

Addressing Pandemic Impacts on Learning

Summary

On average, at-risk New Mexico students were already over half a year (6,000 hours, or 100 days, or 20 weeks, or 4 months) behind in learning before losing the equivalent of another 10 to 60 days of instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic¹. These additional lost days are potentially widening the existing achievement gap and setting New Mexico's children even further behind academic norms.

In prior policy spotlights examining missed learning due to Covid-19, LFC staff recommended the Public Education Department (PED) develop a strategy to measure pandemic impacts of the pandemic on student achievement. However, the federal government and PED waived requirements for standardized tests for 2020 and 2021. Of the schools and students that opted to continue with testing, initial results show that only 31 percent New Mexico elementary school students are now learning at grade level, compared to about 37 percent pre-pandemic.

Educators and policymakers should not delay action to identify students in need of intervention and address missed school time. While school districts have identified interventions in their education plans submitted with their budget, educators and policymakers should not delay action to identify students in need of intervention and address missed school time. National research indicates the pandemic exacerbated existing inequities in student achievement, disproportionately affecting younger students, non-white students, and students from low-income families.

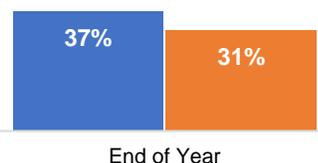
Due to unprecedented levels of state and federal funding made available over the course of the pandemic, districts have the opportunity and resources to provide students with the extra time, tutoring, and innovative teaching necessary to help ameliorate the pandemic's academic effects. However, districts are not equally choosing to use the resources available to them. Participation in K-5 Plus and ELTP can be expanded if school districts are provided necessary flexibility coupled with state-identified accountability measures. For example, 43 of the state's 89 school districts elected not to participate in any sort of extended school year, and 14 did not provide a plan to otherwise address lost instructional time, despite being legally required to do so. In another example, a few school districts are devoting vast swaths of their federal stimulus funding to address missed learning whereas other districts indicate spending no more than the minimum required. Differing local decisions are further exacerbating inequities in educational opportunities.

Given the amount of missed learning time during the Covid-19 pandemic, students will require extra instructional time to catch up to grade level. In the past, districts have widely chosen not to participate in voluntary state funded extended learning time programs (ELTP). Therefore, the Legislature should consider mandating ELTP for all districts and charters, and should consider requiring K-5 Plus in districts that serve a high proportion of at-risk students or exhibit evidence of lower academic achievement with flexibility in implementation to meet local needs. PED should provide technical support for implementation and accountability, which would allow districts the option to phase-in implementation or opt out of participating with potential exemptions including high student achievement, programming being provided by a tribal education department, or a rural and small district.

LFC staff would like to acknowledge and thank LESC staff and PED staff for their thoughtful contributions to this report.

Istation Proficiency Rates Pre-Post Pandemic

- School Year 18-19
- School Year 20-21



Note: Rates reflect a limited cohort of students (n = 18,287; 88 districts and 22 charters) who took Istation in both 2018-19 and 2020-21
Source: PED, LFC analysis

¹ LFC Program Evaluation: "Assessing Time-on-Task" and Efforts to Extend Learning Time

Spotlight

Program Evaluation Unit
Legislative Finance Committee
September 22, 2021



NEW MEXICO
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After a year of pandemic learning, fewer students were proficient in math and reading.

Table 1. School closure and reopening dates related to the Covid-19 pandemic

March 13, 2020	Governor orders schools closed for three weeks
March 27, 2020	Governor extends school closure through remainder of school year
March 1, 2020	PED cancels K-5 Plus for FY 21
July 24, 2020	In person Learning postponed through Labor Day
September 8, 2020	Schools in 25 counties cleared to begin hybrid learning
April 5, 2021	NM schools required to reopen in person learning
June 24, 2021	PED requires LEAs to post Reentry Plans

Source: PED

Proficiency rates for young and some students of color, in particular, declined during the pandemic.

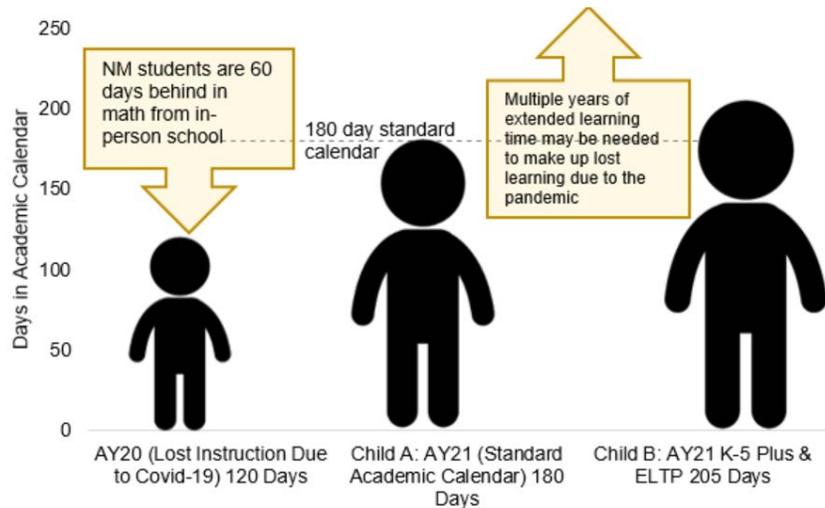
Student achievement data for 2020 and 2021 will be anomalous due to testing waivers, low participation, and remote administration. This makes generalizations and comparisons across districts and student groups challenging. However, based on student data available, lost instructional time due to the pandemic appears to have affected student outcomes and exacerbated existing achievement gaps. PED launched an opportunity to learn survey to better understand how the pandemic affected student learning, due to lack of access to internet and technology during remote learning.

Students lost between 10 days and a third of a year of instructional time in the last two years. Following the announcement of the first Covid-19 cases in New Mexico, the governor ordered schools to close for 10 instructional days. Additionally, many school districts that were offering K-5 Plus or ELTP did not do so in the 2020 or 2021 school year – causing students to potentially lose more learning time (see Appendix A).

Districts implementing K-5 Plus for all students in school year 2021-22:

- Carrizozo
- Central Consolidated Schools
- Chama
- Cuba
- Deming
- Grants Cibola
- Hagerman
- Jemez Mountain
- Mora
- Socorro
- Wagon Mound

Chart 1. NM Students May Need Multiple Years of Extended Learning to Make Up Lost Instructional Time Due to the Pandemic



Source: LFC Analysis

When school resumed remotely in 2020, teachers and students indicate the quality and time spent learning was diminished.

To better understand the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, PED consulted with the Center for Assessment, a consulting group out of New Hampshire, to survey students and teachers on their challenges with teaching and learning during the 2021 school year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Results from this survey indicate that even when learning returned remotely, that the time and quality of schooling was diminished in a remote environment. Nearly three-quarters of teachers (72 percent) reported their students learned less this year than in a typical year.

Further, teachers reported most students could access live and recorded virtual learning without issue, student engagement was low during lessons, with just 6 percent reporting that all students were consistently engaged. This finding was also reflected in an LFC conducted survey where teachers stated 40 percent of their students were not engaged, with failure rates increasing dramatically across all grade levels. In one case LFC found an 11th grade class where failure rates increased by 44 percentage points.

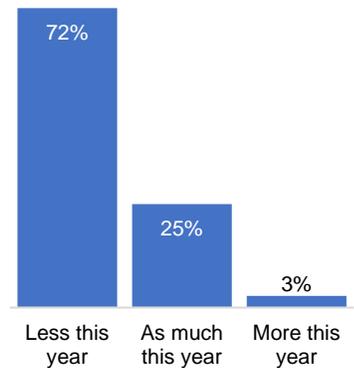
In addition to teacher reports, New Mexico students attending school remotely were more likely to report learning less compared to previous school years. Over half of students reported attending school in-person less than half the time, while about a quarter reported attending school all or most of the time. Nearly half (47 percent) of the students who responded to the survey believed they had learned less in the 2021 school year compared to prior school years. The pandemic most certainly affected students in all communities, their social-emotional well-being, and opportunity to learn. The trauma and disruption to students from the pandemic should not be ignored.² Because the opportunity to learn survey for students was anonymous, there is no way to link survey results to instructional practices during the pandemic, potential disparities (e.g., access to a computer and internet), and student achievement outcomes. To address this gap in knowledge, PED could work to build in-house capacity through their research, evaluation, and accountability bureau to design and validate future surveys that can be linked to student achievement outcomes and identify challenges to student learning with actionable interventions.

Early test results show New Mexico students are academically behind due to missed school and issues with remote learning.

Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, 17 percent of New Mexico K-2 students testing on Istation were proficient at the beginning of the year and 37 percent were proficient at the end of the year. After the pandemic, 37 percent of students were proficient at the beginning of the year – making it appear as if students were on track following in-person school closures. However, district superintendents and teachers told LFC staff the data likely reflects the fact that young students received help from their parents while testing remotely. As one

² For more information, see Learning Policy Institute (2021, April 5). Accelerating Learning As We Build Back Better. Available: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/covid-accelerated-learning-build-back-better>

Chart 2. Percent of Teachers Who Indicated Amount Students Learned This Prior Year Compared to a Typical School Year



Source: PED and Center for Assessment

Only 6 percent of teachers reported their students were consistently engaged during remote education, which was related to perceptions of how much students learned this past academic year.

Source: PED and Center for Assessment

Forty-seven percent of NM students believed they had learned less in the 2021 school year compared to prior school years.

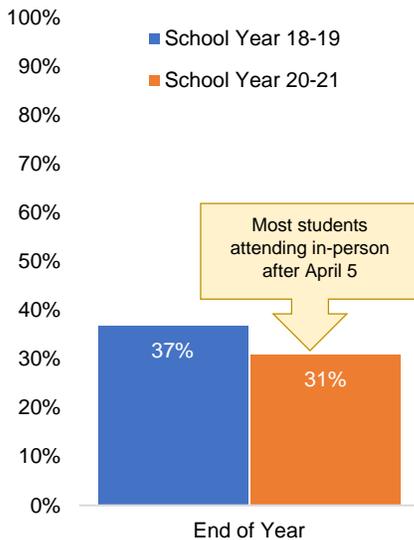
Source: PED and Center for Assessment

Six percent fewer students were proficient on end-of-year Istation during the 2021 school year.

Source: PED

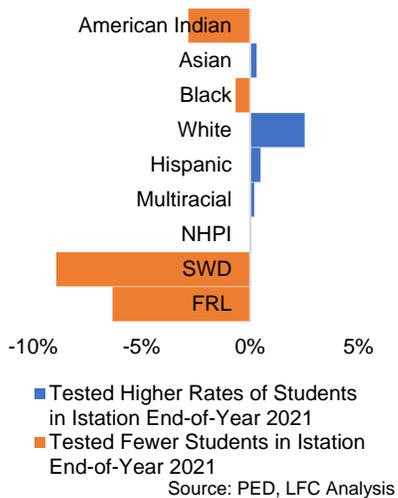


Chart 3. Istation Proficiency Rates Pre-Post Pandemic



Note. Rates reflect a limited cohort of students (n = 18,287; 88 districts and 22 charters) who took Istation in both 2018-19 and 2020-21
Source: PED, LFC analysis

Chart 4. Students Underrepresented in Istation Testing in 2021



Source: PED, LFC Analysis

superintendent told LFC staff in fall of 2020, “We are finding that our engaged parents are doing very well in school, while we’re not sure how well their students are doing.” By the end of the 2021 academic year, when students had mostly returned to the classroom, proficiency rates on Istation had fallen to 31 percent – reflecting a 6 percent drop relative to the pre-pandemic school year. The extent of missed learning is likely conservative as fewer students were tested during the pandemic-affected academic year.

The percent of non-white students and English learners who met benchmarks on the SAT also declined over the pandemic. The College Board uses the SAT to assess college and career readiness among high-school students. During the 2020 school year, 33 percent of students taking the SAT were at or above benchmark in math and 57 percent were at or above benchmark in reading and writing. Scores remained relatively stable for white students, while they declined for students of color. Three percent fewer Hispanic students and 2 percent fewer black students were proficient in reading and math than the year before. Students whose first language is not English also experienced declining scores. Despite a remote learning environment, participation in the 2020 SAT was actually higher for most grades than the previous year.

Waived testing requirements make identifying students in need of intervention on a statewide basis challenging.

After receiving waivers from the U.S. Department of Education, New Mexico schools did not have to administer standardized tests in the 2021 school year. Forty-five states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education all received assessment waivers (see Appendix B). Previous LFC policy spotlights recommended the state develop a plan to determine where students stand academically after in-person school closures and months of remote learning. PED issued guidance to districts on using assessments to identify and address students’ needs, low participation rates and the lack of a consistent assessment strategy across districts or mandatory reporting to the state. As a result, there is likely some useable data to provide a window into some grades such as Istation and SAT, but policymakers still lack a clear picture of the extent of unfinished learning statewide. Additionally, without good data on student learning during the 2021 school year, it is difficult to know how well calibrated district intervention plans are to student needs. Some districts continue to use a variety of different interim and short-cycle, but non-mandatory assessments. Although PED supports Istation, it is not a mandatory assessment, meaning there is not a consistent and required assessment for younger students this coming year.

Table 2. Timeline of PED Assessment Waivers

March 1, 2020	PED waives all testing due to closing of schools for remainder of school year
February 1, 2021	PED seeks testing waiver from USDE for 2020-2021 school year
April 1, 2021	USDE approves PED Spring Testing Waiver

Source: PED

Initial results from a PED-funded study affirm the impacts of Covid-19 on student outcomes. PED is working with the Center for Assessment to examine relationships in school performance pre- and post-pandemic using interim assessment data across two to three school years. PED analyzed data from 28 districts to compare pre- and post-pandemic achievement and growth results. The study used any available school-level data on school-based learning approaches (i.e., online, hybrid, in-person) and test conditions (e.g., remote vs. in-person testing) to contextualize results. The goal of this study was to identify schools that demonstrated similar or significantly better performance during the pandemic, as well as identify groups of students most impacted academically by the pandemic and loss of instructional time. As of the writing of this report, results from that study are preliminary. However, the findings are expected to show trends consistent with national trends and New Mexico Istation data.

Table 3. Threats to interpretation of data should not prevent the use of assessments

Threats to Interpretation of Data, Generalizations, and Comparability	Need for Student Data
Instructional mode (remote/in-person)	Measure impacts of different instructional modes due to the pandemic.
Content of instruction (reduced standards)	Identify missed learning due to differences in standards taught.
Length of instruction (time on task)	Identify missed learning due to differences in time on task.
Contexts and conditions of test administration	Remote assessment could make valid interpretation of assessment data challenging, but could still measure individual student progress.
Test participation rates, especially by subgroup	Within-student progress could still be measures; identify subgroups of students who did not test who could be at-risk.
Social and emotional well-being	Measures of individual student progress could be used to identify students in need of social and emotional well-being intervention.
Other opportunity-to-learn (OTL) challenges	Measures of individual student progress could be used to identify students in need of interventions to address opportunity-to-learn challenges.

Source: PED

Overall, participation rates across the three tests – i-Ready, NWEA MAP, and Star – were fairly low during the 2021 school year (42 to 79 percent). Some districts used a mixture of remote and in-person testing, while others administered the tests entirely in person when they were able. Because school districts are using different short-cycle assessments in addition to the state-sponsored standardized assessments, PED should track which districts are using additional short-cycle assessments. PED should also provide guidance and support to school districts to utilize the results from these additional short-cycle assessments in evaluating local interventions to address unfinished learning due to the pandemic. PED should also work with the districts to develop a formative assessment strategy that can track and monitor student progress and growth in real-time.

Table 4. Student Participation Rates in Alternative Short-Cycle Assessments

Short-Cycle Assessment	Participation Rate
i-Ready Math	54%
i-Ready Reading	42%
NWEA MAP Math	73%
NWEA MAP Reading	69%
Renaissance Star Math	44%
Renaissance Star Reading	79%

Source: Center for Assessment

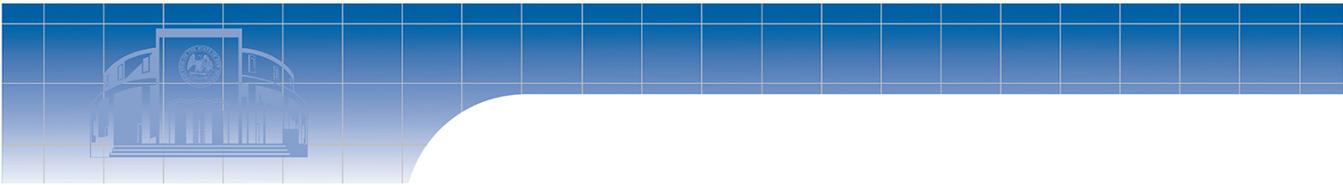
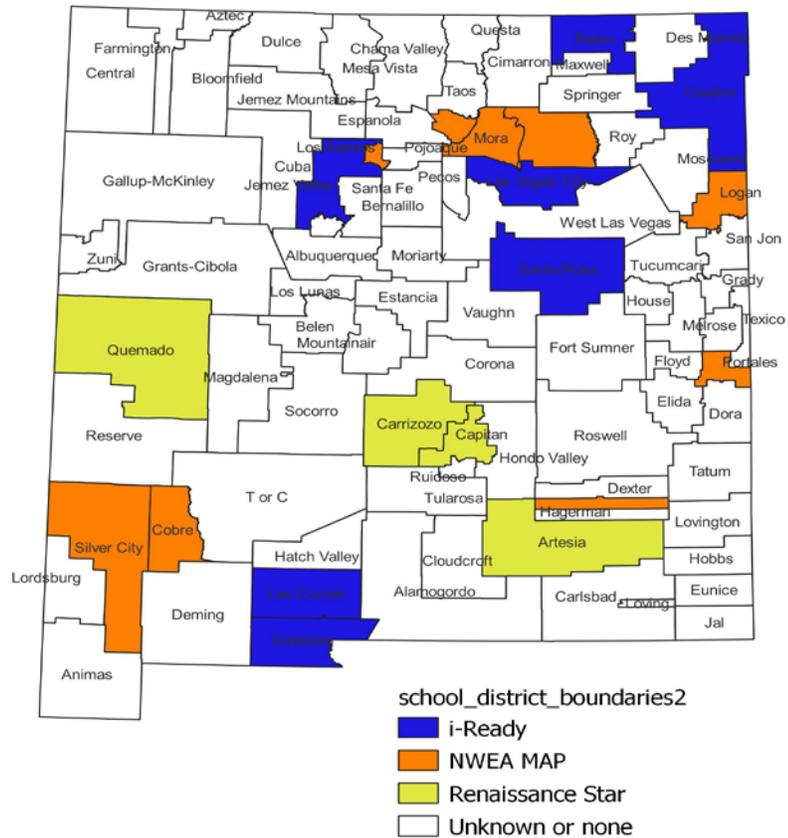


