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.
Genius hour: 3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Lavaland has developed a model for genius hour that focuses on structured enrichment for students, with course offerings ranging from yoga and basketball to robotics and journalism. The courses are all taught by the students' regular teachers, who are encouraged to offer courses aligned with their interests. Students are allowed to rank their course preferences, but administrators weigh the student's educational needs in placement decisions. Students rotate to a new course every seven weeks, with five rotations throughout the school year. When the school started the program, it worked with teachers to differentiate genius hour from the regular instructional day, landing on a number of "do" and "do not" principles:

DO: Have hands-on activities, encourage teachers to share their passions, place students in courses that align with their social-emotional and academic needs

DO NOT: Have worksheets, use the hour as intervention time, play movies

In FY26, 96 percent of students in New Mexico attended a school that generated K-12 Plus funding, despite the minimal increase in student days. While 35 districts and charter schools (20 percent) did not have any schools that operated on a calendar that was eligible for K-12 Plus funding in FY26, those districts enrolled only 4 percent of students statewide. Many not receiving funding are small, rural districts like Maxwell and Clayton, although some larger districts, including Taos and Grants, also did not

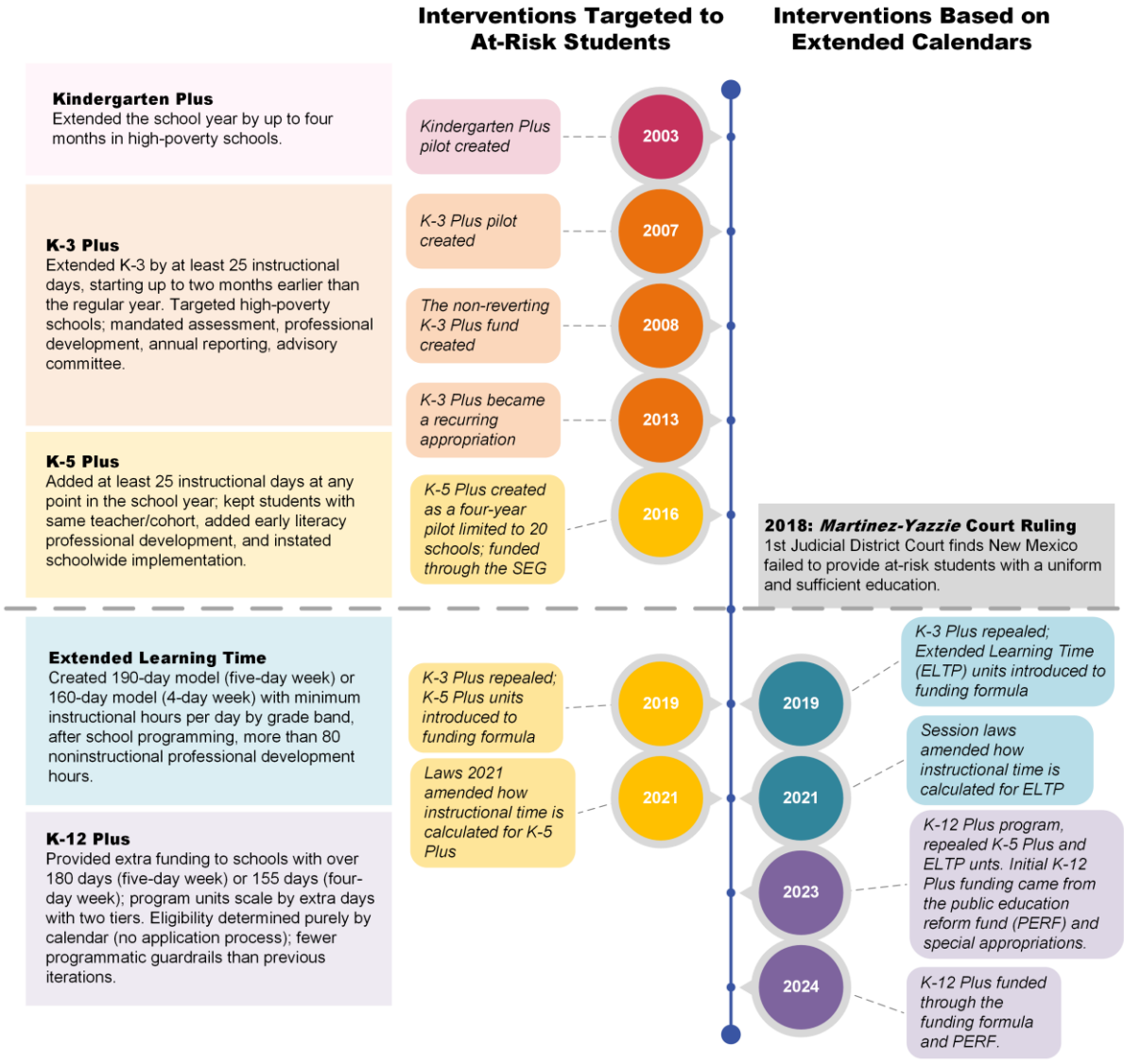
Figure 4. K-12 Plus Formula

				Cost multiplier				
K-12 Plus formula	Enrollment	*	Additional days	*	0.012 (≤10 days) 0.016 (>10 days)	*	Per-student unit value	= Total funding
Example	200 students	*	12 days (192 total)	*	0.012*10+0.016*2 (>10 days)	*	$6,877.10 (FY26)	= $264,081

Source: LFC files

participate. The 156 districts and charter schools that did qualify (60 on four-day calendars and 96 on five-day calendars) received funding ranging from $660 for Mosquero to $50 million for Albuquerque Public Schools. Schools within participating districts and charter schools generated funding for a weighted average of 2.5 extra student days and 7 extra non-student days, with four-day week entities typically having fewer extra days than five-day week entities.

Figure 5. Timeline of Statutory Extended Learning Time Interventions



Source: LFC Files

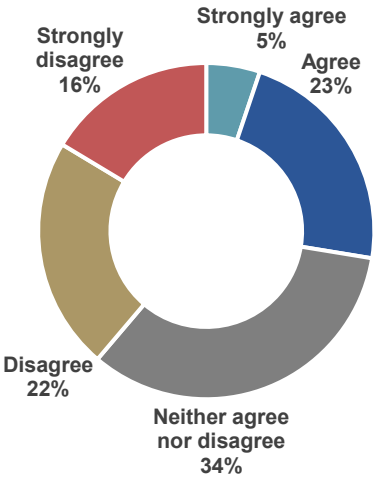
A statutory incentive for four-day weeks, PED implementation that rewards non-student days, and local leadership ambivalence undermine the K-12 Plus incentive to add more student days.

Several features of K-12 Plus help explain why the program has not produced longer school years for students. The statute itself dilutes the incentive; districts and charter schools may use the funds for any purpose, and the program may make four-day weeks slightly more financially advantageous. Public Education Department (PED) implementation has further diminished the incentive by allowing professional work days, when students are not in school, to count toward the thresholds that trigger funding. District and school leader perceptions likely also play into the strength of the incentive. Some are unaware their districts receive K-12 Plus funding and most perceive the financial incentive as weak even though LFC analysis finds the program pays out at roughly the same rate per day as the regular school year. Possibly most importantly, more than a third of superintendents and charter school leaders are skeptical that additional instructional time would help struggling students in their district or charter school, suggesting that given flexibility, they will not choose to prioritize more days.

A third of district and charter school leaders disagree that adding instructional time improves outcomes for struggling students, suggesting that given a choice, they will not add time. In LFC's survey, 78 percent of superintendents and charter school leaders either had no opinion, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement, "Increasing the amount of time students spend in school is an effective strategy for improving outcomes for struggling students in my district/charter." That suggests the largest barrier to extending learning time may be a lack of buy-in from local decision-makers, even given financial incentives and a strong research base.

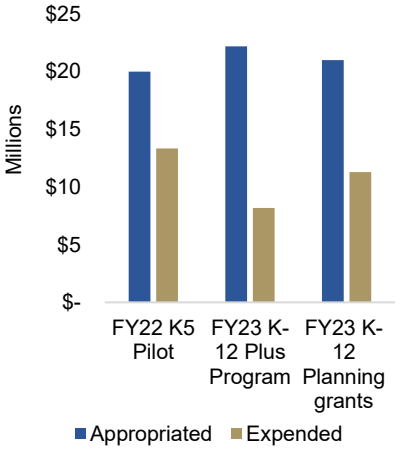
The K-12 Plus statute places no restrictions on how districts may spend the funding it generates, diluting understanding of the program's core purpose. The evidence-based K-3 Plus model was funded below-the-line beginning in FY08, with districts and charter schools applying annually for grants tied to adding at least 25 additional instructional days for kindergarten through third grade. In *Martinez-Yazzie*, the court found that funding mechanism to be unreliable. Specifically, it found that because the state could not fund every school that qualified, eligible schools went unserved (Findings 114 and 129), and that late notice of grant awards, coupled with funding that varied annually and could be terminated, made programs difficult to staff and sustain (Findings 119 through 121, 2228). In 2019, the Legislature responded by moving the program into the public school funding formula as K-5 Plus (Laws 2019,

Chart 12. To what extent do you agree: "Increasing the amount of time students spend in school is an effective strategy for improving outcomes for struggling students in my district/charter."
116 responses



Source: LFC survey of superintendents and charter leaders, 2026

Chart 13. Extended Learning Time Appropriations with Large Reversions



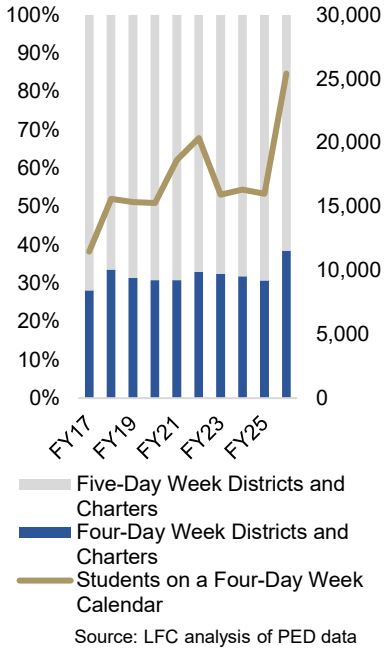
Source: LFC analysis of SHARE data

Chapters 206 and 207) while preserving the program's design in statute. However, uptake remained limited, in part because schools reported that it was difficult to meet the program requirements. In 2023, the Legislature repealed K-5 Plus and replaced it with K-12 Plus (Laws 2023, Chapter 19), which funds districts through the public school funding formula based on the number of instructional days they offer above a statutory threshold, with no other specific program requirements. The statute also places no restriction on how districts may use the funding they generate, as is the case with most funds allocated through the formula.

Since the* Martinez-Yazzie *ruling, the number of New Mexico students attending a school with a four-day week has doubled. In FY26, 25 thousand students (9 percent) attended school on a four-day week calendar, compared to less than 5 percent in FY18. Of districts and charter schools, 74 operated on a four-day week schedule (38 percent) versus 119 on a five-day week schedule (62 percent), an increase of 13 local education agencies since FY18 (see Appendix C for district/charter calendar detail). A 2021 RAND study that examined schools on four-day weeks in New Mexico, Idaho, and Oklahoma found that the top reasons motivating a switch to a four-day week were first, cost savings (mentioned by all districts visited) and second, student attendance improvement (mentioned by two-thirds of districts visited). Some districts also cited the desire to improve educational opportunities and outcomes, increase teacher recruitment and retention, give students more time with their families, and boost time for teacher professional development.

National research shows that student outcomes suffer when districts cut hours to adopt a four-day week schedule, and New Mexico data shows growth slows for students receiving special education services regardless. The weight of high-quality causal evidence points to modest but real negative effects of four-day school weeks on student achievement, especially as these effects accumulate over multiple years. While student outcomes tend to remain relatively steady if schools can maintain overall instructional hours when switching to a four-day week, more serious negative impacts on student outcomes occur when schools cut hours to adopt a four-day week calendar.[2] Between FY22 and FY26, 17 out of the 33 districts or charter schools that switched to a four-day week subtracted 30 or more hours. LFC analysis does not show measurable impacts on growth for the average student at schools that switched regardless of whether or not they cut hours, but students receiving special education services showed statistically significant slower growth at those schools even when they did not cut hours.

Chart 14. Percentage of Districts and Charter Schools and Number of Students on a Four-Day Week



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

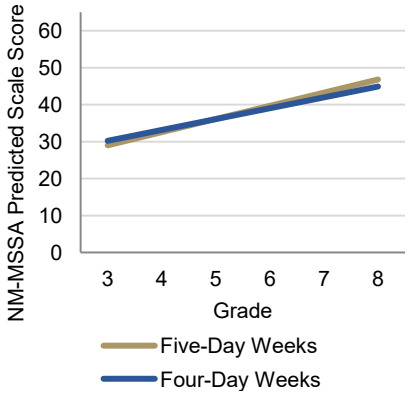
Figure 6. General Appropriation Act Restrictions on Changes to Time

	Prohibition on reducing instructional hours	Prohibition on switching to a four-day week
FY18		x
FY19		x
FY20		x
FY21		x
FY22		Vetoed
FY23		x
FY24	x	x
FY25	x	Vetoed
FY26		
FY27		

Source: LFC

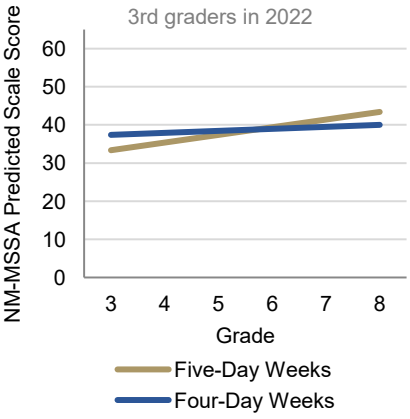
[2] Kraft and Novicoff, 18.

Chart 15. Effect of Four-Day Weeks on Predicted Growth for Students Receiving Special Education Services, Math



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Chart 16. Effect of Four-Day Weeks on Predicted Growth for Students Receiving Special Education Services, Reading



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

The statutory design of K-12 Plus means moving from a five-day week to a four-day week can generate additional revenue for some schools, though operations and maintenance costs significantly diminish overall gains. Schools running a five-day week calendar start to generate K-12 Plus dollars through the public school funding formula for any number of school days over 180, while schools on a four-day week start receiving K-12 Plus money anywhere above 155 school days. LFC staff modeled a hypothetical local education agency with student membership of 500 operating a five-day week calendar for 170 school days to better understand the financial consequences of that district moving to a four-day

Where Four-Day Weeks Can Work

According to a RAND study, four-day weeks potentially make sense under select conditions—primarily very small, remote rural districts where:

1) The alternative is unfilled teacher positions or unsustainable school transportation costs;
2) Total instructional hours are fully preserved via longer days or an extended year; and
3) The district provides supervised programming or meals on the off day to mitigate childcare and nutrition concerns.

Source: Kilburn, M. Rebecca, et al. 2021. *Does Four Equal Five? Implementation and Outcomes of the Four-Day School Week*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Coral Community Charter School: Five-Day to Four-Day

In FY26, Coral Community Charter School in Albuquerque transitioned from a five-day to a four-day instructional week with the goal of maximizing funding from the public school funding formula. The school shifted from 191 student calendar days to 170 and from 1,208 student instructional hours to 1,080. On Fridays, the school offers childcare in partnership with the Rio Grande Education Collaborative (RGEC). Coral Community provides access to its facilities, but RGEC is paid through Childcare Assistance funds from the Early Childhood Education and Care Department.

PED funding: On a four-day calendar, Coral Community had to exceed 155 instructional days to receive K-12 Plus funding. According to PED data, Coral Community provided 169.5 student instructional days and five professional workdays for a total of 19.5 days beyond the minimum threshold of 155 days. The school received $386 thousand for K-12 Plus for FY26. If the school had stayed with its previous, 5-day calendar, it would have had 191 student instructional days and two professional work days, for a total of 13 days beyond the minimum threshold of 180 days. Assuming the same enrollment, that would have generated $239 thousand in K-12 Plus funding, or roughly $147 thousand less.

ECECD funding: Coral Community partners with RGEC to offer aftercare 2:30-6 pm on Monday through Thursday and childcare on Friday from 8 am to noon. As a three-star program in ECECD's ratings, this program generates $413 per month for each student enrolled at least eight hours a week, and $138 for students enrolled 7 or fewer hours. Assuming about 20 percent of the school's 200 students participate in childcare, RGEC generates $55 thousand to $165 thousand in reimbursements per year (Coral Community operates almost 10 months out of the year to accommodate its four-day schedule). Coral Community provides use of its facilities to RGEC at no cost.

week while maintaining the same number of overall days. The analysis showed that while the district generated additional K-12 Plus units when switching to a four-day week, some gains would be eroded by the necessity of continuing maintenance and operations for the additional summer weeks necessary to accommodate the same number of days in a four-day week calendar. Even taking that into account, the hypothetical education agency in this case study increased its overall revenue by approximately 6 percent by switching to a four-day week.

Universal Childcare Assistance funding strengthens the financial incentive for schools to move to a four-day schedule. Between November 2025 and May 2026, 25.8 percent of new students enrolled in universal free childcare through the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) were school-aged children. These approximately 4,670 students will generate between $6.6 million and $42 million in childcare reimbursements depending on rates and hours of weekly service provided. In the hypothetical example modeled above of a district with 500 students, LFC staff estimated that the district (operating a childcare program with a three-star ECECD rating and providing at least eight hours of additional care per week) could net nearly $300 thousand per year even after additional staffing costs and assuming only 20 percent uptake in the program, or 100 students enrolled. This additional ECECD reimbursement revenue almost doubles the net financial incentive for this hypothetical district to move to a four-day week.

