



Santa Fe County  
**Mobilizing for  
Education Excellence**

***SUMMIT 2011***

**BACKGROUND  
REPORT**

- Summit participants are urged to read this report before the event.
- Summit details: Monday, June 13, 8:30am – 5:00pm, Santa Fe Community College

**CONVENER**

United Way of Santa Fe County

**FACILITATOR**

New Mexico First



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# FORWARD

## Purpose of the Event

This one-day summit builds on a series of Community Conversations held by United Way of Santa Fe County (UWSFC) in 2010 and 2011. Drawing on the priorities that surfaced during those conversations, the summit will produce recommendations for a community-driven plan for education excellence. After the summit, United Way will convene an implementation process to advance that plan.

This report provides essential background for participants attending the summit.

## Cultural Competence<sup>1</sup>

To be successful, UWSFC's educational initiatives frame goals into language that can be interpreted and implemented within the cultures the organization seeks to serve. The organization relies on the help and support of "cultural brokers," people expert in the ways of the culture, accepted by the culture, and who can provide leadership in that community.

New Mexico is rich in cultural diversity. That diversity has attracted people to this area for centuries. Celebrating diversity is at the heart of providing effective education, and it is central to the structure and goals of the June summit.

Additional details on UWSFC's approach to cultural competence are provided in Appendix A of this report.

## Convener

United Way of Santa Fe County is one of nine United Way Worldwide pilot sites to mobilize their community around education. Their strategy is to listen to the community's aspirations and act with intentionality to create changes in public education and early learning in Santa Fe.

In 2001, United Way of Santa Fe County (UWSFC) adopted 'creating lasting change in chronic community conditions' as its mission. As a result, UWSFC launched the Santa Fe Children's Project as the means to fulfill its mission and as the sole initiative of the organization. All of the organization's work, including the June summit, falls within its Santa Children's Project.

The project is a community development initiative that seeks to strengthen families, and the whole community, through a sequential pipeline of early intervention, education, and development opportunities. In its full implementation, families with young children will participate in a wide array of opportunities: social, educational, economic, and community development programs that, taken together, can change the academic, social, and economic conditions of the whole community leading to greatly increased community assets, family strengths, and, ultimately, greater success for children.

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<sup>1</sup> Kinkade, Jerry Ph.D., Report to NM Early Childhood Development Partnership. March 2011.

## Facilitator

**New Mexico First** engages people in important issues facing their state or community. Established in 1986, the public policy organization offers unique town halls and forums that bring together people from all walks of life to develop their best ideas for policymakers and the public. New Mexico First also produces nonpartisan public policy reports on critical issues facing the state. These reports – on topics like water, education, healthcare, the economy, and energy – are available at [nmfirst.org](http://nmfirst.org). The organization was co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici (retired).

## Report Authors

This New Mexico First report was prepared by Pamela K. Blackwell and edited by Heather Balas. Reviewers included:

- Brian Dineen, United Way of Santa Fe County
- Katherine Freeman, United Way of Santa Fe County
- Marte Murphy, United Way of Santa Fe County
- Kurt Steinhaus, Los Alamos National Labs

Special thanks to the review committee for sharing their time and expertise.

# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

United Way of Santa Fe County conducted 24 community meetings in 2010 and 2011, engaging over 300 people from all walks of life. These moving discussions surfaced people's aspirations for educational opportunities in Santa Fe, as well as the greatest strengths of the local schools. These events allowed English and Spanish-speaking parents, teachers, and community members to identify key problems the community needs to solve. Their insights provide a foundation for the *Mobilizing for Education Excellence Summit*.<sup>2</sup>

The overriding theme of the conversations was that all children deserve an equitable and quality education that addresses the whole child and respects their culture and language.

Community members' insights fell into six key themes:

- 1) Quality early education and care will ensure success in school and life
- 2) Reading is the fundamental building block for high school graduation
- 3) Parent involvement will improve education
- 4) Teachers are key to student success
- 5) Santa Fe schools need the full engagement of the community
- 6) Santa Fe schools need more funding

## THEME 1:

### Quality Early Education and Care Will Ensure Success in School and Life

*"Money on early education is money well spent. If it is not spent upfront, we will have to spend more down the road." - Community Conversation Participant*

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- Early childhood education is the foundation for school success.
- Santa Fe needs consistent, high quality standards for all early childhood education.
- Early childhood education can develop a love of school early.
- Social skills learned in Pre-K are critical for later success in school.
- There should be universal, but voluntary, access to Pre-K or other quality early care.

