

Legislative Finance Committee  
Program Evaluation Unit

Program Evaluation: Assessing  
“Time-on-Task” and Efforts To Extend  
Learning Time

May 10, 2016

Report #16-04

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May 10, 2015

Ms. Hanna Skandera, Secretary  
Public Education Department  
Jerry Apodaca Education Building  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Secretary Skandera:

On behalf of the Legislative Finance Committee, I am pleased to transmit the evaluation, *Assessing "Time-on-Task" and Efforts to Extend Learning Time*. The evaluation analyzed the characteristics of time-on-task in New Mexico public schools, the differences in learning time among schools serving a variety of student populations, and research-based best practices to promote time-on-task.

This report will be presented to the Legislative Finance Committee on May 10, 2016. An exit conference to discuss the contents of the report was conducted with the Public Education Department on May 5, 2016.

I believe this report addresses issues the Committee asked us to review and hope New Mexico's education system will benefit from our efforts. We very much appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Abbey".

David Abbey, Director

Cc: Senator John Arthur Smith, Chairman, Legislative Finance Committee  
Representative Jimmie C. Hall, Vice-Chairman, Legislative Finance Committee  
Representative Dennis J. Roch, Chairman, Legislative Education Study Committee  
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Ms. Rachel Gudgel, Director, Legislative Education Study Committee  
Dr. Tom Clifford, Secretary, Department of Finance and Administration  
Keith Gardner, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor



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## Nearly a third of instructional time is lost during a school year.

Most of New Mexico’s public school students do not perform at academic grade level, with most starting out behind the first day of school and staying behind their entire academic careers. Too many of these students eventually drop out and experience the damaging long term impacts of low educational attainment in an economy that requires new and ever increasing skill and education levels. Across New Mexico, teachers and students are racing against time in order to teach and learn, while supporting social and emotional growth as well. How much time is made available for instruction and how it is used, referred as “time-on-task” in this report, is critical to an effective education system. The Legislature over the past decade has shown interest in available instruction time, from efforts to increase the number of school days overall, and in a targeted way through the K-3 Plus extended school year program.

This evaluation assessed the time available for instruction in New Mexico public schools, factors that cause lost instruction time, and how those factors impact student achievement and different student populations. The evaluation also reviewed research-based best practices to promote time-on-task and their use by schools. The evaluation used a statewide representative survey of teachers and principals, along with administrative data, to assess how instructional time is used across the state.

New Mexico has established minimum hour requirements for instructional time, either on a per day or per year basis that, if implemented, would result in a standard 180 day school calendar. Public schools have used this flexibility to implement a wide variety of school calendars and school days. Almost all have implemented extended schools days, and as a result most have shorter school years of about 167 days and still exceed yearly requirements for instructional hours.

Much of this instructional time made available for learning, however is lost to other non-instructional activities or impacted by absences. Elementary students, for example, lose well over a third of instructional time, even after accounting for the extra time schools have built in above state minimums. The more lost time per school corresponds directly with lower student achievement. The state lacks a framework and attention to maximizing the use of existing instructional time and ensuring investments in extended time programs (K-3 Plus) are implemented correctly to ensure instructional time results in academic success.

The evaluation recommends the Legislature continue investments in strategies that result in increased instructional time, implement better accountability measures for public schools’ flexible use of at-risk funding and the school calendar, and for PED and public schools to create a framework for assessing and maximizing the effective use of instructional time through a collaborative process of evaluation, technical assistance and professional development.

***Elementary students lose over sixty-two instructional days to non-instructional time, including absences, test preparation, discipline, and teachers’ administrative duties in New Mexico public schools.***

***This report used statewide administrative data and a survey of teachers and principals representing almost 70 percent of schools across New Mexico to assess the use of instructional time.***



## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ***Students lose 32 percent of instructional time per year.***

New Mexico requires public schools to allocate a minimum number of instructional hours as 990 hours for elementary students and 1,080 hours for secondary students. Public schools have the flexibility to set a shorter school calendar, and thus days, by adding time to each day. To accomplish meeting the statutory minimum hours, school districts often exceed the minimum hourly requirements per day, and shorten the school year.

Thirty-two percent of allotted time equates to about 62 standard instructional days. Of the possible 194 available instructional days, 62 are lost due to a variety of factors. Instructional time is lost to such factors as late starts, recess, and breakfast after the bell. On average, elementary students lose two days of instructional time to breakfast. Teacher absenteeism also contributes to the decrease in time-on-task.

Attendance, truancy, and "discipline are critical factors impacting instructional days. Encouraging students to attend school and connecting with students and families to emphasize the importance of attendance are important responsibilities for school districts. In previous LFC evaluations, chronic absenteeism was a factor in low rates of student achievement and low-performing schools. Chronic absenteeism can dramatically affect student success and is a major indicator of dropout risk.

Preparation for assessments results in 10 days of lost instructional time. According to "PED, up to "two percent of instructional "time is lost "to administration of standardized assessments. Other factors that lead to lost instructional time are breakfast after the bell, teacher absenteeism, "student absenteeism, and re-teaching. Early release days and poor scheduling may also contribute to the ineffective use of time.

As instructional time is spent on other activities, student achievement decreases. An LFC survey asked teachers to quantify instructional time lost, not counting student or teacher absences. When controlling for other factors including poverty, there is a statistically significant relationship between reading SBA scores and lost instructional time for both elementary and secondary teachers surveyed. As instructional time lost increases, SBA scores decrease.

### ***Lost instructional time directly impacts student achievement.***

Research shows high-poverty and English Learners (EL) schools tend to have more lost learning time. In addition to LFC survey results, data from PED on student and teacher absences also show that schools with more low-income students lose more instructional days out of the school year. In addition, English learners spend more time on state-mandated assessments and therefore more time out of the classroom than English speakers.

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Extended school year programs such as K-3 Plus have shown positive results of student achievement statewide when administered with fidelity. The state provides K-3 Plus, a program designed to increase time in kindergarten and the early grades to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students. The program extends the school year for kindergarten through third grades by 25 instructional days beginning before school starts. The state needs to ensure schools implement the program correctly to get positive student outcomes. Since FY 13, \$95 million has been appropriated to PED for K-3 Plus summer program and the PED FY17 budget includes \$23.7 million for the 2016 K-3 Plus program.

Time for learning is important, but more time alone will not increase academic achievement. Additional time must be used efficiently and effectively. Schedules should be optimized to allow for the maximum amount of academic learning time. In schools where allocated time is not used properly, adding time to the day is ineffective, costly, and a poor use of scarce resources. Without efficient planning, the addition of an additional hour of instruction will not increase student achievement.

Most school districts are not conducting comprehensive quality time analyses to create a culture that values time-on-task. Maximizing academic learning time (ALT) or time-on-task increases student achievement. Although many school districts employ best practices to maximize ALT, few if any are assessing current time use or conducting internal studies to increase ALT. Of the 15 largest school districts in New Mexico none have conducted a comprehensive study on time-on-task, instructional time or academic learning time.

***State policies do not maximize time-on-task best practices.***

New Mexico does not have a comprehensive framework for measuring available learning time. The majority of teachers in New Mexico indicate having received little to any professional development on time-on-task. Sixty-nine percent of elementary teachers and 74 percent of secondary teachers state they have received no professional development or a little professional development in the past three years on time-on-task.

PED instructional audits do not specifically address time-on-task or maximizing instructional time. Although, instructional audits are to be conducted annually at schools with a “D” or “F” grade as part of the grading accountability system PED did not conduct audits in FY16 and will not in FY17.

PED includes language associated with time-on-task in the Teachscape evaluation rubric. New Mexico has time-on-task language in their teacher framework in NMTEACH domain 2D and teachers are generally evaluated at performing effective or above at over a 95 percent rate.

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# Recommendations

## The Legislature should

Continue increased funding for K-3 Plus and include directives to PED in the GAA.

Continue to increase the at-risk index and add accountability measures for districts and charters schools to demonstrate use of funding to improve performance of at-risk students as part of the budget approval process.

Repeal parent-teacher conferences (PTC) and home visits from counting towards instructional hours. School districts and charter schools may conduct these activities in addition to instructional hours.

Require the Public Education Department to mandate early release schedules.

Increase minimum instructional time by equalizing elementary and secondary school hourly requirements.

## The Public Education Department should

Through the budget process enhance verification of school calendar and time calculations reported by school districts and charter schools.

Fully implement the Early Warning System to track at-risk students.

Work with K-3 Plus schools to increase the number of classrooms where a teacher stays with K-3 Plus students. Report to LFC and LESC the number of classrooms implementing the program with fidelity.

Continue to collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure program approval requirements pay sufficient attention to practices leading to improved time-on-task.

Provide the LFC with audit findings or conduct an audit of testing time and test preparation time statewide.

Develop a framework for guidance for districts to maximize learning time, including appropriate tools, infrastructure, professional development, and how to perform quality time analysis.

## School Districts should

Ensure best practices and effective strategies are being used to maximize time-on-task.

Reallocate professional development to teachers to increase the amount of time students are engaged in academic learning.

Conduct comprehensive quality time analyses to create a culture that values time-on-task.

Analyze Teachscape data for trend analysis and use in professional development.

**“Time-on-task” represents the time students are engaged in academic learning.**

## Overview

In FY16, nearly 340 thousand students enrolled in New Mexico public schools. Critical to an effective education is the amount, and use, of the limited times these students will have during the school year to master content and grow socially and emotionally. The state requires a minimum of 5.5 hours per day, or 990 instructional hours per year for elementary students and 6 hours per day or 1,080 instructional hours per year for secondary students. Local school districts and charter schools, however, have significant flexibility to determine a master calendar, school day length, start and finish times, and the bell schedules at each school.

Research shows a clear link between learning time and academic success. The vast majority of New Mexico children start school far behind expectations on the first day of kindergarten, according to past LFC evaluations, and many make academic progress but not enough to close the achievement gap. This problem of “catch up growth” is especially acute among low-income, English learner (EL), and Native American students. As such, this evaluation assesses how much time students are actively engaged in learning or time-on-task. This evaluation used a statewide survey of teachers and principals, as well as interviews with superintendents from 15 of the largest schools districts and site visits statewide (Appendix B) to focus on analyzing the characteristics of time-on-task in New Mexico public schools, the differences in learning time among schools serving a variety of student populations, and research-based best practices to promote time-on-task.

## LFC Survey Methodology

LFC designed principal, secondary teacher, and elementary teacher surveys based on the survey used by UCLA in the 2014 study, *It’s About Time: Learning Time and Educational Opportunity in California High Schools*. LFC interviewed author Dr. John Rogers on the survey questions, results, and respondent rate. Superintendents and charter school directors statewide were sent an email with links to the survey. Teacher surveys included 14 questions with ordinal scale, interval scale, multiple-choice, ratio scale, and open-ended questions. Principal surveys included 25 multiple choice, ordinal scale, ratio scale, and open-ended questions.

The response rate was 21 percent statewide for teachers, including 2,373 elementary teachers, 2,399 secondary teachers, and 33 percent for principals, including 370 school principals and charter directors. Sixty-five of the 89 school districts (73 percent), 596 of the 863 schools statewide (69 percent), and 58 of the 97 charter schools (61 percent) are represented in the sample.

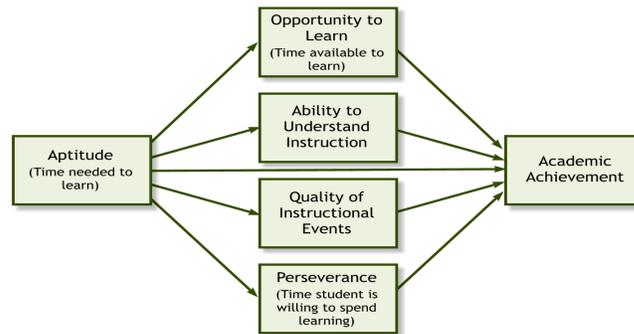
Telephone and on-site interviews were conducted with superintendents and leadership staff from 12 of the 15 largest school districts statewide. In addition, site visits were conducted with 14 schools located in Albuquerque Public Schools, Deming Public School, Las Cruces Public Schools, and Rio Rancho Public Schools. Schools visited were chosen by LFC in conjunction school districts.

The time-on-task analysis was calculated through survey data, student demographics, and student performance data. LFC also analyzed statewide Student Based Assessment (SBA) data and data from student and teacher absences.

## Research

Nearly 90 years ago in 1928, researchers first noted the wasteful consumption of instructional time. However, Carroll’s 1963 research began the study of learning time which stated that learning is a function of time engaged relative to time needed for learning.

**Chart 1. Time-on-Task Formula for Academic Achievement**



Source: Carroll (1963) and Educational Designer

In 1973, Gilman replicated Pressey’s 1928 study and found the school day was characterized by organizational inefficiencies and administrator and teacher mismanagement. The seminal study on time-on-task is the 1980 *California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study* (BTES), which evaluated second through fifth grade students and identified teaching activities, and classroom conditions to advance student learning. The BTES study also provided factors that limit learning or cause students to lose interest during the allocated timeframe such as uneven transitions between activities, and inefficient classroom management procedures that disrupt the flow of learning. The 1994 study *Prisoners of Time, the National Education and Commission on Time and Learning* (NCTL) reported the “misuse of time” was having harmful effects on student achievement. The Commission concluded that “reclaiming the academic day” by implementing better policies and practices would almost double the amount of core curriculum instructional time.