In FY26, schools generated $114 million in K-12 Plus funding for professional work days, and one-third of schools would not have qualified for funding based on student days alone. The K-12 Plus statute passed in 2023 provides that a public school "operating on a five-day calendar that provides more than one hundred eighty days of instruction, and a public school operating on a four-day calendar that provides more than one hundred fifty-five days of instruction," qualify for additional funding, calculated as the number of students multiplied by the number of additional days multiplied by a formula factor. The statute does not define "days of instruction." In NMAC 6.10.5, PED defines instructional days as student instructional days. However, it specifies that K-12 Plus funding includes not only instructional days but school days, which PED separately defines as days including either instructional hours with students or professional work hours, or both. In FY26, PED awarded $114 million of the $175 million total K-12 Plus funding to schools for professional work days. According to PED's data, roughly one-third of the districts and charter schools that currently qualify for K-12 Plus would not qualify under an interpretation that counts only student days.

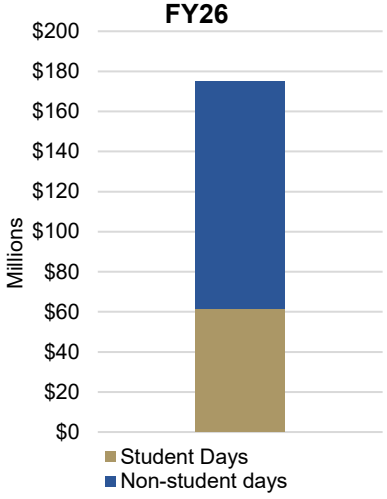
Table 2. ECECD School Age Childcare Reimbursement Rates, Licensed Centers

Rating	Full Time	PT1	PT2	PT3
2	$500	$375	$250	$125
2+	$550	$413	$275	$138
3	$550	$413	$275	$138
4	$650	$488	$325	$163
5	$750	$563	$375	$188

Full time: 30+ hours/week
Part Time 1: 8-29 hours/week
Part Time 2: 8-19 hours/week; split custody or two providers
Part Time 3: 0-7 hours/week

Source: ECECD

Chart 17. K-12 Plus Funding Distribution FY26

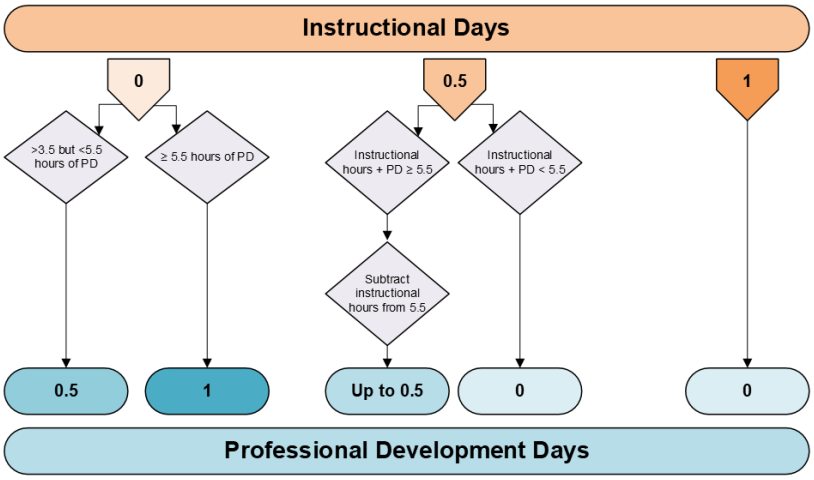


Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Roughly one-third of the districts and charter schools that currently qualify for K-12 Plus would not qualify under an interpretation that counts only student days.

PED's K-12 Plus calculations create a financial incentive for full-day rather than embedded professional work, despite research finding embedded approaches are more effective. PED converts professional work hours, which include professional development and prep time, into days using a set of rules that largely zero out professional work scheduled alongside instructional time. As a result, schools gain the most K-12 Plus funding from scheduling professional work time on non-instructional days. This could include, for example, a day when teachers gather for a full-day training session and students have the day off. However, research consistently shows that embedded professional development like coaching, professional learning communities, and other in-class supports yields better outcomes than stand-alone full-day sessions. By rewarding full-day professional work in its funding calculations, PED is encouraging scheduling practices that do not align with evidence-based best practices. While PED could adjust its conversion rules to reduce the incentive for full-day professional work by counting all professional work hours proportionally, regardless of whether they occur during instructional or non-instructional time, the current K-12 Plus funding structure limits the department's ability to reward schools for embedding professional work in the instructional day.

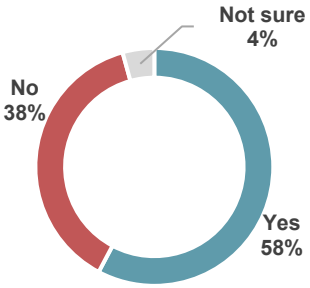
Figure 7. FY26 PED Conversion of Professional Work Hours to Days



Source: LFC

District leaders are sometimes unaware they receive K-12 Plus funding intended to extend learning time and a fifth of those who do use the funding to cover general operational expenses. About 80 percent of New Mexico districts and charter schools generate K-12 Plus funding, but only 58 percent of the district and charter leaders LFC surveyed said their district or charter receives it. Among surveyed leaders who reported that they do not receive the funding or were unsure, about half in fact do. School leader awareness was even lower: just 22 percent of

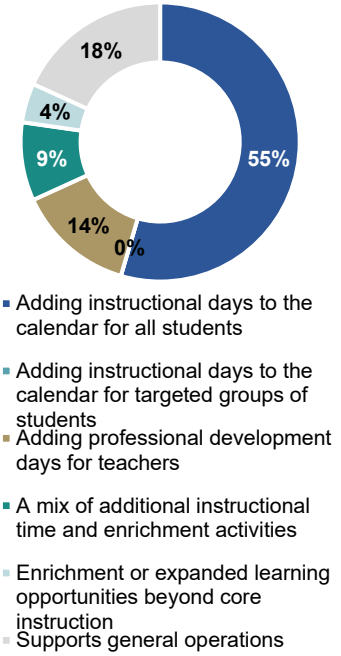
Chart 18. Does your district or charter receive K-12 Plus funding?



Source: LFC survey of superintendents and charter

Chart 19. K-12 Plus Support

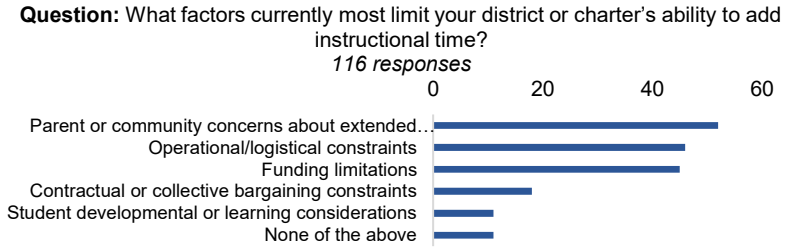
Question: What does K-12 Plus Funding Primarily Support in Your District or Charter?
66 responses



Source: LFC survey of superintendents and charter leaders, 2026

school-level leaders confirmed their school receives K-12 Plus funding, while nearly four in 10 were unsure either way. Among the 66 district leaders who confirmed receiving K-12 Plus funding and described its use, a slight majority reported using it primarily to add instructional days for all students. The remainder reported using K-12 Plus for general operations, professional development, enrichment, or a mix of uses, and no district reported using K-12 Plus to add instructional days for targeted groups of students. Together, these findings suggest K-12 Plus is functioning less as a deliberate calendar lever to add learning time for students than as a relatively invisible, and fungible, source of funding for participating districts.

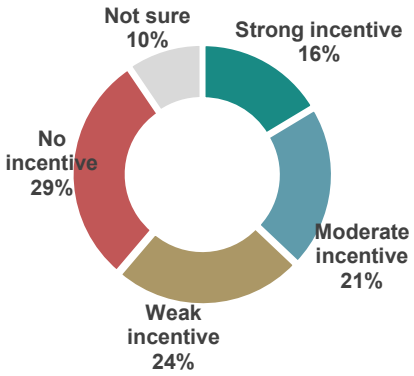
Chart 21. LFC Superintendent/Charter Leader Survey



Source: LFC survey of superintendents and charter leaders, 2026

Most district leaders do not believe K-12 Plus creates a financial incentive for more days. Only 16 percent of respondents to LFC's survey reported that K-12 Plus provides a strong incentive to lengthen the school year, while over half said the K-12 Plus offers either "no incentive" or a "weak incentive." The funding formula awards schools that offer additional K-12 Plus days at a fixed per-pupil per-day rate, with days beyond certain thresholds rewarded at a higher rate (tier one versus tier two). To assess adequacy, LFC staff compared those fixed rates to an implied per-day cost, calculated by removing K-12 Plus funding from total funding formula allocations and dividing by base instructional days. That calculation yielded a statewide adequacy ratio of 1.02, indicating that, on the whole, K-12 Plus funding is sufficient to cover the cost of additional days. However, 56 percent of participating entities fall below that threshold, with the gap most pronounced among small, four-day districts, which have higher per-day costs because of having a smaller number of days into which to divide funding. Statewide, the average per-pupil per-day expenditure in FY25 was $90, which is higher than the funding generated by the formula for tier one K-12 Plus days ($82.52) but less than tier two ($110.03).

Chart 20. To what extent does the current state funding formula create a financial incentive for your district or charter to lengthen the school year?



Source: LFC survey of superintendents

Table 3. Days Required to Meet Student Instructional Hour Minimums, by Day Length

	5.5 Hour Days	6.5 Hour Days	7.5 Hour Days
K-6 (1080 student hours)	197	166	144
7-12 (1110 student hours)	202	171	148

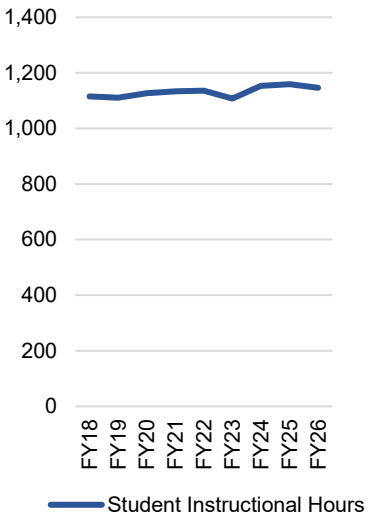
Source: LFC

In addition to days, student instructional hours have also remained largely flat despite $200 million in annual investment.

The 2023 legislation (House Bill 130) raised the minimum instructional time by 90 hours per year for primary school students and 30 hours for secondary school students (to 1,080 and 1,110, respectively). The change also redefined instructional hours to include up to 60 hours of professional work time at the elementary level and 30 hours at the middle and high school levels. The Legislature appropriated $202 million in perpetuity to the base of the public school funding formula to cover the cost, even though two-thirds of districts and charter schools already met the new minimum hour thresholds in FY23. Today the average New Mexico student receives about 30 more instructional hours per year than in FY18. Schools previously below the minimum could add days, minutes to the day, or both; 10 minutes a day across a 180-day year equals 30 hours.

In FY26, the average student in New Mexico was in school for 1,147 hours, up approximately 30 hours from FY18. Schools range in the amount of student instructional time they provide to each grade, from a low end of 1,080 hours all the way up to 1,428 hours. Outliers on the high end are almost exclusively charter schools, with Solare Collegiate Charter School having the highest weighted average number of student instructional hours across all grades, at 1,403. Among districts, Lovington has the highest weighted average number of student instructional hours, at 1,239. When the Legislature raised the instructional hour minimum in 2023, districts and charter schools not meeting those thresholds had discretion over how to accommodate the additional hours, by adding days to the year, minutes to the day, or both. In some cases, they eliminated previous early release days,

Chart 22. Average New Mexico Student Instructional Hours



Note: Weighted by student enrollment
Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Albuquerque Public Schools: Teacher Contracts and K-12 Days

Prior to the passage of House Bill 130 in 2023, the negotiated agreement between Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) and the Albuquerque Teachers Federation capped workdays for certified teachers in the district at 6.5 hours.

At the time, most schools in the district ran on a 5.5 hour student schedule and provided one hour of prep for teachers, in addition to an early release day each week at some schools. After House Bill 130, APS needed to add between 150 and 200 hours per year across grades to meet the new statutory minimums. To accommodate this change while maintaining the negotiated 6.5-hour teacher duty day (which was renewed in the 2025-27 agreement), APS dropped its early release day and daily teacher prep period.

Teachers in APS now work a continuous 6.5 hour teaching day, with 220 minutes per week of prep time. The district also added seven additional full professional development days throughout the school year, extending the teacher contracts by four days for all K-12 teachers. In FY26, APS generated nearly $50 million from the K-12 Plus formula, of which over $29 million was generated by professional workdays.

Source: LFC analysis of PED and APS data

Student Instructional Hour Definition
(Section 22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978)

An instructional hour is a period at school during which students receive instruction aligned to academic content and performance standards and includes:

(1) a school program set forth in Sections 22-13-1 and 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978;
(2) enrichment programs that focus on problem solving and cognitive skills development;
(3) content that provides technical knowledge, skills and competency-based applied learning;
(4) research- or evidence-based social, emotional or academic interventions; and
(5) instruction that occurs at the same time breakfast is served or consumed in accordance with the breakfast after the bell program or federal requirements.

See full definition, including the inclusion of professional work hours, in Appendix D on page 61.

like Albuquerque Public Schools, allowing them to fulfill the new requirements without significantly changing the number of instructional days. Others reduced the number of instructional days, like Vaughn (160 to 152), but added minutes (15) to their school days to meet statutory requirements.

In FY26, the average student in New Mexico was in school for 6.5 hours per day, but some schools were in session for as long as 7.9 hours per day. The average length of a school day has increased from just over six hours in FY18 to 6.5 hours in FY26, suggesting schools are accommodating the higher instructional hour minimum at least partly by lengthening the school day. For example, over a 180-day school year, adding just 23 minutes to each day is the equivalent of adding 70 hours. PED updated its instructional time rules (New Mexico Administrative Code 6.10.5) in 2024 to define a full instructional day as between 5.5 and 7.5 hours, and a half-day as between 3.5 and 5.5 hours. However, districts can and do apply for waivers for variances from the required day length, with four districts exceeding the 7.5 hour cap in FY26. There was no significant variation in length of day across grades in FY26, meaning many kindergarteners have the same day length as a high school senior. While causal studies have found longer days can lead to more learning, returns tend to diminish after a certain point.[3] In other words, going from a four-hour day to a six-hour day almost certainly produces larger positive effects on student achievement than going from a six-hour to an eight-hour day.

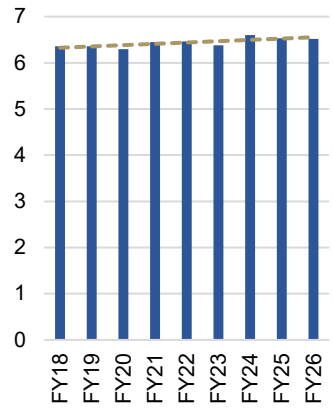
Logan: Managing an Almost Eight-Hour School Day

Logan Municipal School District has the fewest and longest student instructional days of any district in the state. Students in Logan attend school for almost eight hours a day, four days a week. The district organizes its master schedules so that virtually all core instruction takes place between 7:45 am and noon, when students are most likely to be able to process complex information. Afternoon classes for middle and high school students include CTE-focused courses, art, agriculture, and physical education, mostly in the form of team sports.

- **Weeks of instruction, FY26:** 40 weeks
- **Student calendar days:** 146
- **Student instructional hours:** 1,135
- **Student hours per day:** 7 hours, 50 minutes

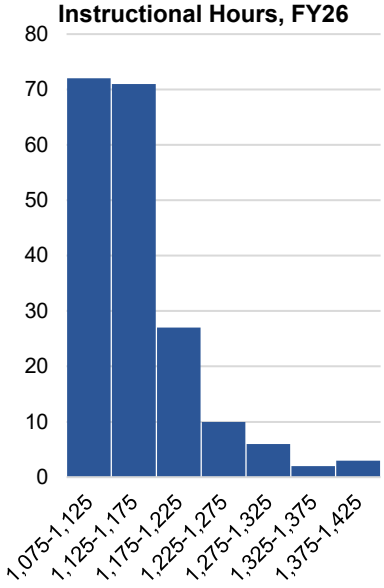
Source: PED data and Logan Municipal Schools

Chart 23. Weighted Student Hours Per Day



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Chart 24. Number of Districts and Charters by Annual Student Instructional Hours, FY26



Note: Hours weighted by grade-level student enrollment

Source: LFC analysis of PED data

[3] Kraft, Matthew A., and Sarah Novicoff. (2024). *Time in School: A Conceptual Framework, Synthesis of the Causal Research, and Empirical Exploration. (*EdWorkingPaper: 22-653).

PED now tracks early release days, consistent with a recommendation of the 2018 report. The 2018 LFC report found that early release days significantly reduced learning time among three of the state's five largest districts, but the magnitude and impact of this reduction went unmeasured in PED's calendar tracking. PED began some tracking of early release days starting in FY22 and has been consistently tracking them since FY24, meaning current instructional hour totals appropriately account for actual student instructional time.