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<sup>2</sup> United Way of Santa Fe County, *Community Conversations Themes and Supporting Statements – Final Report*. April 26, 2011. (The Community Conversations comprised of 24 public meetings and 316 participants from SF County representing a broad range of racial and ethnic, economic, gender, and age backgrounds.) Priorities and themes were pulled from a consistent set of questions developed in cooperation with The Harwood Institute.

## THEME 2

### Reading is the Fundamental Building Block for High School Graduation

*“There was a wonderful teacher that would take each one of us to read to her during recess.”*  
–Community Conversation Participant

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- All 3<sup>rd</sup> graders must read at grade level.
- Students will not succeed in their other subjects, if they can’t read.
- All teachers should be reading specialists.
- Bi-lingual education is not working.
- Volunteers are needed to help students with reading.
- Support is needed for reading at home.

## THEME 3

### Parent Involvement Will Improve Education

*“My involvement will show my child that I value education.”*  
–Community Conversation Participant

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- Schools are not welcoming to parents.
- Language and culture are barriers to parents being involved.
- Teacher-parent conference schedules often do not accommodate working parents.
- Parents want to know effective ways to help their children.
- Some parents fear that their activism will result in the punishment of their child.
- Parents are questioning the “partnership” between themselves and the schools.
- Parents need to be more involved in the political process.

## THEME 4

### Teachers are Key to Student Success

*“Teachers need to be motivated. It comes from a desire or need to succeed.”  
-Community Conversation Participant*

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- Teachers should be supported and respected by the community, parents, students, and administrators.
- High quality teachers are essential.
- Increase compensation for good teachers.
- Teachers need on-going professional development.
- Many teachers do not understand the cultural values and the cultural differences of their students.
- Improve teacher morale and eliminate fear of the administration.
- Teach to the student’s ability, to the whole child.

## THEME 5

### Santa Fe Schools Need the Full Engagement of the Community

*“We need to energize the entire community.”  
– Community Conversation Participant*

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- The community must rise up and demand better schools.
- The community includes everyone, not just those who have children in public schools.
- There are huge opportunities for volunteers to assist in improvements and reform.
- The school board should play a pivotal role in improving academic achievement.

## THEME 6

### Santa Fe Schools Need More Funding

**“Education costs money, but so does an uneducated workforce.”**  
*- Community Conversation Participant*

#### Participants told UWSFC:

- Funding is an investment, not an expense.
- Too many cuts in recent years.
- Legislative advocacy is needed.
- Existing funding needs to be used well.
- Better school budget oversight.
- Change the state funding formula.
- Pay for education or pay for jail.

# WHO ATTENDS SANTA FE SCHOOLS?

## Community Profile

Each year thousands of visitors from around the world come to Santa Fe for its vibrant art market, multicultural character, climate, and outdoor sports activities. Santa Fe's population of about 75,000<sup>3</sup> represents the city's rich Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo heritage. After state government, tourism is the major contributor to the Santa Fe economy. Since 1943, Santa Fe's economy has been closely linked with science and technology when the town served as the gateway to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), and later the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) and Sandia National Laboratories.<sup>4</sup>

Santa Fe's attractions are assets to the community, but viewed alone, they can create the false impression that most Santa Fe families are financially well off. In reality, there is a wide range of income levels with many Santa Fe families struggling to make ends meet in a city whose cost of living is the highest in the state.

## Santa Fe's Children

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, just over 20 percent of Santa Fe's children are under age 18 with over 5 percent of Santa Fe's children under age five.<sup>5</sup> The ethnicity and race of Santa Fe's children reflect Santa Fe's multicultural heritage as well as the diversity in family income.<sup>6</sup>

Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS), Race & Ethnicity Breakdown 2009-2010		
Total student population = 12,591	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
Hispanic	9,663	77%
Caucasian	2,287	18%
Native American	325	3%
African American	129	1%
Asian	187	1%

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Los Alamos National Laboratories. *Los Alamos Nation Laboratory Impacts and Investments in Santa Fe County*. Rpt. LA-UR 11-02378. 2011. P.1.

<sup>5</sup> US. Census, 2000. Retrieved May 11, 2011. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35/3570500.html>

<sup>6</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools Office of the Deputy Superintendent, Department of Assessment and Accountability. *Santa Fe Public Schools District Portfolio: A comprehensive view of demographics and student performance based on longitudinal data*. January 3, 2011.