A 2014 University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access study, *It’s About Time: Learning Time and Educational Opportunity in California High Schools*, looked at the difference between high- and low-poverty high schools across California. Teachers at high-poverty schools had an increase in non-teaching responsibilities in order to meet the needs of students. At high-poverty

schools an extra hour per week was spent on non-instructional needs and 20 minutes per day was spent on extra academic support. Students in high-poverty communities experienced less organized learning time after school and during summer than their more affluent peers. The study concluded that high-poverty schools had a greater loss of instructional time.

**Table 1. Time-On-Task at High-Poverty High Schools, UCLA Study**

Impacts on Learning Time	Description	Examples
Community stressors and school conditions	Students are more impacted by economic and social stressors as well as lack of essential learning conditions.	Hunger; lack of health care; caring for family members; and community violence are challenges students face. 39 percent chance one stressor will affect high-poverty students compared to 13 percent of low-poverty students.
Non-teaching responsibilities	To meet student needs learning time is lost.	In an average week teachers at high-poverty schools spend an extra hour in non-teaching responsibilities than counterparts at low-poverty schools. More than 20 minutes per day is used to provide extra academic support at high-poverty schools.
Teacher absences and substitute teachers	Absences for professional development or illness and lack of qualified substitutes or long-term substitutes.	Insufficient qualifications or higher number of long-term substitutes at high-poverty schools. High-poverty schools lose 4 more days than low-poverty schools in teacher absences.
Special days and disrupted days	School breaks and activities or planned and unplanned disruptions.	High-poverty schools average more lost time than low-poverty schools. High-poverty schools have more assemblies, emergency lock-downs, and disruptions.
Instruction and assessments	Mandated instruction and state/district assessments.	Students at high-poverty schools spend 8 testing days compared to 4 for low-poverty schools.

Source: UCLA – *It's About Time*

The UCLA study targeted additional conditions that led to loss of instructional time:

- Compressed schedule;
- Labor agreement encouraging the early departure of teachers from school;
- Problems with the physical plant;
- High absenteeism;
- High mobility rates;
- Inadequate substitutes; and
- Testing pressures.

Research about time-on-task may be explained using three key concepts: allocated time, engaged time, and academic learning time as noted in table 2. Allocated time is the amount of time available for learning. Engaged time is amount of time students are active during allocated time. Most important is academic learning time, or the quality of engaged time that results in learning.

**Table 2. Time-on-Task Terminology**

Concept	Description
Allocated time	Total amount of time available for learning; e.g. the length of the school day or a class period.
Engaged time	The more engaged time students have, the higher they achieve. Highly interactive instructional styles lead to greater amounts of student engaged time, and consequently, increased student learning.
Academic learning time	Amount of time students spend actively working on tasks of an appropriate difficulty. Targeted instruction of a new concept or skill leads to student success at least 75 percent of the time. *Assisting teachers and schools to manage instructional time improves academic performance.

Source: BTES

\*University of Wisconsin-Madison – *Best Practices in Increasing Academic Learning Time*

## Allocated Time

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) study estimates the average length of the school day for public schools nationwide is just under seven hours and the average school year is almost 180 days. In terms of

instructional hours per year, schools with the most time average almost 1,350 hours compared to about 1,200 hours nationally. Neighboring states Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah require a minimum of hours that may equal to 180 instructional days like New Mexico.

**Table 3. Instructional Time Requirements in New Mexico and Neighboring States, FY16**

State [Citation]	Minimum Instructional Time			Minimum Instructional Hours to Count as One Day	School Start and Finish Time
	Days	Grade	Hours		
Arizona [ARIZ.REV.STAT.§ 15-341.01]	180 days	Kindergarten	356	4 ( excluding lunch and recess)	School District option
		1-3	712		
		4-6	890		
		7-8	1000		
		9-12	At least 4 subjects meeting at least 720		
Colorado [COLO.REV.STAT. § 22-32-109(1)(n)]	160 days	Half-day K	435	na	School District option
		Full-day K	870		
		1-5	968		
		6-12	1056		
New Mexico [N.M. STAT.ANN. §§ 22-8-9(A)(1), 22-2-8.1]	180 days	Half-day K	450	Half-day K -2.5 Full-day K -5.5 Grades 1-6 -5.5 Grades 7-12 -6 (excluding lunch)	School District option
		Full-day K	990		
		1-6	990		
		7-12	1080		
Oklahoma [OKLA.STAT.tit.70, § 1-109]	180 days	1-6	900	6	School District option
		7-12	1080 (includes 6 hours/semester for parent-teacher conferences)		
Texas [TEX.EDUC.CODE ANN. §§ 25.081, 0811]	180 days	na	na	7 ( including recess and break hours)	Start no earlier than the fourth Monday in August
Utah [UTAH ADMIN. CODE R277-419-3(A), 4(C)]	180 days	Kindergarten	450	na	School District option
		Grade 1	810		
		Grades 2-12	990		

Source: Education Commission of the States (ECS)

## Engaged Time

Engaged time is the portion of instructional time that students spend directly involved in learning activities according to the study *Engaged Time in the Classroom*. Teachers must achieve authentic engagement to increase student achievement and increased academic learning time. To assure students can meet standards with a high degree of success, the teacher must engage in systematic planning and use academic materials appropriate for the students' performance level. Much of the research done on effective instruction has used engaged time as the measure of students' use of time and the appropriateness of the curriculum. Research indicates five levels of student engagement as shown in table 4.

**Table 4. Five Levels of Student Engagement**

Engagement	Explanation	Classroom Observations
Authentic	Students immersed in work with clear meaning and immediate value.	Engaged classroom - Students engaged most of the time. Little passive compliance or retreatism. No rebellion.
Ritual Compliance	Class work with little or no meaning to students, but with extrinsic value to keep students engaged.	Traditional Classroom – most classrooms fall into these two categories. Classrooms are orderly and most students appear to be working. Easy to infer authentic learning is taking place.
Passive Compliance	Students see little or no meaning in class work but expend effort to avoid negative consequences.	
Retreatism	Students disengaged from class work and do not comply, but not disruptive to the learning of others.	Off-task Classroom – teachers spend most of the time dealing with discipline issues rather than engaged learning.
Rebellion	Students refuse to do assigned task, disruptive, and/or substitute alternative activities to class work.	

Source: Reading Horizons

## Academic Learning Time

Although allocated time and engaged time are important, academic learning time (ALT), or the amount of time students are actively engaged in meaningful learning per day, is the most vital for increasing student achievement. Academic learning time is an instructional time variable important in research, evaluation, and auditing and is a measure of the quality of instruction.

Research has shown a strong positive relationship between the amount of academic learning time and student achievement. However, there is no relationship between allocated time and student achievement if the allocated time is not used effectively and efficiently, according to the Harvard Family Research Project study among other sources. Extending time alone is not sufficient for achievement if there is not engaging academic learning time.

## Extended School Year and School Day

A 2014 New York State Education Department (NYSED) study found four options for increased time-on-task as detailed in table 5. NYSED also asked school districts to keep the following considerations in mind when creating programs:

- Facilitate student attainment of the NYS learning standards.
- Benefit students with the greatest educational needs including: English learners, students in poverty, and students with disabilities.
- Benefit students in schools identified as requiring academic progress, in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
- Develop practices supported by research as to their effectiveness in raising achievement.
- Create sustained professional development.
- Supplement, not supplant, funds allocated by the school district in the base year for such purposes.

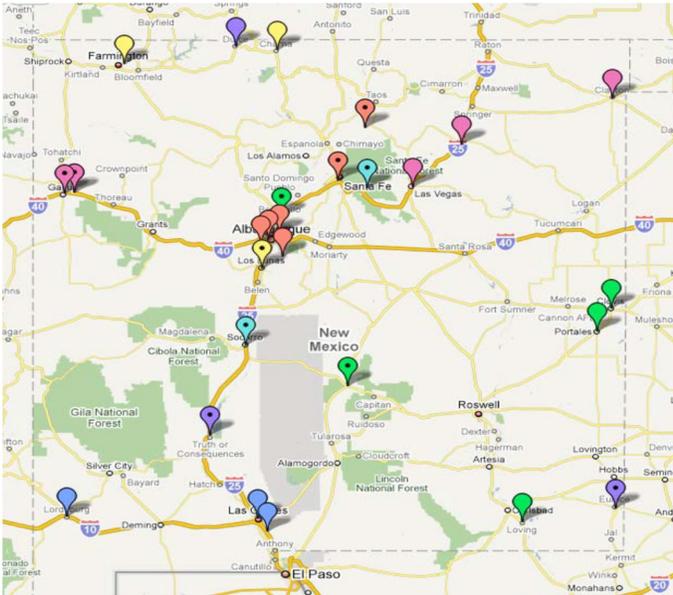
**Table 5. NYSED Increased Time-on-Task Study**

Option	Essential Elements
Extended school day	Additional instruction provided at the middle and high school level, to emphasize content areas and instruction in subjects required for graduation. Student support services to include, but not limited to: guidance, counseling, attendance, behavioral support, parent outreach or instruction in study skills to improve academic performance.
Extended school year	Additional school days used to provide additional instruction. Student support services to include, but not limited to: guidance, counseling, attendance, behavioral support, parent outreach or instruction in study skills to improve academic performance.
Dedicated instructional time	Daily dedicated block(s) of time for instruction in content areas to facilitate student attainment of state learning standards. Research-based core instructional program to be provided during such daily dedicated block(s). Frequent monitoring of student progress to inform instruction, student assessments to diagnose needs, and/or individualized intensive intervention.
Individualized tutoring	Emphasis on content areas to facilitate student attainment of state learning standards targeted at students who are at risk of not meeting the standards. Supplement the instruction provided in the general curriculum. In the secondary level, will emphasize content areas and instruction in subjects required for graduation. May be provided by a certified teacher, a paraprofessional, a person with a major or minor in the subject matter to be tutored, or anyone otherwise deemed qualified by the superintendent.

Source: NYSED

The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) primarily supports extended learning time for public schools through the School Improvement Grants program (SIG). The SIG program, with an average three-year grant of \$2.6 million per school, is the only DOE program that provides funds specifically to establish extended learning time in schools. Nearly 1,800 schools nationwide that received SIG funds (about 94 percent of SIG schools) were required to extend learning time under the SIG program for school years 2011-2015.

**Figure 1. CCLCs in New Mexico**



Source: PED

Four public schools also participate in the NCTL database for schools that provide extended time. The schools are Crownpoint High School, Gallup-McKinley County School District; Cien Aguas International Charter School in Albuquerque; Newcomb Elementary School, Central Consolidated School District; and Ramirez Thomas Elementary School, Santa Fe Public Schools.

In addition, New Mexico receives federal 21st Century grant funding. The goals for the 21st Century grant program in New Mexico are to improve student academic achievement in reading and mathematics and promote positive youth development through youth and family programming. Twenty-first Century learning centers (CCLC) are located throughout New Mexico.

### K-3 Plus

New Mexico is increasing allocated time in high-poverty schools by extending the school year by 25 days for participating students. Table 6 shows state funding for the program from FY13 to FY17.

**Table 6. State K-3 Plus Appropriations FY13 to FY17**

Criteria for Services	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17
Appropriation (in millions)	\$11	\$15.9	\$21.2	\$23.7	\$23.7
Estimated Number of Students Served	9,600	13,400	18,056	19,154	18,137
LFC Estimated Average Cost per Client	\$861	\$1,190	\$1,231	\$1,237	\$1,307

Source: LFC

## Students lose 32 percent of available instructional time per year.

### New Mexico requires public schools to allocate a minimum number of instructional hours equivalent to 180 calendar days.

Minimum allocated instructional time includes 990 hours for elementary students and 1,080 hours for secondary students. Although the State does not include minimal instructional days in statute, for the purposes of this study, days were calculated as 5.5 hours for elementary students and 6.0 hours for secondary students as provided in State statute.

**Section 22-2-8.1 School year; length of school day; minimum. [New Mexico Statutes (2015 Edition)]**

- A. Except as otherwise provided in this section, regular students shall be in school-directed programs, exclusive of lunch, for a minimum of the following:
  - (1) kindergarten, for half-day programs, two and one-half hours per day or four hundred fifty hours per year or, for full-day programs, five and one-half hours per day or nine hundred ninety hours per year; (2) grades one through six, five and one-half hours per day or nine hundred ninety hours per year; and (3) grades seven through twelve, six hours per day or one thousand eighty hours per year.
- B. Up to thirty-three hours of the full-day kindergarten program may be used for home visits by the teacher or for parent-teacher conferences. Up to twenty-two hours of grades one through six programs may be used for home visits by the teacher or for parent-teacher conferences. Up to twelve hours of grades seven through twelve programs may be used to consult with parents to develop next step plans for students and for parent-teacher conferences.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

Public schools have the flexibility to set a shorter school calendar, and thus days, by adding time to each day (Appendix C). Lunch time must be excluded from the calculation, however, the State counts time for parent-teacher conferences or home visits towards allocated instructional time. Public schools can set allocated instructional time around these minimums. State law requires compliance with these minimum instructional time requirements and prohibits PED from approving a school district or charter budget out of compliance. Recently, PED recommended closing a charter school, in-part, due to non-compliance with instructional time requirements.