Figure 1. Use of Alternate Short-Cycle Assessments



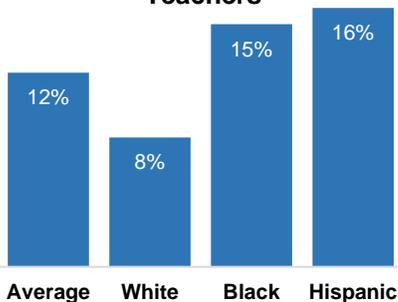
Source: Center for Assessment

Despite a lack of adequate testing data, national trends can inform PED on how to identify students most in need of intervention.

Previous LFC policy spotlights on missed instructional time due to the pandemic indicated that students could be more than four months behind due to in-person school closures. Over the past year, more has been learned about the effects of the pandemic on student learning. The pandemic and in-person school closures are likely to exacerbate existing inequities. A report published by the University of Michigan’s Education Policy Initiative found that children in early grades and students of color disproportionately experienced slower academic growth. Given New Mexico’s high proportion of students of color and students from low-income families, existing achievement gaps are expected to widen. National research has found:

- Remote and hybrid learning resulted in significantly less learning time and lower-quality instruction compared to in-person learning.
- Students of color were less likely to have live access to teachers and virtual learning technology.
 - Native American, Hispanic, and black students experienced greater declines in reading and math compared to Asian and white students.

Chart 5. Percent of Students Nationally without Live Access to Teachers



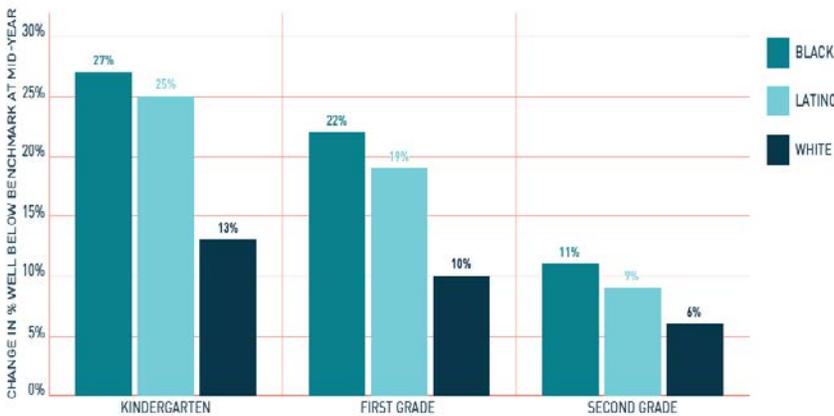
Source: McKinsey Consulting Group



- Younger children experienced bigger setbacks than older students.
 - Some of the necessary changes that were made to young students' (e.g., pre-kindergarten) in-person learning environments to enhance safety were not conducive to learning and social skill development.
 - Schools may not have been able to identify young children with special needs – and therefore were unable to provide adequate services for those students.

PED and local school districts should take immediate action to target interventions for math, younger students, non-white students, students from low-income families, and students who spent more time learning remotely.

Figure 2. In the U.S., More Black and Latino Young Children Fell Well Below Grade Level in the 2020-21 School Year, Compared to Pre-Pandemic Cohorts.



Source: University of Michigan

The pandemic is likely to have long-term effects on in-person education.

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted education delivery that will continue to have long-term effects. Even though in-person learning has now resumed, some families may choose to home school their children or enroll them in virtual schools out of health and safety concerns or simply out of convenience. While these learning formats may provide more flexibility for families, previous LFC studies have found virtual instruction to be less effective than in-person instruction. These decisions may also negatively impact school district budgets, which are based on enrollment. Since research has shown that in-person learning leads to better student outcomes, the Legislature and PED should consider how to balance requiring in-person learning while providing high-quality remote learning for students who require accommodation.

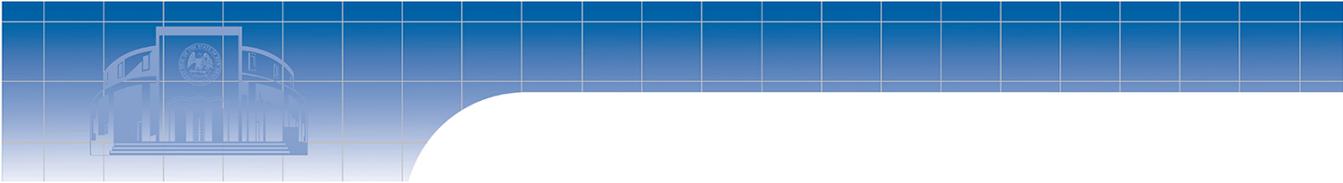
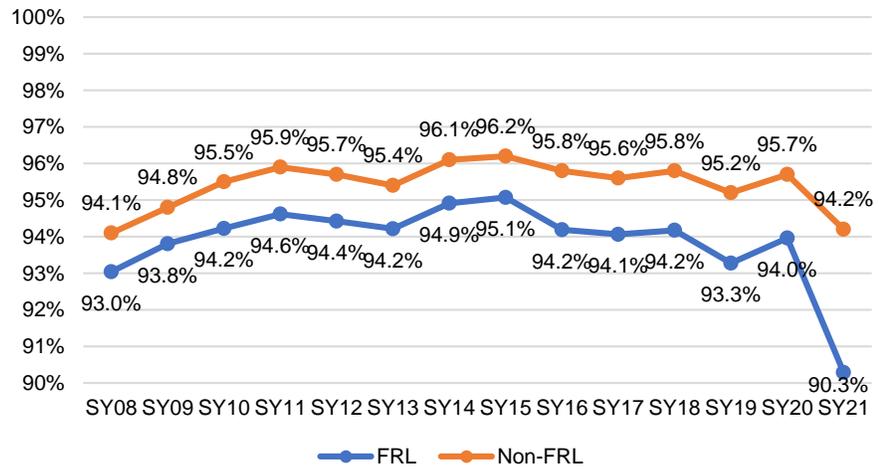


Chart 6. Attendance Rate, All Grades



Source: LFC Analysis

More parents are choosing an educational approach that is more flexible and meets the health, safety, and social emotional needs of their children. The number of registered homeschooled students in New Mexico nearly doubled from 8,800 students pre-pandemic to around 16,000 in 2021, and this will impact public school district budgets as student enrollment drops. A newly released U.S. Census Bureau report shows an increase from about 5.4 percent of U.S. households with school-aged children homeschooling in spring 2020, compared with 11 percent in the fall, an increase of 5.6 percent.

The Public Education Department (PED) launched the New Mexico Virtual Course Consortium (NMVC2), which allows school districts and charter schools to collaborate on remote learning. The state launched the program to expand access to online classes in districts with limited resources. During the pandemic, PED required school districts to offer online learning options. While not the case this school year, some students and parents may prefer it and opt for online learning. A student who wants remote learning that’s unavailable in their school or district can take virtual courses offered in another district, as long as both are members of the consortium, which is free to join. The student’s district pays the district hosting the virtual classes and the cost is \$375 for each course the student takes. Consortium members who have a student taking online classes elsewhere will continue to receive the state funds they get for each of their students and will provide them resources like counseling and meals. PED provided \$2.5 million for schools willing to build online options and help get the network started. At present, the consortium only serves 158 students from seven school districts. There is no deadline to join. PED reports regular check-in meetings with NMVC2 schools to gauge planning and implementation of virtual courses.