## SFPS Student: A Snapshot

- 62% (7,835) are economically disadvantaged.
- Close to 75% are eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- 28% (3,558) are English Language Learners (ELLs). 13% (1,639) are special education students. (Does not include “gifted students.”)

(Source: SFPS, demographics and student performance data report. 01/03/11)

## Santa Fe Schools and Enrollment

The Santa Fe Public School (SFPS) district has 20 elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools (including charter schools) making it the fourth largest school district in New Mexico.<sup>7</sup> Many students attend the same schools that their parents and grandparents attended. Additionally, the SFPS district provides educational services to registered home school students and to students at the New Mexico School for the Deaf, the Santa Fe County Juvenile Detention Center, and the New Mexico Girls Ranch. There are about 1,800 SFPS district employees.

The total number of students enrolled in Santa Fe public schools consistently declined until the 2008-2009 school year, when public school enrollment increased.<sup>8</sup> Early in 2008, 76 percent of local students were enrolled in the public schools.<sup>9</sup> By 2010, that number increased to 81 percent with 18 percent of students enrolled in private schools.

There may be a number of reasons for this increase in public school enrollment. The downturn in the economy began in 2008, and it is possible that some families could no longer afford private school tuition. Given the SFPS district consistently low student state and national test scores, it is unlikely that parents moved their children from private to public schools because of a perception that the public schools had improved.

<sup>7</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools Office of the Deputy Superintendent, Department of Assessment and Accountability. *Santa Fe Public Schools District Portfolio: A comprehensive view of demographics and student performance based on longitudinal data*. January 3, 2011.; Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS). Online. Retrieved May 11, 2011.

<http://www.sfps.info/index.aspx?NID=35>

<sup>8</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools Office of the Deputy Superintendent, Department of Assessment and Accountability. *Santa Fe Public Schools District Portfolio: A comprehensive view of demographics and student performance based on longitudinal data*. January 3, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> CNNMoney. *Money Best Places to Live 2010*. CNN, Fortune Magazine, & Money Magazine. Online. Retrieved May 12, 2011. <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2006/snapshots/PL3570500.html>

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

## How are Santa Fe's Children Doing?

While some Santa Fe children and teens excel in school, many are not doing well. In the 2009-2010 school year alone, only 61 percent of Santa Fe High School students graduated or received their General Education Development (GED) degree.<sup>10</sup> Less than half of Capital High's students graduated or received their GED. SFPS graduation rates are far below the national average graduation rate of 74 percent.<sup>11</sup>

As noted previously, a majority of Santa Fe students are Hispanic, and statewide Hispanic children have the highest drop-out rate.<sup>12</sup> Statewide, of Hispanic students who entered ninth grade in 2004, only 37 percent graduated four years later.<sup>13</sup>

Each year less than half of those students who graduate from high school or obtain a GED go on to post secondary two or four-year education.<sup>14</sup>

<b>SFPS Graduation Rate vs. Other NM School Districts 2009-2010<sup>15</sup></b>	
<b>School District</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
Los Alamos Public Schools	88%
Silver City Consolidated Schools	72%
Albuquerque Public Schools	65%
Las Cruces Public Schools	65%
<b>Santa Fe Public Schools</b>	<b>60%</b>
Gallup-McKinley County Schools	55%
<b>New Mexico Average</b>	<b>66%</b>

<sup>10</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools Office of the Deputy Superintendent, Department of Assessment and Accountability. *Santa Fe Public Schools District Portfolio: A comprehensive view of demographics and student performance based on longitudinal data*. January 3, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Bowden, Bob. *The Cartel: Education + Politics = Money*. The Moving Picture Institute. Documentary. 2010. <http://www.thecartelmovie.com/cgi-local/content.cgi?g=27>

<sup>12</sup> *Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, New Mexico's Statewide Needs Assessment; Kids Count*, Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2008. [www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook), Overall Ranking Profiles by State. P.2.

<sup>13</sup> New Mexico Public Education Department.