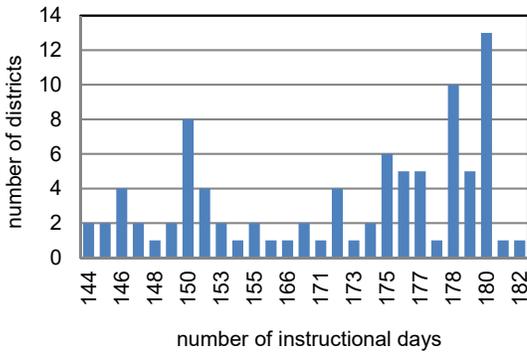
**Almost all districts report they exceed the statutory minimum number of hours, but deliver instruction with about 167 days.** To accomplish meeting the statutory minimum hours, school districts often exceed the minimum hourly requirements per day, and shorten the school year. For example, increased daily hours and minutes added on average an additional 8 percent above the minimum, or the equivalent of 14 standard elementary school days. If hours are converted to days assuming a 5.5 hour school day, districts average 194 instructional days

**Table 7. Additional Hours (Days) of Instruction Over Statutory Minimum Hours**

	Weighted Mean Elementary	Weighted Mean High School
Additional Hours	78.5	64.9
Converted to Additional Days (5.5 hours Elementary, 6.5 hours High School)	14.3	10.8

Source: LFC Analysis

**Chart 2. Instructional Days Statewide**



Source: PED

It is unclear whether or how often PED validates this self-reported data. LFC staff spot checked some district reports and found instances of over-reporting and underreporting of instructional time, days or hours.

Eighty-three percent of districts do not provide 180 instructional days. The length of school year ranges from 144 days to 182 days as shown in chart 2. Again, these districts have to add hours or minutes to each day to meet the total hour requirements. For example, many micro school districts, those with less than 200 students, have four school days per week for over 6.5 and sometimes 7.5, hours per day versus the standard 5.5 for elementary students.

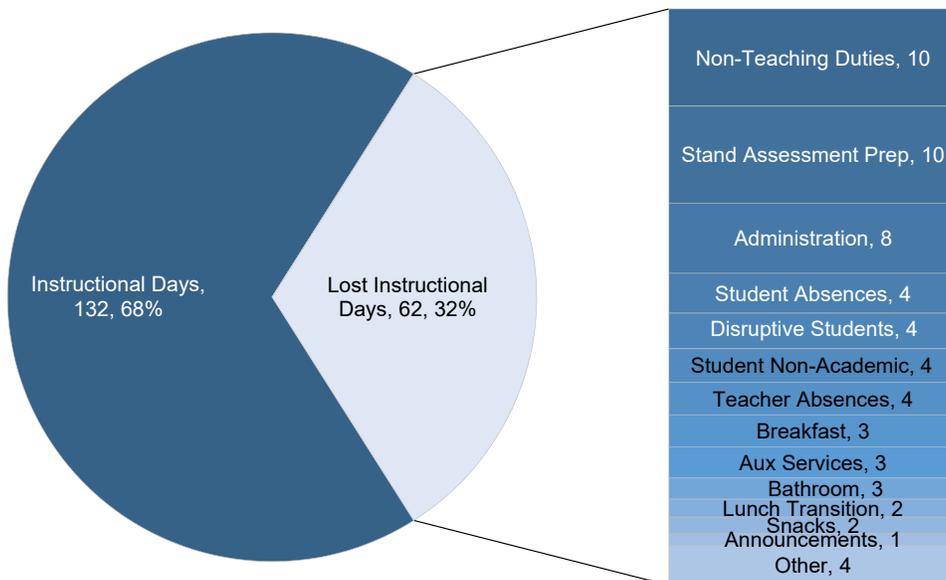
About 128 thousand students are in school districts that allocate 180 days or more. About nine thousand students are in districts less than 150 days and 187 thousand for districts allocating 151 to 179 instructional days.

Despite low academic achievement, New Mexico requires 90 fewer instructional hours, or 15 days, for elementary students than secondary students. Given research on early childhood development and the importance of early literacy, it is unclear why the state requires 90, almost ten percent less, fewer instructional hours, than it does for middle and high school students. This approach of having a shorter day for the same calendar is common among states. However, 25 percent of New Mexico kindergarteners enter school below grade level, one in five cannot identify a single letter, 61 percent are not enrolled in a publicly funded pre-school program, and 74 percent are not ready at grade level by third grade. Almost

all districts exceed their minutes and would not incur costs to raise New Mexico standards. Elementary students still have less allocated learning time on average than secondary students.

**Chart 3. Instructional Days (194 Total Days Available\*)**

\*Includes conversion of 990 hours to 180 days plus 14 additional days reported by districts



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

Note: Other includes Tardies, Delay to start class, Class transitions, Sports and Clubs, and Taking Attendance Does not include eight days of missed instructional days due to reteaching, or the almost four days spent administering PARCC

**Students lose an estimated 32 percent of allocated instructional time, or about 62 standard instructional days.**

Of the possible 194 available instructional days, 62 are lost due to a variety of factors. According to data from PED, the average student is absent five days per school year, and teachers miss an average of 3.5 days per school year.

Additionally, according to the LFC elementary teacher survey, bathroom breaks, announcements and other distractions add up to 10.5 days. The average teacher reports losing about 43 instructional days per year to duties not related to time-on-task totaling 62 lost instructional days per year, such as testing, test preparation student absences, and others.

**New Mexico teachers reported an additional eight days of instruction was lost to re-teaching in elementary schools.** LFC survey results indicated eight additional instructional days are lost to re-teaching in New Mexico public schools. These hours are not included in the lost time calculations above, but do contribute to potential sub-optimal time-on-task. In the UCLA study *It's About Time*, high-poverty schools were found to face more barriers in implementing learning experiences, like test-based accountability, dealing with school emergencies, providing social/emotional counseling, discussing community problems, and addressing community stressors. This resulted in a decrease in opportunities for teachers to cover material, explore topics in depth, or provide individualized student support, and an increase in additional instructional time re-teaching topics due to the high frequency of distractions. The study concluded available time is not the same as time available for learning.

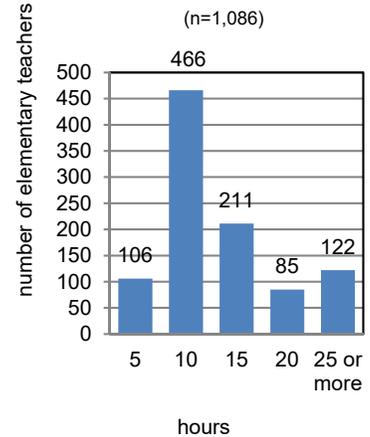
**According to PED up to 2 percent of allocated instructional time is lost to administration of standardized assessments.** PED conducted New Mexico Assessment Inventory (NMAI) which was to better understand assessment practices. LFC requested but did not receive results from the NMAI however in a presentation on the NMAI PED stated that “less than 2 percent of the school year is dedicated to state mandated testing.” Two percent is equivalent to 21 hours or almost four instructional days.

The LFC elementary teacher survey included questionu regarding testing time. Of teachers reporting PARCC testing time, 43 percent reported administering the assessment taking 10 hours. However, 11 percent of teachers reported PARCC testing time taking 25 hours or more. Teachers also noted that additional non-instructional time is spent after taking PARCC in activities such as extended recess, watching movies, and playing games. These hours are not included in the lost time calculations above, but do contribute to potential sub-optimal time-on-task. According to PED state-mandated testing time has declined between 2010 and 2015 by an estimated 2.5 hours and the 2016 PARCC testing time was further reduced by 90 minutes.

**More research is needed on how much of learning time results in meaningful engagement of teachers and students.** Although allocated time is important, the amount of time a student is engaged in learning is a much better predictor of performance and has a large impact on outcomes. New Mexico allocated instructional time is at 68 percent, however survey results did not quantify actual engagement rates. A Carnegie Mellon and Columbia University study found elementary children were largely on task: 71 percent of the time and off-task 29 percent of the time. The most common types of off-task behavior were peer distractions 45 percent and self distractions 18 percent.

Engagement rates among students nationwide range from 50 percent to 90 percent depending on a teacher’s classroom management competencies, type

**Chart 4. Total Hours Taking PARCC Testing According to Elementary Teachers**



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

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of instruction, grouping practices, or individual student characteristics. As little as 50 percent of each school day may be devoted to instruction or actual engaged time, according to a study conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other half of the school day may be considered lost time to activities such as transitions; announcements; student or teacher interruptions; or late starts. The study further emphasizes the need for sustained, substantive engagement since engagement is linked with academic learning and student achievement.

**Attendance, truancy, and discipline are critical factors impacting the availability of instructional time.**

Encouraging students to attend school and connecting with students and families to emphasize the importance of attendance are important responsibilities for school districts. Tracking attendance and absenteeism is vital for helping student achievement. In previous LFC evaluations, chronic absenteeism was a factor in low rates of student achievement and low-performing schools. Chronic absenteeism can impact student success and is an indicator of dropout risk.

***The percentage of students absent 10 or more days for any reason increased from FY13 to FY15.*** Fourteen percent of students were absent 10 or more days in FY13, 13.5 percent in FY14 and 15.4 percent in FY15. Students absent 10 or more days were absent 17 days on average in FY13 through FY15, more than three times the number of days missed by students who were absent fewer than 10 days. Students absent fewer than 10 days were absent five days on average in those same years.

An elementary student absent 10 or more days loses a minimum of 15 hours of both language arts and math instruction time depending on various schedule types and configurations. Both excused and unexcused absences decrease student learning time and time-on-task.

For example, an elementary student in Rio Rancho Public Schools loses 1.5 hours of reading and writing instruction and math instruction for every day absent based on a block schedule configuration. Puesta del Sol Elementary in Rio Rancho has made time-on-task a centerpiece of their efforts to sustain achievement. With a total enrollment of 753 kindergarten through fifth grade students, the school has scheduled movement down to the minute to avoid long lines during lunch or bottlenecks in the hallways. At Columbia Elementary School, Las Cruces Public Schools, attendance is a priority for student achievement. Columbia is a high-poverty school with a 98 percent Hispanic population and a “B” grade. The principal has tracked attendance and posted graphs for students and parents to emphasize the importance of being at school in order to learn. An attendance tracking board at the school showed a high of 97 percent attendance for third, fourth, and fifth grades and a low of 92 percent for kindergarten students.

***Over 3 percent of all New Mexico students were disciplined in FY15, decreasing available instructional time.*** Of the 10,874 disciplined students, 8,345, or 77 percent were taken out of the classroom through out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or arrest/referral to the juvenile justice system. Seventy-five students were expelled and 24 students received a modified expulsion which includes some education services. Student discipline declined by 10 percent in FY15 compared to FY14; however, non-

modified expulsions increased by 67 percent at the same time, from 45 expulsions in FY14 to 75 expulsions in FY15.

Suspension policies differ among school districts with some making an effort to provide instruction during suspension. APS' suspension policy dictates students assigned to in-school-suspension must have access to meaningful educational instruction for the duration of the suspension. In-school suspensions are effective in reducing the students' social interactions while keeping them engaged academically. However, over a five-year period, APS had more out-of-school suspensions than in-school suspensions with the exception of FY12 when in-school suspensions spiked. Out-of-school suspensions have the same effect on a student's ability to learn as an absence since the student is not engaged in a classroom and may not have access to meaningful educational instruction.

**Table 8. Albuquerque Public Schools Suspension and Enrollment over a Five Year Period, FY11 to FY15**

Fiscal Year	Enrollment	In-School Suspensions	Out-of-School Suspensions	All Suspensions	Unique Student Count	Suspensions of All Students
FY11	94,052	7,736	9,131	16,867	8,618	9.2%
FY12	94,297	10,400	7,412	17,812	8,879	9.4%
FY13	93,094	8,163	9,583	17,746	8,663	9.3%
FY14	92,307	7,565	8,318	15,883	8,013	8.7%
FY15	90,833	7,423	7,957	15,380	7,847	8.6%

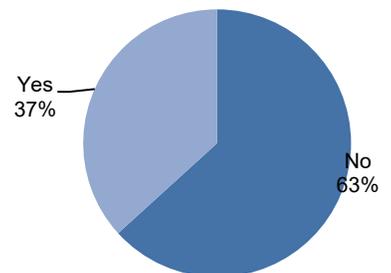
Source: APS

**Early release and scheduling may contribute to the ineffective use of time.**

Thirty-seven percent of surveyed schools, including 14 percent of high schools and middle schools and 23 percent of elementary schools, indicated they have early release or late start days. Some school districts with early release include Albuquerque Public Schools, Santa Fe Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools and Taos Public Schools. The lost half day is allocated as other days in the form of minutes. Four percent of principals indicated their early release was part of a reform effort, either University of Virginia (UVA) turnaround schools, Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE), or other district turnaround efforts. Seventeen percent indicated early release was not part of a reform effort, with four schools indicating having no idea why they had early release in their school. Virtually all the schools with early release indicated using the time for professional development (PD) or professional learning community (PLC). Of the districts interviewed with early release days, all indicated they track the intended use of early release for PD or PLC either through district leadership or site-based principals.

**New Mexico does not require districts to justify early release and efforts to ensure effective use of learning time the rest of the week.** Many school districts in urban areas have only 4.5 instructional days per week with insufficient justification. For example, Santa Fe Public Schools releases elementary students from school on Fridays at 12:30 p.m. Originally, the district indicated a shorter school day was necessary on Friday to have a block for teacher professional development in preparation for implementing Common Core state standards. However, the schedule has remained in place for the last four years.

**Chart 5. Does Your School Have Early Release?**



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

Some states such as Texas and Arkansas require schools to submit early release waivers for school districts and charter schools to conduct school for less than a specified number of hours in a day. Waivers are granted for time to be used for professional development provided students are in attendance for a certain number of hours.

