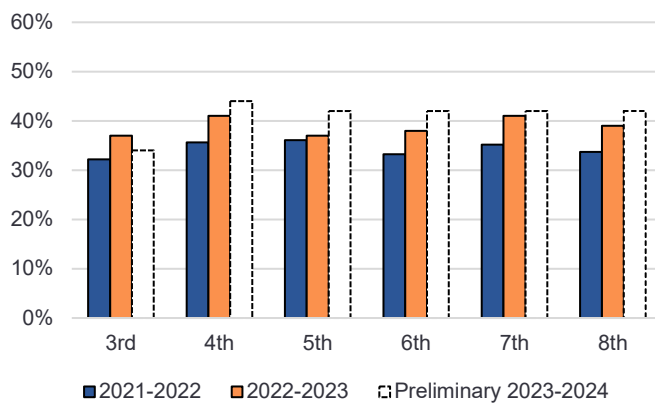


Topic Area: Achievement, Absenteeism, Graduation, and Efficiency

Math and reading test scores and high school graduation rates have long been used as predictors of future economic and social outcomes for students. However, New Mexico consistently ranks the lowest on these traditional measures of student achievement. Another key factor affecting performance is student absenteeism, which remains higher than pre-pandemic levels. There are several evidence-based options to boost student outcomes and close achievement gaps with at-risk youth, including increasing access to quality learning time, developing and retaining highly effective educators, and providing engaging curriculum. In recent years, the state has enacted legislation and significantly increased appropriations in support of these objectives. Overall proficiency rates appear to be improving, disparities in graduation rates across demographic groups are narrowing, and statewide graduation rates have grown over the last decade. However, the state has more room for improvement.

Key Data

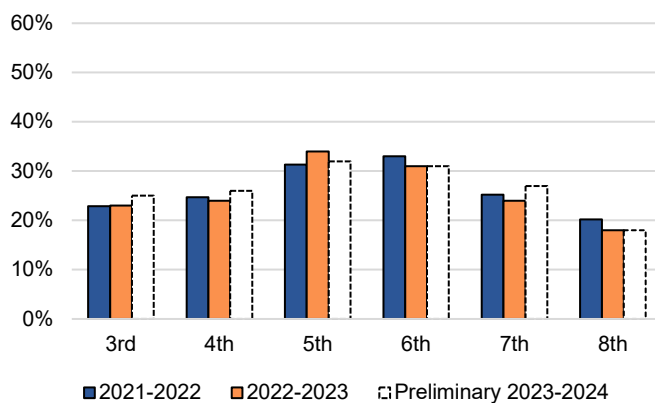
MSSA Reading Proficiency by Grade



Source: PED

- Preliminary results from the New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (MSSA) test show overall improvements in most grade levels, between 1 percentage point and 5 percentage points, in reading proficiency rates, except for third grade.
- National test scores in 2022 ranked New Mexico as last in the nation for reading.
- Preliminary 2024 SAT reading and writing proficiency rates for New Mexico 11th graders fell slightly to 35 percent, down from 36 percent in 2023.
- SAT changed to a stage-adaptive test, which had fewer questions and shorter testing times. Most states using the SAT saw dips in performance under the new assessment.

