

## FACT SHEET

### ***STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES OF EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMS: K-3 PLUS AND READS TO LEAD***

The first eight years of children’s learning experiences – from birth through third grade – develop a foundation critical to a student’s cognitive, social, and emotional skills that are critical for learning in future grades. Some children enter kindergarten without basic skills and end up far behind their peers. Children with weak literacy skills at age 8 face a potentially damaging short- and long-term consequences; among them, repeating a grade or dropping out of school. Third grade is considered a critical point in a student’s academic success because that is when students shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” It is imperative that New Mexico has a comprehensive early literacy strategy in place to ensure that:

- students who enter kindergarten have the basic social, literacy, and numeracy skills needed for future academic success; and
- New Mexico closes the achievement gap by third grade.

First year Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment results, only 24.9 percent of third graders achieved proficiency in reading and 25.2 percent achieved proficiency in math.

<b>Table 1</b>					
<b>2014-2015 PARCC RESULTS</b>					
<b>Percent of 3rd Graders Proficient <sup>1</sup></b>					
<b>Level Indicators</b>	<b>L-5</b>	<b>L-4</b>	<b>L-3</b>	<b>L-2</b>	<b>L-1</b>
<b>READING</b>	1.3	23.6	23.6	24	27.5
<b>MATH</b>	2.6	22.6	28.8	28.3	17.7

<sup>1</sup> According to PED, PARCC performance level indicators: L1 – did not meet expectations; L2 – partially met expectations; L3 – approached expectations; L4 – met expectations; and L5 – exceeded expectations.

The Public Education Department (PED) has not yet released disaggregated results from PARCC. However, performance on the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment in previous years demonstrate students who come from a low social economic status, who are English language learners (ELLs), Hispanic and Native American, and students with learning disabilities scored lower than average.

<b>Table 2</b>								
<b>An Overview of NMSBA 3rd Grade Results</b>								
<b>GROUP</b>	<b>READING: PERCENT PROFICIENT &amp; ABOVE</b>				<b>MATH: PERCENT PROFICIENT &amp; ABOVE</b>			
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>All Students</b>	52.9	52.4	55.2	51.8	51.5	52.7	54.8	49.4
<b>Hispanic</b>	48.2	47.8	51	48.3	46.4	47.9	49.4	45.4
<b>American Indian</b>	35.5	36.2	39.2	32.3	37.8	37	38.1	30.5
<b>English Language Learners</b>	33	28.1	35.9	33.7	34.4	31.1	36.7	33.5
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	21.7	20.6	20	19	24	23.9	22	21.1

## Background

During the 2014 interim, the committee heard testimony from Dr. Nonie Lesaux, Professor of Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr. Lesaux stated that a comparison of New Mexico demographics to the rest of the country indicates:

- 33 percent of children birth through 5 years old in New Mexico live in poverty, compared to 26 percent of US children among the same age group; and
- 22 percent of children and youth in New Mexico are children of immigrants, compared to 24 percent in the US.

A majority of these children, she emphasized, are generally not fluent in English, which creates an obstacle for proficiency in literacy. Dr. Lesaux explained that only 22 percent of fourth graders in New Mexico, of which 17 percent are Hispanic, read at or above grade level.

She stated that many students in New Mexico who grow up in poverty and come from a diverse linguistic and cultural background will have a gap between decoding skills and word knowledge. While these students may be on grade-level in decoding skills, she stated, they may be below grade-level in word knowledge, which is fundamental for comprehension. She then outlined a five-part plan to increase the quality of children's language and reading environments, including:

- program design and implementation;
- ongoing assessment of children and settings;
- redefined adult capacity building models;
- language rich, rigorous, and engaging curricula; and
- partnerships with families focused on language and learning.

The National Governors Association (NGA) recommended early literacy policy actions that align with Dr. Lesaux's calling governors to:

- adopt comprehensive language and literacy standards and curricula from birth through third grade;
- expand access to high-quality child care, pre-kindergarten, and full-day kindergarten;
- engage with and support families as partners in early language and literacy development;
- equip professionals providing care and education with the skills and knowledge to support language and literacy development, especially for dual language learners (DLLs); and
- promote continuous improvement and accountability to include:
  - strengthening quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS);
  - developing a comprehensive assessment system through third grade; and
  - coordinating early childhood and kindergarten through twelfth grade state longitudinal data systems.