Several states require waivers for early release. Early-release days or late starts require districts and schools to be aware of practical considerations such as transportation, child care, student activities, negotiated agreements, and state mandates. Texas requires early release waivers allowing districts or charter schools to shorten a school day a total of six times in a school year. Districts and charters may only shorten the student instructional day for conducting teacher collaboration or planning, conducting teacher parent conferences, or releasing school before a holiday, game playoff, or local school related activities. Waivers granted for early release are worth up to 180 minutes. Massachusetts provides early release waivers as long as schools meet the required 180 school day minimum and 900 hours (elementary) and 990 hours (secondary) structured learning time, time during which students are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum.

In the 2013 regular session, the Washington State Legislature passed and the governor signed into law Senate Bill 5558 to change the definition of a “school day” prohibiting late start, early release and partial days resulting in less than six instructional hours per day unless the release is for a full school day. The bill did not provide waiver authority to the State Board or the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The bill intended to avoid half-days of instruction and early release which is inconvenient for parents and lessens the time available for teachers to spend educating their students.

**School districts offer differing schedules to students in order to better maximize allocated time.**

For example, most traditional high schools offer two schedule options, an hourly schedule and a block schedule. There is no data to support that one schedule option increases student achievement over the other. Although Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) instituted block scheduling in high schools for the last six years, APS began a new schedule for FY16 that introduced two block schedule days in hopes it would improve student achievement and graduation rates. However, in FY17, in an agreement with its union, APS will go back to the hourly schedule, at considerable cost to the district. The proposed change will require more teachers to make up instructional time lost to preparation time.

Districts such as Las Cruces Public Schools are investigating whether or not to eliminate block scheduling and Clovis Municipal Schools eliminated block scheduling altogether as a cost-saving measure. Block schedules are designed so the teacher has a smaller caseload of students especially for core subject areas thus requiring more teachers and adding a higher cost to the school district budget. Alamogordo Public Schools eliminated block scheduling because of attendance issues for students participating in sports and activities. Teachers did not see students for longer stretches of time if they consistently missed the same days each week for games or activities. Students who miss one block schedule class can essentially be missing the

**High School Schedules**

Hourly schedule - based on the Carnegie Unit or a measure of classroom attendance representing one hour per day each academic year or between 180 and 190 hours of classroom contact per subject.

Block schedule – at least part of the daily schedule is organized into larger blocks of time (more than 60 minutes) to allow flexibility for a diversity of instructional activities.

Source: Lumina Foundation

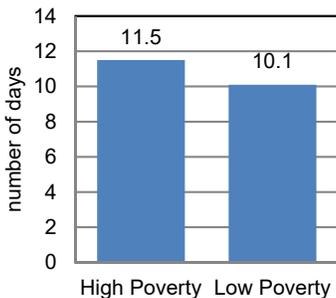
**APS High School Schedules**

In FY17, APS will eliminate block scheduling to give teachers a preparation period and a collaborative period. The change will require 70 to 80 additional high school teachers.

The 7/5 plan will decrease the number of classes teachers teach each day from six to five classes. The decision was not based on best practices for time-on-task or increasing student achievement, but on the collective bargaining agreement.

Source: APS

**Chart 6. Days Spent on Assessment Preparation**



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

equivalent of two classes and a considerable amount of material covered in that block of time.

### **Preparation for assessments expend an estimated 10 days of instructional time.**

According to the LFC teacher survey, teachers indicated spending on average 10 days of instructional time preparing students for state, district, or other mandated standardized assessments. Students at high-poverty schools spent almost one and a half additional days preparing for assessments than low-poverty schools. Chapter II will discuss in greater detail factors associated with assessment and student achievement.

### **Other factors contribute to lost instructional time.**

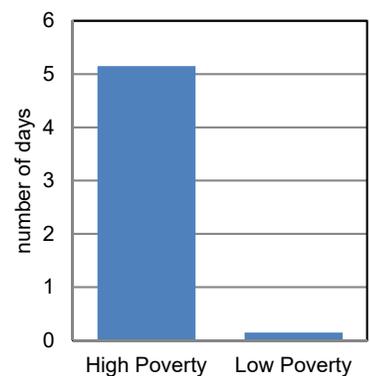
Direct instructional time is lost to other factors such as late starts, recess, and breakfast after the bell. Extreme weather may cause late starts in New Mexico schools. However, a full instructional day is counted even if students encounter late starts or two-hour delays due to snow for example. Schools are also allowed to count recess as part of the instructional day. Although research has shown that recess is important for the health and well-being of students, that time is not regulated or standardized statewide.

**On average, elementary students lose two days of instructional time to breakfast each year.** The majority of elementary teachers (51 percent) reported breakfast taking less than 5 minutes of instructional time, however, 22 percent report breakfast taking 11 minutes to 15 minutes, and 12 percent report taking 21 minutes or more of instructional time per day. High-poverty schools reported taking five more days over the course of a school year for breakfast than low-poverty schools.

**Teacher absenteeism also contributes to the decrease in time-on-task.** On average, teachers state-wide were absent 3.5 days and 67 percent of teachers were absent at least part of the day in FY15. Thirty-three percent of teachers state-wide had no absences for the same year. Twenty-seven percent (6,597) of teachers were absent from school more than five instructional days. The UCLA study, *It's About Time*, found teachers from high-poverty schools reported more absences than teacher from low-poverty schools, however, data indicates this is not true for New Mexico teachers. One school district did report teachers on average were absent more days prior to the implementation of the NMTEACH evaluation system which penalizes teachers for absences.

**Parent-teacher conferences and half days are counted towards mandated instructional hours, even though students are not receiving instruction.** Statute allows thirty-three hours of the full-day kindergarten program to be used for home visits by the teacher or for parent-teacher conferences. Twenty-two hours of grades one through five programs may be used for home visits by the teacher or for parent-teacher conferences. For example, Santa Fe Public Schools has a total of 176 instructional days on their calendar; however, four full days are set aside for parent-teacher conferences in elementary and two days for high school. In addition, a half day before the winter holiday is counted as a full day of instruction as reported on the PED calendar check form.

**Chart 7. Days Spent Serving Breakfast**



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

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## Recommendations

### **The Legislature should:**

Repeal parent-teacher conferences (PTC) and home visits from counting towards instructional hours. School districts and charter schools may conduct these activities in addition to instructional hours.

Require waiver from the Public Education Department for early release schedules. The waiver would include a plan for teacher use of time along with a plan to ensure there is no reduction in engaged time-on-task or academic learning time as a consequence of early release.

Require early release days to be made up with more calendar days rather than longer school days.

Prohibit waivers for early release at school districts with below average student achievement and graduation rates.

Increase minimum instructional time by equalizing elementary and secondary school hourly requirements.

### **The Public Education Department should:**

Through the budget process enhance verification of school calendar and time calculations reported by school districts and charter schools.

### **School Districts should:**

Ensure best practices and effective strategies are being used to maximize time-on-task.

Reallocate professional development to teachers to increase the amount of time students are engaged in academic learning.

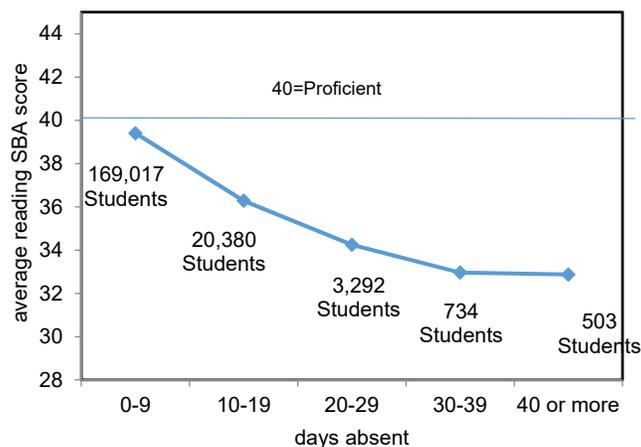
## Lost instructional time directly impacts student achievement.

### Students lose about 32 percent of instructional time and lost instructional time impacts student achievement.

As instructional time is spent on other activities, student achievement decreases. An LFC survey asked teachers to quantify instructional time lost, not counting student or teacher absences. When controlling for other factors including poverty, there is a statistically significant relationship between reading Standards Based Assessment (SBA) scores and lost instructional time for both elementary and secondary teachers surveyed. As instructional time lost increases, SBA scores decrease. As seen in Chart 8, the percentage of students proficient in reading also declines with increases in instructional time lost.

A school where a teacher reports lost instructional time of 0-19 days has more than half of their students testing proficient in reading whereas a school with more than 20 lost days of instructional time has fewer than half of their students testing proficient.

Chart 8. Days Absent By SBA Scaled Score



Source: LFC Analysis

### Student absences are associated with lower student achievement.

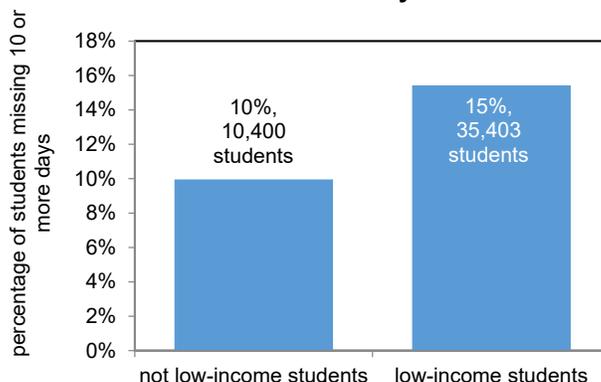
If a student is not present in school they lose out on instructional time. The majority of students in New Mexico miss less than 10 days with the average elementary student being absent about four days and the average secondary student being absent about five days. However, almost 25 thousand students miss 10 days or more of school. These 25 thousand students see a significant drop in SBA scores compared to students who miss fewer days. When controlling for poverty, English language learner status, and other student variables, there was a significant effect of student absences on student achievement. For every 10 days of missed school comes a two point drop in reading SBA scores.

**Low-income students are more likely to have missed 10 or more days.** Ten percent of students not from low-income families miss 10 or more days, while 15 percent of students from low-income families miss 10 or more days equating to over 35 thousand students who are likely losing at least two SBA points per 10 days. Additionally, low-income students who miss 10 or more days perform significantly worse on the SBA than low-income students missing nine or fewer days of school.

### Research shows high-poverty schools tend to have more lost learning time.

The UCLA study conducted on time-on-task and found that students in high-poverty schools tend to have less time on task than students in low-poverty schools. The LFC attempted to recreate elements from this study in New Mexico. LFC staff found that there is a

Chart 9. Percent of Students that Miss 10 or more days



Source: LFC Analysis

## Elev8 NM

Gadsden Middle School in the Gadsden Independent School District promotes attendance, safety, school engagement, community outreach, and teaching and learning through the Elev8 program.

GMS has 100 percent FRL, 98 percent are Hispanic, and 50 percent come from homes where English is not the primary language.

The program was initiated in 2007. Students participating in Elev8 graduate at higher rates than their statistically comparable peers.

Source: Gadsden Independent School District

significant correlation between instructional time lost and school poverty level as measured by an LFC teacher survey and student performance data. In addition to LFC survey results, data from PED on student and teacher absences also show that schools with more low-income students lose more instructional days out of the school year.

### English learners (EL) and low-income students have more lost learning time due to multiple factors.

English learners spend more time on state-mandated assessments and therefore more time out of the classroom than English speakers. A regular education, non-English learner ninth grade student will spend approximately 21.7 hours per year, or 3.9 school days, in assessments. English learner ninth graders would add another 2.75 hours of assessment time for a total of 24.4 hours or 4.4 school days. Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) has calculated testing times for all assessments across the district by grade level, elementary, middle school and high school. For example, the testing time for the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) at the high school is approximately 9.7 hours, at the middle school 9.2 hours, and at the elementary school third grade 8.25 hours and fourth and fifth grades 8.5 hours. APS has published testing windows and approximate times for all district-wide assessments on their website.

### Teachers in New Mexico report that student economic and social stressors are the most significant challenge to maximizing academic learning time.

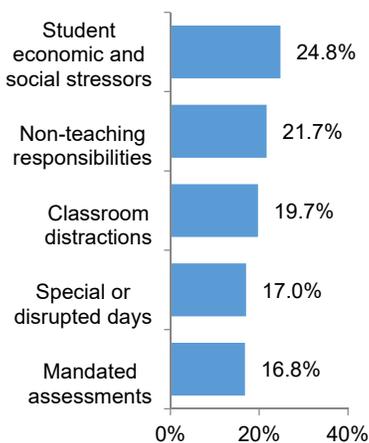
Almost a quarter of all teachers rank student economic and social stressors as the greatest challenge to maximizing learning time. Additionally, teachers are leaving from high-poverty schools at a higher rate than low-poverty schools. Teachers left high-poverty schools at a rate of 39 percent compared to 6 percent of low-poverty schools between FY14 and FY15. Of the roughly 22 thousand teachers teaching in New Mexico in FY14, 16,804 were still teaching at the same school in FY15 meaning 5,346 teachers either moved to a different school or stopped teaching. Of the over five thousand teachers who were not in the same school, 2,386 were teaching at a different school in New Mexico and 2,960 were not teaching at a school in New Mexico.

PED has not fully implemented the Early Warning System (EWS) slated to be operational by FY15. An EWS can identify and track at-risk students and allow for the application of more effective prevention and early intervention services. A thorough analysis of risk indicator patterns and associated relevant information will help districts better understand the root causes of student disengagement and academic failure, according to the Response to Intervention Network.

According to PED, fifteen schools are piloting the Early Warning System (EWS) and have received professional development and site visits from Johns Hopkins University experts. The EWS data dashboard is available to the fifteen schools. Current professional development efforts are focused on supporting schools in using the data that they have available and tracking their intervention efforts at the local level. However, PED reports low usage of the system by schools piloting the system.

