

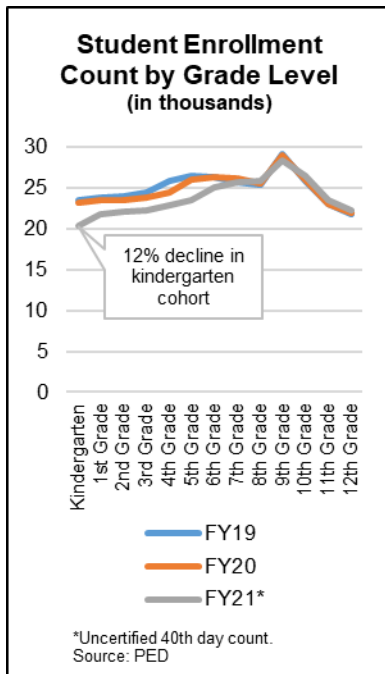
ACTION PLAN

Submitted by agency?	No
Timeline assigned?	No
Responsibility assigned?	No

Public Schools

The Public Education Department (PED) issued school reopening guidance in the first quarter; however, increasing Covid-19 transmission in July prompted the governor to delay school reopening until September 8. PED required school districts and charter schools to submit reentry plans in July and added new requirements for reopening on September 3, including community viral spread metrics, air filtration standards, personal protective equipment standards, and school roster limitations. Although 72 of the 89 school districts met the community viral spread gating criteria for in-person learning under a hybrid model for September 8, only 48 school districts eventually elected to reopen, with many schools delaying reopening due to the new requirements.

A 2020 LFC spotlight noted remote instruction improved in the first quarter compared with the fourth quarter of FY20. Additionally, PED restored basic accountability measures, such as attendance, grading, and minimum instructional hour requirements. However, remote instruction remains an inadequate substitute for in-person education, and the validity of remote assessment data is questionable due to low at-risk student participation and no independent test monitoring. The spotlight also found higher course failure rates in secondary schools and reported a fifth of students were not engaging in remote classes. With schools beginning to close again due to increasing Covid-19 transmission statewide, remote learning will likely continue to have a negative impact on student academic and social wellbeing – particularly for at-risk student populations.



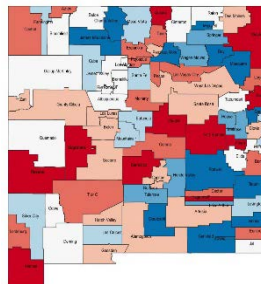
Enrollment Changes

School districts report FY21 public school student enrollment has declined dramatically due to the public health emergency, which will affect state funding distributions for FY22. Prior to the pandemic, overall student membership was naturally declining by about 1 percent each year. Preliminary, uncertified enrollment data suggests statewide student counts fell by 12.3 thousand students, or 3.9 percent, this quarter with most districts across the state losing membership. However, a few (mostly rural) districts reported substantial enrollment growth as well. Notably, enrollment declines were more significant for younger grade levels and districts bordering the state.