Virtual Schools: Navigating the Ambiguities of "Instructional Time"

New Mexico's full-time virtual schools and distance learning programs embedded within districts operate without a shared definition of what counts as instructional time. Laws 2026, Chapter 8, responds to this gap in part by directing the Legislative Education Study Committee, in collaboration with PED and LFC, to conduct a comprehensive study of virtual instruction by November 1, 2026, with particular attention on programs serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Current programs largely track student participation through proxies—daily logins, course progress, assignment completion—rather than time spent in synchronous instruction. At Ute Lake Online Learning, students work almost entirely asynchronously and synchronous contact with a teacher is triggered only when a student is failing or has stopped logging in. At Rio Rancho Cyber Academy, absences are only flagged for administrative action if a student has fallen behind with the curriculum. New Mexico Connections Academy (NMCA), a charter that contracts with Pearson for platform, curriculum, and IT, does not require students to attend live lessons, appear on camera, or come off mute, and the recordings made available afterward do not show student profiles. In one fifth-grade class, administrators reported that 50 of 58 students typically log on to the live session, but the recording offered no way to verify how many were present, attentive, or working on something else entirely; in a seventh-grade lesson on calculating the area of a rectangle, the teacher muted the chat for off-topic messages but did not call on students, leaving no indicator of active engagement.

In all cases, the schools reported delivering six to eight hours of instruction a day in FY26, per PED data, putting them all above the minimum annual instructional hour thresholds. Many online schools also generate considerable K-12 Plus funding for additional days, but it is not clear how a day is measured if most instruction is asynchronous.

Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Clarifying that "instructional days," as referenced in the K-12 Plus statute, are student instructional days;
- Amend the K-12 Plus formula to provide sufficient incentive for additional, high-quality student learning time while eliminating financial incentives that reward practices not likely to improve student outcomes;
- Updating the definition of instructional hour to clarify that receiving instruction means synchronous instruction from a certified teacher;
- Including a yearlong moratorium on the new adoption of four-day weeks in the FY28 General Appropriations Act;
- Amending statute to require that any school adopting a four-day week schedule maintain their FY25 student instructional hours; and
- Amending statute to mandate the adoption of five-day week schedules for any district or charter school designated as a priority school under the New Mexico school accountability framework.

The Public Education Department should:

- Revise New Mexico Administrative Code 6.10.5 to define K-12 Plus days as student instructional days;
- Exercise its authority to require all districts and charter schools that have adopted a four-day week schedule to submit updates annually to PED, as part of their budget submissions, that explain how the four-day week has achieved intended educational goals and fiscal benefits, and to reject a district's or charter school's budget when educational outcomes decline or student instructional hours decrease; and
- Report on the NM Vistas website the average, weighted number of student learning hours and student instructional days each year for the state, districts, and schools, and clearly define both the terms and their measurement so reporting remains comparable over time.

Local education agencies should:

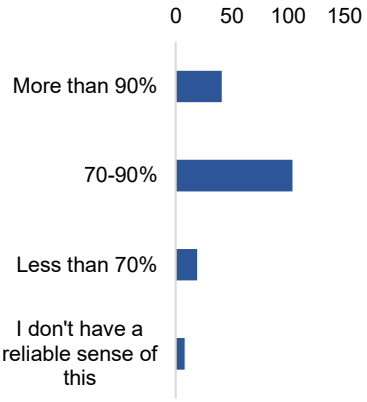
- Use K-12 Plus funding to add instructional days and enrichment at schools that serve at-risk students, informed by evidence-based models;
- Identify schools with the most at-risk students and target and prioritize professional development and enrichment opportunities to those schools; and
- Follow best practices for professional development, embedding it within instructional days, rather than primarily creating standalone professional development days.

Scheduled Instructional Time Does Not Fully Reach Students, Further Eroding Their Opportunity to Learn

While calendar data shows small increases in instructional time, only a portion of that scheduled time turns into active learning time for students. In a survey, school leaders in New Mexico overwhelmingly estimated that less than 90 percent of scheduled instructional time becomes student learning time, with student and teacher absences identified as the most common sources of time loss. More than 30 percent of New Mexico students are chronically absent, and the average chronically absent student missed 34 days of school in FY25, or about 20 percent of the average school year. Attendance plans submitted to PED show that schools often struggle to identify the root causes of absenteeism and respond effectively, and PED guidance is primarily corrective rather than proactive. Even where students attend consistently, the quality and equity of the time they receive depends on how schools use it. Teachers are the largest in-school factor affecting student achievement, and their ability to be effective depends in part on whether their time is well-structured. However, most school leaders receive no formal training in schedule design. The state also provides no guidance on equitable scheduling practices and has no visibility into how schedules are constructed. Addressing those gaps could help maximize the conversion of allocated instructional time into learning time.

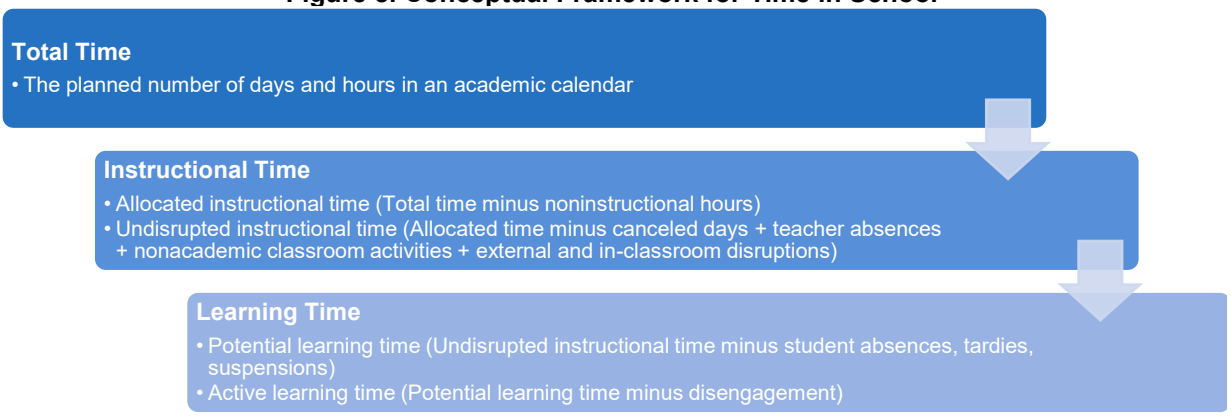
Chart 25. Active Learning Time

Question: Of the time scheduled for instruction in your school, roughly what percentage do you believe becomes active learning time for most students?
172 Responses



Source: LFC survey of school leaders, 2026

Figure 8. Conceptual Framework for Time in School

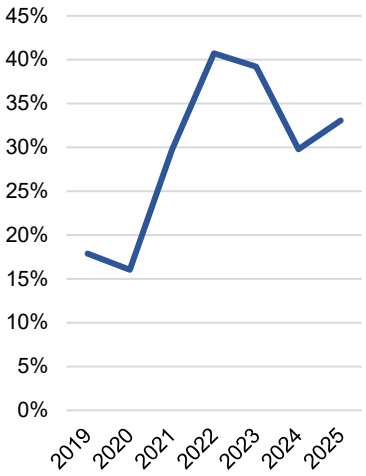


Source: Kraft and Novicoff (2024)

Inability to diagnose and confront the causes of persistent absenteeism reduces the instructional time students actually receive.

Scheduled instructional time is eroded by high rates of chronic student absenteeism, which remains a formidable problem despite significant state investment in student attendance initiatives. More than a third of students in New Mexico missed more than 10 percent of scheduled school days in FY25, and 12 percent missed 20 percent or more. As examined in a 2024 LFC report on attendance, students who are chronically absent are much less likely to be academically proficient, and their absence has a negative impact on their classmates as well. The report noted that targeted interventions to reduce chronic absenteeism might ultimately have a larger impact than paying for additional time because reducing absenteeism adds a large amount of instructional time for many students. The Legislature has appropriated more than $35 million directly to attendance initiatives since FY18, including a three-year, $18.3 million appropriation starting in FY26 from the public education reform fund (PERF). As noted in the 2024 LFC evaluation, past attendance initiatives did not have measurable outcomes, but initiatives funded through the PERF must be evaluated for impacts on student outcomes, with an emphasis on causal evidence when possible.

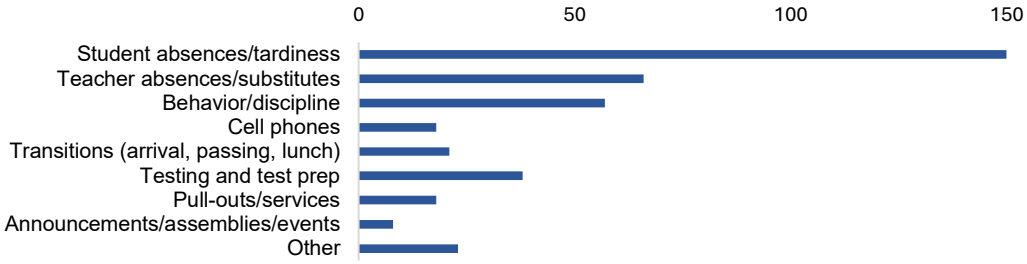
Chart 26. Chronic Absenteeism Rate



Source: LFC analysis of PED Annual Attendance Report data

Chart 27. Sources of Time Loss

Question: What are the most significant sources of time loss in your school? (Choose a max of 2) *172 Responses*



Source: LFC survey of school leaders, 2026

School leaders report that student absenteeism is the most common cause of learning time loss, followed by teacher absences. LFC staff surveyed a representative sample of school leaders in New Mexico about instructional time. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they believe less than 90 percent of scheduled instructional time in their school is converted into active learning time. About half of school leaders agreed or strongly agreed that time loss is a major barrier to student achievement in

their schools. Respondents pointed to multiple factors contributing to instructional time loss within the school day, including behavior and discipline, and testing and test prep. However, the most frequently identified source of time loss by far was student absences, followed by teacher absences. Additionally, student attendance was the most frequent response in a separate survey of district and charter leaders when they were asked what data they routinely examine if a school is underperforming. LFC's 2024 evaluation of attendance and performance found that teacher absences correlated strongly with student attendance and recommended that PED collect data on teacher absences. PED has not yet done so.

Chronic absenteeism has declined from record highs during the Covid-19 pandemic but remains high. Statute requires PED to collect data on absences from school districts several times a year (Section 22-12A-6 NMSA 1978). PED publishes data on school attendance and chronic absenteeism on multiple public dashboards, including the school attendance dashboard and the NM Vistas school performance dashboard. The dashboards do not align in their calculations of chronic absenteeism, defined as the number of students in New Mexico who miss more than 10 percent of school days for any reason, but the rate is around one-third of students in the state in both calculations. The school attendance dashboard shows 33 percent of students were chronically absent in FY25, while the NM Vistas dashboard reports a lower rate of chronic absenteeism, at 28.9 percent. The dashboards are also inconsistent in their trends, with the former logging an increase in the chronic absenteeism rate since FY24, while the latter shows a decrease. Further complicating the issue, the 2024 LFC program evaluation focused on student attendance and performance found attendance-taking practices are inconsistent across schools and districts in New Mexico, likely resulting in an undercount of absences.

The average chronically absent student missed 34 instructional days, the equivalent of roughly 215 instructional hours, during the 2024-25 school year. Students flagged as chronically absent in PED attendance data missed on average about one fifth of statutorily required instructional time, meaning chronically absent students only attended 146 days in a 180-day school year. Across all students, the average student was present for 162 days. Rates of chronic absenteeism were especially high among subgroups identified in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit: 42 percent of Native American students, 40 percent of economically disadvantaged students, 38 percent of English learners, and 32 percent of special education students were chronically absent in the 2024-25 school year.

Schools and districts struggle to translate attendance data into effective strategies. Attendance is critical to maximizing state-funded

Attendance for Success Act: Attendance Improvement Plan Requirements

1) attendance data for each of the preceding two school years and the current school year, including:
a) the public school's overall absence rate;
b) chronic absence rates disaggregated by student subpopulation;
c) chronic absence rates disaggregated by grade level; and
d) student attendance for every day of the school year;

2) school-wide identification of potential root causes of chronic and excessive absenteeism through one or more of the following:
a) national or local research;
b) analysis of supportive factors and barriers;
c) student surveys or focus groups;
d) youth participatory research; or
e) other appropriate school-based research methods;

3) identification of strategies for each tier of the attendance improvement plan;
4) identification of performance measures for each strategy; and
5) a data-collection plan for performance measures.

Source: Attendance for Success Act (22-12A-8D NMSA 1978)

Across all students, the average student was present for 162 days in FY25.

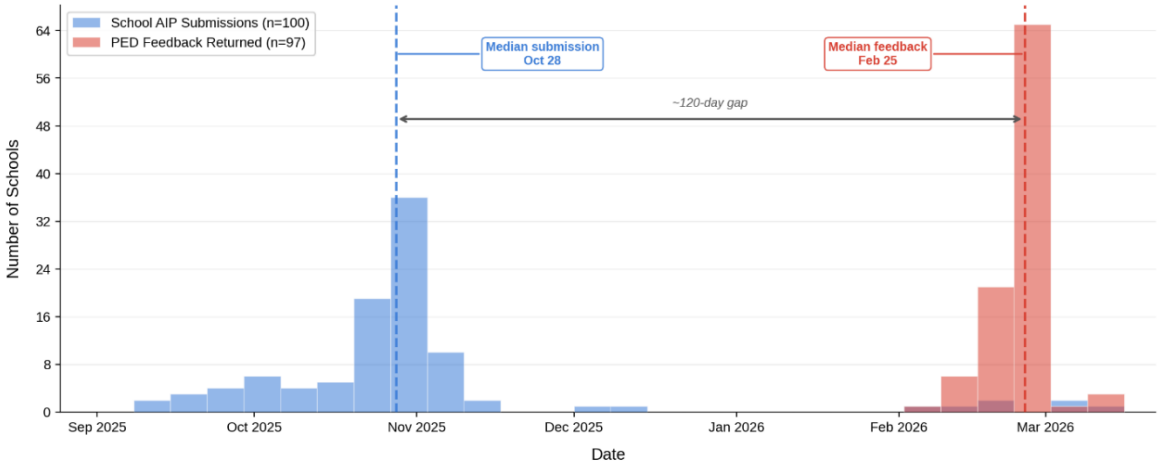
extended learning time, but many schools struggle to match attendance improvement strategies to underlying issues and specific student populations. Adopted in 2019, the Attendance for Success Act (Section 22-12A-1 through 22-12A-14 NMSA 1978) created a preventive, comprehensive, and data-driven approach to improving school attendance. As part of the act, schools with a 5 percent or greater chronic absence rate (either for total student population or within a particular student subgroup) are required to submit an annual attendance improvement plan to PED no later than 45 days after the beginning of the school year. An algorithmic analysis of a representative sample of 100 attendance improvement plans from the 2025-26 school year found that schools struggled most with pinpointing underlying causes of chronic absenteeism and tailoring strategies to specific student groups. The strongest plans tended to demonstrate clearer linkages between identified root causes, selected strategies, and targeted student groups, but few plans tied root causes to strategies suitable for each of the act's four tiers of intervention. Without fully understanding root causes or which student populations are driving chronic absenteeism, schools risk adopting strategies peripheral to underlying problems. For instance, the 2024 LFC program evaluation flagged transportation as a top barrier for students who accessed attendance coaching services; however, only 46 percent of the attendance improvement plans in LFC's 2026 analysis included strategies for improving transportation access.

PED provides guidance and feedback on attendance plans, but in forms that do not meaningfully help schools improve. PED has taken steps to support districts and charter schools, but the current mix of guidance, feedback, and outreach leaves schools without the practical tools they need to translate plans into improvement. PED has published an

Graduation Alliance: Sole Source Contracts and Declining Enrollment

LFC's 2024 program evaluation of student attendance and performance found since 2020, PED spent at least $9.3 million on attendance recovery through a for-profit company called Graduation Alliance — yet the number of students served decreased and outcome monitoring remained minimal. The scope of work included establishing an Attendance Project, providing outreach to families, triaging student need, and reporting metrics to PED. This initial emergency contract specified PED would go through a competitive bid process if schools continued to be virtual for the 2020-2021 school year. However, PED continued to contract with Graduation Alliance through sole source contracts. PED's most recent contract for $97 thousand over nine months included no explanation for why the contractor was serving fewer students for more money over a longer period. Enrollment in the ENGAGE NM program fell from 41 percent of referred students in 2021 to just 27 percent in 2023, meaning most eligible students never engaged with the service. Of the over 72 thousand students referred since 2020, only roughly 36 percent chose to participate — making a meaningful statewide impact unlikely.

Chart 28. Attendance Improvement Plan Submission versus PED Response School Year 2025-2026



Source: LFC analysis of PED data; graphic made with Claude

Attendance Improvement Model guidance document outlining strategies schools and districts can use to combat absenteeism. The document links to underlying research but does not indicate which strategies are most effective in which contexts—the kind of differentiation that would help schools facing similar attendance issues avoid duplicating ineffective efforts. Feedback on attendance plans arrives too late to act on: the median plan in LFC's sample was submitted October 27, 2025, and the median date schools received PED feedback was February 25, 2026—a gap of about 85 school days, leaving roughly 60 instructional days to implement changes before year's end, though strategies may continue into the next year. PED's reviews are also largely evaluative rather than instructive, frequently noting "action steps could be more granular" without modeling what granularity looks like in a school's specific context. Meanwhile, PED signed a $2.1 million contract in April 2024 with Real Time Solutions for a statewide "attendance support and awareness campaign"—approximately 40 percent of the agency's attendance act special appropriation—despite holding detailed, student-level absenteeism data that would support more targeted approaches. PED could help support districts by providing faster turnaround on improvement plans, creating templates for common communication with families, directing schools to evidence-based best practices, and creating tools to help districts and charter schools survey families to better understand underlying causes for local absenteeism.