**Chart 10. Teacher Rated Greatest Challenge to Maximize Learning Time**

n=1925



Source: LFC Survey

**Extended school year programs such as K-3 Plus have shown positive results of student achievement statewide when administered with fidelity.**

The state provides K-3 Plus, a program to increase learning time in kindergarten and the early grades by extending the school year by 25 days prior to the start of the school year the program, seeks to decrease summer learning loss and get a jump start on the next school year. The program provides an opportunity to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students. K-3 Plus programs are delivered in high-poverty public schools in which eighty percent or more of the students are low-income or an elementary school with a “D” or “F” grade the previous year. Since FY13, the legislature has appropriated \$71.8 million to PED for K-3 Plus and the PED FY17 budget includes another \$23.7 million in appropriations.

A 2015 Utah State study of K-3 Plus in New Mexico found the program displays a measure of promise as an intervention that can improve student performance. Exploratory results for the kindergarten year suggest that even just 25 days of summer programming can move students forward in their academic achievement and preparedness for school. Students showed some gains in reading and math (about .10 standard deviations) as well as in writing (about .15 standard deviations). The study did not control for implementation approaches and found while K-3 Plus students improved compared to peers, those gains faded.

The study found K-3 Plus is most effective when the same teacher stays with the group of students from the extra 25 days through the regular school year as the program design intends. The 2015 Utah State study found that when the same teacher remains with students there is a statistically significant and substantial effect on both math and writing skills. Schools not providing K-3 Plus for all students struggle with continuity of teachers because only low performing students are selected for the program creating a classroom during the regular school year with all underperforming students concentrated with one teacher. Schools also struggle with teacher recruitment for the program as teachers are often not willing to give up part of their summer break to teach an extra 25 days.

Columbus Elementary in Deming Public Schools has addressed these challenges by expanding K-3 Plus to all students and incorporating the extra 25 days into teacher contracts. In addition, Deming has expanded the program to fourth and fifth grade students.

Columbus Elementary School attributes its rise in school grade and student performance to “mandatory” K-3 Plus among other programs. Columbus is 100 percent Hispanic, 100 percent FRL, and 83 percent bilingual, with many students crossing the international border from Palomas, Mexico. All students participate in the extended school year Kindergarten through fifth grade. Although the school cannot technically mandate attendance it begins in July.

K-5 Plus for all students, the calendar is set in advance and all students are expected to begin school on the 1st of July. Columbus Elementary has had K-3 Plus and grades four and five for two consecutive years, and the 2016 school year will mark the third year, with an approximate cost of \$60

**Table 9. Columbus Elementary School, Deming Public Schools, FY11 through FY15**

Year	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency	School Grade
2015	40.9%	17.0%	B
2014	40.6%	48.9%	B
2013	31.7%	34.9%	F
2012	32.5%	31.3%	F
2011	33.0%	33.4%	D

Source: PED

thousand in FY15. Deming Public Schools is in its second year of K-3 Plus grades four and five with an approximate cost of \$200 thousand in FY15, according to the school district.

### **Time for learning is important, but more time alone will not increase academic achievement.**

#### **Adding Instructional Hours to the School Day**

Adding at least 300 more hours of instructional time than the conventional district calendar allocates is one of the strongest predictors of higher achievement, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on extended learning time.

Other predictors include:

- High-dosage tutoring;
- Consistent feedback to teachers;
- Use of data; and
- High expectations.

The same predictors were noted in recent LFC evaluations as characteristics of high-performing elementary and middle schools.

Source: GAO/LFC

Additional time must be used efficiently and effectively. Schedules must be optimized to allow for the maximum amount of academic learning time. In schools where allocated time is not used properly, adding time to the day is ineffective, costly, and a poor use of scarce resources. Without efficient planning, the addition of an additional hour of instruction will not increase student achievement. According to a Stanford University study, adding an hour of instruction each day ranked at the bottom of reforms in math and third of four in reading.

The study compared four reforms: peer tutoring, smaller classes, increase in computer based instruction, and adding an hour of instruction. Approximately one-half of all classroom time can be taken up by non-instructional activities according to a Gallup poll of teachers in public schools nationwide. Teachers agreed that a major problem for public schools is lack of discipline in classrooms. Classroom management is correlated to student engagement and discipline which are key factors for increasing student achievement.

***Adding one instructional day in New Mexico would cost approximately \$13 million.*** The figure of \$13 million is based on the FY17 state equalization guarantee (SEG) of \$2.519 billion and an average of 194 instructional days statewide. Past policy efforts sought to extend the school year by five days with the state investing \$14 million in FY09 for one day. However, subsequent review for public schools did not always extend the school year as intended. The total cost would have been \$70 million.

#### **FY08 GAA Language**

“The general fund appropriation to the state equalization guarantee distribution contains sufficient funding to increase the school year by one full instructional day which shall not be substituted with an equivalent number of minutes or hours. Prior to the approval of a school district's or charter school's budget, the secretary of public education shall verify that each school district or charter school has provided for one additional full instructional day above the 2007-2008 school year.”

Source: LESC

Increasing instructional days in a school year has proven to be a challenge for other states. California estimated it would take approximately \$50 million per school district annually to add one instructional day to the yearly calendar. Increasing the school year nationally to 200 days would cost between \$34.4 billion and \$41.9 billion annually, according to the National Education Commission on Time and Learning. Two decades ago the Oregon Legislature attempted to increase instructional days from 175 to 220 but repealed the Act in four years after the state could not afford the extended days.

Because districts report allocating more than required instructional hours, the state has the opportunity to increase minimums at no cost to current practices levels. To the extent the state schools can demonstrate improvements in use of existing allocated time then additional learning time could be purchased at no cost. Given the size of the achievement gap, a continued strategy of expanding PreK and K-3 Plus, while ensuring quality appears warranted. Additionally, the Legislature sought funding formula changes in 2016, including a five year increase to the at-risk index. Changes to the at-risk index would better align the formula's distribution model to recognized costs related to learning time, including social workers to ensure improved attendance and social well-being, after school tutoring, and other

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learning time initiatives. The bill did not pass but should be considered again along with mechanism to address accountability concerns.

## Recommendations

### **The Legislature should:**

Equalize minimum hour requirements for elementary and secondary bringing elementary up to 1,080 hours.

Continue increased funding for K-3 Plus and include directives to PED in the GAA to do the following:

- Prioritize K-3 Plus expansion funding to school districts that implement school-wide programs and that keep the K3 Plus teacher with their students into the regular school year.
- Prioritize funding for school districts seeking to implement the program districtwide and/or match K3 Plus funding with district funding to provide K-5 Plus funding for school wide programs.

Continue to increase the at-risk index and add accountability measures for districts and charters schools to demonstrate use of funding to improve performance of at-risk students as part of the budget approval process.

### **The Public Education Department should:**

Fully implement the Early Warning System to track at-risk students.

Work with K-3 Plus schools to increase the number of classrooms where a teacher stays with K-3 Plus students. PED should also set a goal for recommendation and report to LFC and LESC the number of classrooms implementing the program with fidelity.

# State policies do not maximize time-on-task best practices.

## Most public schools do not conduct comprehensive quality time analyses to create a culture that values time-on-task.

Maximizing academic learning time (ALT) and time-on-task increases student achievement, according to research. Although many school districts employ best practices to maximize ALT, few if any are assessing current time use or conducting internal studies to increase ALT. Of the 15 largest school districts in New Mexico none have conducted a comprehensive study on time-on-task, instructional time or academic learning time. The 15 largest school district superintendents concurred that it is often delegated to an individual school principal to examine issues associated with time-on-task like lost-time or distractions.

### UVA Turnaround Schools

Schools involved in the University of Virginia (UVA) school turnaround program, like Columbia Elementary School in Las Cruces Public Schools, go through a formal process to assess time-on-task. The Principal at Columbia indicated this process as one of the keys to moving the school's achievement forward.

Another UVA school, Twin Lakes Elementary in the Gallup-McKinley City Schools has used turnaround strategies including assessing time-on-task to increase school performance from a "F" grade in FY14 to a "C" grade in FY15.

Source: School Districts

Eighty-one percent of principals and charter school directors in a LFC survey indicated they have not done any studies on their school's time-on-task. Of the 19 percent who indicated time-on-task studies were done, 11 percent indicated the studies were done solely on the amount of instructional time that is lost to assessments.

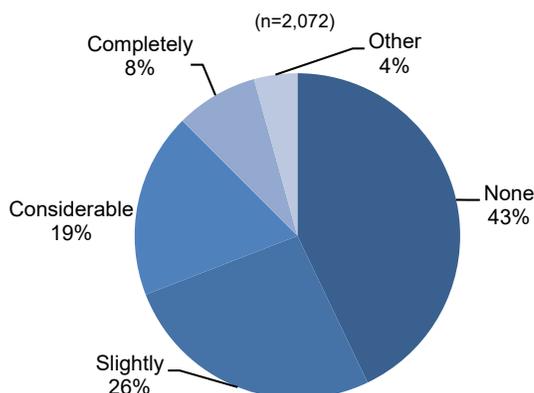
**Only the schools participating in the University of Virginia (UVA) turnaround program are required to evaluate time-on-task in their schools.** Of the teachers and principals surveyed, site visits and interviews conducted, the LFC found that the only schools required to evaluate time-on-task were turnaround schools. Some 18 schools in seven school districts currently participate in the UVA program statewide. It is not evident how the results of those evaluations are used in each of the schools or if UVA shares those results with the State.

## New Mexico does not have a comprehensive framework for measuring available learning time.

The majority of teachers in New Mexico indicated having received little to any professional development on time-on-task. Sixty-nine percent of elementary teachers and 74 percent of secondary teachers state they have received no professional development or a little professional development in the past three years on time-on-task. The 15 largest school district superintendents interviewed stated teacher preparation programs statewide are not doing enough to train teachers on how to maximize instructional time.

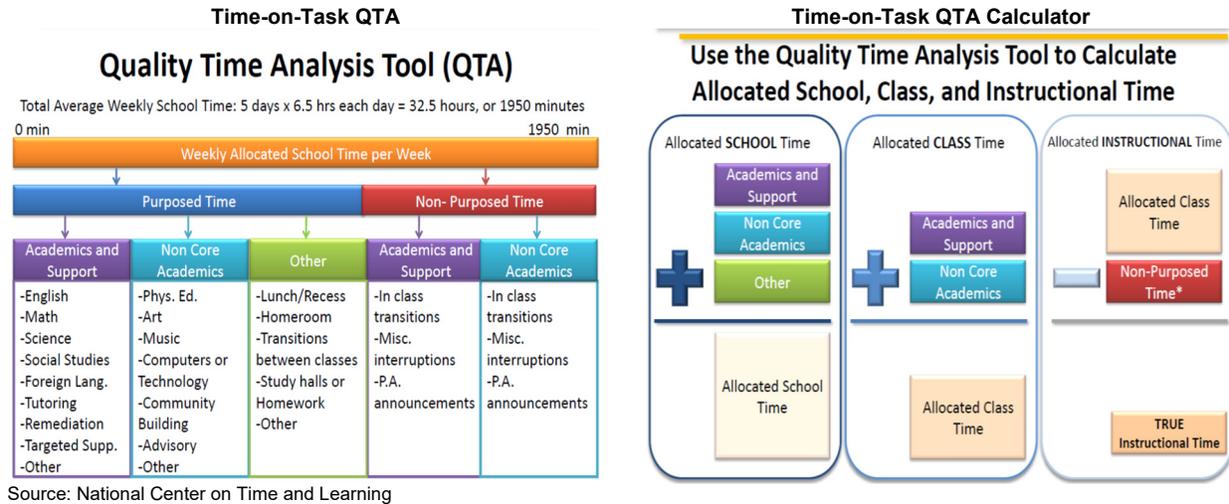
In other states like Virginia, the Virginia Department of Education has partnered with the Fairfax County Public Schools has developed a time-on-task observation form to assist teachers identify off-task behavior and classroom disruptions. The University of Washington as part of the scaling the pyramid project developed on-task observation forms for teachers to compare individual student with peers. School districts can identify existing time that could be better used by using tools such as the quality time analysis tool (QTA) developed by the National Center on Time and Learning to calculate allocated school, class, and instructional time. Two of the tools include a quality time analysis in which schools can look at weekly allocated time to calculate allocated school, class, and instructional time.

**Chart 11. Elementary Teachers: In the past three years, did you receive professional development on time-on-task?**



Source: LFC Elementary Survey

**Figure 2. Time-on-Task Quality Time Analysis Tools**



**PED instructional audits do not specifically address time-on-task or maximizing instructional time.** Instructional audits are to be conducted annually at schools with a “D” or “F” grade as part of the grading accountability system. The purpose of the audits is to improve instruction and the practices of instructional personnel, according to the PED New Mexico instructional audit: data and practice manual. Instructional audits are a component of PED’s A-F school grading accountability system and examine a number of factors to provide district support and improve instruction at the classroom level. Instructional audits are based on 13 indicators related to research and best practices for teaching and learning none of which directly addresses time-on-task (Appendix D).