## **Policy Indicators and Goals: *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy***

According to *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy*, a nonprofit civic enterprise that provides impartial analysis for pragmatic policy solutions of public problems, in order to significantly improve children's literacy development as well as learning and development in other areas such as math, science, and social-emotional domains, federal, state,

and local education agencies need to take a comprehensive, coordinated, and connected birth to third grade (B-3<sup>rd</sup>) approach, especially with an emphasis on pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.

While most states, including New Mexico, have made progress toward developing a comprehensive pre-kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade program, these systems are still fragmented and uncoordinated. This leaves students without sufficient opportunities to help them succeed academically, especially children who speak English as a second language, children with special needs, and children from low-income families.

To determine how states are working toward addressing this issue, *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy* team developed a B-3<sup>rd</sup> policy framework based on research and discussions with early education experts. The team grouped states into three categories based on meeting the framework as:

- 1) walking – making solid strides toward comprehensive B-3<sup>rd</sup> policy (five states);
- 2) toddling – progress in some areas but not in others (35 states); and
- 3) crawling – at early stages with limited progress (11 states).

New Mexico is among 35 states to fall into the toddling category, though is considered closer to the walking category in its progress toward the policies outlined in the framework (see **Attachment 1, *Statewide Progress on Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Policies, by Category***).

The framework includes state policies in seven areas that are essential for supporting children's literacy development (see **Attachment 2, *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy Indicators and NM Progress***): educators – teachers and leaders; standards, assessment, and data; equitable funding; pre-kindergarten access and quality; full-day kindergarten access and quality; DLL supports; and third grade reading laws.

Among its recommendations, the *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy* team states that a balance must be met between state and local autonomy to implement policies so that children and families have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities.

### **History of the K-3 Plus Program**

In 2003, K-3 Plus program originally began as the Kindergarten Plus pilot project, a three-year study program in four schools. The Kindergarten Plus pilot project extended the school year for 40 days with the intent of demonstrating that additional time in kindergarten narrows the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and other students.

In 2006, the program was enacted to serve more school districts with high-poverty schools, defined as having 85 percent or more of the students eligible for free or reduced-free lunch.

In 2007, K-3 Plus was enacted as a six-year pilot project that extends the school year in kindergarten through third grade by at least 25 instructional days, starting up to two months earlier than other classes. K-3 Plus, which is administered by PED, provides additional time on literacy, numeracy, and social skills development for participants, as well as leads to higher test scores for all participants.

In 2012, K-3 Plus program became permanent and among its provisions:

- require PED to grant priority to schools with research-based, scientific reading strategies;
- require that K-3 Plus programs be funded at no less than 30 percent of the unit value per student and that funded school districts use up to 2.0 percent of the money received for student recruitment and to ensure regular attendance by K-3 Plus students; and
- require PED to report annually to the Legislature and the Governor on the efficacy of the project.

Since FY 08, \$104.7 million has been appropriated to PED for K-3 Plus summer program as follows:

SUMMER	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Amount Appropriated</b>	\$7.2	\$7.2 <sup>1</sup>	\$7.9 <sup>2</sup>	\$5.3 <sup>3</sup>	\$5.3	\$11	\$16	\$24.9	\$23.7
<b>Amount Allocated</b>	\$5.6	\$5.6	\$5.6	\$5.1	\$3.7	\$8.9	\$14.3	\$21.4	\$24.2
<b># of Students Served</b>	5,069	6,996	8,053	5,816	4,564	7,163	11,639	18,056	19,383
<b># of Programs</b>	54	92	93	62	50	75	140	271	229
<b># of Districts &amp; Charter Schools</b>	17 districts	25 districts	25 districts	19 districts & 1 charter school	14 districts & 1 charter school	20 districts & 1 charter school	32 districts & 2 charter schools	46 districts & 1 charter school	47 districts & 7 charter schools

<sup>1</sup>The 2009 Legislature appropriated \$3.0 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families but was vetoed.