Table 4. Selected Root Causes and Related Tiered Strategies

Root Cause	Tier 1–2 Strategies	Tier 3 Strategies	Tier 4 Strategies
Low school connection	Social emotional learning integration, attendance campaigns, enrichment activities	Assigned mentor, restorative circles	Intensive mentoring, re-entry protocols, wellness room access
Family barriers	Family communication, awareness campaigns, basic needs assessment	Home visits, transportation support, community partner referrals	Wrap-around services, CYFD coordination (as support), family advocate
Health/mental health	Health triage guidance, wellness room, schoolwide social emotional learning	Mental health referrals, health-related absence monitoring	Individualized health plan, coordinated community health services

Source: LFC files

Schedule design is critical for maximizing effective learning time, but the state has not made it a priority.

Master schedules and bell schedules are the primary school-level structures that govern the conversion of scheduled instructional time into student learning time. A master schedule is a schoolwide plan that allocates time, people, and space, specifying what students are learning, who they are learning with, how long they learn, and the classroom or other space to be used. A well-considered master schedule design helps a school convert instructional time into learning time by minimizing disruptions, promoting equity, and providing adequate teacher preparation and collaboration time. Despite their importance, master schedules are often constructed without shared infrastructure or support from the state or districts. PED does not collect information about master schedules and provides no templates or guidance for schedule design, and one third of school leaders report that their central office offers no support for master schedule construction. The result is a system in which the mechanisms that translate state-funded instructional time into student learning are often left to each school to design.

Master scheduling decisions shape student access to experienced teachers, rigorous coursework, and other resources central to addressing the findings of Martinez-Yazzie, but schedulers often do not approach the work strategically. In a 2021 qualitative study of nine states, Columbia University's Center for Public Research and Leadership interviewed 33 principals, schedulers, district leaders, and other system leaders to examine how master schedules are designed and how those design choices affect student opportunity. The researchers found that schedulers typically approach master scheduling as a technical task—managing instructional minutes, accommodating teacher preferences, troubleshooting course conflicts—rather than as a strategic decision about

East Mountain High School: Quantity and Quality of Time

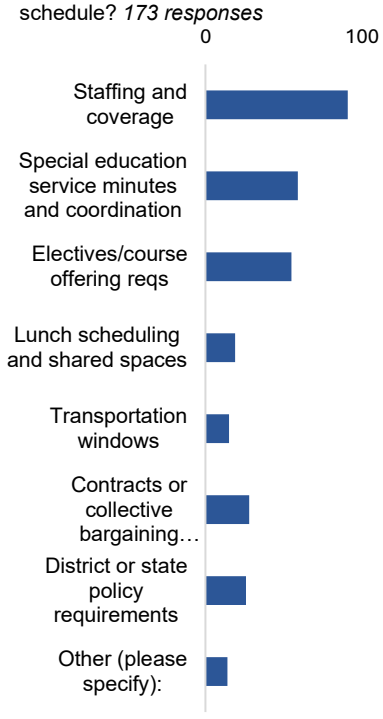
East Mountain High School in Sandia Park is one of the top performing schools in the state. The school is in the 99th percentile for student days (193), and the 90th percentile for student hours (1,218). However, leadership at the school believes it is the strategic use of that time that distinguishes them. For example:

- The school operates on a block schedule, with students attending four classes a day for 85 minutes each.
- Teachers who teach in the same subject area have aligned daily prep periods to ensure curriculum continuity across classes and grades.
- The school invests heavily in tutoring, with monthly tutoring days for students who need extra support. Teachers at the school are compensated for any additional tutoring time conducted outside of their contract hours.
- Enrichment is built into instructional time, with students participating in educationally aligned activities like music, robotics, and debate.

"Instead of a dedicated effort to creatively design a learning environment that maximizes students' learning and experiences, [master scheduling] often becomes a game of bureaucratic Whack-a-Mole, in which the schedule is built around any number of generic parameters and constraints."

- *About Time: Master Scheduling and Equity (Columbia University, 2021)*

Chart 29. Master Schedule Constraints



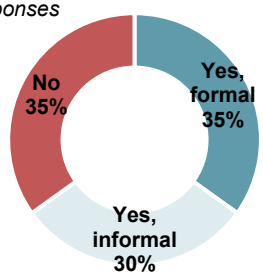
Source: LFC survey of school leaders, 2026

how to allocate time, people, and space in service of student learning. The technical orientation, the researchers concluded, tends to standardize existing inequities by directing the most experienced teachers, the most rigorous courses, and the most desirable course combinations to students who already have the greatest access to them, while limiting those opportunities for Black, Latino, low-income, multilingual, and students with disabilities. The *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit identified similar opportunity gaps for many of the same student groups, and master scheduling is one of the school-level mechanisms through which those gaps are produced or narrowed.

School leaders carry primary responsibility for master schedule design in New Mexico, but few receive formal training and many do not receive district support in the work. Nearly two thirds of school leaders reported that an individual school administrator principally designs the master schedule for their school. However, in a dozen LFC site visits, no administrator reported receiving formal training in master schedule design during their preparation programs. New Mexico's administrative licensure framework, consistent with those of other states, includes operations and management as broad competency areas but does not specifically identify master schedule design as a required skill. While the Priority Schools Bureau collects master schedules as part of its site visit protocol, PED does not offer any specialized coaching or training on improved master schedule design. In February 2026, PED selected Edupoint's Synergy Education Platform as the state's first statewide student information system, available to districts and charter schools for free on an opt-in basis. Depending on how PED configures the platform, the transition could give the state tools to support better school-level scheduling.

Chart 30. Scheduling Guidance

Question: Does your school receive formal support or guidance on optimizing instructional time (e.g., schedule design, interventions) from your district or central office? *172 responses*



Source: LFC survey of principals and school leaders, 2026

Bibb County, Georgia Schedule Redesign

Prior to 2015, scheduling decisions in Bibb County were left up to individual school leaders, with the result that students assigned to different schools within the district received highly variable instruction. For example, elementary students at one school received 60 minutes of reading instruction a day while at another school they received 120 minutes. The district also had no dedicated time set aside for interventions, meaning students who needed extra support were often pulled from core instruction to receive it.

In 2015, based on analysis of the data, the district worked with elementary school leaders and teachers to redesign the master schedule. The biggest change was setting consistent guidelines requiring all K–5 schools to provide 120 minutes of reading, 75 minutes of math, and at least 45 minutes each of science and social studies daily. The redesign also carved out a separate intervention and enrichment block, staggered by grade level, so that students with IEPs and multilingual learners could receive support without missing core instruction.

The district also developed written expectations and guidelines for instructional time allocation and created a framework for principals to learn from one another.

Source: *About Time: Master Scheduling and Equity* (2021), Columbia Center for Public Research and Leadership

The district survey also suggests master schedules are not necessarily perceived as a significant lever for improving the use of instructional time: only 11 percent of districts reported investing in master schedule design training in the past two years, and no district identified scheduling training as its top priority among the time-related improvement strategies they had pursued.

What Makes an Effective Master Schedule

A. Learning-first design (not "constraints-first") Starts with district and school priorities (e.g., grade-level literacy, Algebra I success, multilingual learner access) and *then* fits staffing and rooms around them.

B. Protected instructional minutes for the highest-impact content. Adequate daily minutes for literacy and math, with minimal fragmentation. "Do not disturb" rules, such as minimal pull-outs and assemblies during core.

C. Built-in, routine academic support time. A **daily intervention or enrichment block** (often schoolwide) so support can happen without students missing core classes. If using tutoring, schedule it with the consistency high-impact tutoring models require (e.g., three or more sessions per week) inside the day.

D. Collaboration time that is real (and usable). Common planning time for grade and content teams (not just scattered prep) and a cadence for looking at student work and data and adjusting instruction.

E. A "service delivery" plan that doesn't cannibalize learning. Special education services scheduled to reduce conflict with core instruction whenever possible (push-in or coordinated pull-out windows). Clear responsibility for intervention groups (who teaches whom, when).

F. Equity checks are explicit. Who gets advanced coursework? Who gets novice teachers? Who loses electives for intervention? Who is pulled from arts/science most often? Schedules should be audited for access and trade-offs.

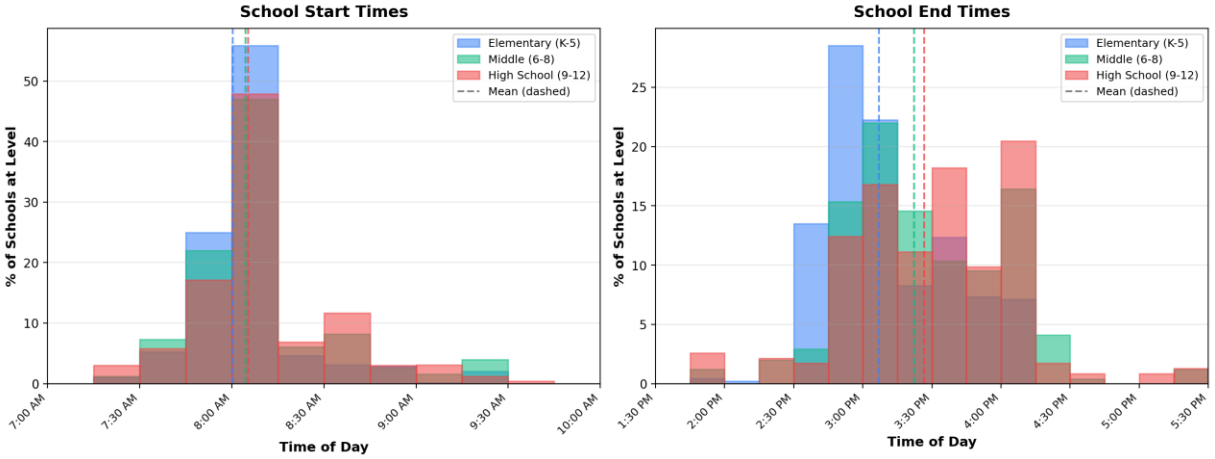
G. Implementable, monitored, and adjustable. The schedule is only "good" if it is actually followed—and reviewed using walkthrough data, time-on-task indicators, and participation data for interventions and tutoring.

Sources: Amanda Lu et al. "The Resource of Time: Master Schedules and Effective Allocation of Students and Educators." March 2025, Stanford SCALE Initiative Accelerator for Learning.

In contrast to the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics and other peer-reviewed research, approximately 80 percent of New Mexico middle and high schools start before 8:30 a.m. Across New Mexico, the median start time for elementary, middle, and high schools is 8:00 a.m. The median end time for elementary schools is 3:00 p.m., and 3:15 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. for middle and high schools, respectively. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that middle and high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. to accommodate adequate sleep for students entering adolescence. A 2024 meta-analysis of school time interventions across several high-quality studies found that shifting starting times later for middle and high schoolers had small to moderate positive effects, increasing math and reading test scores in some studies, decreasing car accidents while in transit to school, and improving sleep, mood, and attention. In 2023, Albuquerque Public Schools moved its high school start time back in response to the health and developmental concerns cited

above, with most of the district's high schools now starting at 8:40 a.m. California has passed a law that does not allow high school to start before 8:30 a.m., and other states including New Mexico have authorized studies. A Legislation Education Study Committee study for House Memorial 56 in 2023 found that schools with four-day weeks were more likely to start earlier (often before 7:30 a.m.) and end later than their five-day week peers, to accommodate minimum instructional time requirements.

Chart 31. School Start and End Times, 2025-26 School Year



Source: LFC analysis of PED bell schedule data; graphic generated with Claude

Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Shift the statutory timeline for school submission of attendance improvement plans to September 30, at the latest;
- Providing explicit direction in any future appropriations related to the Attendance for Success Act about allowed expenditures and desired outcomes; and
- Monitoring outcomes of the FY27-FY29 public education reform fund appropriations to attendance-related initiatives.

The Public Education Department should:

- Choose a standard metric for reporting chronic absenteeism to be used consistently across the department, and provide public documentation to support the calculation;
- Track teacher absences;
- Develop a template for districts to survey students and families regarding the reasons for chronic absenteeism, collect the results of those surveys, and report publicly on the aggregate results;

- Develop a guidance document detailing the most common causes of chronic absenteeism and the most effective, evidence-based strategies addressing those root causes;
- Provide feedback on attendance improvement plans within 30 days of submission and connect feedback more directly to student outcomes;
- Shorten the attendance improvement plan template to focus most directly on evidence-based interventions;
- Clarify that demonstrated competency in master schedule design best practices is required under existing administrative licensure standards related to operations and management. PED should specify the technical knowledge required (constraint navigation, special education service coordination, alignment of schedule features with school improvement goals) and identify acceptable evidence of competency for licensure candidates and their preparation programs; and
- Ensure local education agencies adopting the statewide student information system have access to a master scheduling module and provide guidance within that module on best practices for master schedule design.

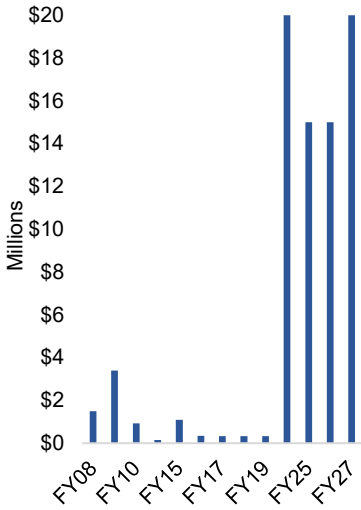
Local education agencies should:

- Survey a representative sample of families and students about chronic absenteeism using PED's template, and report the results to PED;
- Use information gathered from the surveys to inform attendance improvement plans;
- Report teacher absences to PED;
- Collect master schedules from all component schools and provide technical assistance and feedback on optimizing student learning time; and
- Adjust bell schedules to align with research on when different ages of students learn best.

Time-Related Interventions are Not Reaching the Students Who Need Them Most

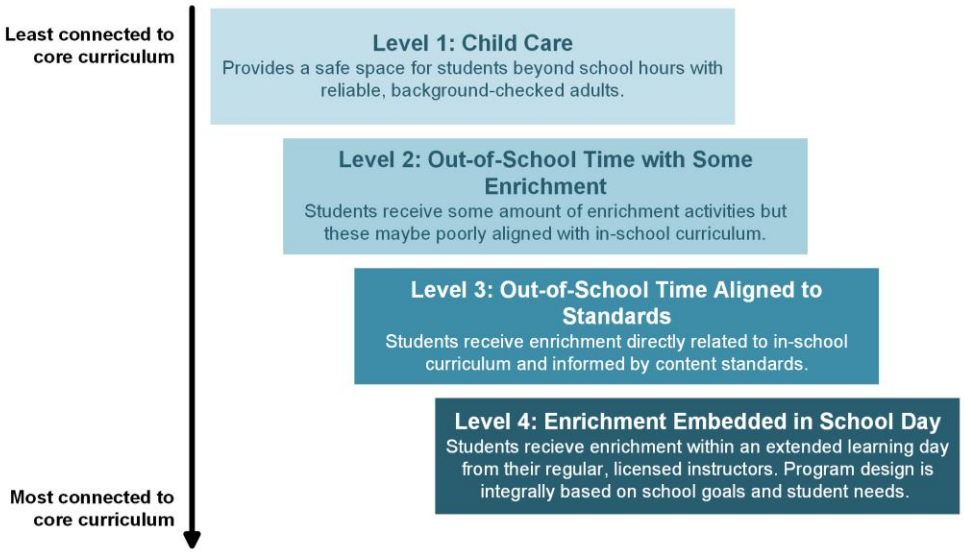
In addition to investments in instructional hours and days, the Legislature has invested $150 million since FY18 in three time-related interventions to accelerate student learning: out-of-school time, tutoring, and summer literacy. Each is supported by evidence when implemented well, but currently implementation operates separately from, rather than in coordination with, the core instruction students receive during the school day. Out-of-school time programs lack a clearly articulated educational purpose that distinguishes them from childcare, and PED has not tracked participation or results in ways that would allow the state to assess whether an educational purpose is being met. Tutoring has primarily been delivered outside of school hours, departing from best practice on how to maximize the impact of tutoring. The summer literacy program currently does not directly connect to school-year curriculum, nor does it intentionally target the students most in need of support. Additionally, PED has inconsistently tracked summer literacy student outcomes and has yet to publicly report data from 2024 or 2025. Integration would require curriculum alignment, communication between program staff and classroom teachers, and targeting services to the students whose classroom performance suggests they most need this support.

Chart 32. Appropriations to Out-of-School Time



Source: LFC files

Figure 9. Models of Out-of-School Time



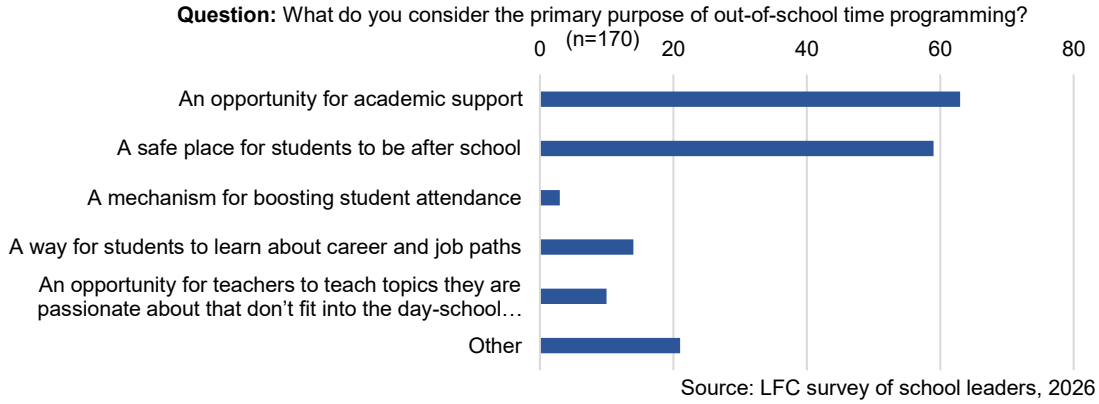
Source: LFC

If appropriately designed, out-of-school time can help close achievement gaps for at-risk students.