For the 2020-2021 school year, at least 14 states required in-person instruction to be available in some or all grades either part- or full-time, while nine states mandated full-time, in-person learning. New Mexico is one of the 14 states that opened for in-person learning 5 days a week this spring, although schools could continue to provide virtual schooling for families who wanted it. For the 2021- 22 school year, PED has stated that all New Mexico public schools will offer in-person schooling for families who want it, although it is not strictly mandated by the state. North Carolina, South Carolina, Iowa and Virginia are states that have taken the step of passing legislation that would require school districts in those states to offer some version of in-person learning in 2021-22. In late January, Iowa passed a law requiring all schools to offer families at least the option of full-time, in-person education. This is part of a fast-spreading trend of statutory attempts to open schools. Additionally, the Maryland State Board of Education passed a solution that all schools must provide 180 days of in-person instruction with a teacher in a classroom for all students in 2021-22 (Appendix C).

Figure 3. State-by-State Map of Where School Buildings Are Opened or Closed



Source: Education Week

The federal government has announced a plan to control Covid-19 by encouraging K-12 schools to mandate masks, require vaccines, and ramp up testing. According to the CDC, preventive measures are critical to reduce transmission and severe outcomes in children and adolescents, including vaccination and universal masking in schools by all individuals older than two years. The government also plans to require vaccinations for all federal employees, including teachers in Department of Defense schools, the Bureau of Indian Education, Head Start, and Early Head Start. The administration has named New Mexico as one of nine states that is leading by example when it comes to vaccines and masking for school employees.

Despite a return to in person schooling and a coronavirus surge, hospitalization rates for school-aged children in New Mexico have remained relatively stable and cases appear to be declining. Schools are likely able to act as a force multiplier for preventative measures such as masking, sanitation, and surveillance methods including testing and contact tracing, which students might not necessarily have access to without schools providing them.

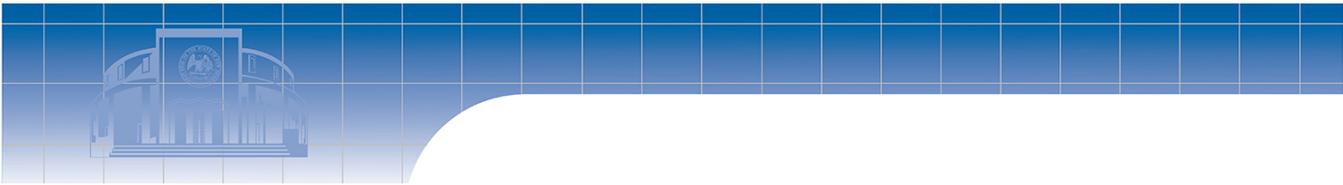
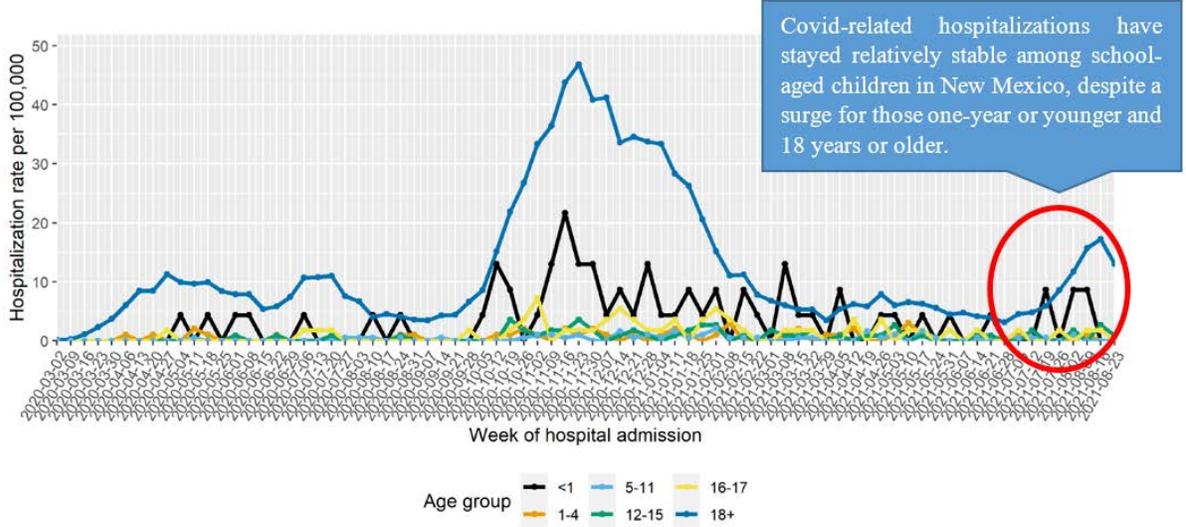


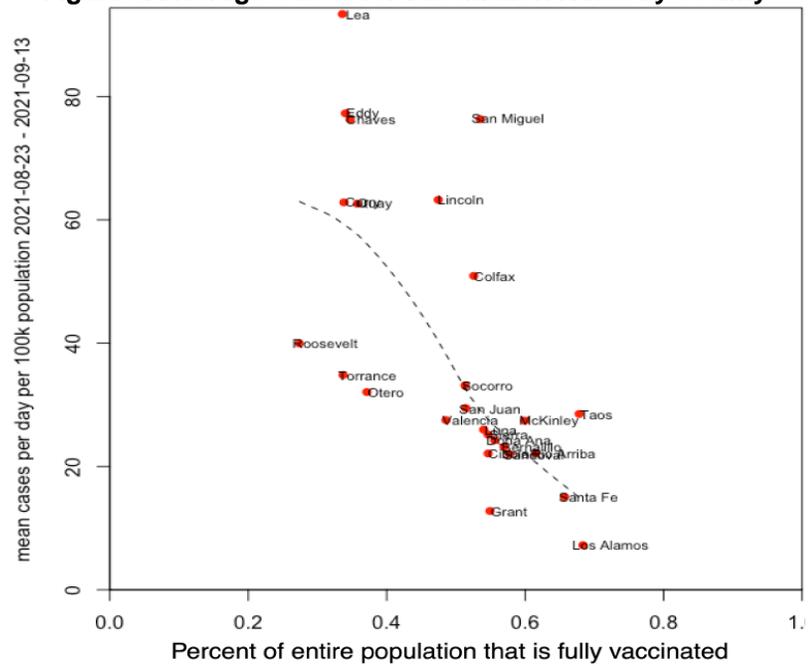
Figure 4. Weekly hospitalization by Age Group



Source: DOH

A forecast from Los Alamos National Labs has noted a strong correlation between vaccination rates and average number of cases on a by-county basis.

Figure 5. Average Cases vs. Vaccination Rates by County



Source: DOH

School Districts are Adopting Different Strategies to Address Lost Instructional Time, Potentially Creating Inequities.

Even before the pandemic, large learning gaps existed among New Mexico’s most at-risk students. Previous LFC research has detailed the benefits of extended learning time and K-5 Plus, and in response to the Martinez-Yazzie lawsuit, the 1st Judicial District Court indicated extended learning opportunities could help close achievement gaps. Though an attempt to mandate a longer school year fell short in the 2021 legislative session, the Legislature appropriated enough funding to cover all students for extended learning, providing the opportunity for all districts to participate. Some districts and teacher unions opposed an effort to mandate ELTP and K-5 Plus noting it would lead to teacher burn out and place a greater burden on small, rural districts. As a result, many districts and charter schools declined to extend their school year, forgoing millions of dollars in new state funding.

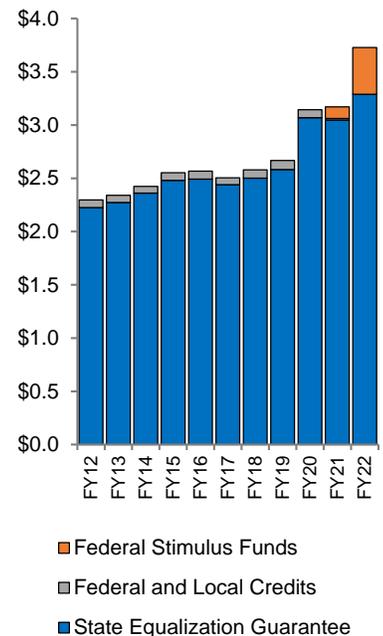
Many school districts are foregoing state funding for K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time Programs.

The Legislature already funds a voluntary, evidence-based K-5 Plus program to create more learning time for at-risk students who enter school less prepared. By statute, the program extends the school year for elementary school by 25 days, in which time the students stay with their existing teachers and have time to cover subjects they otherwise would not. For schools unwilling or unable to add 25 additional days to their school calendar, the Legislature has also offered ELTP for districts to add 10 days for all grade levels.