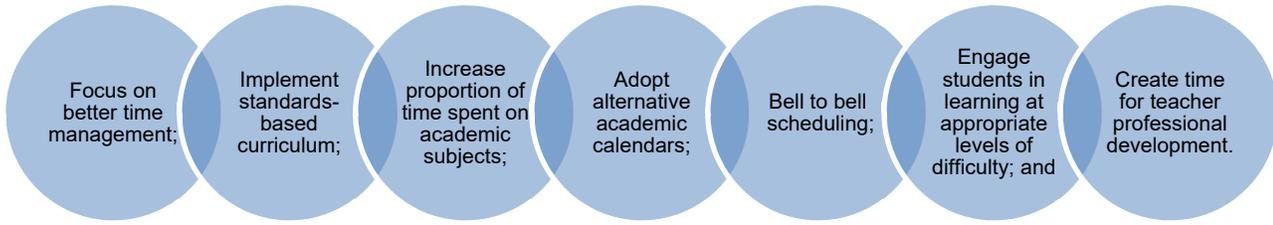
Related topics such as, “maintain a positive, respectful classroom climate and use effective classroom management strategies that are consistent with school and district policies to meet the learning needs of all students” comprise one of the 13 indicators. The audit team conducts a three-day site visit to the school and gathers data through interviews with the district and school leadership, teachers, students, and parents. In addition, the team reviews numerous documents and visits a sample of classrooms, conducting classroom walk-throughs. In the document review portion of the audit, the team looks at, among other documents, a school’s Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) plan and the bell schedule which correlate with time-on-task. However, the site visit protocols, interviews of principals, teachers, parents, and students; walkthrough observation forms; or the NMIA audit reports do not reference time-on-task.

Instructional audits were not completed by PED in FY16 and likely will not be completed in FY17, according to PED. PED attributes the lack of audits to the delay in PARCC results. PED reported to the LFC they do not anticipate audits in FY17 because of the implementation of new federal regulation under Every Student Succeeds Act. As a result, “D” and “F” grade schools will have little to no guidance or intervention from instructional audits to improve academic practices.

New Mexico school districts are employing some of the best practices to maximize academic learning time. As noted in interviews of the 15 largest

school districts, few districts implement all seven of the best practices espoused by such entities as the U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Time and Learning.

**Chart 12. Best Practices to Maximize Academic Learning Time**



Sources: National Center for Time & Learning; WestEd; US Department of Education

**Effective classroom management has a powerful impact on students.**

Poor management wastes class time, reduces students' time-on-task, and detracts from the quality of the learning environment. At all public school grade levels, effective classroom management has been recognized as a crucial element in effective teaching, according to research conducted by Robert Marzano. Student engagement rates are .617 standard deviations or 23 percentile points higher in classes where effective classroom management techniques are used than the engagement rates in classes where effective management techniques are not employed. Classes with effective classroom management techniques reach achievement levels that are .521 standard deviations or 20 percentile points higher than the achievement in classes without effective classroom management techniques.

**Table 10. Effects of Classroom Management on Student Engagement and Achievement**

Outcome	Average Effect Size	Number of Subjects	Number of Studies	Percentile Increase
Engagement	+.617	784	7	23
Achievement	+.521	553	5	20

Source: ASCD, Robert Marzano  
 Note: All effect sizes are significant at the .05 level.

For example, if a teacher increases instructional time by fifteen minutes a day through the use of more efficient routines, procedures and transitions, students gain 45 hours of instructional time a year. Time-on-task has much to do with a teacher's ability to maximize

academic learning and efficiently manage a classroom, according to the BTES study and other research. To maximize academic learning time, teachers must:

- Accurately diagnose each student's knowledge and skill level;
- Prescribe learning tasks appropriate to a student's levels;
- Structure engaging lessons around the learning tasks and give clear, concise task directions; and
- Have substantive teacher-student interaction during the lesson, such as: modeling, guiding students as they practice, asking probing questions, giving corrective feedback.

Four classroom management processes promote time-on-task: organizing physical space, rules and procedures, transitions, and pacing can be found in table 11.

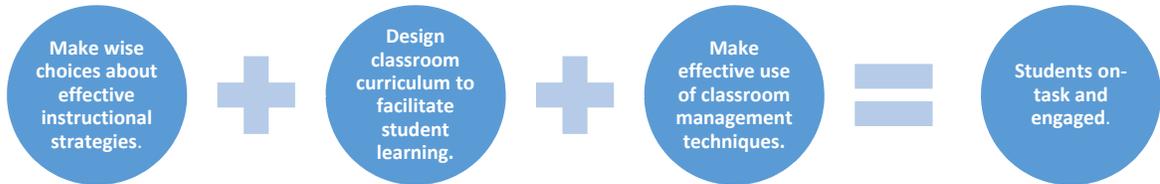
**Table 11. Four significant classroom management processes to promote time-on-task**

Room arrangement – Well-organized room arrangements provide easy student movement and good teacher-student eye contact.
Rules and procedures – Effective rules and procedures reduce the time spent on disruptions and disciplinary situations.
Transitions – Efficient practiced transitions help students move in and out of the room smoothly and get to work quickly at the beginning of class or on the next learning activity.
Preparation and pacing –Pre-planning and preparing ample activities and materials allows educators to focus on the lesson momentum. Good pacing reduces dead time and keeps students involved and on-task.

Source: BTES

The organization of physical space and the learning environment greatly influences how long students remain on-task and are engaged.

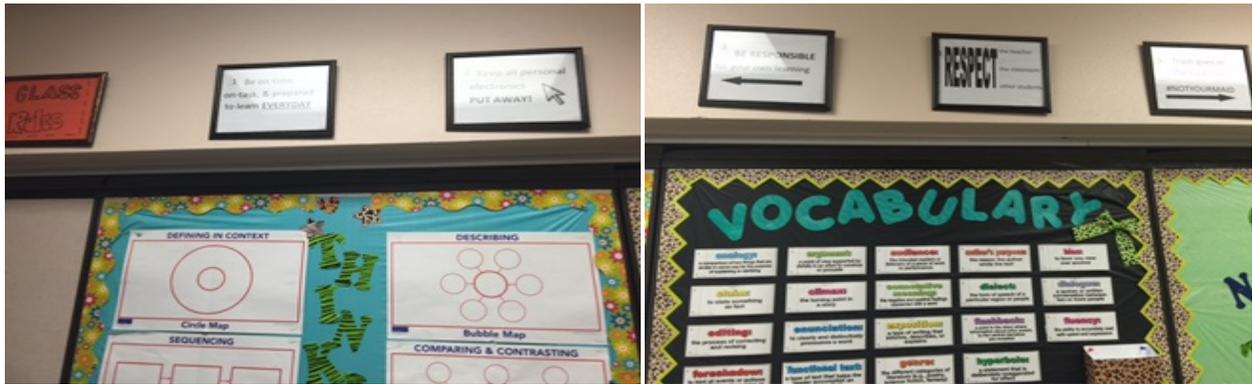
**Chart 13. Teacher Formula for Students On-task and Engaged**



Source: Teaching Leadership

Rules and routines lead to effective time management which is one the skills necessary for success in the classroom. Teachers who effectively manage time provide the best opportunity for academic learning. A teacher at Eagle Ridge Middle School, Rio Rancho Public Schools, incorporates time-on-task in her class rules: “Be on time-on-task and prepared to learn everyday” and “Be responsible for your own learning.”

**Figure 3. Class Rules Including Time-on-Task**



Source: Rio Rancho Public Schools

**Teachers employing effective disciplinary interventions will cut in half the student disruptions.**

Disruptions are any type of student behavior not sanctioned by the teacher. Disruptive behavior interferes with student engagement and learning, according to a study conducted by Marzano. The Marzano study further states the four general components of effective classroom management are rules and procedures, disciplinary interventions, teacher-student relationships, and mental set (a teacher’s frame of mind).

## Behavioral Support

School districts throughout New Mexico follow behavior intervention models either district-wide or at individual school sites.

Some school districts such as Alamogordo, Gallup-McKinley, and Roswell use the positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) program district-wide.

PBIS was established by the U.S. Department of Education to assist school districts in establishing behavioral supports and social culture to help students achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Source: School Districts

## Bell-to-Bell Method

High-performing high schools such as La Cueva High School, APS and Cleveland High School, Rio Rancho Public Schools use the bell-to-bell method.

At Centennial High School, Las Cruces Public Schools, the school motto is “bell to bell learning.” CHS has reduced transition times by dedicating buildings to grade levels. Students are not allowed in the hallways 15 minutes before and after the bell.

Source: School Districts

## Curriculum Pacing

Rio Rancho Public Schools and Gadsden Independent Schools have created curriculum pacing guides for all schools in the districts.

Source: School Districts

Transitions between classes and between core subjects may be challenging. One method to increase instructional time is by using bell-to-bell scheduling or bell-to-bell learning. Bell-to-bell is a proactive teaching method used to decrease transition times and maximize academic learning time from the beginning of class to the end of the bell. Teachers practicing bell-to-bell often have a “bell ringer” to begin the class, have a complete agenda of the class period, and learning literally ends at the bell. Bell ringers are brief activities used at the beginning of the class to engage students and focus thinking. Bell-to-bell is not mandated by the state and the LFC does not have information on how many school districts implement the method.

Pacing is directly related to time allocation. Teachers must take a macro look at the curriculum at the beginning of the year and a micro look each week to make sure that most students are mastering the content and for those students who do not, interventions are in place. School districts that require curriculum pacing have been able to increase time-on-task and student achievement. In addition, pacing ensures that all schools are teaching the same material within one school district.

### **Teacher preparation programs statewide do not effectively address classroom management or other time-on-task skills.**

A 2014 National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) study notes New Mexico, California, Oregon, and Texas teacher preparation regulations address four of the big five classroom management strategies. However, the NCTQ study did not identify a single university in New Mexico or nationwide as a model for teacher preparation. A model program would address all research-based strategies, identifying classroom management as a priority, strategically determining how it should be taught and practiced, and employing feedback accordingly.

A 2014 article on education exodus reported teacher turnover at APS is 18 percent to 20 percent a year and at Santa Fe Public Schools the number is 10 percent to 12 percent teacher turnover per year. Twenty percent of new teachers leave the profession after three years, and 50 percent leave after five years, according to the National Education Association (NEA) among other entities. One of the top three reasons is poor teacher preparation, including classroom management.

Classroom management is one of the top concerns for new teachers. A 2014 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education found that trouble managing student discipline is one of the many reasons teachers leave the classroom. In 1988, the typical teacher in a public school had 15 years’ experience. By 2008, the typical teacher was a rookie, according to a University of Pennsylvania study.

***Teacher preparation programs often emphasize the mission of forming a professional identity rather than the technical transmission of skills.*** Some teacher preparation programs ask students to develop their own personal philosophy on classroom management and often evaluate students on classroom management strategies during the student-teaching phase of the program even if the candidate did not learn the strategies in previous coursework, according to NCTQ. Time-on-task has much to do with a teacher’s ability to maximize academic learning and

efficiently manage a classroom, according to the BTES study and other research.

Teacher preparation programs in New Mexico leave the teaching of classroom management strategies to mentor teachers. As in most teacher preparation program throughout the nation, pre-service teachers must rely on mentor teachers to impart skills such as classroom management during the student-teacher portion of the program. Teachers who obtain an alternative licensure often lack the pedagogy and student-teacher learning experience. According to the New Mexico largest school district superintendents interviewed by the LFC, novice teachers begin the professional without many essential teaching skills especially classroom management. Districts like Clovis Municipal Schools and Deming Public Schools have created comprehensive mentoring and induction programs with new teachers participating for up to three years. The programs assist new teachers with such skills as classroom management.

Using the Big Five Classroom Management Strategies to gauge teacher practices, a 2016 LFC survey of teachers statewide found that establishing routines was the number one strategy to promote time-on-task.

**Table 12. Big Five Classroom Management Strategies**

Strategy	Description	Teacher Prep Programs Addressing Strategies Nationwide
Rules	Establish and teach classroom rules to communicate expectations for behavior.	71%
Routines	Build structure and establish routines to help guide students in a wide variety of situations.	76%
Praise	Reinforce positive behavior using praise and other means.	26%
Misbehavior	Consistently impose consequences for misbehavior.	62%
Engagement	Foster and maintain student engagement by teaching lessons that include opportunities for active participation.	49%

Source: NCTQ

To address concerns about teaching classroom management to student teachers, innovative programs have recently been implemented. Pre-service teachers at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education began a computer-based mixed-reality Mursion simulation classroom management program during the spring semester of 2016. The classroom is simulated and the students are avatars, programmed to be unruly to test pre-service teachers' classroom management skills. A student might pull out a phone or make a comment that disrupts the rest of the class. The prospective teacher uses classroom-management techniques learned in class to re-engage the students in the lesson. The program provides guided practice, strategies, and instant feedback.

**PED includes language associated with time-on-task best practices in the Teachscape evaluation rubric.**

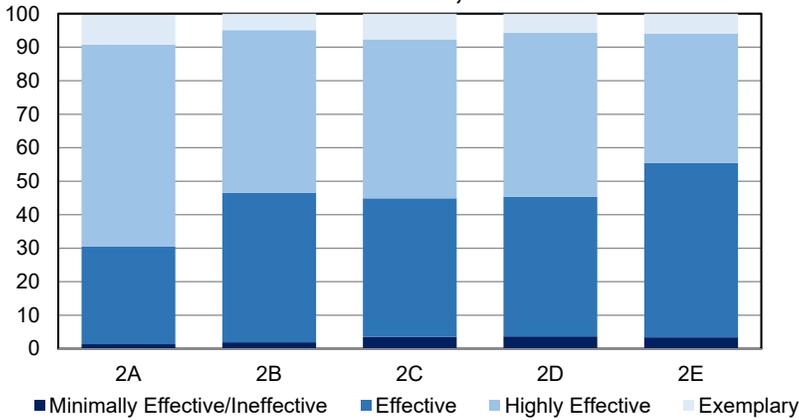
New Mexico has time-on-task language in their teacher evaluation framework in NMTEACH 2D: managing classroom procedures. The element of the domain asks the evaluator, 1) To what level is the classroom culture and routine maximizing instructional time?; and 2) To what level does the teacher use developmentally appropriate procedures to maximize instructional time?