<sup>14</sup> Gutierrez, Bobbie. *SFPS Dropout Event Data*. May 27, 2011

<sup>15</sup> NM Public Education Department (PED). *Stars Dashboard*. Online. Retrieved May 12, 2011. <http://nmped.datacation.net/>

## Quick Facts About Santa Fe Schools<sup>16</sup>

- 47% of students can read proficiently at the end of fourth grade.
- 36% of students are proficient in math at the end of fourth grade.
- 44% of Hispanic students can read proficiently at the end of eighth grade.
- 84% of Anglo students can read proficiently at the end of eighth grade.
- 44% of Santa Fe students drop out before graduation from high school.
- 26% of students, nationally, drop out before graduation from high school.
- 36% of students, statewide, drop out before graduation from high school.
- 71% of students attending Capital High School are economically disadvantaged; the school has a dropout rate of 53%.
- 49% of students attending Santa Fe High School are economically disadvantaged; the school has a dropout rate of 38%.
- Last year, two of 26 Santa Fe schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

## Test Scores: New Mexico vs. Other States

Santa Fe students are not the only ones struggling with proficiency. As a whole, New Mexico's students test poorly when compared to other states. Since each state has its own tests to determine proficiency (i.e., NM has the NMSBA), the only way to know how New Mexico's children are doing compared to other states is to test students using the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test.<sup>17</sup> The difference between New Mexico students' NMSBA test scores and the same New Mexico students' NAEP test scores raises many questions.<sup>18</sup>

- Are New Mexico's testing and other standards too low?
- Are our expectations of our children too low?
- Why aren't our expectations for our children higher?

In 2007, the NMSBA found that 55 percent of New Mexico fourth-graders were proficient in reading, but the NAEP test found that only 24 percent were proficient. This is 34 percent lower than the national NAEP average for reading.<sup>19</sup>

Also in 2007, the NMSBA found that 30 percent of New Mexico sixth to eighth-graders were proficient in math, but the NAEP found that only 18 percent were proficient. This means that New Mexico students score 39 percent lower than the national NAEP average for math.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools Accountability Report 2009-2010.

<sup>17</sup> Sturgis, Chris. *Positioning for the Possible: Investing in Education Reform in New Mexico*. New Mexico Association of Grant Makers. January 2011. P.3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<b>Number of SFPS Graduates Who Go on to Post Secondary Education<sup>21</sup></b> <i>(Self reported by seniors)</i>	
Post Secondary Education – 4 Year	186
Post Secondary Education – 2 Year	25
Total No. of Students who Go on to Post Secondary Education	211
Total No. of Students who Graduated/GED (2008-09)	465

### What Do SFPS Parents Think?

Each school year SFPS requires that each school publish a report card.<sup>22</sup> The report cards provide the NMSBA testing results for the students at that school, graduation/drop-out rates, number of qualified teachers, race/ethnicity and economic demographics of the students. The report cards also provide results of a parent survey. The survey asks the parents to rate how they think the school is doing (on factors such as safety, accountability, academic opportunity/achievement, etc.). Despite student test scores being below average, and graduation rates at all time lows, parents tend to rank their child's school as doing well, answering most questions in the 80 percent range.

### What Are the Consequences of Failing Students and Failing Schools?

By the year 2020, 123 million American jobs will be high-skill and high-pay occupations, from computer programming to bioengineering, but only 50 million Americans will be qualified to fill them.<sup>23</sup> American jobs will be filled by skilled and educated workers from other countries.

The average college graduate earns 73 percent more than the average high school graduate in a lifetime.<sup>24</sup> Based on this relationship, the 1.2 million U.S. students who should have graduated from college in 2008 but failed to do so – will cost the nation nearly \$319 billion in lost income over the course of their lives.<sup>25</sup>

In a world that demands not just a high school degree, but often also a college degree, parents might ask:

- What will the students who drop out of Santa Fe schools do?
- Where will they work?
- How will they support themselves and their families?
- Who will support them instead?
- How can Santa Fe and New Mexico thrive without an educated and skilled workforce?

<sup>21</sup> Gutierrez, Bobbie. SFPS Superintendent. Retrieved May 26, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS). Online. Retrieved May 4, 2011. <http://www.sfps.info/index.aspx?NID=35>

<sup>23</sup> Weber, Karl. *Waiting for "Superman", How we can save America's failing public schools*. Participant Media. 2010. p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

# WHAT IS WORKING?

## SFPS and the Community: A Crucial Partnership

**SFPS Strategic Plan** - SFPS knows how crucial community input and support is to improving our public schools. SFPS recently developed a plan in which SFPS and the community will partner together on many levels to increase student achievement, provide professional leadership and training for teachers, enhance the effective use of technology in the classroom, and engage students, parents, and the community. The first phase of the plan was set to begin March 2011 and run through the end of 2011.<sup>26</sup>