The Legislature has appropriated $70 million since FY24 for out-of-school time (OST) programs, reversing the sporadic, uneven funding the 2018 LFC evaluation found had produced inconsistent implementation and unmet demand for after-school and summer enrichment. For FY27, House Bill 2 appropriated $20 million from the public education reform fund (PERF), though this appropriation is not subject to the typical evaluation and reporting requirements associated with the fund. PED operates state-funded OST as a grant program and provides some technical assistance and oversight. However, New Mexico statute does not define the purpose of OST programming or specify expected outcomes. Further, PED has not collected the data needed to evaluate whether programs are working, and individual providers are largely left to define quality for themselves. Project-based learning and similar models can produce moderate academic gains when well implemented, but those gains depend on trained staff, coordination with school-day instruction, consistent participation, and shared quality standards—none of which the state has fully established. Without clearer state-level expectations, OST funding is unlikely to deliver an educational benefit.

New Mexico has not defined what OST programming is for, leaving its purpose unresolved even among the educators who run it. New Mexico statute does not define the purpose of OST programming or specify expected outcomes. PED guidance describes OST programs as providing "safe, engaging learning opportunities beyond the regular school day and year" that support academic growth, enrichment, and social-emotional development, and grant materials identify allowable activity categories—STEM, arts exposure, career and technical education, academic supports, educational field trips. In the future, materials could additionally specify who these programs should reach or how they should be designed to

Chart 33. Purpose of Out-of-School Time



achieve specific outcomes. That present ambiguity is reflected in the field: asked what they consider the primary purpose of OST programming, school leaders split nearly evenly between "an opportunity for academic support" and "a safe place for students to be after school," the two most common responses by a wide margin.

The expansion of universal childcare makes distinguishing OST from childcare more urgent. In November 2025, New Mexico eliminated income requirements from childcare assistance, greatly expanding the pool of potential enrollees. Since then, roughly 4,670 school-age children have entered childcare assistance (26 percent of new enrollees). For school-aged children, childcare can provide a predictable, supervised setting outside school hours; ECECD describes its program as "supporting working parents, strengthening communities, and helping children learn and grow in safe, nurturing environments," a mission statement that echoes PED's purpose statement for OST. Distinguishing state-funded OST from childcare through an emphasis on alignment with educational goals offers an opportunity to support students who are behind academically. But absent clearly delineated educational outcomes, OST funding risks becoming redundant to the sizeable new investment New Mexico has made in universal childcare access.

PED has not collected the student-level data needed to evaluate OST program impact. In FY25, PED contracted with New Mexico State University ($13 thousand) to evaluate the impact of state-funded OST programs, but because programs were not required to track individual student participation or report in detail on program structure and goals, the evaluators lacked the student-level data needed to draw conclusions, producing only a descriptive account of participation (roughly 7 thousand students) and programming types. PED has since tried to close this gap, engaging the Southwest Regional Education Cooperative in FY26 to manage and analyze student-level data at two dozen sites and to subcontract a broader evaluation of OST and tutoring programs ($311 thousand combined), with results not yet available.

Site visits conducted under PED contracts lacked standardized protocols for assessing program quality. PED has attempted to improve the quality of state-funded OST programs in a variety of ways in FY26. One avenue has been requiring documentation similar to that required of federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grantees, including program profiles and plans tied to student outcomes. However, the profiles and continuous quality improvement plans submitted for state-funded programs to date offer only high-level descriptors like "academic enrichment" or "theater through technology," with no detail on instructional approach or learning objectives—and as of March 2026 only a handful of state-funded programs had submitted documentation. In FY26, PED also contracted with Cooperative Education Services and the Southeastern New Mexico

21st CCLC/OST QMC Technical Assistance Visit Checklist

Program & Compliance Observations:
- ✓ Signed assurances
- ✓ Program profile complete and reviewed
- ✓ Student level data on the EZReports platform
- ✓ Partnership Agreements/ MOUs
- ✓ Program takes place in a safe environment
- ✓ Program incorporates family voice and fosters meaningful family engagement
- ✓ Program is high-quality, engaging, and aligned with day school
- ✓ CQI/Action Plan is in place
- ✓ Comments and Feedback from stakeholders:
- ✓ Compliance observation/Notes:

Follow-Up/Support
- ✓ Strengths to Celebrate
- ✓ Areas for Growth/TA
- ✓ Additional Resources or Guidance Needed
- ✓ Observations/Notes:

Source: PED

Economic Development District through intergovernmental agreements to conduct site visits and provide technical support to both state- and federally-funded OST programs across the state (nine quality management consultants, $1.4 million). The consultants were tasked with helping develop "at least one data-driven action plan for each targeted site." According to a site visit checklist, the consultants looked for evidence that programs were "high-quality, engaging, and aligned with day school." But the consultants did not use standardized observation rubrics or structured protocols for assessing quality, making it impossible to distinguish structured learning models like project-based enrichment from less structured activities like supervised homework time and to confirm whether best practices like coordination between OST providers and school-day teachers are occurring.

PED should establish a statewide quality framework rather than leaving each provider to build one alone. In the absence of PED guidance on how to structure quality programming, OST sites are largely left to develop their own program models and define quality for themselves. PED's current "Resource Handbook" is meant to help "sites in identifying high-quality tools, programs, and opportunities," but it also emphasizes that "sites are encouraged to determine what best fits their unique context, community and program goals." Local flexibility matters given the variation in student populations and community needs across the state, but the current approach places a substantial planning and evaluation burden on providers, many with limited administrative capacity, and produces widespread duplication of effort. The FY26 site-visit contracts expire at the end of the fiscal year and have not been renewed, creating an opening to redesign oversight. PED should adopt a structured quality-assessment protocol—similar to the monitoring tools used by the Priority Schools Bureau—that evaluates program design, alignment with school-day instruction, staff practices, and student engagement, and should establish a clearer statewide framework of evidence-based standards, vetted curricula, implementation guidance, and model programs that licensed educators could adapt locally rather than build from scratch. A more active PED coordinating role, facilitating regular knowledge-sharing among program directors, would help successful practices and staffing strategies spread across districts more efficiently.

When implemented according to best practices, tutoring can dramatically increase student growth.

High-impact tutoring programs have been consistently shown to improve student proficiency when implementation aligns with national best practices. However, New Mexico's approach to tutoring has rarely aligned

with these evidence-based strategies, nor has the state maintained a coherent strategy for funding and implementation. To see the best return on investment for at-risk students, tutoring should take place during school hours, with licensed professionals, following curricula closely aligned to classroom teaching.

High-dosage tutoring has a strong evidence base and substantial positive impact on student achievement, but only when implemented with fidelity. The Institute of Education Sciences finds that tutoring is most effective when conducted at school, during school hours, and delivered in three or more sessions per week for at least 30 minutes with well-trained, supervised tutors rather than volunteers. In a large 2020 meta-analysis of randomized studies, tutoring programs produced consistent, substantial positive impacts on achievement overall, with stronger average effects for students paired with teacher/paraprofessional tutors and in earlier grades. Small group structured tutoring by a licensed teacher has a return on investment of $10.67 for every dollar spent. Evidence from University of Chicago Education Lab in partnership with the nonprofit organization Saga Education likewise found large gains from high-dosage tutoring in math in Chicago Public Schools when implemented with a consistent model and tight integration into the school day.

New Mexico has repeatedly changed its tutoring models and vendors, undermining continuity and producing inconsistent results. PED has made several attempts to establish a high-impact tutoring program in the state over the last four years. However, early attempts suffered from vendor issues; a $3.3 million contract with Paper (an on-demand virtual provider) launched in December 2022 drew weak family uptake because it relied on students and families seeking help outside school hours, and a later attempt to launch contracts with three high-impact providers was canceled before it began after a vendor protest and contract dispute. During the 2022-23 school year, PED partnered with Saga Education and the Personalized Learning Initiative to provide virtually delivered high-dosage tutoring for about 500 middle schoolers across the state. The collaboration ran a randomized controlled trial using a lottery system to measure the impacts of tutoring on student learning and found that students who received tutoring learned 38 percent more in one year than similar students who did not receive it. In FY25, PED directly funded districts and charter schools to develop tutoring programs. Each iteration of tutoring has represented a different theory of action, and none has clearly improved outcomes except for the Saga program. However, even in that isolated case of high-fidelity implementation, the program suffered from low initial enrollment—only 1.5 percent of eligible students statewide signed up.

Special appropriations for tutoring may be less effective than PED providing guidance on what works. As the court found in the 2018 *Martinez-Yazzie* ruling, special appropriations can make it harder for PED

Characteristics of Highly Effective Tutoring

Tutoring is most effective when conducted at school, during school hours, and in three or more sessions per week for at least 30 minutes each.

Tutoring is more effective when conducted by teachers or professional tutors who are well trained and supervised rather than by volunteers, peers, or parent tutors.

Early-grade students (pre-K-1) benefit from 1:1 tutoring; students in grades 2-5 benefit from small groups with a tutor-student ratio of 1:3 or 1:4; secondary students benefit from small groups with a tutor-student ratio of no more than 1:4.

Reading tutoring tends to be relatively more effective for students in grades pre-K-1, whereas math tutoring tends to be more effective for students in grades 2-5.

Source: Andre Joshua Nickow et al. "The Impressive Effects of Tutoring on PreK-12 Learning: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence," *EdWorkingPaper*, 2020: 20-267. Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University.

Table 4. FY25 Tutoring Special Appropriation

Earmarked for tutoring	$8.5 M
Awarded in grants by PED	$6.8 M
Requested for reimbursement by districts	$5.7 M
Amount spent of original appropriation	67%

Source: LFC analysis of PED OBMS data

and districts to use state money effectively to support at-risk students. This has played out in recent appropriations to support tutoring initiatives. In FY24, PED spent more than half of the original $20 million appropriation on contracts with regional education cooperatives, including some services that generously interpret "programs to address learning gaps," such as upgrades to the department's budgeting system, OBMS. In FY26, PED did not release its RFP for tutoring programs until November 17, 2025—several months into the school year. Meanwhile, other sources of state and federal money exist to support tutoring programs. The public school funding formula includes at-risk program units that generate money to provide services for at-risk students. Statute defines services as "research-based or evidence-based social, emotional or academic interventions" that can include "case management, tutoring, reading interventions, and after-school programs that are delivered by social workers, counselors, teachers, or other professional staff" (Section 22-8-23.3 NMSA 1978). Additionally, federal funds can support high-dosage/high-impact tutoring in some circumstances (e.g., Title I/II/III, per U.S. Department of Education guidance). PED has also used federal elementary and secondary school emergency relief (ESSER) funding to support tutoring initiatives.

Funding through special appropriations, ***"is distributed by grants, for which school districts must apply, and districts must use the funding for specific programming"*** *and,* ***"may vary annually according to the fiscal year legislative appropriation, may be terminated for a fiscal year, and is generally not available to all school districts."***

- 1st Judicial District Court Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit

The Legislature's multiyear public school reform fund (PERF) appropriation for FY27 through FY29 is a promising shift, but accountability structures must be strengthened. In FY27, the Legislature appropriated $15.3 million from the public education reform fund over the next three fiscal years for high-impact tutoring during the school day to improve student and reading math proficiency. PED can use up to $300 thousand of this appropriation to evaluate and monitor outcomes. A 2025 LESC brief on high-dosage tutoring found while PED's FY26 intent to apply instructions for the high-impact tutoring grant broadly aligned with national best practices, "beyond the providing of assurances and the possibility of a site visit at PED's request, it is unclear how the department will ensure compliance with the design principles." As part of both PERF and Government Results and Opportunity (GRO) accountability measures, PED will need to create a more formalized validation and quality control process for tutoring grantees.

With intentional targeting, summer literacy programs can help at-risk students catch up and achieve proficiency.

During the 2024 legislative session, the Legislature appropriated $30 million to the Public Education Department for "a summer reading intervention program for students based in the science of reading." In 2025, the Legislature appropriated $29 million to continue the program. The program is slated to run for its third year in 2026. Goals of the program include enhancing statewide literacy, tracking individual student reading

progress, boosting the confidence of readers, boosting individual student skills in literacy, and engaging families and communities. As noted in the background, most New Mexico students are not proficient in reading and are not on track to reach proficiency during their K-12 education. Starting in FY28, PED will be required to screen all students in kindergarten through third grade for reading difficulty, per Senate Bill 37 (2026). PED and districts have an opportunity to focus their summer literacy intervention programs on students who struggle early in their K-12 education and to tie summer programming to school-year learning.

Summer literacy programs work where they are intentionally tied to school-year curriculum and targeted at the students who need it most. Mississippi's summer reading camps are a tightly targeted intervention reserved for the third graders who fall short of proficiency on the state's end-of-year reading assessment. Students have three tries to score at least a three or higher on the reading portion of the state's English Language Arts assessment to move to fourth grade, and the summer camps exist to give those students intensive, focused instruction between retest windows. Critically, reading camp materials are aligned with the state's standards across comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics, the same foundational skills embedded in the school-year curriculum and measured by the proficiency test. The summer program is also just one piece of a comprehensive, science-of-reading reform package that includes screening three times each year from kindergarten through third grade, individualized reading plans for every student flagged with a deficiency, full-time literacy coaches, and required science-of-reading coursework for teacher candidates. Causal evidence from a Boston University Wheelock Educational Policy Center study found that being retained under Mississippi's policy led to substantially higher reading scores in the sixth grade, with the largest gains for Black and Hispanic students and no negative effect on absences or special education identification.

Implementing High-Quality, Evidence-Based Summer Reading Programs

Multiple studies point to the efficacy of high-quality summer reading programs in maintaining academic momentum through the summer and boosting achievement, especially among low-income students. Like instruction during the school year, the efficacy of summer reading programs depends on instructor quality, student attendance and participation, and the use of data for program improvement.

Several other states have implemented standalone summer literacy programs akin to New Mexico, including Tennessee and North Carolina. Those programs have shown mixed results but generally small, positive effects.

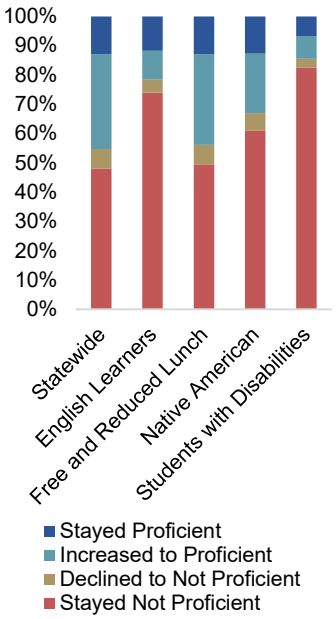
Mississippi has also implemented a summer program, but one more targeted to students most at-risk of falling behind. The program is one component in a suite of coordinated intervention strategies including tutoring, extended learning days, and the adoption of statewide curriculum.

Source: McCombs JS, Augustine CH, Schwartz HL, et al. *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning.* Santa Monica: RAND Corporation; 2011: Monograph Report 1120, and Kim JS, Quinn DM. "The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8: A meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions." *Review of Educational Research.* 2013;83(3):386-431.

Schools could help identify and target summer literacy interventions for students who need it most, and PED could provide technical assistance. To date, PED has relied primarily on mass marketing campaigns to generate interest in the summer reading program. In FY25, the department contracted Real Time Solutions for $720 thousand to market and promote the program, including the production of banners, billboards, posters, brochures, and social media posts. Although the department and districts collect, track, and report on reading proficiency data, they have not used this data to help target students who could most benefit from additional support. Senate Bill 37 (2026) amended the High Quality Literacy Instruction Act to require mandatory literacy assessments of all students in kindergarten through third grade starting in the 2027-28 school year. If a school identifies a student as having a reading difficulty based on the results of the assessment, parents are to be notified within thirty days. This mandate provides a natural opportunity for districts and charter schools to inform parents of the summer literacy program and suggest that their students participate. In the meantime, interim assessments like Amira (grades K-2) and NM-MSSA (grades 3-8) provide student-level reading proficiency data that can help educators and administrators target the students and subgroups most likely to need additional support.

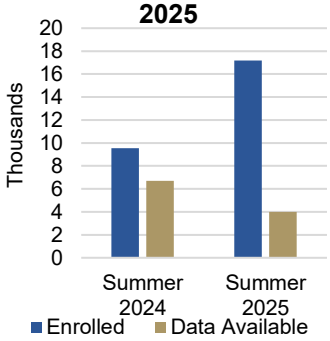
By employing disparate curricula and instructors who are not certified teachers, the summer literacy program remains disconnected from school-year instruction. The summer literacy program does not require its instructors to be certified as teachers. Additionally, literacy programs in 2025 used one of four curricula (Lavinia, Levy Learning, Neuhaus, TNTP/Magnetic Reading), which may or may not be connected to what the student's home school uses during the school year. Critically, only Magnetic Reading is listed on PED's adopted high quality instructional materials list, suggesting further disconnect between core materials and summer offerings. Mississippi's nationally recognized summer reading program is reserved for the students whose assessment data shows they need it, with content mirroring the standards and curriculum students will return to in the fall. The program is embedded within a year-round system of screening, coaching, and high-quality instructional materials rather than treated as a stand-alone fix.