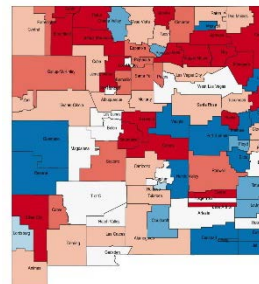
Enrollment Changes



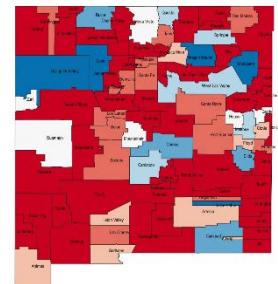
October 2018



October 2019

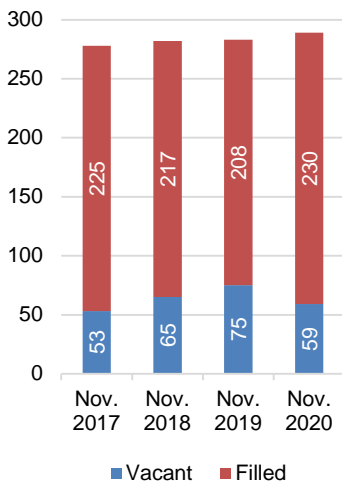


October 2020



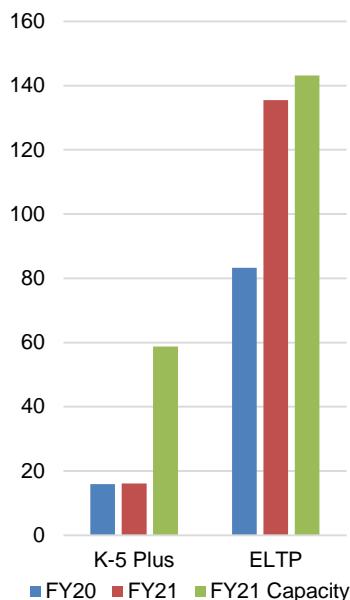
PED's reengagement program, Engage NM, will support the agency's efforts in locating 558 of the 12.3 thousand missing students. The agency notes 118 districts and charters are participating in the program, making over 16 thousand referrals for interventions to reengage students – an average of 2,500 referrals per week. In the fourth quarter of FY20, Engage NM initiated 11 thousand interventions. Approximately 78 percent of the interventions included two-way contacts, indicating a strong level of engagement and demand for support from families. PED notes referrals spiked during the first quarter, and those numbers are expected to continue rising with remote learning in place.

**Public Education
Department FTE
Positions**



Source: SPO

**Estimated Student
Participation
(in thousands)**



Source: PED, LFC Files

Public Education Department

In spite of the hiring freeze announced by the governor in April 2020, PED has continued to fill positions, decreasing the number of agency vacancies by 27 percent from the prior year. The department has prioritized hiring positions in the school support and accountability, licensure, reporting and data quality, student budget and financial analysis, Native American education, charter schools, and special education bureaus. Despite the addition of new personnel and increased funding for data reporting and collection, PED has not submitted data on some first quarter performance measures.

	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Target	FY21 Q1	FY21 Q2	FY21 Q3	Rating
Budget: \$14,322.2 FTE: 282.2							
Students served in K-5 Plus Programs	18,227	15,967	N/A*	16,067			Y
Students served in Extended Learning Time Programs	New	82,816	N/A*	134,042			G
Average days to process reimbursements	26.8	31	24	No report			R
Data validation audits of funding formula	28	12	35	7			Y
Program Rating							R

*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.

Extended Learning Time

PED reports over 16 thousand students will generate K-5 Plus program funding in FY21, or 11 percent of eligible students. While overall participation is flat with FY20 levels, funding at each school district and charter schools has changed significantly. In FY20, Deming went from districtwide participation to no participation. Like Deming, 27 other districts cancelled their K-5 Plus programs; however, Los Alamos started its districtwide K-5 Plus program in FY21 and three other districts Central, Cobre, and Jemez Mountain, expanded their programs districtwide, resulting in a net increase in program growth.

In contrast, participation in Extended Learning Time Programs (ELTP) grew to 134 thousand students in FY21, an increase of 51 thousand students, or 62 percent, from the prior year. Although participation was likely spurred in part by provisions during the special session requiring schools to make up lost instructional time, nearly half of all students will participate in an extended school year in FY21. Combined, both initiatives will expend \$64.3 million in FY21 and revert an estimated \$87 million to the public education reform fund. PED estimates year end balances in the fund could be up to \$171 million, depending on final K-5 Plus and ELTP transportation distributions.

Teacher Workforce

New Mexico State University's 2020 *Educator Vacancy Report* notes the number of teacher vacancies statewide decreased from 644 vacancies in FY20 to 571 vacancies in FY21, with elementary and special education teachers comprising half of all vacancies. Additionally, institutions admitted 1,287 students into an educator preparation program (EPP) in FY20, an increase of 193 students, and 927 students completed EPPs, an increase of 181 students – reversing a decade-long trend of declining enrollment and completions. Declining student enrollment may also be contributing to the lower vacancy rate as schools experience reduced workloads, highlighting the need for more comprehensive metrics for evaluating the state of the current teacher workforce.