In response to school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Legislature provided sufficient funding to cover the participation of all students in ELTPs and restore K-5 Plus funding to levels prior to the special session. The 2021 General Appropriation Act granted \$280 million for these programs, including \$50 million from the public education reform fund. Chapter 134 (Senate Bill 40) amends requirements for K-5 Plus and ELTP, requiring school-wide participation, establishing minimum instructional days, and streamlining the application process. Although the bill originally mandated statewide participation in either program, this requirement was removed.

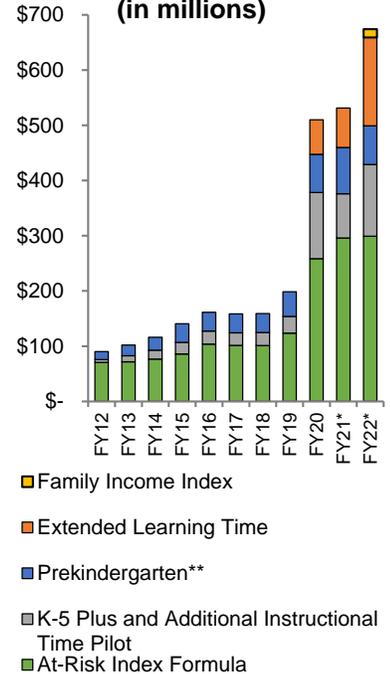
In the 2022 school year, fewer districts are participating in K-5 Plus compared to school year 2020. Only 13 districts are participating in K-5 Plus in 2022 compared to 40 districts in 2020. Enrollment in K-5 Plus among school districts dropped from 15.1 thousand students in school year 2020 to 13.8 thousand in 2022, a decrease of about 9 percent. This drop in participation in K-5 Plus corresponds with more districts opting to participate in ELTP. Forty-five districts are participating in ELTP in school year 2022 compared to 25 districts in school year 2020. Total student enrollment in ELTP increased 72 percent, up to about 142 thousand students in school year 2022 compared to

Chart 7. Funding for Public Schools (in billions)



Source: LFC Files

Chart 8. At-Risk Student Program Funding (in millions)



*Budgeted appropriation
**CYFD, PED, and ECECD

Source: LFC Files



83 thousand in 2020. Compared to school year 2020, districts participating in K-5 Plus in school year 2022 served lower rates of students from low-income families. This is concerning since Yazzie/Martinez plaintiff Stephen Barro reported at the August, 2021, LFC hearing that funding available for at-risk students is not reaching at-risk students (Appendix D).

Figure 6. New Mexico school districts participating in K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time in 2019-20

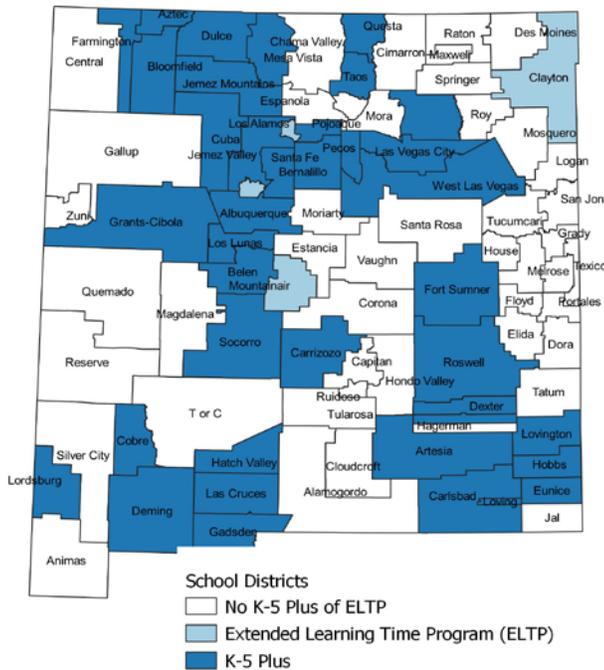
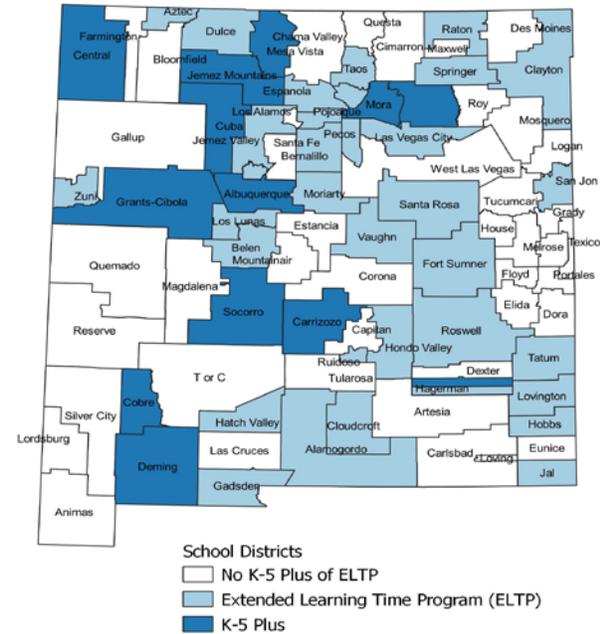


Figure 7. New Mexico school districts participating in K-5 Plus and Extended Learning Time in 2021-22



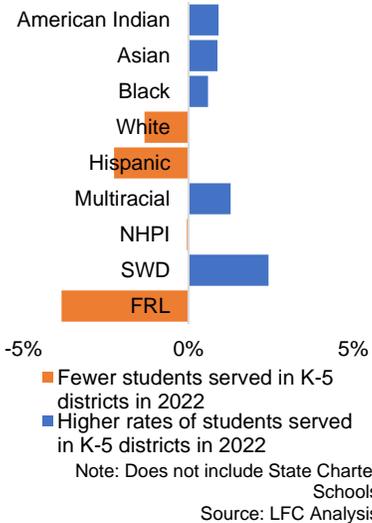
Note: Does not include State Charter Schools

Source: LFC Analysis

*Albuquerque, Alamogordo, Lovington, Cobre, and Dulce are all participating in a K-5 140 pilot
 **see Appendix D for more details
 Note: Does not include State Charter Schools

Source: LFC Analysis

Chart 9. Change in rates of students served by K-5 Plus between 2020 and 2022



Note: Does not include State Charter Schools
 Source: LFC Analysis

Many districts and charter schools chose to opt out of K-5 Plus and ELTP without sufficient plans to address lost instructional time. School districts choosing not to participate are required by law to provide written notification to PED, LESC, and LFC of their intent and detail how the district or charter will recover lost instructional time. Some of the largest districts in the state do not plan to offer widespread extended learning program, including Albuquerque Public Schools and Las Cruces Public Schools, although Albuquerque does plan to offer ELTP at 10 schools and is taking advantage of the additional instructional time pilot, which adds 140 educational hours to the existing school year (Appendix D).

Seventeen school districts and six charters reported their students did not experience any declines in student achievement during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is hard to quantify that assertion, given the lack of reliable assessment data. Fourteen districts and 10 charters that opted out also did not provide a plan to address lost instructional time, despite being legally required



to submit an opt out plan. Districts and charters that chose to opt out widely cited lack of community buy-in, teacher exhaustion, and alternate strategies for addressing learning. Districts with fewer than 200 students, such as Elida and Mosquero, argue they were able to keep a closer eye on students during virtual learning and were able to return to in-person learning sooner due to the micro district exception.

Both ELTP and K-5 plus are designed to increase the amount of time students are learning, especially to boost and reduce unfinished learning. However, only 69 percent of New Mexican students attend schools in districts that are implementing some type of extended school year. Several large districts, including the second largest (Las Cruces Public Schools), declined to implement any extended learning.

Many New Mexico school districts plan to spend the minimum amount of their federal ESSER funds in addressing missed learning due to the pandemic.

In 2020, the federal government created the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, and appropriated \$1.5 billion to New Mexico public schools to address emergencies related to the pandemic. Districts and charters are choosing different strategies for using the federal funds given the money could be for any activity necessary to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic or any operational needs. PED also set aside up to 10 percent of ESSER funds for statewide emergency needs and administrative costs. Additionally, the Acts appropriated \$42.2 million to the governor to provide assistance to students and families through school districts, institutions of higher education, and other education-related organizations.

More than 20 percent of students attend school districts that did not have a plan to address unfinished learning.

In 2021, the Legislature created the K-5 Plus 140 pilot program and appropriated \$20 million over the next two school years. This allows schools to add 140 hours of instructional time to the existing school year, rather than adding extra school days. Schools are required to monitor the outcomes of this program and report to PED.