Chart 34. Students Who Maintained or Changed Proficiency in Reading
School Year 2023-24 to 2024-25, 4th-8th graders



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Chart 35. Student Data, Summer Literacy Program, Summers 2024 and 2025

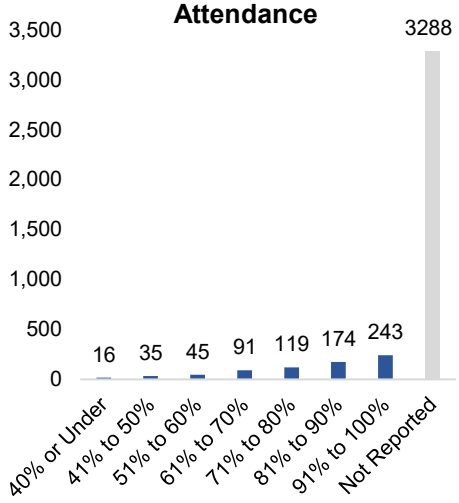


Note: It is unclear whether students with complete data are the only ones who completed the program or if the program served more students than those represented in the data sets.

Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Incomplete data tracking during the first two years makes it difficult to quantify student outcomes. Prior to initiating the program, PED aimed to enroll 10 thousand K-8 students and administer pre- and post-program assessments to measure student growth. In 2024, PED recruited close to its goal, though only about two-thirds of students had data at the end of the summer. The following summer, the program recruited over 17 thousand students. However, PED only reported outcomes data for 4,010 students and attendance data for 723 of those students. PED has not explained whether these students were the only ones who completed the program in 2025 or were merely the only ones for whom there is reliable participation data.

Chart 36. 2025 Summer Literacy Program Student Attendance



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

2025 Summer Literacy Outcomes: Unpublished Results from PED and NM Highlands University

For 2024 and 2025, PED contracted the Southwest Regional Education Cooperative (SWREC) to provide management and oversight of the program. SWREC, in turn, contracted with New Mexico Highlands University to conduct evaluation and analysis of program outcomes. The Highlands reports were never finalized, however, report drafts and raw data provided to LFC show that student data was tracked incompletely and outcomes data linked to student IDs only sporadically. PED staff caution that findings are preliminary and cannot be validated due to the low quality of initial data.

NMHU Descriptive Data Analysis Finding:

One quarter of summer literacy participants moved up a level, but the majority of those who did not move up were those that started from the lowest level (Well Below, i.e. those with the most room to grow), and those who moved the most were either already at Level 2 or 3. *Martinez-Yazzie* subgroups saw growth on par with statewide averages, except for economically disadvantaged students, who grew significantly less.

Movement between DIBELS Levels, Summer 2025

Starting level	n	Moved up	Stayed	Moved down
1 (Well Below)	1,841	21.5%	78.5%	0% (not poss.)
2 (Below)	840	35.6%	46.1%	18.3%
3 (At)	541	35.7%	40.7%	23.7%
4 (Above)	389	29.3%	47.3%	23.4%
5 (Well Above)	400	0% (not poss.)	79.2%	20.8%

PED Matched Student Finding:

PED's matching study found that summer literacy participants outperformed their demographically similar peers by a small but statistically significant margin. PED staff conducted a matched analysis, pairing students who had participated in the summer literacy program with demographically similar peers who had not participated. Due to the low quality of starting data and the matching method, PED sampled 208 students from the reading program who were entering first grade, and 219 who were entering second grade.

2025-26 Beginning of Year Grade 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Non-Summer Reading Program (n=208)	116 (55.77%)	42 (20.19%)	18 (8.65%)	22 (10.58%)	10 (4.81%)
Summer Reading Program (n=208)	72 (34.62%)	38 (18.27%)	35 (16.83%)	34 (16.35%)	29 (13.94%)

Source: Unpublished data from NMHU and PED

Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Articulating the educational purpose of out-of-school time programming in statute to distinguish it from childcare.

The Public Education Department should:

- Articulate a clear educational strategy in rule for state-funded out-of-school time that aligns with the new statutory definition referenced in the legislative recommendation above;
- Collect robust data on out-of-school time programs, including student-level participation and attendance, provider credentialing, and program design;
- Develop a protocol for evaluating the quality of out-of-school time programs and assisting districts and community-based organizations with improving quality, in line with PED's existing School Support and Readiness Assessments;
- Provide a resource library for districts and community-based organizations standing up new out-of-school time programs with evidence-based standards, vetted curricula, implementation guidance, and model programs that can be adapted locally rather than built from scratch;
- Make public the summer literacy program results for 2024 and 2025 as soon as possible to inform future legislative funding decisions and encourage 2026 participation;
- Collect robust data on the summer literacy programs, including student-level participation and attendance, tutor credentialing, dosage by site, curricula employed, student attrition, and student academic achievement on a test that can be readily compared to school-year tests;
- Ensure curricula employed in the summer reading program are listed on the department's list of high-quality instructional materials; and
- Focus recruitment efforts for the summer literacy program on students who are identified as having reading difficulties on the screening test required by the High-Quality Literacy Instruction Act, including by sending home information about the program bundled with the test results.

Local education agencies should:

- Evaluate out-of-school time programs for alignment with core instruction and define clear educational goals for the programming tailored to the specific student population served; and
- Prioritize scheduling tutoring and intervention during the school day, aligned with core curriculum.

Appendix A. Progress on Past Recommendations

Recommendation	Status	Comments
Instructional Time and Extended Learning Opportunities in Public Schools (2018)		
The Legislature should consider amending state law (Section 22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978) to require that parent-teacher conferences and home visits be counted as in-service time, rather than instructional time.	NO ACTION	Up to two days of parent-teacher conferences count towards instructional days (Section 22-2-8.1 NMSA 1978)
The Legislature should consider including language in the General Appropriation Act directing PED to require school districts and charter schools to report on the number of early release days in their calendar in order to receive operating budget approval.	COMPLETE	In Section 22-8-6(C)E-1, the Legislature directed school districts and charter schools to report on the frequency of early-release days as part of their annual educational plans starting in FY21.
PED should require LEAs to report use of early release days (including number of days and hours) in a standardized manner through the budget approval process, as well as account for early release time.	COMPLETE	PED requires schools to report actual student hours per day as part of their budget calendar submissions, by grade, and distinguishes in rule between full and partial days.
PED should develop rules for an early-release day waiver system that would provide LEAs with a limited number of early-release waivers annually.	NO ACTION	PED has not directly addressed early release in any rulemaking.
School districts and charter schools should begin middle school and high school after 8:30 AM, whenever feasible	PROGRESSING	The state's largest school district, Albuquerque Public Schools, adjusted school start times by over an hour for middle and high school students in FY24; however, the start time for most middle and high schools in the state remains earlier than recommended by the American Association of Pediatrics.
PED and legislative agencies should study the effectiveness of extended learning time programs to gauge progress in closing the achievement gap, potentially using a quasi-experimental approach.	PROGRESSING	The current LFC report aims to address some of these questions, although PED calendar data tracking has not been sufficiently robust to allow for quasi-experimental analysis. PED staff supported the data collection in this progress report though the agency has not published its own analyses related to time in school.
The Legislature should consider amending the state Variable School Calendar Act to include a requirement that LEAs that wish to adopt a four-day week schedule submit a plan to PED detailing the goals they intend to achieve with a	NO ACTION	The Legislature has made no changes to the Variable School Calendar Act. The Legislature included language in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) between FY18 and FY25 prohibiting schools that did not previously operate on a four-day school week from switching calendars; the Governor vetoed the language in FY22 and FY25, and the Legislature did not include the budget language in the GAA in FY26 or FY27.

four-day week, intended educational and fiscal benefits, and any other anticipated impacts, including any advantages or disadvantages that the district has identified. LEAs already on a four-day week would also be required to submit such a plan.		
PED should require all LEAs that have adopted a four-day week schedule to submit updates every three years to PED, as part of their calendar submissions, that explain how the four-day week has achieved intended goals and educational and fiscal benefits.	NO ACTION	PED does not have rules that require additional reporting from LEAs operating on a four-day week schedule.

Student Attendance and Performance (2024)

PED should publish rules regarding how districts should take attendance. This guidance should be different for elementary versus secondary schools and should allow for some district flexibility.	NO ACTION	PED has no published rules regarding attendance.
PED should develop and publish a strategic plan as to how PED can support districts regarding attendance.	PROGRESSING	PED does not have a strategic plan specific to attendance. However, the department includes improving attendance as a section in its 2025 strategic plan, with a stated goal of reducing chronic absenteeism to 22 percent by 2027. The plan does not include details about how PED plans to achieve that goal.
PED should produce and publicly post a list of best practice interventions to improve absenteeism and post templates for letters home regarding student absences.	PROGRESSING	PED has published an “Attendance Improvement Model” guidance document for schools and districts with information about strategies to combat absenteeism. While the document provides links to research, it does not assess effect sizes or indicate which strategies are most effective. PED has not published templates for letters home regarding student absences.
PED should collect data on teacher absences.	NO ACTION	PED does not collect data on teacher absences.

Appendix B. Methodology

Student Growth Calculations

Data

LFC staff compiled student-level results from the New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) for FY22 through FY25 and organized students into longitudinal cohorts defined by grade and test year (Table A). This structure follows the same students across consecutive grades, which is the basis for measuring academic growth over time. Reading and language arts and math were analyzed separately throughout. Growth models were estimated as linear mixed-effects models using the lme4 package in R, with up to four annual test scores per student.

Table A. Longitudinal Cohorts

School Year	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
2022	1	0	-1	-2	-3	-4
2023	2	1	0	-1	-2	-3
2024	3	2	1	0	-1	-2
2025	4	3	2	1	0	-1

About the linear mixed-effects model

All growth estimates in this appendix, statewide and by subgroup, come from the same kind of statistical model: a linear mixed-effects (LME) model, fit in R using the lme4 package. A mixed-effects model is well suited to repeated test scores because it accounts for two things at once. It estimates an overall, or "fixed," trend—the average starting score and the average growth rate across all students—while also allowing each student (and, in the four-day analysis, each school and district) to depart from that average through "random" effects. In practice this means the model borrows strength across the full sample to estimate group averages but does not assume that every student follows the same path.

This structure has two practical advantages over fitting a single straight line to group averages. First, it uses each student's own sequence of scores, so students who are tested in different years or who start at different levels are weighted appropriately. Second, it separates the average trend from the variation around it, which is what allows the model to report both how fast a typical student grows and how widely individual students differ—the basis for the confidence intervals discussed below. Reading and math were modeled separately throughout, and time was measured in grades and centered at the first observed grade so that the intercept represents a meaningful starting score.

Estimating growth and time to proficiency

The first analysis asked how long it would take the average student to reach proficiency. Staff selected every student whose first available test score fell in fourth grade, yielding 26,053 students in reading and language arts and 26,126 students in math.

The model had two levels: repeated test scores within each student, and variation between students around the average starting score and the average growth rate. Time was measured in grades and centered at grade 4, producing an average fourth-grade score (the intercept) and an average change in score per year (the slope).

$$SS_{ti}^{l} = \pi_{0i}^{l} + \pi_{1i}^{l}(Grade - 4)_{ti}^{l} + e_{ti}^{l}$$

Time to proficiency was calculated as the distance from the average fourth-grade score to the proficiency benchmark, divided by the average annual growth rate. Using the proficiency benchmark of 60 scale score points, the average student would take about 9.6 years to reach proficiency in reading and about 22.9 years in math, measured from fourth grade. Both reflect slow average growth relative to the distance remaining: about 1.0 point per year in reading and 0.6 points per year in math, against gaps of 10 and 14 points.

Table B. Linear Mixed Effects Model to Compute Time to Proficiency

Fixed Effects	Reading	SE	Math	SE
Average Initial Status, β_{00}^{l}	50	0.13	46	0.13
Average Growth Rate, β_{10}^{l}	1.04	0.38	0.61	0.38
Random Effects	**Variance**	**SD**	**Variance**	**SD**
Temporal variation, Var(e_{ti}^{l})	116	10.8	126	11.2
Student initial status, Var(r_{0i}^{l})	369	19.2	317	17.8
Student growth rate, Var(r_{1i}^{l})	7	2.7	5	2.2

Comparison of Growth Across Cohorts

For the primary longitudinal analysis featured in this report, LFC staff chose to model the cohort of students who were in fourth grade in school year 2021-22 because this group had four complete years of NM-MSSA scores and fell in the middle of the grade range of the six years during which this test is administered (see Table C below). However, staff also ran a linear mixed effects model on the two other cohorts with complete NM-MSSA data sets for FY22-FY25: students who were in fifth grade and students who were in third grade in FY22. The data shows some variation between cohorts, with some showing stronger growth than others. However, early growth is no guarantee of later proficiency. For instance, while the average eighth-grade student in FY22 scored about 56 NM-MSSA scale score points

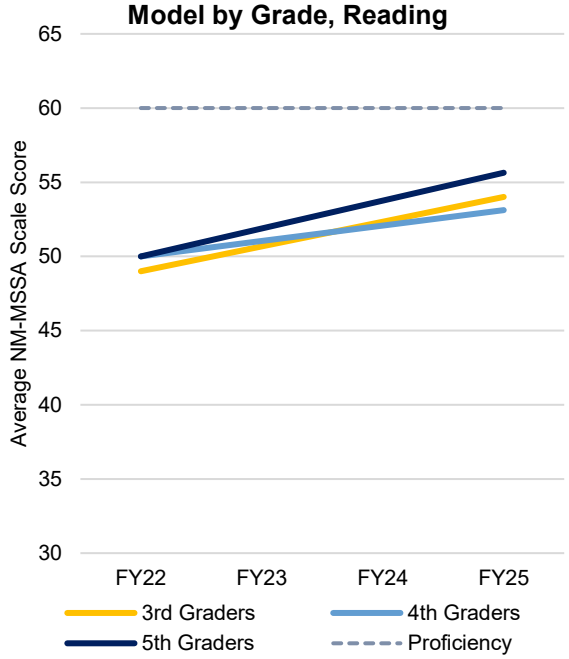
(only 4 points short of proficiency), these students only had a 40 percent chance of reaching proficiency by 11th grade, as measured by the SAT. Additionally, we know from national literature that students tend to make the most growth in elementary school before seeing a plateau during middle school, particularly in math. Thus, part of the apparent difference across cohorts is likely due to the period within a students' K-12 career being sampled for the growth analysis: students measured primarily in elementary school appear to grow more quickly than students who were measured mostly in middle school. Lingering pandemic effects and educational initiatives may also play a role.

Table C. Cohorts in Growth Models

Cohort	Grade in FY22	Grade in FY23	Grade in FY24	Grade in FY25
3rd Grade Cohort	3	4	5	6
4th Grade Cohort*	4	5	6	7
5th Grade Cohort	5	6	7	8

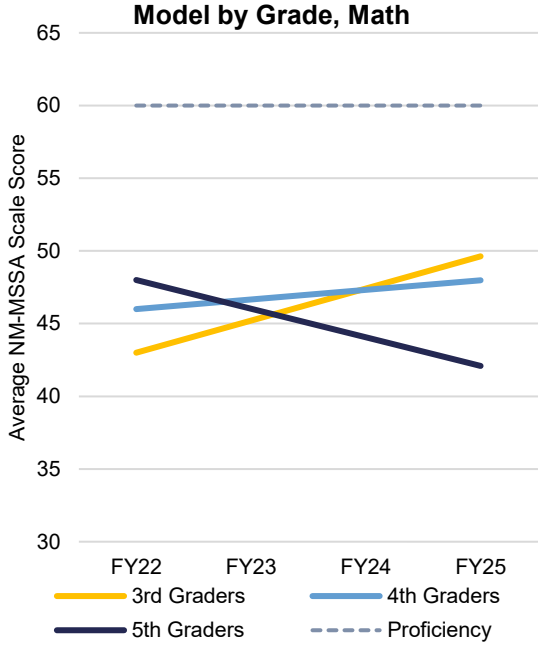
*Cohort featured in main longitudinal analysis.

Chart A. Average Student Growth Model by Grade, Reading



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Chart B. Average Student Growth Model by Grade, Math



Source: LFC analysis of PED data

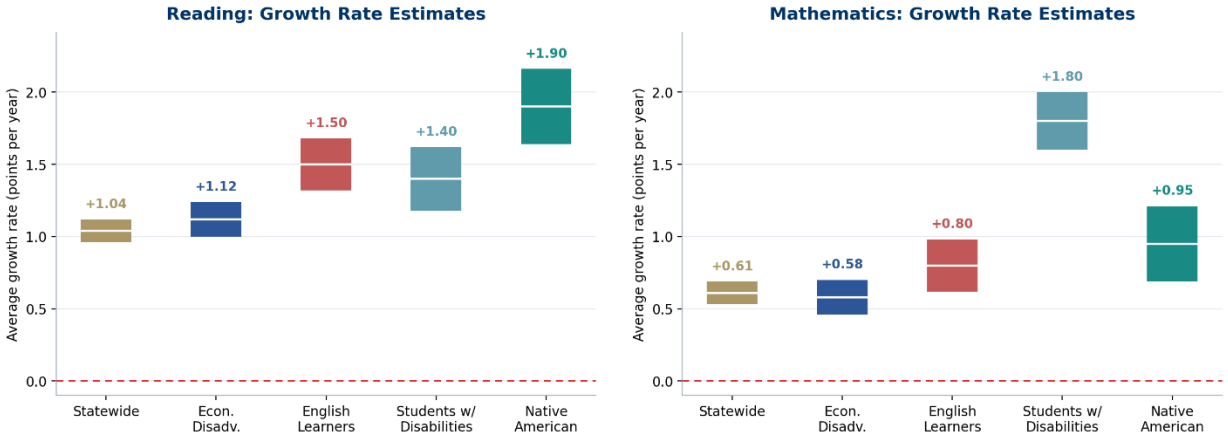
Understanding growth rate uncertainty

Each subgroup's growth rate is an average—a single number that summarizes thousands of individual student trajectories. Two distinct questions follow from that average: how precisely has the model estimated it, and how much do individual students vary around it? The mixed-effects model answers both, and Figure D displays them side by side for mathematics and reading.