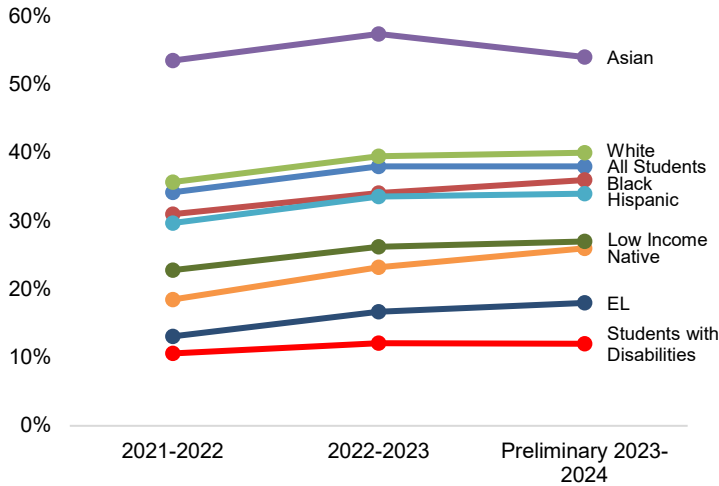
MSSA Math Proficiency by Grade



Source: PED

- Except for fifth grade, preliminary MSSA test results show about 2 percentage points of improvement. Sixth and eighth graders showed no change in math proficiency rates.
- National test scores in 2022 ranked New Mexico as last in the nation for math.
- Preliminary 2024 SAT math proficiency rates for New Mexico 11th graders fell to 11 percent, down from 15 percent in 2023.

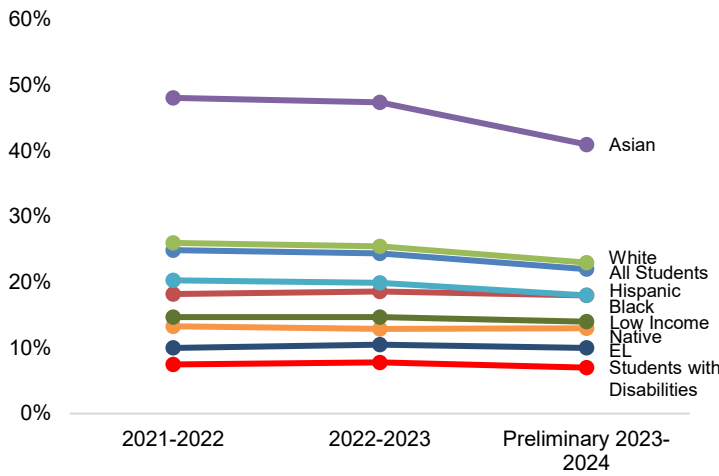
Reading Proficiency by Demographic



Source: PED

- Preliminary reading proficiency rates are projected to be 38 percent for all students, flat with the prior year.
- PED is still validating test scores from vendors. Proficiency calculations include MSSA, SAT, and DLM (not iStation or SBA). Low-income student data is only from MSSA.
- Students identifying as Native American, Black, and English learners (EL) appear to be narrowing achievement gaps with peers.
- All districts and charter schools serving K-5 grades must review and implement literacy plans annually.
- PED's summer literacy program has 117 sites with 2,775 instructors and 9,362 students enrolled.

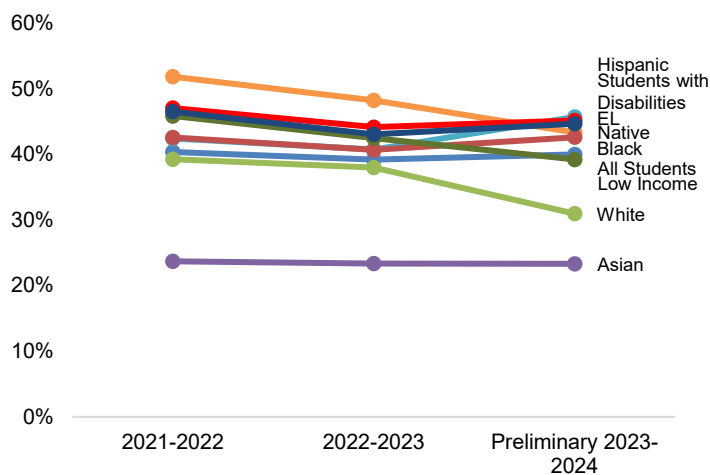
Math Proficiency by Demographic



Source: PED

- Preliminary math proficiency rates are projected to be 22 percent for all students, down 2 percentage points from the prior year.
- Mathematics has not received the same level of attention and resources statewide as reading.
- Achievement gaps for students are on par with gaps prior to the pandemic, despite a change from the PARCC to MSSA test.