**Career and Technical Education Center** – Since 2008, SFPS, community college, city, and county employees, community members, and high school students have been designing a career and technical education (CTE) center for Santa Fe.<sup>27</sup> Career and technical education prepares children and young adults for a wide range of careers through a rigorous curriculum and hands-on learning, something students rate as the number one factor in learning. The C-Tech center in Santa Fe will focus on these career areas: arts and entertainment, business management, communication and information (i.e., computers, IT), energy and environment, engineering construction and agricultural management, architecture and drafting, health and biosciences, and hospitality and tourism. CTE students in the U.S. have been slow to improve their national math and reading test scores and are 10-15 percent more likely to be in the labor force and earn 8-9 percent more than high school graduates of traditional academic programs.

**Let's Talk Santa Fe** - SFPS Office of Student Wellness and Women's Health Services have launched a new citywide program called *Let's Talk Santa Fe* to help Santa Feans support student safety and success. *Let's Talk* provides web-based learning and parent workshops designed to support families, educators, healthcare providers, and other caring adults to create safe and resilient environments in every home, school, and community.<sup>28</sup>

**Partnership with Citizen Schools** – In April 2011, SFPS expanded its partnership with Citizen Schools, a national nonprofit that partners with schools to expand the learning day for children in middle schools across the country and across New Mexico. The partnership, currently at De Vargas Middle School, will more than double the amount of students served to over 250 students. The organization organizes a second shift of afternoon educators, who provide academic support, leadership development, and "apprenticeships"—hands-on projects taught by volunteers from business and civic organizations. Students develop the skills they need to succeed in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.<sup>29</sup>

**Partnership with United Way of Santa Fe County's/Santa Fe Children's Project:** The Santa Fe Children's Project provides high-quality, half-day Pre-K for 96 four-year-olds on the Aspen Community Magnet School Campus. Low child/adult ratios and small classroom sizes allow for personal attention for each child. Spanish is used and supported in the classrooms. This program prepares children for early and continuing academic success.

<sup>26</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools. *Strategic plan matrix*. 2011.

<sup>27</sup> SFPS Superintendent's Design Team. *Learning Plan for the Career and Technical Education Center in the Santa Fe Public Schools*. June 2008. P.3.

<sup>28</sup> Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS). Online. Retrieved May 17, 2011. [www.letstalksantafe.org](http://www.letstalksantafe.org)

<sup>29</sup> Citizen Schools. *Santa Fe Public Schools to Expand Partnership with Citizen Schools*. Press release. April 29, 2011.

The Community School Initiative, implemented at the Aspen Community Magnet School, provides services to children, parents, and community members beyond the 8-3 school day. The goal is to improve the academic performance of students and thus their opportunities for their future success, as well as strengthen the skills of their parents to be better able to support their children and advocate for them.

**SFPS and LANL Partner to Promote Science Education** - During the 2010-11 school year, SFPS partnered with the LANL Foundation and three other northern New Mexico school districts and launched the Inquiry Science Education Consortium (ISEC). Amy Biehl Community School at Rancho Viejo, Aspen Magnet Community School, and Salazar Elementary School have implemented the inquiry-based science program this year which focuses on best practices in science and literacy instruction. Three more schools will join in the fall, and students appear to be excited and gaining knowledge about science. “Inquiry-centered” science instruction:

- Teaches students how to think—not just what to think.
- Assesses students’ current knowledge and skills then builds upon them.
- Encourages students to develop questions then look for possible explanations.
- Actively engages children.
- Promotes teamwork and collaboration.
- Accommodates different learning styles.

### 90/90/90 SCHOOLS?

A number of cities around the nation, with a student and economic base similar to Santa Fe’s, have turned their schools around. Some are called “90/90/90 Schools”? What makes them unique?

- More than 90 percent of the students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- More than 90 percent of the students are from ethnic minorities.
- ***More than 90 percent of the students met or achieved high national academic standards.***

### ***How Did They Do It?***

- Focus on academic achievement.
- Provide clear curriculum choices.
- Frequently assess student progress and provide multiple opportunities for improvement.
- Emphasize nonfiction writing.
- Use collaborative scoring of student work.