The first quantity is the 95 percent confidence interval around each group's average growth rate (the dark bars in the figure). A confidence interval describes the precision of the estimate: if the study were repeated with a new sample of students, the true average growth rate would be expected to fall within this range about 95 percent of the time. A narrow interval means the average is estimated tightly; a wider one means less precision, typically because the subgroup is smaller. For example, the statewide reading average of about 1.04 points per year carries a tight interval of roughly 0.96 to 1.12, whereas smaller subgroups such as Native American students show wider intervals.

The second quantity is the range of individual student growth rates (the light bars), covering roughly the middle 95 percent of students in each group. This range is always far wider than the confidence interval because students vary enormously: within every subgroup, some students gain several scale-score points per year while others lose ground. The negative lower end of each light bar reflects students who are declining year over year. The two should not be confused—the projection lines elsewhere in this report trace each group's average, not a guaranteed path for any individual student. We can locate a group's average growth rate with reasonable confidence even though individual outcomes within that group remain highly variable.

Figure D. Growth rate uncertainty by subgroup, NM-MSSA SY22–SY25



	Reading			Mathematics		
Subgroup	Avg (pts/yr)	95% CI	Student 95% range	Avg (pts/yr)	95% CI	Student 95% range
Statewide	+1.04	0.96 to 1.12	-4.1 to +6.2	+0.61	0.53 to 0.69	-3.8 to +5.0
Econ. Disadvantaged	+1.12	1.00 to 1.24	-4.1 to +6.3	+0.58	0.46 to 0.70	-3.8 to +5.0
English Learners	+1.50	1.32 to 1.68	-3.3 to +6.3	+0.80	0.62 to 0.98	-3.1 to +4.7
Students w/ Disabilities	+1.40	1.18 to 1.62	-4.1 to +6.9	+1.80	1.60 to 2.00	-2.1 to +5.7
Native American	+1.90	1.64 to 2.16	-2.5 to +6.3	+0.95	0.69 to 1.21	-3.4 to +5.3

Comparing students receiving special education services in four-day week and five-day week settings

The second analysis asked whether students grow more slowly in four-day settings than in five-day settings, overall and by subgroup. For the special education subgroup, staff selected students receiving special education services who were in third grade in SY22 and followed them through sixth grade in SY25, yielding 13,030 records for 3,659 students in reading and 13,017 records for 3,654 students in math.

Because these students are grouped within schools and districts, staff used a four-level model: repeated scores within each student, and variation between students, between schools, and between districts. A time-varying indicator recorded whether a student attended a four-day or five-day school each year, and an interaction term allowed the two groups to differ in growth rate as well as in starting score.

In reading, special education students in four-day settings started third grade about 3.8 scale score points higher than their five-day counterparts but grew about 1.1 points more slowly per year. Both estimates are statistically distinguishable from zero at the 95 percent level, though the growth difference only narrowly so, with an upper confidence bound near zero. The two groups' fitted trajectories converge by sixth grade, and both remain well below the proficiency benchmark. In math, the corresponding differences, 0.3 points in starting score and 0.33 points per year in growth, are small and not statistically significant. Parallel models for students who began the period in fourth and fifth grade produced growth differences in the same direction but with standard errors too large to distinguish from zero.

Table C. Linear Mixed Effects Model to Compare Growth Rates of Special Ed Students in four-day and five-day Settings

Fixed Effects	Reading	SE	Math	SE
Average Initial Status	32.4	0.66	30.5	0.65
Average Growth Rate	2.9	0.15	3.25	0.16
four-day	3.8	1.25	0.3	1.3
four-Day * Time	-1.1	0.56	-0.33	0.59
Random Effects	**Variance**	**SD**	**Variance**	**SD**
Temporal variation	147.3	12.1	148.7	12.2
Student initial status	223.4	14.9	217.7	14.8
Student growth rate	6.4	2.5	5.6	2.4
School initial status	9.7	3.1	12	3.5
School growth rate	2.2	1.5	3.3	1.8
District initial status	13.6	3.7	11.9	3.4

Limitations

The strongest caveat concerns the test scale. Both analyses treat NM-MSSA scale scores as if they lie on a common vertical scale across grades, so that a one-point gain means the same thing in grade 4 as in grade 7. The NM-MSSA technical report does not establish such a scale. Without it, growth rates estimated across grades, and particularly the time-to-proficiency figures projected years beyond the four grades observed, should be read as rough indications rather than precise forecasts. The 22.9-year math estimate in particular extends far past the grades in the data and assumes growth remains constant and linear, which is not the case.

The technical report also notes that scale scores carry a margin of error of two to three points, that a student's performance level can shift from year to year, and that NM-MSSA results should be triangulated with other evidence rather than used on their own. Finally, the four-day comparison does not adjust for student or district characteristics that may differ between four-day and five-day settings, so its estimates describe an association between school schedule and outcomes, not a causal effect of the four-day week.

Surveys of District, Charter, and School Leaders

LFC surveyed New Mexico school districts, charter schools, and individual public schools to better understand policies and practices related to instructional time, including how schools allocate that time, whether and how they use K-12 Plus funding, how they respond to attendance data, and how they structure out-of-school time programming. LFC employed the SurveyPlanet platform to conduct two separate, but related surveys: One survey was directed to district and charter leaders and a second was directed to school leaders. Each survey included 20 questions, most of them multiple choice, with a small number of open response queries. Most respondents completed all questions in about 8 minutes.

LFC sent the surveys to the 187 superintendents and charter leaders and 720 principals and school leaders for whom PED provided contact information. The respondents were targeted because they set the instructional calendars, master schedules, and time-use policies that this evaluation examines. Recipients were given two weeks in early April 2026 to respond. The district and charter survey drew 118 responses, a response rate of 63.1 percent, and the school survey drew 176 responses, a response rate of 24.4 percent. Both response rates reflect a representative sample.

The questions LFC asked on the district and charter leader survey were as follows:

1. What district or charter are you answering for? Open response
2. What is your role? Multiple Choice
3. Has your district or charter made any of the following changes to instructional time in the last two years (SY25 or SY26)? Multiple Choice
4. What informed your decision to make changes to instructional time? Multiple Choice
5. Does your district or charter receive K-12 Plus funding? Multiple Choice
6. Which of the following best describes how K-12 Plus funding is used in your district or charter? Multiple Choice
7. To what extent does the current state funding formula create a financial incentive for your district or charter to lengthen the school year (e.g. reduce time students are out of school during the summer)? Multiple Choice
8. In the past two years, what interventions has your district or charter invested in to improve how allocated instructional time is used? Multiple Choice
9. Of the strategies you selected in the previous question, which single one has been your district or charter's highest priority? Multiple Choice
10. In your district or charter, who primarily sets master schedules for individual schools? Multiple Choice
11. Does your district or charter have formal requirements or guidelines for how instructional time is allocated (e.g. minimum minutes for core subjects, intervention blocks)? Multiple Choice
12. To what extent do you agree: "Increasing the amount of time students spend in school is an effective strategy for improving outcomes for struggling students in my district/charter." Multiple Choice

13. When a school is underperforming academically, which of the following time-related data does your central office routinely review? Multiple Choice
14. What factors currently most limit your district or charter's ability to add instructional time? Multiple Choice
15. Which of the following actions has your district or charter taken in response to attendance data in the past two years? Multiple Choice
16. To what extent does your district or charter receive guidance and support from the state regarding student attendance policies and strategies? Multiple Choice
17. Approximately what share of students in your district or charter participate in out-of-school time programming? Multiple Choice
18. What do you consider the primary purpose of out-of-school time programming? Multiple Choice
19. If your district or charter could make a single change to improve the quality or impact of your out-of-school time programming, which would be most important? Multiple Choice
20. If you would be interested in discussing this topic further with LFC in a focus group, please provide a contact email. Open response

The questions LFC asked on the school leader survey were as follows:

1. What school are you answering for? Open response
2. What is your role at the school? Multiple Choice
3. Has your school made any of the following changes to instructional time in the last two years (SY25 or SY26)? Multiple Choice
4. What primarily informed your decision to change instructional time? Multiple Choice
5. Does your school receive K-12 Plus funding? Multiple Choice
6. Which of the following best describes how K-12 Plus funding is used in your school? Multiple Choice
7. Of the time scheduled for instruction in your school, roughly what percentage do you believe becomes active learning time for most students, subtracting out causes of time loss, including announcements, behavioral disruptions, cell phone use, teacher absences etc.? Multiple Choice
8. Does your school receive formal support or guidance on optimizing instructional time (e.g., schedule design, interventions) from your district or central office? Multiple Choice
9. In your school, who primarily designs the master schedule? Multiple Choice
10. What are the most significant constraints on your master schedule? Multiple Choice
11. When you review data about your school's academic performance, which of the following time-related indicators do you regularly examine alongside achievement data? Multiple Choice
12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Time loss is a major barrier to achievement in my school." Multiple Choice
13. What are the most significant sources of instructional time loss in your school? Multiple Choice
14. Which of the following actions has your school taken in response to attendance data in the past two years? Multiple Choice
15. To what extent does your school receive guidance or support from the state regarding student attendance, including the development and use of attendance plans? Multiple Choice
16. Approximately what share of students in your school participate in out-of-school time programming? Multiple Choice
17. What do you consider the primary purpose of out-of-school time programming? Multiple Choice
18. If you could make a single change to improve the quality or impact of your out-of-school time programming, which would be most important? Multiple Choice

19. What single resource or support would help you make better use of instructional time in your school? Open response
20. If you would be interested in discussing this topic further with LFC in a focus group, please provide a contact email. Open response

Attendance Improvement Plan Scoring Rubric and Average Scores

Dimension	Score 1 — Insufficient	Score 2 — Partial	Score 3 — Meets Standard	Average Score (n=100)
Root cause analysis	No root cause identified, or stated root cause is generic/implausible	Root cause named but not linked to data or specific school context	Root cause grounded in specific school data; strategy clearly responds to identified cause	**2.49**
Tier coherence	Same strategy repeated across tiers, or tiers not meaningfully differentiated	Tiers differentiated in title but not in strategy content	Each tier escalates appropriately; cumulative support explicitly acknowledged	**2.59**
Progress monitoring specificity	No data source, baseline, or target named	Vague reference to data (e.g., "attendance rates") without baseline or measurable target	Specific data source, baseline value, and numeric target identified; 40-day cycle referenced	**2.8**
Actionability	Strategy is aspirational only — no named roles, timeline, or concrete steps	Some roles or steps named but incomplete; timeline vague	Named staff, specific actions, clear timeline, and monitoring mechanism all present	**2.74**
Non-punitive framing	Language frames families or students as culpable; punitive measures as primary response	Mostly supportive framing with some punitive language	Consistently non-punitive; barrier-removal and family partnership emphasized throughout	**2.62**
Subpopulation awareness	No mention of specific student groups or differentiated needs	Subgroups mentioned but no differentiated strategy	Strategies explicitly address highest-need subgroups identified in data	**2.44**

Source: LFC analysis of district and charter attendance improvement plans, 202five-26 school year.

Appendix C. Days and Hours by LEA, FY26

	LEA	Week Type	PED Student Instructional Days	Student Calendar Days	K-12 Plus Days	Student Instructional Hours	Total Instructional Hours	
1	21st Century Public Academy	5-Day	170	171	178	1148	1196	1
2	ABQ Charter Academy	4-Day	171	171	176	1112	1142	2
3	Academy For Technology & Classic	5-Day	160	174	176	1111	1141	3
4	Ace Leadership High School	5-Day	181	181	186	1358	1388	4
5	ACES Technical Charter School	5-Day	188	188	197	1254	1306	5
6	Alamogordo Public Schools	5-Day	175	175	183	1116	1163	6
7	Albuquerque Aviation Academy	5-Day	187	187	192	1306	1336	7
8	Albuquerque Bilingual Academy	5-Day	180	180	189	1170	1222	8
9	Albuquerque Collegiate Charter Sch	5-Day	180	180	190	1245	1301	9
10	Albuquerque Institute for Math and S	5-Day	179	179	184	1248	1282	10
11	Albuquerque Public Schools	5-Day	184	184	189	1161	1207	11
12	Albuquerque School of Excellence	5-Day	184	184	192	1158	1204	12
13	Albuquerque Sign Language Acade	5-Day	182	182	190	1175	1226	13
14	Albuquerque Talent Development Ch	4-Day	163	163	168	1136	1166	14
15	Aldo Leopold Charter School	5-Day	187	187	191	1230	1257	15
16	Alice King Community School	4-Day	159	161	168	1090	1145	16
17	Alma D'Arte Charter High School	5-Day	162	181	168	1111	1141	17
18	Altura Preparatory School	5-Day	162	181	170	1093	1153	18
19	Amy Biehl Charter High School	5-Day	170	171	175	1116	1146	19
20	Anansi Charter School	5-Day	181	181	190	1149	1202	20
21	Animas Public Schools	4-Day	151	151	155	1132	1162	21
22	Artesia Public Schools	Mixed	171	172	178	1143	1183	22
23	Aztec Municipal School District	5-Day	170	172	178	1132	1177	23
24	Belen Consolidated Schools	5-Day	174	180	183	1101	1147	24
25	Bernalillo Public School	5-Day	184	184	191	1195	1240	25
26	Bloomfield Schools	5-Day	177	177	184	1159	1204	26
27	Capitan Municipal Schools	4-Day	151	151	158	1125	1170	27
28	Carlsbad Municipal Schools	5-Day	180	181	188	1173	1219	28
29	Carrizozo Municipal Schools	4-Day	151	151	157	1125	1170	29
30	Central Consolidated Schools	5-Day	176	177	183	1132	1176	30
31	Cesar Chavez Community School	4-Day	154	154	159	1112	1142	31
32	Chama Valley Independent School	4-Day	163	163	170	1176	1220	32
33	Christine Duncan Heritage Academy	4-Day	173	173	182	1284	1338	33
34	Cien Aguas International	5-Day	159	182	168	1146	1199	34
35	Cimarron Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	156	1110	1158	35
36	Clayton Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	149	154	1110	1155	36
37	Cloudcroft Municipal Schools	4-Day	150	150	154	1113	1143	37
38	Clovis Municipal Schools	5-Day	172	172	180	1132	1179	38
39	Cobre Consolidate Schools	4-Day	154	154	161	1137	1183	39
40	Coral Community Charter	4-Day	170	170	174	1080	1140	40
41	Corona Public Schools	4-Day	152	152	157	1140	1175	41
42	Corrales International	5-Day	187	187	195	1131	1174	42
43	Cottonwood Classical Preparatory S	5-Day	182	183	188	1158	1194	43
44	Cottonwood Valley Charter	4-Day	159	159	168	1113	1166	44
45	Cuba Independent Schools	4-Day	155	155	160	1106	1141	45
46	Deming Cesar Chavez	4-Day	148	148	153	1110	1140	46
47	Deming Public Schools	5-Day	178	178	185	1183	1230	47
48	Des Moines Municipal Schools	5-Day	170	171	178	1121	1169	48
49	Dexter Consolidated School District	4-Day	155	155	160	1135	1179	49
50	Digital Arts and Technology Academ	4-Day	161	161	166	1195	1225	50
51	Dora Consolidated School	4-Day	148	148	156	1110	1156	51
52	Dream Dine' Charter School	4-Day	144	144	154	1080	1140	52
53	Dulce Independent Schools	5-Day	178	178	184	1205	1251	53
54	Dzil Ditl'ooi School of Empowermen	5-Day	154	170	160	1163	1199	54
55	East Mountain High School	5-Day	193	193	198	1218	1248	55
56	El Camino Real Academy	5-Day	198	198	205	1282	1327	56
57	Elida Municipal Schools	4-Day	150	151	155	1129	1174	57
58	Equip Academy of New Mexico	5-Day	184	184	194	1230	1290	58
59	Espanola Public School District	5-Day	176	176	183	1128	1175	59