<sup>2</sup>Eight and a half million dollars was originally appropriated but as a result of the 2009 special session, this appropriation was reduced by 6.5 percent to \$7.9 million.

<sup>3</sup>Five and a half million dollars was originally appropriated but as a result of the 2010 special session, the appropriation was reduced by 0.544 percent to \$5.5 million. After the 3.244 percent reduction in August 2010, \$5.3 was available for K-3 Plus.

PED's FY 17 budget request includes \$29.2 million for the summer 2016 K-3 Plus.

### ***Research-Based Support for K-3 Plus***

The University of Utah received funding through the federal Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) program administered by the US Department of Education (USDE) to evaluate the effectiveness of New Mexico's K-3 Plus program. The study is referred to as the Start Smart K-3 Plus Project (Start Smart).

Start Smart was designed as a randomized controlled trial because comparing students from K-3 Plus-eligible schools with non-K-3 Plus-eligible schools would result in selection bias because those schools have different:

- percentages of ELL students;
- percentages of free- and reduced-priced lunch (FRL) students; and
- levels of motivation from parents and students.

Although preliminary, current study results include:

- adjustments to account for program attendance; and
- data for all students through the beginning of first grade.

The most recent preliminary results indicate K-3 Plus is having positive effects on student learning. The results indicate how much better a student did if he or she had participated in K-3 Plus compared to a student in the control ranking at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on tests. The numbers for each readiness effect indicate points above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

<b>Table 4</b>			
<b>Start Smart K-3 Plus Effectiveness</b>			
<b>Readiness Effects</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>First Grade</b>	<b>Second Grade</b>
Expressive Vocabulary	2	1	0
Letter-Word Identification	12		
Broad Reading		9	8
Applied Problems	6		
Broad Math		9	4
Basic Writing	11	9	6

### **History of New Mexico Reads to Lead**

In 2012, the Governor proposed an \$11.5 million investment in early childhood reading reforms; and the Legislature appropriated \$8.5 million for FY 13. In the first year the funds were provided to districts through a competitive request for application process but changed to a non-competitive application process after the first year. Additionally, PED launched a reading website with resources in English and Spanish. The *New Mexico Reads to Lead* (RTL) initiative has provided the following expectations and supports for early literacy interventions:

- a screening assessment to use for planning data-driven instruction;
- quality professional development for administrators, reading coaches, and teachers;
- ensure that districts and charter schools have a comprehensive plan for addressing literacy instruction; and
- support for parents and families through outreach with resources in English and Spanish.

School districts and charter schools who participated received funding to:

- hire reading coaches to provide professional development for educators to improve instruction in reading and support increased student achievement; and
- reading intervention support for students in kindergarten through third grade to include:
  - hire reading interventionists to provide interventions for struggling students; or
  - purchase intervention instructional materials.

In addition, PED provided the DIBELS Next and IDEL assessments for kindergarten through third grade to all school districts and state-chartered charter schools.

Since FY 13, \$49.5 million has been appropriated to PED for RTL as follows:

<b>Table 5</b>			
<b>Reads to Lead Funding</b>			
	<b>AMOUNT APPROPRIATED</b>	<b>AMOUNT PED ALLOCATED</b>	<b># OF DISTRICTS &amp; CHARTER SCHOOLS RECURRING ALLOCATION</b>
<b>FY 13</b>	\$8,500,000 <sup>1</sup>	\$4,491,020.50	13 Districts
<b>FY 14</b>	\$11,500,000 <sup>2</sup>	\$6,615,327 <sup>3</sup>	86 Districts & 33 Charter Schools
<b>FY 15</b>	\$14,500,000 <sup>4</sup>	\$10,759, 500	88 Districts & 43 Charter Schools
<b>FY 16</b>	\$15,000,000 <sup>5</sup>	\$10,654,00	88 Districts & 43 Charter Schools

<sup>1</sup>Three million dollars was used to provide a common K-3 interim assessment for use in all elementary schools and \$1 million for professional development.

<sup>2</sup>Two million two-hundred thousand dollars was used to provide a common K-3 interim assessment for use in all elementary schools and \$2.7 million was used for professional development.