*(Source: Reeves, Douglas B. Accountability in Action: A Blueprint for Learning Organizations, Ch.19 High Performance in High Poverty Schools. Advanced Learning Press. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2000.)*

## Other Promising SFPS Programs

**AVID System Accelerates Students' Learning** – The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) System is an elementary through post secondary college system that increases school-wide learning and performance. The AVID system accelerates student learning, uses research based methods of effective instruction, provides meaningful and motivational professional development, and acts as a catalyst for system reform and change.

AVID National Demonstration Schools are exemplary models of the program and demonstrate the very best AVID methodologies and strategies. AVID exists at Capital High School, Santa Fe High School, SER/Career Academy, Capshaw Middle School, DeVargas Middle School, and Ortiz Middle School.

**Cooking with Kids** - Cooking with Kids works with over 4,300 pre-kindergarten through sixth grade students in SFPS where 50 percent or more students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Cooking with Kids offers two types of classes and supports healthy and delicious cafeteria meals. Throughout the school year, children prepare and taste a variety of fresh, affordable foods and learn about making healthy choices. Students participate in an introductory class, five cooking classes, and five fruit and vegetable tasting classes. The objectives of Cooking with Kids are that children will engage in positive sensory experiences with a variety of healthy foods, identify personal food preferences, practice food preparation skills, and learn about cultures of the world. The Cooking with Kids curriculum supports educational standards in math, science, and language arts. SFPS partners with Cooking with Kids in 14 of the district's elementary schools.

**Advanced Placement Initiative** - The Daniels Fund has awarded \$75,000 to the Advanced Placement Initiative to make Advanced Placement course work accessible to more students statewide and to improve AP test passage rates. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are college-level courses that students can take in high school and for which they can earn college credit at most post secondary institutions in the United States—saving them time and money in college. Santa Fe High School and SFPS participate with eight other districts in NM.

**Ramirez Thomas Elementary Turnaround Model** - This past year, the school went through a painful process of replacing 50 percent of the staff, redefining its mission and vision, as well as what the school day and the length of the school year looked like for students and staff. Working with district leadership and NMPED's Priority Schools Bureau, the principal and her staff focused on nurturing shared leadership; coming to agreements on student expectations and curriculum; learning to use data; focusing on one problem at a time; building a professional learning community; and recognizing that being put on the "needs improvement" list was a chance for growth even though it was overwhelming to be identified as the ninth lowest performing elementary school in the state during the 2008-09 school year. Prior to replacing staff in the spring of 2010, a change in the school's leadership produced much needed growth on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) last spring.

Ramirez Thomas Elementary is the only school in the state of New Mexico to have selected the Turnaround Model for use of its school improvement funds which are just over an additional \$1 million per year for three years. The decision to replace staff drew strong criticism from the teacher's union National Education Association of NM and from state legislators. The school principal and the Superintendent who directly supervises the school have spent a lot of time educating community members and the members of the Legislature about the Turnaround Model and the anticipated results over a three-year period.

## Appendix A

# CULTURAL COMPETENCE

### EXCERPTED FROM A REPORT TO NM EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

by Jerry Kinkade, Ph.D.

March 2011

Cultural competence is the ability to function effectively in the context of cultural differences. It has five elements.

1. Awareness, acceptance and valuing of cultural differences.
2. Awareness of one's own culture and values. (Everyone has a culture.)
3. Understanding the range of dynamics that result from the interaction between people of different cultures.
4. Developing cultural knowledge of a community or accessing cultural brokers who have that knowledge.
5. Ability to adapt individual interventions, programs, and policies to fit the cultural context of the individual, family, or community.

Cultural competence is a national movement in organizations that provide or fund educational and human services. It recognizes that success for program initiatives is tied to understanding how things are done in different cultures. Since no one can know about all cultures, general skills in understanding and interacting with differing cultures constitutes the basis of cultural competence. It begins by being "culturally intentional" or interested in a particular group (i.e. wanting to learn about customs, music, dress, food, arts, etc.).

However, cultural competence goes further, to a state of functioning effectively in cultural differences. It means learning to get along without offending people and changing to adapt to the ways of the culture. It is also an ongoing process of self and program improvement. It means learning to pay attention to and appreciate the "cultural bump" – "oh, what was that" – when two people from different cultures interact. Each person interprets the experience from their perspective. Discussing the exchange openly creates learning. From a program perspective it means creating an ongoing dialogue – a feedback mechanism for monitoring progress and continuing development of both policy and procedure.