Domain 2 is associated with a few of the best practices required for a teacher to increase time-on-task in the classroom. On item 2C, establishing a culture for learning 96 percent of New Mexico teachers average effective to exemplary is and 2E, managing student behavior 96.5 percent of New Mexico teachers average of effective to exemplary. Of the 11,025 teachers from the school districts who provided the LFC with data, 436 were

minimally effective or ineffective on 2C, establishing a culture for learning and 384 teachers were minimally effective or ineffective on 2E, managing student behavior.

States have adopted language concerning time-on-task in their evaluations of teachers. Over 20 states including Arizona, New Jersey, Washington, and Idaho use the framework for teaching developed by the Danielson Group. The Danielson Group has recently entered into a partnership with Teachescape Reflect, a tool used by PED. The Danielson framework uses four domains for teacher evaluation; in domain two, managing classroom procedures, 2C refers to teachers maximizing instructional time (Appendix E).

**Chart 14. Teacher Evaluation District Averages Domain 2, FY16**



Source: School Districts

### Swivl

To standardize principal observations and provide opportunities for teachers to self reflect, Deming Public Schools, utilizes Swivl to videotape lessons. The mobile device follows the teacher and focuses on whiteboards or small groups when needed.

Principals in Deming use videos recorded with Swivl for professional development and calibration with the Teachescape observation tool.

Source: Deming Public Schools

Teachescape evaluation system is not used for district-wide analysis and teacher professional development planning according to half of New Mexico largest school district superintendents interviewed. All school district leaders reported Teachescape provides the ability for detailed analysis of the domain scoring for teacher observations, at the individual, school, and district level.

Principals are responsible for monitoring and analyzing school-wide data for teacher support and school-wide professional development as indicated by interviewed New Mexico largest school district superintendents. All school district leaders stated Teachescape is used to monitor if principals are meeting deadlines and to calibrate data between principals. However, only half indicated data is analyzed district-wide for professional development and deeper trend analysis.

A majority of New Mexico teachers ranked effective to exemplary on the NM Teach evaluation system in domain 2 in FY16. The LFC requested but did not timely receive the component score distribution report statewide from PED (Appendix F). However, using the component score distribution scores from eight of the largest districts with 52 percent of the teachers across the state, the averages of domain 2 show teachers are ranked effective to exemplary with averages as high as 98.62 for 2A, creating an environment of respect and rapport and 98 percent for 2B, organizing physical space.

**Table 13. Teachers by Domain 2 Category, FY16**

n=11,025/21,011

2A Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	*NT	2B Organizing Physical Space	NT	2C Establishing a Culture for Learning	NT	2D Managing Classroom Procedures	NT	2E Managing Student Behavior	NT
Exemplary	958	Exemplary	540	Exemplary	845	Exemplary	628	Exemplary	649
Highly Effective	6,708	Highly Effective	4,920	Highly Effective	5,230	Highly Effective	5,395	Highly Effective	4,263
Effective	3,207	Effective	5,351	Effective	4,559	Effective	4,598	Effective	5,738
Minimally Effective/Ineffective	152	Minimally Effective/Ineffective	220	Minimally Effective/Ineffective	436	Minimally Effective/Ineffective	398	Minimally Effective/Ineffective	384

Source: School districts' component score distribution reports  
\*NT= Number of Teachers

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## Recommendations

### **The Public Education Department should:**

Continue to collaborate with teacher preparation programs to ensure program approval requirements pay sufficient attention to practices leading to improved time-on-task.

Provide the LFC with audit findings or conduct an audit of testing time and test preparation time statewide.

Develop a framework for guidance for districts to maximize learning time, including as appropriate tools, infrastructure, professional development, and how to perform quality time analysis.

As part of PED's ongoing assessment of its instructional audit and Web EPPS programs include greater focus on helping schools maximize learning time through these and other initiatives.

### **School Districts should:**

Conduct comprehensive quality time analyses to create a culture that values time-on-task.

Analyze Teachscape data for trend analysis and use in professional development.





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GOVERNOR

May 10, 2016

David Abbey, Director  
Legislative Finance Committee  
325 Don Gaspar, Suite 101  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Director Abbey:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report: *“Time on Task” and Efforts to Extend Learning Time*. Please accept my compliments to your staff for their professionalism and collaborative approach throughout the evaluation process. As always, the Public Education Department (PED) is committed to continuous quality improvement, best practices, and improving outcomes for all New Mexico students.

We agree in part with the LFC’s findings and recommendations. In particular, PED agrees with those that may lead to higher rates of student and teacher attendance, and improve teacher practice to maximize return on each minute of the school day. In alignment with these findings, the PED has recently taken the following steps:

- implemented a teacher evaluation system to identify our best teachers, giving school leaders the information they need to maximize the effectiveness of their teaching force;
- verified school calendar and time calculations through the budget review process;
- collaborated with teacher preparation programs to ensure program approval requirements focus on practice-based training that can lead to better instruction.

We appreciate committee staff investigating time on task in New Mexico schools. However, the PED would like to clarify a number of concerns with the draft evaluation. First, the draft report fails to analyze the impact of teacher effectiveness in leveraging school hours. New Mexico’s most effective teachers leverage the same amount of time as less effective teachers to obtain greater results with their students, and are able to maximize learning during all parts of the day while accounting for their pedagogical and developmental needs. The draft report subtracts time used for student non-academic needs, breakfast, test

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preparation, and bathroom/lunch transition; the best teachers in the state leverage every minute of the school day to advance student learning, including time spent on these activities. The evaluation's absolute focus on "instructional time" discounts the value a highly effective teacher can add to some of these important non-classroom activities. The absence of an analysis of teacher effectiveness is a significant shortcoming in the report.

The evaluation also did not analyze or acknowledge the impact of two PED initiatives on increasing time on task. The NMTEACH teacher evaluation system has impacted time on task in some districts by holding their teachers accountable for their attendance. Districts and charter schools using the measure have found teachers have higher attendance rates. For example, in the first full year of implementation of the NMTEACH system, students in Albuquerque Public Schools received 18,000 hours of additional instruction from licensed educators instead of substitutes.

The Truancy and Dropout Prevention Coaches and Middle School Social Worker program were implemented to increase student attendance in the neediest schools in New Mexico. Student attendance is also a critical factor in considering time on task. The program leverages the work of coaches and social workers to increase student attendance and reduce truancy rates. Early indicators from the program's first year of implementation are promising, with some schools seeing large increases in average daily attendance. These efforts to improve teacher and student attendance have proven to demonstrably increase teacher/student days in the classroom.

The draft report reviewed by the PED also indicated the Breakfast after the Bell program was leading to 2 days of lost instruction for students. The intent of the program is to ensure that all elementary students 1) receive a nutritious meal before starting the school day, and 2) receive instruction on the health benefits of good nutrition during that time. The finding fails to recognize the need for students to be fed to make every minute of the school day valuable. For those schools that count this as non-instructional time because the program is not being implemented as planned, the recently signed SB-144 provided for breakfast to be served either before or after the bell to ensure children are being fed while giving districts flexibility to meet individual school needs. Further, since a large number of New Mexico students rely on school meals as their sole source of nutrition, this should be considered a valuable part of the overall impact on student learning. The finding fails to recognize the need for students to be fed to make every minute of the school day valuable.

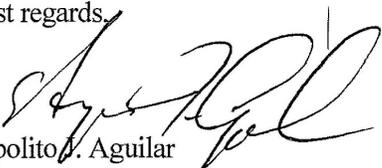
This evaluation focuses on the need to increase at-risk funding through changes in the funding formula. The recommendation fails to note how distributions from the State Equalization Guarantee, which are non-categorical, connect to increasing time-on-task. Additionally, these funds generally do not follow the students that generate them. A 2007 LFC special audit of the at-risk dollars generated by Albuquerque Public Schools students found that not only did at-risk dollars not follow the students, but they actually went to schools in wealthier parts of town. This underlines why the department believes targeted investments are best to target specific education needs, as the funds are directed where there is most need and districts can be held accountable for their programmatic expenditures.

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The draft report makes assertions that PED instructional audits do not specifically address time on task. These assertions assume time on task is not included in the underlying research within the instructional audit framework. The Priority Schools Bureau's initiatives at the PED are created to support struggling districts and schools to create and maintain an aligned system that supports increased time-on-task. In an aligned district and school system, time-on-task is improved because school and district leadership roles contribute to shaping behavior, attitudes and actions. Schools that have shown deficiencies in these areas in the past are held accountable through the Educational Plan for Student Success.

Time on task is an important structural and instructional lever to increasing student achievement. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report. We look forward to working with the LFC to improve the educational outcomes for New Mexico's more than 330,000 students.

Best regards,



Hipolito Aguilar  
Deputy Secretary, Finance and Operations

SS/cr/mp

cc: Hanna Skandera, Secretary, Public Education Department  
Christopher Ruskowski, Deputy Secretary of Policy and Program



## Appendix A: Evaluation, Scope, and Methodology

### Evaluation Objectives.

- Identify research-based best practices to promote time-on-task.
- Identify and analyze the characteristics of time-on-task in New Mexico public schools.
- Evaluate the differences in learning time among schools serving a variety of student populations and the impact of time-on-task on student achievement.

### Scope and Methodology.

- Reviewed applicable laws and regulations.
- Reviewed prior LFC reports and file documents.
- Reviewed external program evaluations, reports, peer-reviewed educational studies, and other literature.
- Contacted superintendents of 15 largest districts. Interviewed 12 of the 15 superintendents of the largest districts statewide by student population in person or by telephone conference.
- Conducted survey of all school district and charter school elementary principals and secondary (middle school and high school) principals statewide and all elementary teachers and secondary teachers statewide between May and April 2016. LFC survey inspired by *It's About Time: Learning Time and Educational Opportunity in California High Schools* (UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access, 2014) survey of high- and low-poverty high schools.
  - Secondary teachers survey – 2,399 respondents
  - Elementary teachers survey – 2,373 respondents
    - 4,772 respondents out of a possible 21,011 (elementary and secondary teachers)
  - Principal survey
    - 370 respondents out of a possible 1,108 principals statewide
  - Response rate
    - 33 percent response rate statewide (all principals)
    - 21 percent response rate statewide (all teachers)
- Contacted and provided the following New Mexico entities with evaluation objectives, information regarding surveys, and links to surveys:
  - National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers leadership
  - New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools (NMCCS) leadership
  - New Mexico School Board Association (NMSBA) leadership
  - New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders (NM CEL) leadership
  - Regional Education Cooperatives (REC) directors
- Conducted site visits at school districts, selected schools.  
Met with LFC staff, including analysts and LFC staff leadership.
- Reviewed documents and evaluation with LESC staff.

### Evaluation Team.

Madelyn P. Serna Mármol, Lead Program Evaluator

Nathan Eckberg, Program Evaluator

Yann Lussiez, Program Evaluator

**Authority for Evaluation.** LFC is authorized under the provisions of Section 2-5-3 NMSA 1978 to examine laws governing the finances and operations of departments, agencies, and institutions of New Mexico and all of its political subdivisions; the effects of laws on the proper functioning of these governmental units; and the policies and costs. LFC is also authorized to make recommendations for change to the Legislature. In furtherance of its

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statutory responsibility, LFC may conduct inquiries into specific transactions affecting the operating policies and cost of governmental units and their compliance with state laws.

**Exit Conferences.** The contents of this report were discussed with Paul Aguilar, Deputy Secretary of the Public Education Department and Christopher Ruskowski, Deputy Secretary of the Public Education Department, and Matt Pahl, Policy Director of the Public Education Department on May 5, 2016. A report draft was provided to the Public Education Department on May 5, 2016 for a formal written response.

**Report Distribution.** This report is intended for the information of the Office of the Governor; The Public Education Department; Office of the State Auditor; and the Legislative Finance Committee. This restriction is not intended to limit distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record.