Table 5. ESSER Fund Allocation to New Mexico (in Millions)

Federal Stimulus Package	ESSER	State Total ESSER Allocation	LEA Amount	PED Amount
ESSER I (authorized via CARES)	ESSER I	\$108,574	\$97,717	\$10,857
ESSER II (authorized via CRRSA)	ESSER II	\$435,938	\$392,344	\$43,593
ESSER III (authorized via ARPA)	ESSER III	\$979,056	\$881,150	\$97,905
Total		\$1,523,569	\$1,371,212	\$152,356

Source: NCSL ESSER Fund Tracker

Allowable use of the ESSER I funds by school districts included anything related to preventing, preparing for, and responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. With ESSER II, districts were advised that funds could be used for addressing the impacts of lost instructional time, preparing schools for reopening, and testing, repairing, and upgrading ventilation systems. ESSER III was more prescriptive, stipulating that local school districts must use at least 20 percent of funds to address the impacts of lost instructional time with evidence-based interventions. Those interventions are supposed to respond to students’ social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of the



Los Alamos Public Schools budgeted (LAPS) use of ESSER II funds to address student learning

LAPS will use this funding to address missed learning in students due to the pandemic. Funds will be used to purchase supplies and materials to supplement instruction, support intervention efforts, and support at home learning. Funds will be used to pay staff to provide after-hours **tutoring**.

LAPS will implement a **summer learning program** focusing on reading and math for all K-8 grade students in the district. Students will have the opportunity to receive instruction from certified teachers in reading and math to recover unfinished learning time due to the pandemic. The district will also implement **after school programming** for intervention and tutoring in core academic areas.

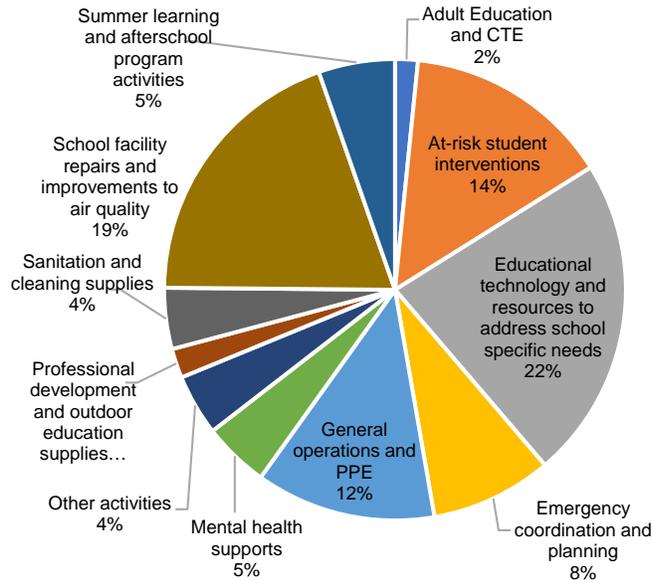
Source: PED

pandemic on certain student groups. Districts can use more than the required 20 percent to address unfinished learning, and in some cases likely should.

New Mexico school districts plan to dedicate an average of only about 5 percent of ESSER II funds to address missed learning and about 5 percent on summer learning and supplemental afterschool program activities. In data provided to the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED), districts report that they are plan to spend their ESSER II funds on: purchasing educational technology including assistive technology or adaptive equipment (18 percent); inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade project to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities (14 percent); and other activities necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services and to continue to employ existing staff, including purchasing personal protective equipment for students and staff (12 percent). Despite anticipated missed learning due to lost instructional time during the Covid-19 pandemic, districts report allocating an average of 5 percent of ESSER II funds to address missed learning among students and an average of 5 percent for summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs.

Los Alamos Public Schools is the only district that plans to allocate 100 percent of its ESSER II funds to address missed learning and implementing summer and after school programs. Large school districts including Albuquerque Public Schools (9 percent), Las Cruces Public Schools (4 percent), and Rio Rancho Public Schools (6 percent) plan to spend a relatively small percentage of their ESSER II funds on addressing missed learning, summer learning programs, or after school programming. A total of about \$392 million dollars was made available to local school districts through the ESSER II fund of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Chart 10. ESSER II Budgeted by New Mexico Districts
(\$435 million total)



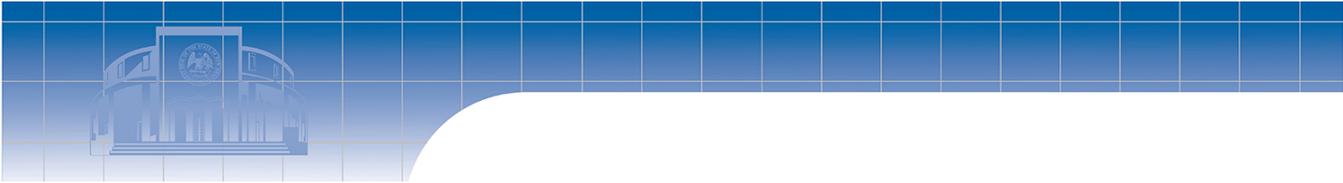
Source: PED



Districts are enacting different strategies to address unfinished learning using their ESSER funds, which may lead to educational inequities. Some districts, such as Alamogordo Public Schools plan to increase teacher salaries using ESSER funds, to account for extra time spent tutoring. Other districts plan to use their ESSER funds to hire dedicated tutors or learning loss specialists. The Jemez Mountain School District, for example, plans to hire two reading specialists to address unfinished learning. Other districts plan to use their funds to expand after school programs or purchase learning loss software. More than 20 percent of students attend school districts that did not have a plan to address unfinished learning. Some students who attend districts with learning loss programs may not necessarily participate in those programs. In addition, only 51 of the state's 89 districts plan to offer some kind of summer school or extended learning time for students who are falling behind. Many schools plan to offer experiential learning that focuses on the outdoors.

In July, LFC sent a memo to all school districts, providing them with a list of evidence-based interventions to help address learning. The memo addressed best practices around tutoring, extended learning time programs, teacher consulting, and professional development as well as instructional practices, non-academic support, English language learning, and social-emotional learning programs. With regards to tutoring, the memo suggested interventions such as one-to-one or small group tutoring by certified teachers, peer tutoring, and parent tutoring with teacher supervision (https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Documents/Money_Matters/Federal%20Stimulus%20Funds%20Status%20Reports/Federal%20Relief%20Funds%20Brief%20-%20July%202021.pdf). The federal Department of Education released similar guidance for tutoring, and recommended offering tutoring during the school day whenever possible, although after school tutoring has also proven to be effective.

Considering that school districts got approximately \$2,400 per pupil in federal ARPA funding, local districts will have to determine how to best invest that money to meet their schools' and students' needs. Some potential options that are estimated to cost about \$500 per pupil include: contracting for three to one tutoring for half the student body for one year; offering targeted summer learning and enrichment opportunities for half the students; lengthening the school year by two weeks; or lengthening the school day by 10 minutes for one year.



PED’s Spending and Guidance Is Consistent with Best Practices but Lacks an Implementation and Evaluation Strategy.

PED is making a good effort to spend their state set-aside federal stimulus funds to address pandemic impacts. They are also providing guidance to districts on evidence-based strategies to make up for missed learning (as has the LFC). However, PED is leaving it up to districts to determine how to implement that guidance and could be doing more by requiring assessments and providing appropriate interventions.

PED also notes they cannot mandate schools to extend their calendar year to address lost instructional time due to the pandemic, even though research shows extended learning time can be an effective tool to make up for missed learning. In many cases, PED has approved district plans to opt of K-5 Plus and ELTP without the district offering an alternate approach to address unfinished learning and existing achievement gaps. PED is missing an opportunity to provide guidance and technical support on implementing effective interventions to inform decisions using data

As a result, PED will likely approve 89 different approaches and strategies to addressing pandemic impacts on student learning. PED does not have an evaluation plan to monitor and track the outcomes of the various strategies implemented by different school districts. Like other state education agencies, PED should utilize federal stimulus funds to evaluate the progress and outcomes of district’s intervention strategies and provide technical assistance as needed.

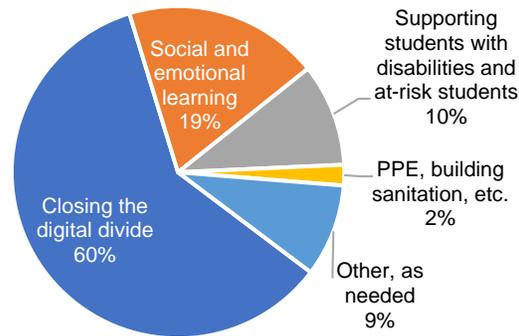
PED plans to use its ESSER set-aside for addressing education inequities and address missed learning.

PED will receive a 10 percent set-aside of the federal stimulus funds for public education through ESSER funding. States will have until FY24 to spend all funds. PED’s plan was approved on July 22, 2021, and the department will receive a total of \$150 million. PED intends to use its set-aside funding to address education inequities and unfinished learning, including interventions such as afterschool programs, mentoring and tutoring, and summer school enrichment. However, New Mexico’s ESSER plans do not highlight how the state will evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions. Without frequent program assessments, it will be difficult to know which interventions produce the best outcomes.

For ESSER I, PED proposed to allocate their 9.5 percent of discretionary funds (\$10.9 million) to districts and charter schools.