<sup>3</sup>In FY 14, PED agreed to a distribution amount methodology that guaranteed each qualifying school district and charter school a minimum amount of RTL funding based on students membership. However, because the department's request was not fully funded and the Legislature included \$4 million in the funding formula for school districts and charter schools to use for early literacy, the department took credit for the \$4 million appropriated through the formula. This resulted in only \$6,615,327 in RTL funding being allocated to school districts and charter schools.

<sup>4</sup>One million nine-hundred thousand dollars was used to provide a common K-3 interim assessment for use in all elementary schools and \$1.9 million for professional development.

<sup>5</sup>One million, nine-hundred thousand dollars was used to provide a common K-3 interim assessment for use in all elementary schools and \$2.4 million for professional development.

For FY 17, PED requested \$25 million for Reads to Lead. Fifteen million dollars will be used to support the original Reads to Lead model, including PED provided professional development and statewide assessment costs. Ten million dollars will be used for supplemental Reads to Lead 2.0 awards that will be made on a competitive basis to the lowest performing schools. PED indicates the following considerations will be made when awards are made:

- student achievement as demonstrated by DIBELS Next data, PARCC data, overall elementary school grades (D/F), and Q1/Q3 grades for elementary schools (D/F);
- commitment to weekly data meetings focused exclusively on student K-3 reading progress;
- commitment to host at least one Readers Raise the Roof workshop during the school year;
- willingness to align additional resources to the schools, such as time, staff, money, etc... as needs arise based on student outcomes;
- participation in up to three site visits annually by PED staff and the regional coach in the schools participating in 2.0;
- willingness to participate in a program evaluation; and
- a school-wide commitment to participate in Reads to Lead 2.0 and the additional requirements.

PED anticipates the additional \$10 million will support 60 schools in the first year of Reads to Lead 2.0.

## **Conclusion**

According to *New America's Early and Elementary Education Policy*, New Mexico is making progress toward developing a comprehensive early learning approach to support early literacy

development in kindergarten through third grade. It is evident in the approaches of both K-3 Plus and Reads to Lead. The two programs help support early literacy through embedding:

- standards and assessment data driven instruction;
- Response to Intervention with strong emphasis in Tier I core instruction for all students;
- professional development in literacy best practices, among some to include Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)<sup>1</sup> and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)<sup>2</sup>; and
- support with reading coaches and interventionists.

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<sup>1</sup> LETRS is a professional development program that responds to the need for high-quality literacy education at all levels.

<sup>2</sup> SIOP Model is a research-based and validated instructional model that has proven effective in addressing needs of English learners in core instruction.

Table 1  
**State Progress on Birth–3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Policies, by Category**

**Walking**

New York  
 Oklahoma  
 Connecticut

West Virginia  
 Wisconsin

**Toddling**

Washington, D.C.  
 Minnesota  
 New Jersey  
 Alabama  
 Rhode Island  
 Maryland  
 North Carolina  
 Illinois  
 Florida  
 Arkansas  
 Delaware  
 Ohio  
 Massachusetts  
 Indiana  
 Louisiana  
 Tennessee  
 Vermont  
 Alaska

New Mexico  
 Georgia  
 South Carolina  
 Mississippi  
 Michigan  
 Oregon  
 Iowa  
 Maine  
 Washington  
 Colorado  
 Pennsylvania  
 Texas  
 Nebraska  
 Virginia  
 California  
 Hawaii  
 Missouri