In the western world the dominant society has adopted an "evidence-based practice" approach to evaluating program success. We want numbers, statistics, and "hard data." However, in many cultures a "faith-based practice" has prevailed for centuries. Things are done a certain way because the community accepts that it works. That practice has proven to be effective for that community. In most cultures such beliefs exist.

To be successful, our educational initiatives must frame our goals into language that can be interpreted and implemented within the cultures we seek to serve. We will do so with the help of "cultural brokers," people expert in the ways of the culture, accepted by the culture, and who can provide leadership in that community.

New Mexico is rich in cultural diversity. That diversity has attracted people to this area for centuries. Celebrating our diversity is at the heart of providing effective early childhood education. As we form partnerships with local communities, let's do so in a way that reflects our deep respect for their cultures.

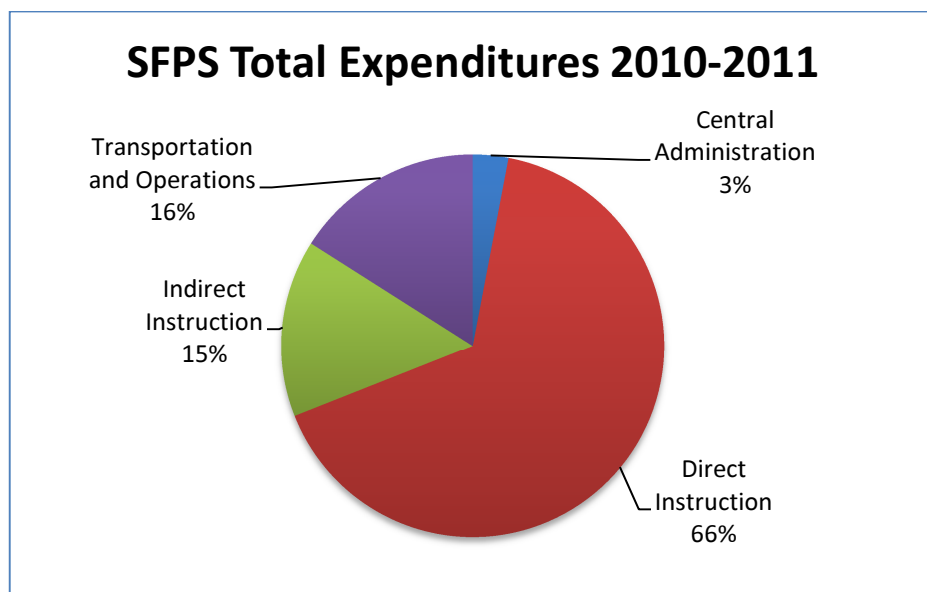
## Appendix B

# SCHOOL FUNDING

Since 1971, education spending in the United States has more than doubled from \$4,300 per student to more than \$9,000 per student (adjusted for inflation).<sup>30</sup> Yet in that same time period, reading and math scores have remained flat in the United States, though the scores have risen in every other developed country.<sup>31</sup> Some people believe more dollars are required. Others say we have to use existing funding differently.

### How are SFPS schools funded?

All New Mexico taxpayers fund public schools by paying different types of taxes including general and gross receipts taxes, income tax, property and other taxes.<sup>32</sup> Revenues combine into one pot of money that is divided among all of New Mexico's schools. Schools request funds from the state through a need-based funding formula. This means that schools in wealthier areas in which residents pay higher property taxes do not necessarily receive more state funding. In fact, schools in poorer areas that contribute less in tax revenue commonly receive more funding.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, New Mexico's school funding formula is considered one of the most fair in the nation.<sup>34</sup> Raising property taxes alone will not fix public schools. For SFPS, state money makes up 97 percent of the SFPS district's operating budget.



### NM Teacher Salary and Benefits

- Starting salary - \$33,730
- Average salary - \$41,637
- 10-year growth in salary - 43.2%
- 15 weeks of vacation every year
- 3 years to be eligible for tenure

(Source: Teachportal.com, 5/17/11)

<sup>30</sup> Weber, Karl. *Waiting for "Superman", How we can save America's failing public schools*. Participant Media. 2010. p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Weber, Karl. *Waiting for "Superman", How we can save America's failing public schools*. Participant Media. 2010. p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Garcia, Veronica C. *How New Mexico Public Schools are Funded*. New Mexico Public Education Department, School Budget and Finance Analysis Bureau. February 10, 2009. P.1.

<sup>33</sup> Parents Reaching Out. *Unlocking the Mystery of School Funding in New Mexico: A Guide to Understanding the New Mexico Funding Formula – 2010-2011*.