Chart 11. PED's Use of Discretionary ESSER I Funds (\$10 million)



Source: PED

For ESSER II, PED proposed to use their set-aside funds (\$43.5 million) to provide a grant to a handful of school districts. These grants primarily supplemented smaller school districts including Grady, House, Mosquero, Roy, and The Masters Program.

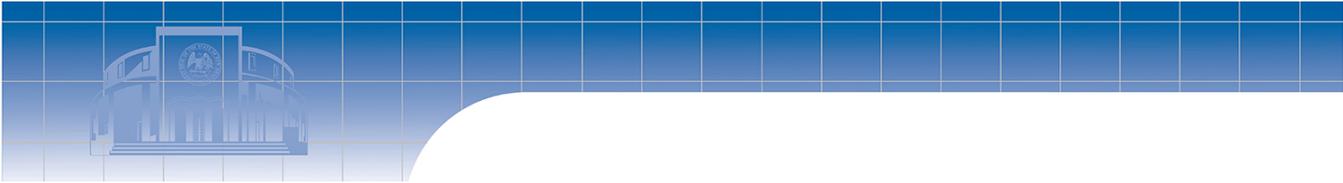
For ESSER III, New Mexico was allocated a total of \$979 million and PED planned to utilize the set-aside funds (\$97 million) in the following ways:

- **Five percent (\$48.9 million) for the implementation of evidence-based interventions aimed specifically at addressing unfinished learning.** In PED's approved plan, the department indicates it will use \$22 million to support accelerated learning by providing teacher professional development on academic acceleration, communities of practice for educators and administrators, developing high-dosage tutoring programs following evidence-based curriculum and pedagogy, and peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring.
- **One percent (\$9.8 million) can be used for evidence-based summer enrichment programs.** PED established a joint internship in tribal, county, or municipal governments for students aimed to reengage at-risk youth for the 2021-2022 school year totaling \$6 million. In addition, PED will use \$3.8 million of funding to provide grants to school districts and partner organizations to run summer programs in five key areas: 1) STEM programs, 2) outdoor, environmental education programs, 3) museum-based, arts, or cultural programs, 4) at-risk youth and teen-oriented programs, and 5) land-based, agricultural, or career and technical education (CTE) programs.
- **One percent (\$9.8 million) can be used for evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs.** PED will issue a request for application to community organizations to provide evidence-based services to students, including expanding community schools, which provide extended learning time and wraparound services.

ARPA stipulates that state education agencies are required to dedicate their allocations to carry out activities:

- Five percent to address unfinished learning;
- One percent for afterschool activities; and
- One percent for summer learning programs.

Source: DOE



Accelerated Learning: Acceleration builds on what students already know as a way to access new learning. Studies have shown that when students tie background knowledge to new information, they are better at making inferences and retaining the new information more effectively. Learning acceleration focuses on quickly diagnosing gaps in critical skills and concepts that may impede students from accessing grade-level coursework. Acceleration provides instruction in prior knowledge and teaching prerequisite skills that students need to learn at a pace that allows students to stay engaged in grade-level content and lays a foundation for new academic vocabulary.

Source: DOE

- **One half of 1 percent (\$4.9 million) can be used for administrative costs and emergency needs determined by the state to address issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

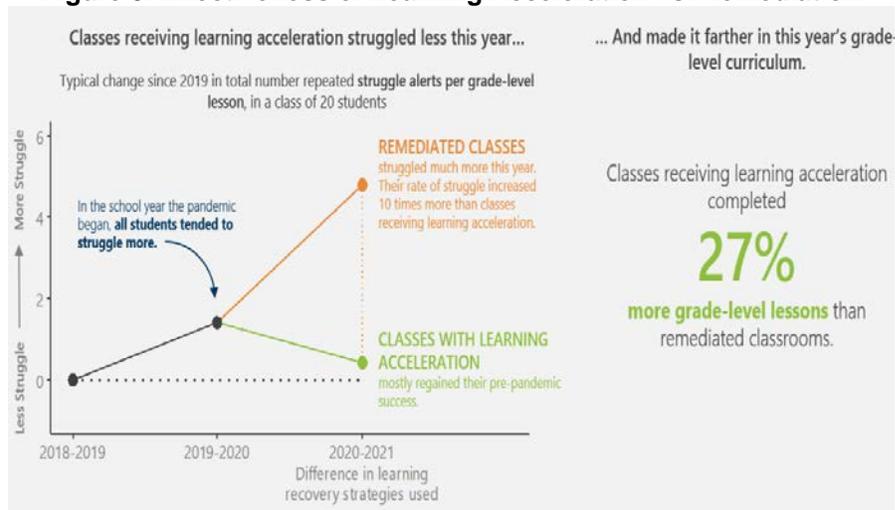
These stipulations for use of ARPA funds by state education agencies is in addition to the 20 percent districts must use to address lost instructional time due to the pandemic. Unlike other states, New Mexico has not indicated that they are using federal ESSER funds to enhance data system to monitor and evaluate implementation of evidence-based interventions to address lost instructional time.

PED’s guidance to districts during the pandemic reflected best practices, but was not supported by training to change classroom practices.

PED’s pandemic guidance to districts focuses on accelerated learning, which is a best practice. Over the course of the pandemic, PED released a series of school reopening guides that provided updated research and best practices to assist school officials in responding to the pandemic. The guidance included resources for designing schedules and staff considerations; guidance for allowable uses for ESSER funds; an informational list for educators on best practices; and a plan to implement accelerated learning. PED’s suggested accelerated learning plan including utilizing data to determine unfinished learning and identifying potential gaps; assuring high quality instructional materials; interventions such as high dosage tutoring; implementing social-emotional renewal; and prioritizing family and community engagement.

Evidence indicates focusing on acceleration is more effective than remediation for addressing missed learning due to the pandemic. Recent research by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) in partnership with Zearn during the pandemic indicates that acceleration might be the best approach. TNTP found that students who participated in a learning acceleration setting completed 27 percent more grade-level lessons compared with students in a remediation setting. Although students of color and students from low-income families were less likely to receive accelerated learning over this past year, learning acceleration was found to be particularly effective for these groups of students. TNTP’s research found that classes that provided learning acceleration in schools with mostly students of color completed 49 percent more grade-level lessons and those classes at Title I schools completed 28 percent more grade-level lessons compared to similar classes that provided remediation.

Figure 8. Effectiveness of Learning Acceleration vs. Remediation



Note: N = 27,926 students/3,742 classrooms for the remediated group. N = 22,713 students/2,337 classrooms for the learning acceleration group. Zearn data drawn from 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms in school grades that missed the final set of lessons of previous school year with sufficient student activity and 3+ years of continuous data.

Source: The New Teacher Project

New Mexico teachers have not yet received training on how to incorporate accelerated learning into their teaching. PED's updated guidance for the upcoming year stresses accelerated learning. In theory, this should mean that schools continue to deliver instruction to students at grade level and provide additional support, like tutoring, if necessary, as opposed to remediation to address potential unfinished learning due to the pandemic. However, when LFC staff met with teachers in fall of 2021, most indicated that they were not familiar with the concept and had never received training in how to incorporate into their teaching. When LFC staff spoke with district superintendents and teachers in fall of 2020, they indicated that they were focused on identifying priority standards to address missed learning, rather than revising instruction to incorporate accelerated learning. This is likely because PED's guidance on accelerated learning emphasized priority standards, the most critical prerequisite skills and knowledge that connect to the instructional scope, rather than adjusting teaching practices to incorporate prerequisite skills to help students stay engaged in grade-level content. PED has provided superintendents, charter school directors, and tribal education leaders a link to a one and a half-hour webinar on accelerated learning provided by The New Teacher Project, but has not provided support or guidance for implementation in the classroom. PED should develop professional development resources and support systems to provide training on accelerated learning.

PED does not appear to have a way to ensure consistent training among districts. According to Teach Plus, an organization that focuses on professional development for teachers, there are three commonly cited shortcomings with teacher development: it is disconnected from the everyday



For the FY23 budget request, PED was required to complete a program inventory of three below the line programs, student nutrition and wellness, STEAM initiatives, and Career Technical Education, in accordance with SB58. While PED provided information regarding nutrition and wellness, no programming for CTE or STEAM initiatives was included.

practice of teaching; it is too generic and unrelated to the curriculum or to the specific instructional problems teachers face; and it is infrequent and implemented as a one-shot event. Hiring a designated professional development coordinator for the state would help ensure that teachers get frequent, individualized training that is consistent among schools and districts. PED should develop professional development resources and a system of support that is in line with its guidance and strategic goals.

PED needs a strategic plan to ensure guidance is implemented effectively. While PED’s roadmap is good in theory, it remains unclear how the department plans to define and measure success statewide and link its initiatives to student outcomes. PED’s last strategic plan expired in 2020. PED is currently in the process of finalizing a new strategic plan. As they finalize the strategic plan, PED should plan how to provide technical assistance and support as needed to ensure that strategic goals and initiatives are implemented in the classroom.