**Crawling**

Kansas  
 Kentucky  
 Arizona  
 North Dakota  
 Utah  
 Nevada

Idaho  
 South Dakota  
 Wyoming  
 New Hampshire  
 Montana

Policy Indicators	Policy Goals	NM Progress
<b>Educators: Teachers and Leaders</b>	State-level policies governing educator preparation and licensure should account for the unique needs of Pre-K-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade teachers who are laying the foundation for children’s success in school and later in life, and this includes preparation in the science of reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has an early childhood education (ECE) teaching license that spans birth to third grade but is not required for teachers holding a K-8 license who teach in kindergarten through third grade</li> <li>- does not require principals to have specialized preparation in ECE prior to leading an elementary school</li> <li>- for licensed child care centers, directors must have a Child Development Associate’s (CDA) but lead teachers in child care centers can teach with less than a high school diploma or GED</li> </ul>
<b>Standards, Assessments, and Data</b>	Children need to move seamlessly from classroom to classroom, especially from Pre-K into kindergarten to make it easier for teachers to build upon their academic and developmental skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has comprehensive early learning guidelines for Pre-K, infants, and toddlers, and provides college- and career-ready standards for grades K-12</li> <li>- mentions dual language learners (DLLs) in the introduction and literacy sections</li> <li>- has not developed K-12 social-emotional learning standards;</li> <li>- developed a common statewide kindergarten entry assessment called Kindergarten Observation Tool (KOT) that will be implemented in the fall of 2016</li> <li>- requires a reading assessment in kindergarten through second grade but does not make recommendations or require a math assessment in those grades</li> <li>- can link individual child data from some ECE programs to the state K-12 longitudinal data system and collects ECE screening and assessment data from at least one type of early childhood program</li> <li>- FOCUS quality rating system (QRIS) does not rate programs on learning environment or teacher-child interactions</li> </ul>
<b>Equitable Funding</b>	Funding needs to be equitable and sufficient but because schools who serve the nation’s most vulnerable children – those facing poverty,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not fund pre-K programs through a funding formula</li> <li>- has a flat funding distribution that provides its highest-poverty districts with about \$1.02 for every dollar in low-poverty districts<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> According to *New America’s Early and Elementary Education Policy*, the federal government recommends that states reimburse child care centers for children from families receiving child care subsidies at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the state market rate for child care. New Mexico does not meet this threshold and reimburses child care centers based on a tiered system for quality.

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	hunger, family turmoil, high mobility, or other challenges – often have limited resources, therefore it is important for states to allocate more money to districts with students facing poverty	
<b>Pre-K: Access and Quality</b>	All states should strive to ensure that all three- and four-year-olds have access to high quality pre-K programs, using public resources to first prioritize the most at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has a state-funded pre-K program but does not serve three year olds</li> <li>- gives local authority to determine length of day for pre-K</li> </ul>
<b>Full-Day Kindergarten</b>	Research shows that full-day kindergarten supports better academic outcomes for students in the early years and children in full-day kindergarten programs made statistically greater gains in the early literacy skills than their peers in half-day programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- does not require full-day kindergarten but districts offering full-day kindergarten are not allowed to charge tuition;</li> <li>- funds full-day kindergarten at the same rate as first grade; and has a minimum length of day for full-day kindergarten equivalent to first grade</li> </ul>
<b>Dual Language Supports (DLLs)</b>	States that require pre-K programs to screen for DLLs will likely do a better job of identifying and providing early support to students as well as engaging parents who speak a language other than English at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- state policy allows districts to provide a bilingual, multicultural education program (BMEP) for DLLs and native or proficient English-speaking students;</li> <li>- DLLs participating in a BMEP must achieve a proficient score of 5<sup>2</sup> on the WIDA ACCESS test in order to be identified as fully English proficient (FEP);</li> <li>- has family engagement laws that specifically mention families that speak languages other than English at home</li> <li>- allows bilingual non-English classes in pre-K programs, but does not require a screening assessment or provide families with a home language survey as required in K-12</li> </ul>
<b>Third Grade Reading Laws</b>	States that include a third grade reading law that ensures students are reading at grade-level by the end of third grade include; early identification	- state law requires annual reading assessments for students in kindergarten through third grade but does not require reading assessments in pre-K

<sup>2</sup> As noted in the Public Education Department's (PED) BMEP Technical Manual, they are reclassified as FEP when they have attained a composite score of 5.0 on the English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS. According to PED, it was determined to use the composite score of 5.0 because it correlated to proficiency on the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment, and it created an objective measurement. When ELLs are reclassified as FEP, these students enter mainstream public education.

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and intervention before third grade; and parent notification of student progress. This framework does not support the requirement of third grade retention if they do not score proficient on state reading assessments.

- state law does not require retention for third grade students who do not meet grade-level expectations in reading