Charles Sallee  
Deputy Director for Program Evaluation

## Appendix B: Fifteen Largest School Districts

### 15 Largest School Districts, FY16

Districts	Interviewed Administrative Staff	Number of Schools	Student Population >5,000	Teachers	Principals	Site Visits
Albuquerque Public Schools	Yes	159	92,245	5,843	250	Atrisco Heritage High School Eugene Field Elementary School La Cueva High School Van Buren Middle School
Las Cruces Public Schools	Yes	41	24,775	1,542	98	Centennial High School Columbia Elementary School Early College High School Valley View Elementary School
Rio Rancho Public Schools	Yes	19	17,206	1042	43	Eagle Ridge Middle School Maggie Cordova Elementary School Puesta del Sol Elementary School V. Sue Cleveland High School
Santa Fe Public Schools	Yes	33	14,652	965	51	na
Gadsden Independent Schools	Yes	22	13,524	879	54	na
Gallup-McKinley City Schools	Yes	36	11,747	737	44	na
Farmington Municipal Schools	No	20	11,718	681	27	na
Roswell Independent Schools	Yes	21	10,436	553	26	na
Hobbs Municipal Schools	Yes	18	9,923	506	23	na
Los Lunas Public Schools	Declined Participation	16	8,466	456	25	na
Clovis Municipal Schools	Yes	19	8,411	519	27	na
Carlsbad Municipal Schools	Yes	15	6,572	354	20	na
Central Consolidated Schools	No	17	6,379	396	20	na
Alamogordo	Yes	15	5,914	356	17	na
Deming Public Schools	Yes	11	5,437	293	16	Columbus Elementary School Deming Intermediate School
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>337,959</b>	<b>21,011</b>	<b>1,108</b>	<b>na</b>

## Appendix C: School District Instructional Days and Hours

	Days	Elementary Hours per Day	High School Hours per Day	Total Hours Elementary	Total Hours High School	Elementary Additional Hours	High School Additional Hours
<b>Statutory Requirements</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>1080</b>		
Alamogordo Public Schools	172	6.25	6.67	1075	1147	85	67
Albuquerque Public Schools	182	5.5	6	1001	1092	11	12
Animas Public Schools	150	7.08	7.25	1062	1088	72	8
Artesia Public Schools	180	6.42	6.33	1156	1139	166	59
Aztec Municipal Schools	147	7.5	7.5	1065	1103	75	23
Belen Consolidated Schools	180	5.5	6	990	1080	0	0
Bernalillo Public Schools	180	5.5	6	990	1080	0	0
Bloomfield School District	178	7	7.08	1246	1260	256	180
Capitan Municipal Schools	145	7.33	7.58	1081	1111	91	31
Carlsbad Municipal Schools	179	6.33	6.67	1133	1194	143	114
Carrizozo Municipal Schools	149	7.5	7.5	1065	1103	75	23
Central Consolidated School District	178	6.5	7	1157	1246	167	166
Chama Valley Schools	150	6.75	7.25	1013	1088	23	8
Cimarron Municipal Schools	153	7.5	7.5	1148	1148	158	68
Clayton Municipal Schools	172	6.53	6.53	1109	1109	119	29
Cloudcroft Municipal Schools	155	7	7	1085	1085	95	5
Cobre Consolidated Schools	176	6.25	6.75	1,100	1,188	110	108
Corona Municipal Schools	150	7.17	7.25	1076	1088	86	8
Clovis Municipal Schools	171	6.67	6.58	1135	1119	145	39
Cuba Independent Schools	173	6.5	6.5	1098	1098	108	18
Deming Public Schools	175	6	6.5	1050	1138	60	58
Des Moines Municipal Schools	172	6.25	6.75	1075	1161	85	81
Dexter Consolidated Schools	177	6.25	6.25	1106	1106	116	26
Dora Municipal Schools	150	7.33	7.33	1100	1100	110	20
Dulce Independent Schools	177	6	6.42	1062	1136	72	56
Elida Municipal Schools	151	6.75	7.25	1019	1095	29	15
Española Public Schools	179	6	6.92	1074	1239	84	159
Estancia Municipal Schools	178	6.33	6.44	1127	1146	137	66
Eunice Municipal Schools	179	6.5	6.5	1164	1164	174	84
Farmington Municipal Schools	177.5	6.42	6.5	1140	1154	150	74
Floyd Municipal Schools	151	7.33	7.42	1107	1120	117	40
Fort Sumner Municipal Schools	166	7.33	7.5	1217	1245	227	165
Gadsden Independent Schools	174	6	6.5	1044	1131	54	51
Gallup-McKinley County Schools	178	6.25	6.5	1113	1157	123	77
Grady Municipal Schools	147	7.5	7.5	1103	1103	113	23
Grants-Cibola County Schools	175	6.08	6.67	1064	1167	74	87
Hagerman Municipal Schools	179	6.7	6.7	1199	1199	209	119
Hatch Valley Public Schools	175	6	6.5	1050	1138	60	58
Hobbs Municipal Schools	180	5.75	6.83	1035	1229	45	149
Hondo Valley Public Schools	144	7.58	7.58	1092	1092	102	12
House Municipal Schools	146	7.52	7.52	1098	1098	108	18
Jal Public Schools	180	6.33	6.33	1139	1139	149	59
Jemez Mountain Public Schools	154	7.25	7.25	1073	1117	83	37
Jemez Valley Public Schools	180	6.5	6.5	1170	1170	180	90
Lake Arthur Municipal Schools	178	6.58	6.58	1171	1171	181	91
Las Cruces Public Schools	175	6.58	7	1152	1225	162	145
Las Vegas City Public Schools	180	6.42	6.57	1156	1183	166	103
Logan Municipal Schools	146	7.5	7.5	1095	1095	105	15
Lordsburg Municipal Schools	179	6.5	6.58	1164	1178	174	98
Los Alamos Public Schools	180	5.73	6.43	1031	1157	41	77
Los Lunas Public Schools	176	6	6.5	1056	1144	66	64
Loving Municipal Schools	176	6.53	6.63	1149	1167	159	87
Lovington Municipal Schools	180	6	6.33	1080	1139	90	59
Magdalena Municipal Schools	146	7.5	7.5	1095	1095	105	15
Maxwell Municipal Schools	147	7.5	7.58	1103	1114	113	34
Melrose Public Schools	151	7.25	7.25	1095	1095	105	15
Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools	150	7.42	7.42	1113	1113	123	33
Mora Independent Schools	180	6.5	6.5	1160	1160	170	80
Moriarty-Edgewood School District	172	6.08	6.77	1046	1164	56	84
Mosquero Municipal Schools	144	7.5	7.5	1080	1080	90	0
Mountainair Public Schools	177	6.2	6.31	1097	1117	107	37
Pecos Independent Schools	178	6.5	6.58	1157	1171	167	91
Peñasco Independent Schools	153	7	7.25	1071	1109	81	29

	Days	Elementary Hours per Day	High School Hours per Day	Total Hours Elementary	Total Hours High School	Elementary Additional Hours	High School Additional Hours
<b>Statutory Requirements</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>1080</b>		
Portales Municipal Schools	177	6.25	6.25	1106	1106	116	26
Quemado Independent Schools	150	7.33	7.6	1100	1140	110	60
Questa Independent Schools	169	6.5	6.75	1071	1113	81	33
Raton Public Schools	174	6.67	6.83	1161	1188	171	108
Reserve Independent Schools	151	7.53	7.53	1137	1137	147	57
Rio Rancho Public Schools	177	6	6.25	1056	1106	66	26
Roswell Independent Schools	178	6.5	6.58	1157	1171	167	91
Roy Municipal Schools	145	7.5	7.5	1088	1088	98	8
Ruidoso Municipal Schools	178	6.08	6.33	1082	1127	92	47
San Jon Municipal Schools	146	7.5	7.5	1095	1095	105	15
Santa Fe Public Schools	176	6.5	7	1078	1232	88	152
Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools	169	6.45	7	1090	1183	100	103
Silver Consolidated Schools	178	5.92	6.25	1054	1113	64	33
Socorro Consolidated Schools	181	6.08	6.5	1100	1177	110	97
Springer Municipal Schools	148	7.25	7.5	1073	1110	83	30
Taos Municipal Schools	175	6.25	6.42	1094	1124	104	44
Tatum Municipal Schools	156	7.25	7.25	1131	1131	141	51
Texico Municipal Schools	155	7.25	7.25	1124	1124	134	44
Truth or Consequences Municipal	175	5.91	6.46	1034	1131	44	51
Tucumcari Public Schools	150	7.25	7.33	1088	1100	98	20
Tularosa Municipal Schools	178	6.42	6.55	1143	1166	153	86
Vaughn Municipal Schools	150	6.6	7.2	990	1080	0	0
Wagon Mound Public Schools	149	8.25	8.25	1229	1229	239	149
West Las Vegas Public Schools	180	6.25	6.33	1125	1139	135	59
Zuni Public Schools	180	6.08	6.35	1094	1143	104	63

Source: PED School Calendars/LFC Analysis

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## Appendix D: Instructional Audit Indicators

1. Implement research-based strategies, interventions, and programs that ensure quality teaching and learning that meet students' academic needs.
2. Effectively employ a continuous improvement process in the classroom with students.
3. Use data derived from interim and other formative assessments as well as summative assessments to refocus or modify instruction at the classroom or individual level to help all students meet high standards.
4. Consistently implement the district's policy for allocating and protecting instructional time in all core subject areas.
5. Demonstrate appropriate content knowledge for effective and accurate instruction.
6. Employ effective teaching strategies, including differentiated instruction, to meet the learning needs of all students.
7. Provide specific and timely feedback to students on an ongoing basis, with students using feedback to improve performance.
8. Offer students multiple opportunities for demonstrating proficiency.
9. Implement curriculum and classroom assessments that are aligned with the New Mexico Content Standards (NMCS).
10. Maintain a positive, respectful classroom climate and use effective classroom management strategies that are consistent with school and district policies to meet the learning needs of all students.
11. Maintain a culture of respect in which relationships, trust, communication, and collaboration are valued by the entire school community.
12. Ensure that the school is a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning.
13. Ensure that the school has an environment in which the cultures of the community members are respected.

# APPENDIX E: Teachscape Rubric

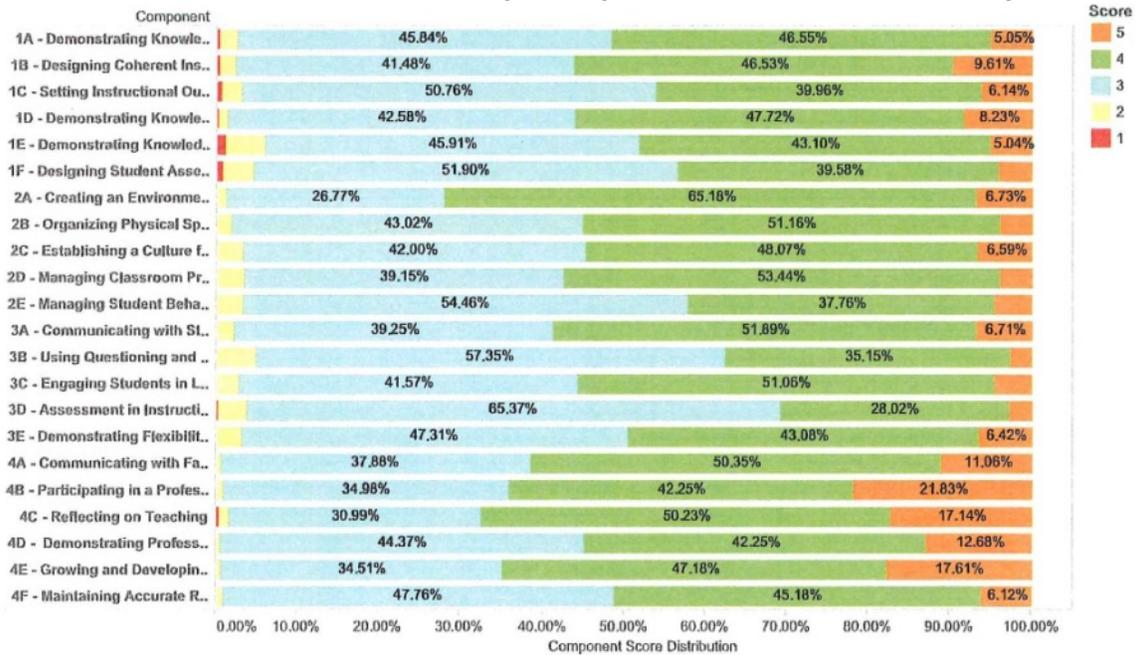
## NMTeach Teacher Evaluation, Domain 2

Domain 2: Creating an Environment for Learning		
<b>Element</b>	<p><b>NMTEACH 2D: Managing Classroom Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what level is the classroom culture and routine maximizing instructional time?</li> <li>To what level does the teacher use developmentally appropriate procedures to maximize instructional time?</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Any reference to “all students” includes culturally and linguistically diverse, ELs, and SWD .</i></p> <p><i>Note: Any reference to NM adopted standards includes the 2012 Amplification of WIDA ELD Standards, when serving ELL and IEP goals, when serving SWD.</i></p>	
<b>Level of Performance</b>	<b>Ineffective</b>	<p><b>A majority of instructional time is lost due to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inefficient classroom routines;</li> <li>inefficient procedures for transition;</li> <li>inefficient use of supplies and materials; and</li> <li>use of developmentally inappropriate procedures.</li> </ul>
	<b>Minimally Effective</b>	<p><b>Some instructional time is lost due to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partially effective classroom routines and procedures that may or may not be developmentally appropriate;</li> <li>partially effective routines for transition; and</li> <li>partially effective use of supplies and materials.</li> </ul>
	<b>Effective</b>	<p><b>Little instructional time is lost because of</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>established routines and procedures that are developmentally appropriate for all students and may include modifying speech and wait time to ensure understanding of the routines;</li> <li>routines and procedures that are designed to keep students’ interest, maximize learning, and assist in transitions; and</li> <li>implementation of a well-organized system for accessing materials, including supplies and manipulatives.</li> </ul>
	<b>Highly Effective</b>	<p><b>Almost no instructional time is lost because of</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students’ internalization of daily routines;</li> <li>students’ taking the initiative and contributing to the seamless operation of the classroom and classroom procedures, including those that pertain to developmentally appropriate cooperative learning activities; and</li> <li>implementation of a well-organized system of transitions in which students lead effective routines, including the distribution and collection of materials and manipulatives.</li> </ul>
	<b>Exemplary</b>	<p><b>In addition to the indicators for highly effective, the teacher leader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributes to a culture of student ownership of school-wide operations;</li> <li>models and assists colleagues and students in creating classroom procedures that are culturally and linguistically responsive and student centered; and</li> <li>engages in opportunities to support and mentor colleagues by sharing knowledge, information, and strategies for managing classroom procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Notes:</b>		

Source: PED

# APPENDIX F: Teachscape School District Report Example

**Chartxx. District-Wide Teachscape Component Score Distribution Example**



Source: School district data

\*The component score distribution report shows how teachers are scoring on each teaching domain (1-ineffective, 2-minimally effective, 3-effective, 4-highly effective, 5-exemplary).