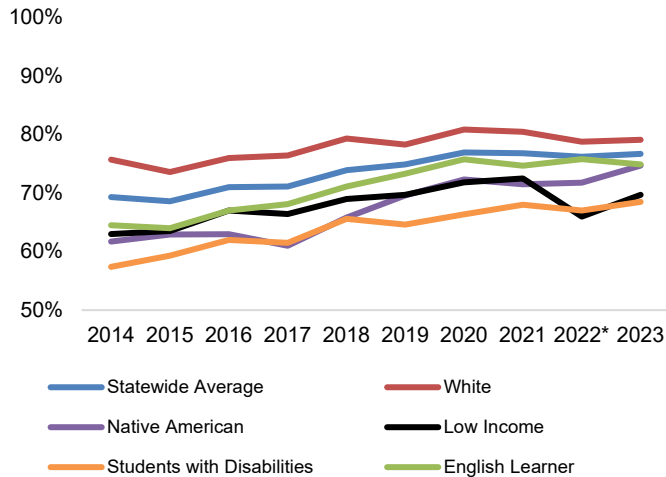
Chronic Absenteeism Rates



*2024 data is based on 7 districts representing 50 percent of all students
Source: PED

- Students in New Mexico have missed more days of school since the pandemic than their peers nationally.
- New Mexico school attendance personnel report illness, parental decisions, and lack of student engagement are the main reasons for chronic absenteeism.
- The state's Attendance for Success Act aligns with many best practices; however, local attendance tracking practices are inconsistent statewide, likely undercounting absences.
- Chronic absenteeism rate data was not available for most schools. Initial data shows concerning trends of increasing absenteeism from Hispanic students, particularly in the largest districts.
- Chronic absenteeism rates are the highest in early grade levels and high school.

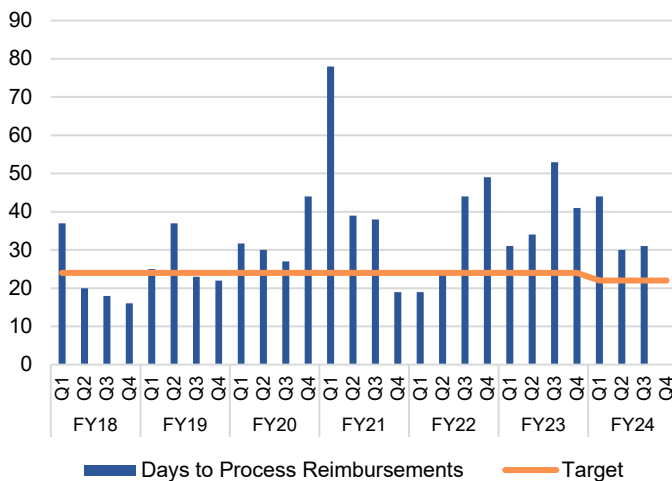
High School Graduation



*Low income changed from FRL to direct certification in 2022
Source: PED

- New Mexico’s high school graduation rate for the class of 2023 is 76.7 percent, up slightly from 76.2 percent in 2022.
- Since 2014, graduation rates have steadily increased, particularly for Native American students and English learners, who have been closing the gap with their peers.
- The U.S. high school graduation rate in 2022 was 87 percent. To reach the national graduation rate in 2022, New Mexico needed to graduate another 2,344 students.
- In 2020 and 2021, PED allowed school districts to locally determine competencies for graduation. Beginning in 2022, students may use other options beyond the state test to demonstrate competency for graduation.

Average Days to Process Reimbursements



Source: PED

- PED has not met performance targets related to the average number of days to process reimbursements to grantees after receipt of complete and verified invoices in the last two years.
- PED notes the high volume of requests for reimbursement from new initiatives (such as universal school meals), federal pandemic aid reimbursements, and staff turnover have contributed to delays.
- In FY24, PED filled 50 FTE positions, reducing the agency’s vacancy rate from 23 percent to 11.8 percent. Nearly all fiscal and budgetary positions are filled, and the training of newly hired staff should improve processing times.