<sup>34</sup> Institute for Local Self-Reliance. *New Rules Project: School Funding Formula – New Mexico*. Retrieved May 16, 2011.

<http://www.newrules.org/equity/rules/equity-school-finance/school-funding-formula-new-mexico>

## Appendix C

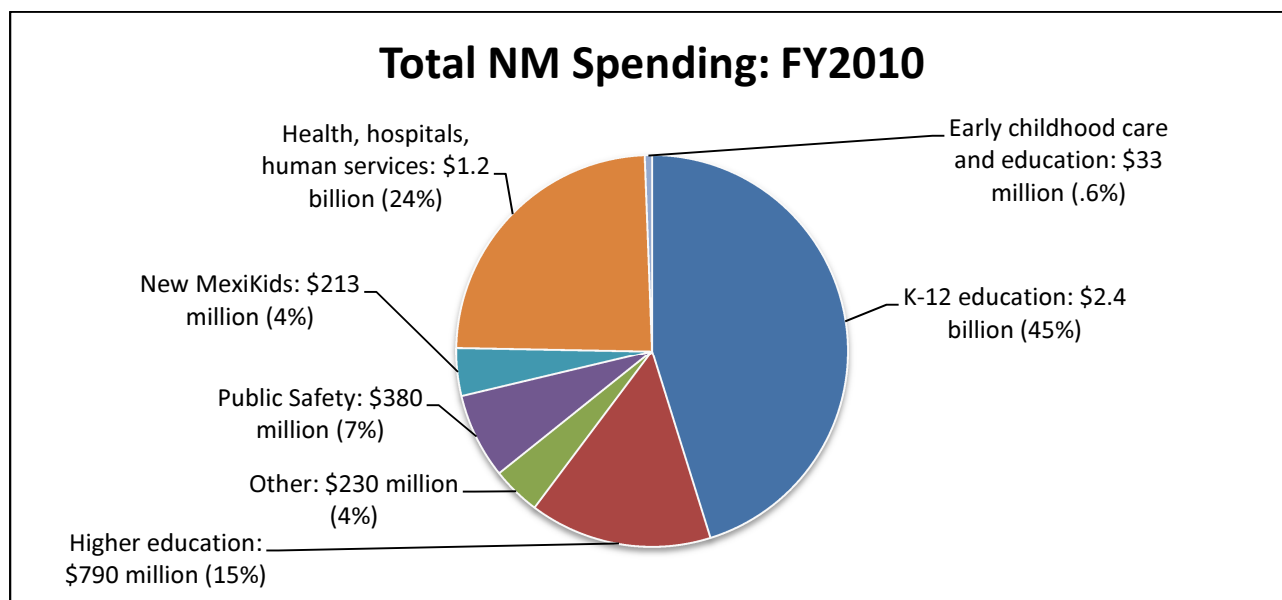
# EARLY CHILDHOOD YEARS

How should Santa Fe and other communities address their low graduation rates? One strategy is to focus on changing education with our youngest children. Research shows that funding for early childhood is not only an investment in our children's future, but an investment that improves our communities and – many people say – saves taxpayers' money in the long run. Economists estimate that \$1 invested in quality early care and education saves taxpayers more than \$8 in future costs.<sup>35</sup> Money spent in later grade levels or job training does not save as much money.

Quality early childhood programs help ensure that children grow up to be healthy and productive adults. Some researchers point to long-term benefits this way: an educated workforce attracts good jobs to the community; those good jobs generate more tax revenues for the community while reducing unemployment and crime.<sup>36</sup>

### What Does New Mexico Spend on Early Childhood Development?

The state spends \$33 million (less than 1 percent of its total annual spending) on early childhood care and education programs.<sup>37</sup> Funded programs include home visits, childcare assistance and referrals, New Mexico Pre-K, state contributions to Head Start and training for early childhood educators.



<sup>35</sup> *Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, New Mexico's Statewide Needs Assessment; Kids Count, Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2008. [www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook), Overall Ranking Profiles by State. p. 11*

<sup>36</sup> *Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, New Mexico's Statewide Needs Assessment; Kids Count, Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2008. [www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook), Overall Ranking Profiles by State. p. 11.*

<sup>37</sup> Common Ground. *The first five years: Choice-dialogues on Early Childhood in New Mexico*. New Mexico Voices for Children. Rep. Nov. 2010. p.7.