	LEA	Week Type	PED Student Instructional Days	Student Calendar Days	K-12 Plus Days	Student Instructional Hours	Total Instructional Hours	
60	Estancia Municipal Schools	4-Day	152	152	158	1139	1183	60
61	Estancia Valley Classical Academy	5-Day	175	175	182	1181	1225	61
62	Eunice Public Schools	5-Day	178	178	178	1116	1146	62
63	Explore Academy	4-Day	169	169	176	1120	1161	63
64	Explore Academy - Las Cruces	5-Day	198	198	204	1117	1151	64
65	Explore Academy - Rio Rancho	4-Day	165	165	174	1108	1160	65
66	Farmington Municipal Schools	5-Day	178	178	185	1105	1150	66
67	Floyd Municipal School District	4-Day	149	149	157	1118	1164	67
68	Fort Sumner Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	156	1110	1154	68
69	Gadsden Independent Schools	5-Day	161	176	172	1110	1155	69
70	Gallup-McKinley County Schools	5-Day	190	190	192	1173	1216	70
71	Gilbert L Sena Charter Hs	5-Day	190	194	196	1386	1416	71
72	Gordon Bernell Charter	5-Day	196	196	201	1274	1304	72
73	Grady Municipal Schools	4-Day	149	149	155	1118	1160	73
74	Grants Cibola County School Distric	5-Day	171	173	178	1148	1192	74
75	Hagerman Municipal Schools	4-Day	154	154	161	1155	1202	75
76	Hatch Valley Public School District	5-Day	173	173	181	1137	1183	76
77	Health Leadership High School	5-Day	184	184	188	1150	1175	77
78	Hobbs Municipal Schools	5-Day	183	183	190	1140	1186	78
79	Hondo Valley Schools	4-Day	148	149	154	1112	1156	79
80	Horizon Academy West	4-Day	152	152	160	1102	1162	80
81	House Municipal Schools	4-Day	146	147	151	1117	1156	81
82	Hozho Academy	5-Day	189	194	197	1202	1247	82
83	Independent School District No 1	4-Day	153	153	157	1129	1159	83
84	J Paul Taylor Academy	5-Day	185	185	192	1211	1264	84
85	Jal Public Schools	4-Day	151	152	157	1110	1151	85
86	Jefferson Montessori	5-Day	164	181	179	1110	1157	86
87	Jemez Mountain School District	4-Day	151	152	158	1135	1182	87
88	Jemez Valley Public Schools	4-Day	153	155	160	1157	1200	88
89	La Academia De Esperanza	5-Day	178	178	183	1141	1171	89
90	La Academia Dolores Huerta	5-Day	176	177	180	1142	1173	90
91	Lake Arthur Municipal Schools	5-Day	166	185	173	1140	1182	91
92	Las Cruces School District	5-Day	181	181	188	1133	1178	92
93	Las Vegas City Schools	5-Day	178	178	186	1162	1209	93
94	Logan Municipal Schools	4-Day	145	146	151	1135	1175	94
95	Lordsburg Municipal Schools	4-Day	150	150	158	1118	1162	95
96	Los Alamos Public Schools	5-Day	183	183	189	1205	1250	96
97	Los Lunas Schools	5-Day	181	181	189	1154	1199	97
98	Los Puentes Charter	5-Day	180	180	185	1215	1245	98
99	Loving Municipal Schools	4-Day	153	153	160	1148	1194	99
100	Lovington Municipal Schools	5-Day	189	189	193	1239	1269	100
101	Magdalena Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	153	1110	1147	101
102	Mark Armijo Academy	5-Day	176	176	181	1144	1174	102
103	MASTERS Program	5-Day	191	191	195	1214	1244	103
104	Maxwell Municipal School	4-Day	148	148	152	1110	1140	104
105	McCurdy Charter School	5-Day	164	164	172	1123	1168	105
106	Melrose Municipal Schools	4-Day	152	153	157	1106	1149	106
107	Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools	4-Day	150	150	157	1118	1162	107
108	Middle College High School	5-Day	161	161	166	1175	1205	108
109	Mission Achievement & Success Ch	5-Day	173	173	182	1112	1162	109
110	Monte del Sol Charter School	5-Day	179	179	184	1131	1161	110
111	Montessori Of The Rio Grande	5-Day	174	174	181	1088	1140	111
112	Mora Independent Schools	4-Day	159	161	166	1160	1208	112
113	Moreno Valley High	4-Day	148	149	153	1110	1140	113
114	Moriarty Edgewood School District	5-Day	182	182	189	1168	1215	114
115	Mosaic Academy Charter	5-Day	170	172	179	1107	1161	115
116	Mosquero Municipal Schools	4-Day	147	147	153	1136	1177	116
117	Mountain Mahogany Community Sch	5-Day	184	184	193	1107	1157	117
118	Mountainair Public Schools	4-Day	154	154	160	1155	1201	118
119	Native American Community Acade	5-Day	177	181	185	1286	1328	119
120	New America School	4-Day	163	163	168	1126	1156	120

	LEA	Week Type	PED Student Instructional Days	Student Calendar Days	K-12 Plus Days	Student Instructional Hours	Total Instructional Hours	
121	New America School Las Cruces	4-Day	156	156	160	1150	1180	121
122	New Mexico Academy for the Media	5-Day	178	179	183	1113	1145	122
123	New Mexico Connections Academy	5-Day	180	180	186	1125	1159	123
124	New Mexico International School	5-Day	156	177	167	1093	1150	124
125	New Mexico School for the Arts	5-Day	184	184	189	1376	1406	125
126	North Valley Academy	5-Day	175	175	185	1086	1143	126
127	Pecos Cyber Academy	5-Day	184	191	191	1298	1335	127
128	Pecos Independent Schools	5-Day	177	177	184	1151	1196	128
129	Penasco Independent School	4-Day	158	160	167	1154	1200	129
130	Pojoaque Valley Schools	5-Day	168	176	174	1146	1189	130
131	Portales Municipal Schools	4-Day	151	151	159	1119	1165	131
132	Public Academy For Performing Arts	5-Day	168	168	174	1230	1265	132
133	Quemado Independent School Distri	4-Day	150	150	158	1125	1170	133
134	Questa Independent Schools	4-Day	155	156	162	1165	1209	134
135	Raices Del Saber Xinachtli Comm S	5-Day	180	180	189	1144	1204	135
136	Raton Public Schools	5-Day	176	177	182	1153	1186	136
137	Red River Valley Charter School	4-Day	153	153	161	1087	1143	137
138	Rio Gallinas School	5-Day	180	180	189	1125	1179	138
139	Rio Grande Academy of Fine Arts	5-Day	185	185	194	1199	1251	139
140	Rio Rancho Public Schools	5-Day	183	183	190	1097	1140	140
141	Robert F. Kennedy Charter	5-Day	185	185	190	1202	1233	141
142	Roots and Wings Community Charte	5-Day	194	194	201	1187	1241	142
143	Roswell Independent School District	5-Day	186	186	192	1191	1235	143
144	Roy Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	155	1110	1155	144
145	Ruidoso Municipal Schools	5-Day	157	176	172	1118	1164	145
146	Sacramento School of Engineering a	5-Day	192	192	196	1284	1314	146
147	San Diego Riverside School	5-Day	191	191	196	1278	1333	147
148	San Jon Municipal Schools	4-Day	149	149	154	1110	1150	148
149	Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Edu	5-Day	184	185	195	1153	1210	149
150	Santa Fe Public Schools	5-Day	155	173	167	1112	1159	150
151	Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools	4-Day	155	155	162	1154	1199	151
152	School of Dreams Academy	5-Day	178	179	185	1154	1196	152
153	Sendero Schl Of Academ & Career	4-Day	163	163	167	1111	1141	153
154	Sidney Gutierrez Middle	5-Day	186	186	190	1209	1238	154
155	Siembra Leadership High School	5-Day	184	191	196	1242	1272	155
156	Silver City Consolidated Schools	Mixed	175	175	181	1114	1149	156
157	Six Directions Indigenous School	5-Day	164	183	170	1167	1199	157
158	Socorro Consolidated Schools	4-Day	154	154	160	1102	1144	158
159	Solare Collegiate Charter School	5-Day	189	189	198	1403	1452	159
160	South Valley Academy	5-Day	185	185	191	1202	1235	160
161	South Valley Preparatory School	5-Day	180	183	185	1194	1228	161
162	Southwest Preparatory Learning Ce	5-Day	188	188	195	1224	1269	162
163	Southwest Secondary Learning	5-Day	178	178	183	1246	1276	163
164	Springer Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	155	1110	1155	164
165	Sun Mountain Community School	5-Day	180	180	190	1080	1140	165
166	T or C Municipal Schools	4-Day	162	162	169	1109	1156	166
167	Taos Academy	4-Day	158	168	164	1210	1244	167
168	Taos Integrated School of the Arts	4-Day	148	148	156	1087	1140	168
169	Taos International School	5-Day	157	157	166	1126	1181	169
170	Taos Municipal Charter	5-Day	182	183	191	1192	1245	170
171	Taos Municipal Schools	5-Day	173	173	174	1124	1167	171
172	Tatum Municipal Schools	4-Day	153	153	155	1148	1162	172
173	Technology Leadership High School	5-Day	166	184	170	1110	1140	173
174	Texico Municipal Schools	4-Day	154	154	158	1149	1182	174
175	The Ask Academy	4-Day	152	154	158	1126	1161	175
176	The Great Academy	4-Day	166	166	171	1134	1165	176
177	The International School At Mesa De	5-Day	180	180	188	1125	1176	177
178	The Montessori Academy	5-Day	186	187	193	1130	1185	178
179	THRIVE Community School	5-Day	185	185	192	1199	1240	179
180	Tierra Adentro of New Mexico	5-Day	180	180	185	1184	1214	180
181	Tierra Encantada Charter School	4-Day	164	164	169	1189	1219	181
182	Tucumcari Public Schools	4-Day	150	150	156	1125	1168	182
183	Tularosa Municipal Schools	4-Day	148	148	154	1100	1145	183
184	Turquoise Trail Charter School	5-Day	179	180	187	1136	1184	184
185	Vaughn Municipal Schools	4-Day	151	151	158	1131	1179	185
186	Vista Grande High School	5-Day	168	169	174	1110	1140	186
187	Voz Collegiate Preparatory Charter	5-Day	179	200	185	1365	1401	187
188	Wagon Mound Public Schools	4-Day	149	149	155	1118	1158	188
189	Walatowa Charter High School	5-Day	168	170	172	1173	1203	189
190	West Las Vegas School District	5-Day	181	181	189	1131	1177	190
191	Zuni Public School District	5-Day	179	182	186	1156	1202	191

Note: All reported values are weighted by school and grade-level student enrollment.

Source: LFC analysis of PED data

Appendix D. Statute

22-2-8.1. School year; length of school day; minimum.

A. Except as otherwise provided in this section, students shall be in school programs, exclusive of lunch, for a minimum of one thousand one hundred forty instructional hours per year, except half-day kindergarten, which shall have five hundred fifty instructional hours per year.

B. An instructional hour is a period at school during which students receive instruction aligned to academic content and performance standards and includes:

(1) a school program set forth in Sections 22-13-1 and 22-13-1.1 NMSA 1978;
(2) enrichment programs that focus on problem solving and cognitive skills development;
(3) content that provides technical knowledge, skills and competency-based applied learning;
(4) research- or evidence-based social, emotional or academic interventions; and
(5) instruction that occurs at the same time breakfast is served or consumed in accordance with the breakfast after the bell program or federal requirements.

C. Up to sixty instructional hours per school year for elementary grades and thirty instructional hours for middle and high school grades may be used for professional work hours, which may be embedded during the course of a normal school day. A "professional work hour" means time during which a teacher participates in professional work aligned to challenging academic content and performance standards, including:

(1) home visiting or parent-teacher conferences;
(2) educator training or professional development; and
(3) mentorship, coaching and collaboration between school employees.

D. Nothing in this section precludes a local school board from setting a school year or the length of school days in excess of the minimum requirements established by Subsection A of this section.

E. The secretary may waive the minimum length of school days in those school districts where such minimums would create undue hardships as defined by the department as long as the school year is adjusted to ensure that students in those school districts receive the same total instructional time as other students in the state.

F. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, provided that instruction occurs simultaneously, time when breakfast is served or consumed pursuant to a state or federal program shall be deemed to be time in a school-directed program and is part of the instructional day.

G. Every general election and regular local election shall be a school holiday for students and staff at each public school in this state.

22-8-23.14. K-12 plus program units; additional program units.

A. A public school operating on a five-day calendar that provides more than one hundred eighty days of instruction, and a public school operating on a four-day calendar that provides more than one hundred fifty-five days of instruction, shall be considered a "K-12 plus school". Each school district or charter

school with a K-12 plus school shall be eligible to receive program units for students in that public school.

B. The number of K-12 plus program units is determined by multiplying the MEM in department-approved K-12 plus schools by the cost differential factor of twelve thousandths and the number of instructional days provided between:

(1) one hundred eighty-one and one hundred ninety instructional days for a public school with a five-day school week; and
(2) one hundred fifty-six and one hundred sixty-five instructional days for a public school with a four-day school week.

C. The number of K-12 plus program units is determined by multiplying the MEM in department-approved K-12 plus schools by the cost differential factor of sixteen thousandths and the number of instructional days provided between:

(1) one hundred ninety-one and two hundred five instructional days for a public school with a five-day school week; and
(2) one hundred sixty-six and one hundred seventy-five instructional days for a public school with a four-day school week.

D. A school district is eligible for the total number of program units calculated in this manner for every K-12 plus school in that school district.

E. No later than October 15 of each year, a school district or charter school that wishes to establish a new K-12 plus school for the next fiscal year shall submit to the department the actual number of students participating in each of its K-12 plus schools in the current year and an estimate of the number of students that the school district or charter school expects will participate in each K-12 plus school in the next year.

F. No later than November 15 of each year, the department shall notify the legislature of the number of students participating in K-12 plus schools in the current school year and the number of students projected to participate in K-12 plus schools in the next school year.

22-8-23.3. At-risk program units.

A. A school district or charter school is eligible for additional program units if it establishes within its department-approved educational plan identified services to assist students to reach their full academic potential. A school district or charter school receiving additional at-risk program units shall include a report of specified services implemented to improve the academic success of at-risk students. The report shall identify the ways in which the school district, charter school and individual public schools use funding generated through the at-risk index and the intended outcomes. For purposes of this section, "at-risk student" means a student who meets the criteria to be included in the calculation of the three-year average rate in Subsection B of this section. The number of additional units to which a school district or charter school is entitled under this section is computed in the following manner:

At-Risk Index x MEM = Units

where MEM is equal to the total district or charter school membership, including early childhood education, full-time-equivalent membership and special education membership and where the at-risk index is calculated in the following manner:

Three-Year Average Rate x 0.40 = At-Risk Index.

B. To calculate the three-year average rate, the department shall compute the preceding three-year average of the school district's or charter school's family income index rate.

C. The department shall recalculate the at-risk index for each school district and charter school every year.

D. For purposes of this section, "services" means research-based or evidence-based social, emotional or academic interventions, such as:

(1) case management, tutoring, reading interventions and after-school programs that are delivered by social workers, counselors, teachers or other professional staff;
(2) culturally relevant professional and curriculum development, including those necessary to support language acquisition, bilingual and multicultural education;
(3) additional compensation strategies for high-need schools;
(4) whole school interventions, including school-based health centers and community schools;
(5) educational programming intended to improve career and college readiness of at-risk students, including dual or concurrent enrollment, career and technical education, guidance counseling services and coordination with post-secondary institutions; and
(6) services to engage and support parents and families in the education of students.

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MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR

June 17, 2026

Dear Chairman Small and members of the Legislative Finance Committee,

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Finance Committee's (LFC's) progress report on instructional time and extended learning opportunities in public schools. We welcome the dialogue about our collective investments and commitments and recognize that continuous improvement requires collaboration and shared accountability.

PED understands that increased instructional time alone may not guarantee improved student outcomes. However, when coupled with additional evidence-based strategies, increased instructional time provides the opportunity for students to receive the learning and support services they need to succeed. A recent review of 74 studies by the University of Oregon found that time in school matters for student achievement. The University of Oregon report includes recommendations that schools maintain or add hours, shift start times and schedules that support student needs while maintaining time in school, and utilize instructional time more effectively. In response to such relevant research findings, PED has made efforts to add instructional time and implement best practices in school scheduling, however, some of PED's efforts to affect change through rule have been met with opposition.

As the LFC report results show, New Mexico has not realized the full return on its investments intended to increase instructional time. We have seen the number of days students spend in school essentially remain flat for nearly two decades despite increased funding. In addition, more districts and charter schools are moving to a four-day week calendar, increasing in number from 58 in the 2024-2025 school year to 85 in the coming 2026-2027 school year. This will result in additional districts and charter schools having fewer instructional days.

According to New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee legislative staff briefs, the K-12 Plus Program (established by House Bill 130 in 2023) was designed in response to lessons learned from K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time Program, emphasizing key policy pillars that include incentivizing additional time in school with significant funding and supporting

embedded professional work time. Unfortunately, this legislation also incentivized four-day school week schedules due to the additional revenue that is generated for schools with those calendars. In addition, the LFC has found that one-third of school district and charter school leaders disagree that adding instructional time improves outcomes for struggling students, further impeding the state's efforts to increase instructional time.

PED understands that improving student outcomes requires a multi-faceted approach. PED supports increased instructional time, strategic master scheduling, developmentally appropriate start times, embedded interventions throughout the school day, and targeted out-of-school time interventions. PED agrees with the progress report recommendation to amend the K-12 Plus formula to ensure additional, high-quality student learning time while eliminating financial incentives that reward practices that are not likely to improve student outcomes.

PED also welcomes the LFC progress report's recommendations that seek to improve department operations, including data collection and public reporting, program monitoring, and professional development and technical assistance. These recommendations should include additional resources for the agency to support this work.

We ask for your continued commitment and partnership in implementing strategies that address effective use of instructional time. Given the long history of the extended learning time program in New Mexico, including statutory changes, regulatory revisions, and – most recently – judicial intervention, PED recognizes that this is an initiative that cannot successfully be addressed without a collaborative and a coordinated approach. It is clear that forward progress on this issue will be difficult to achieve without the necessary statutory and consequent legal authority to act.

PED looks forward to working with you on addressing the pressing concerns outlined in your report.

Sincerely,

Mariana D. Padilla

Mariana D. Padilla
Secretary of Public Education
New Mexico Public Education Department