Progress Monitoring

LegisStat Recap

At the previous Public Education Department’s (PED) LegisStat subcommittee hearing on July 19, 2023, the subcommittee discussed implementation of new instructional hour minimums and participation in K-12 Plus programs. PED noted about one-third of schools increased classroom time with students while one-third decreased time with students. Subcommittee members asked about the effects of longer school calendars on teacher retention and student engagement, community and parental input on longer school years, if reporting on new calendars was accurate, whether the department was recommending further extensions of the school year, whether the quality of instruction was more important than the quantity, whether longer years or days were equitable between urban and rural areas, and whether extensions of the school year addressed findings in the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit. Staff noted investments in extended learning were largely being offset by high student absenteeism, the state lacked assessment

data on math and reading, national assessments showed dips in achievement due to the pandemic, and gaps in high school graduation rates were narrowing across student demographic groups.

Members also asked questions about delays in PED awards resulting in reversions of funds, the number of teachers trained in the science of reading, uses of the public education reform fund, access to early childhood funding, why student outcomes were still stagnant, whether students were learning life skills, whether Native American students were receiving equitable educational opportunities, how the state was addressing absenteeism of at-risk students, how rural schools addressed transportation issues, how schools received additional supports for special education students, whether students should have additional time to learn algebra, whether leadership turnover at PED affected statewide progress, how PED was tracking and supporting attendance improvement, whether PED had the capacity to support all federally designated schools requiring intervention, and why PED had not yet released interim test and 2022 graduation data. PED noted newly hired staff would address most programmatic issues flagged by the subcommittee, discussed plans to expand initiatives, and noted delays in reporting were due to the timing of when data is available. PED asked for additional funding for initiatives related to attendance and behavioral health supports and recommended changes to the Attendance for Success Act to be more responsive to local conditions. The subcommittee further asked PED to provide a directory of agency staff to LFC and LESC.

Prior Meetings

Since 2021, PED has participated in three LegisStat hearings and taken steps toward addressing issues discussed with LFC. A summary of action steps and status of completion are provided below.

LegisStat: October 28, 2021

Sec. Kurt Steinhaus, Dep. Sec. Gwen Perea-Warniment, Dep. Sec. Katarina Sandoval

Action Step	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Reinstate statewide testing by the 2021-2022 school year			✓	Statewide assessments resumed on November 12, 2021
Publicize all assessment results by June 30 each year		—		FY23 data released in November 2023; data validation delays remain
Track beginning, middle, and end of year interim assessment data		—		Interim tests are optional statewide; iMSSA data last provided to LFC in FY22
Increase participation in K-5 Plus and extended learning time (ELT) programs		—		FY24 K-12 Plus program units remain lower than FY21 K-5 Plus and ELT levels




LegisStat: May 19, 2022

Sec. Kurt Steinhaus, Dep. Sec. Gwen Perea-Warniment

Action Step	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Increase instructional hour and day requirements		—		Instructional hour minimum raised to 1,140 hours; some FY25 calendars will shrink
Expand PED’s authority to hold schools accountable for results	✗			PED’s performance-based 180-day rule under litigation
Provide additional school leader training to improve competencies			✓	More funding for PED school leadership programs; new board training requirements

LegisStat: July 19, 2023

Dep. Sec. Amanda DeBell, Dep. Sec. Gregory Frostad

Action Step	Status			Comments
	No Action	Progressing	Complete	
Study effects of extended school years on students and schools				LESC proposed workplan item
Reduce time to process reimbursements to 22 days				To date, nearly all PED fiscal staff positions are filled
Amend the Attendance for Success Act to be more effective for families and less burdensome for schools				LESC and LFC studies find state act to be mostly aligned to best practices