PED’s Theory of Change to Support Acceleration and Renewal

- If school teams identify student baseline knowledge, **learning gaps** and potential unfinished learning, and
- If high quality, **culturally responsive instructional materials** and curriculum are identified and used, and
- If teachers receive **professional development** on using this curriculum and employing such pedagogical strategies, and
- If educators collaboratively and deliberately plan for **intentional intervention** (such as high dose tutoring), and
- If school leadership teams utilize creative, flexible **staffing models** to ensure accelerated learning can be employed, and
- If **schools are safe**, inclusive, and grounded in trusting relationships that value all students, and
- If **families and communities** are valued, understand the tenets of accelerated learning, are engaged, and supportive of programs and structures,

Then, **equitable access** to a guaranteed, viable, culturally relevant curriculum will be achieved for all students, **learning outcomes** will improve, and renewal from the pandemic as well as an **improved education system** will emerge for New Mexico.

Source: PED

PED could strengthen research and evaluation to promote effective implementation of evidence-based interventions to address education inequities and unfinished learning.

PED should implement an evaluation process to identify which evidence-based interventions to address unfinished learning are the most effective in New Mexico. Without such a process, the state will not be able to identify which interventions and programs provide the highest return on investment. Further, evaluation and monitoring can flag when evidence-based programs are not being implemented correctly and, therefore, jeopardizing outcomes.



New Mexico's state ARPA ESSER plan does not address how it will evaluate the effectiveness of interventions for unfinished learning like other states. PED plans to evaluate its support of evidence-based comprehensive afterschool programs by comparing the chronic absenteeism rates for participating students in school year 2020-21 as compared to school year 2021-22. PED also plans to fund an evaluation of their Educator Fellows program. No evaluations are planned for locally proposed interventions for addressing unfinished learning.

On the other hand, other states plan to utilize funds for research and evaluation (Appendix F). New York provides technical assistance to districts to target and implement appropriate evidence-based interventions to address specific student needs and monitors progress on an ongoing basis. Texas plans to evaluate its interventions in short, medium, and long-term cycles, relying on stakeholder involvement, and using data from standardized tests to diagnose student mastery. North Dakota requires school districts to have a plan for evaluating individual programs before they are implemented and provide a centralized state evaluation team to support districts in those efforts. Although PED provided a resource list linked to some evidence-based resources in their guidance documents, their ongoing implementation support, monitoring, and evaluation is limited.

Interventions to address lost instructional time should incorporate frequent program assessment and evaluation. In addition to the strategies like in-school acceleration, tutoring programs, out-of-school time programs, and summer learning and enrichment, the federal guidance identifies several factors that should be considered when implementing interventions to address lost instructional time. One important consideration for PED and local school districts in implementing interventions to address lost instructional time is to build in frequent program assessment and evaluation. Federal guidance recommends using early warning indicator systems to identify students with the greatest needs. Data on student performance, as well as data on the context for that performance, can help schools and districts to fully understand student needs, strategies to address them, and how best to target resources. Continuous quality improvement and frequent evaluations of the program assist providers in analyzing and making improvements to better provide students with engaging opportunities that improve their lives. Continuous improvement engages key players in a system to focus on a specific problem of practice and, through a series of iterative cycles, identify and test change practices (new approaches, tools, or strategies used to address the problem), make predictions, collect data about the change practices, and study the potential influence of those change practices on outcomes of interest. Through these cycles the members of the system build their capacity to test proposed change practices;

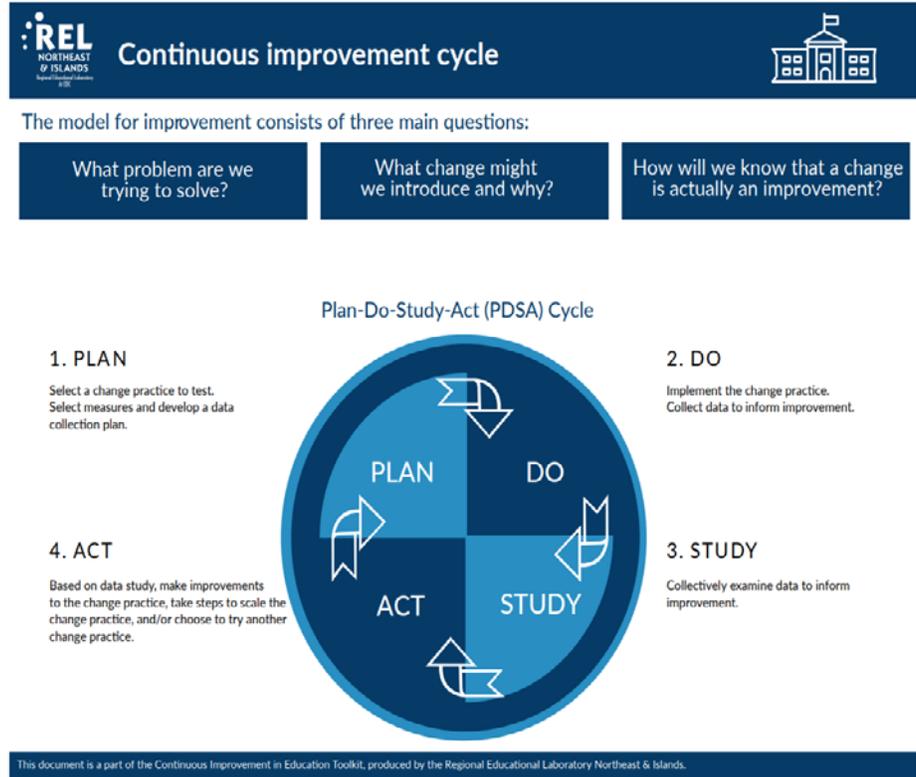
An SEA should consider using funds to provide technical assistance to its LEAs on identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions.

Source: DOE



refine those change practices based on evidence; and increase the scale, scope, and spread of a change practice over time.

Figure 9. The Continuous Improvement Cycle



Source: DOE

Using research and evaluation to support education interventions is considered a best practice. In their review of the New Mexico education system, the Learning Policy Institute of UCLA recommended that PED should develop an evaluation system that includes comprehensive data and processes that New Mexico’s districts and schools can use regularly to inform and support educator learning, high-quality implementation, and continuous improvement. Such a system can facilitate collaboration with districts and tribal governments. To achieve such a system, New Mexico needs a comprehensive set of measures that provide data for evaluating the state’s and districts’ progress towards its strategic goals. Such data shed light on the extent to which resources are being used effectively. PED should provide ongoing training and technical assistance for educators, school boards, and tribal partners on using data to pinpoint problems for continuous improvement in ways that are locally appropriate. Such an approach could allow flexibility in local implementation of interventions to address student achievement while providing added accountability.



Next Steps and Potential Options

Current evidence supports previously presented research that fewer at-risk students are proficient in reading and math since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, likely exacerbating existing inequities.

- Given what research indicates how the pandemic impacted students, educators should take immediate action to target interventions for learning math, younger students, non-white students, students from low-income families, and students who spent more time learning remotely.
- School districts should consider using PED and LFC guidance for intervention strategies. Districts with evidence of gaps in student achievement should consider spending more than their required 20 percent to address unfinished learning.

The funding the Legislature made available to address lost instructional time due to the pandemic and existing achievement gaps has been underutilized by school districts. Many school districts that opted out of K-5 Plus and extended learning time programs did not indicate a plan for addressing lost instructional time, and PED did not use their statutory authority to require districts to develop a plan.

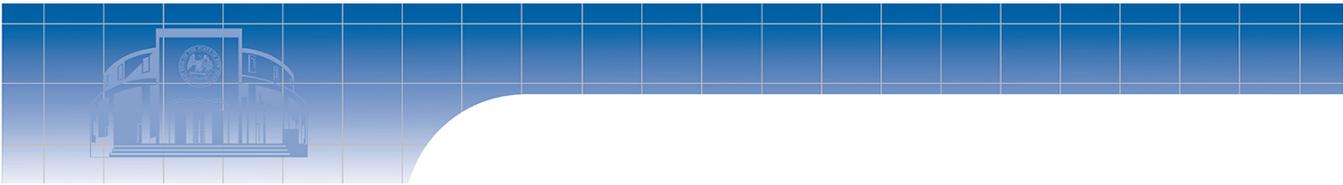
- Therefore, the Legislature should consider mandating ELTP for all districts and charters, and should consider requiring K-5 Plus in districts that serve a high proportion of at-risk students or exhibit evidence of lower academic achievement with flexibility in implementation to meet local needs.
- PED should provide technical support for implementation and accountability, which would allow districts the option to phase-in implementation or opt out of participating with potential exemptions including high student achievement, programming being provided by a tribal education department, or rural and small district.

The federal government's historic stimulus to address the pandemic's impacts on education represents a once in a generation opportunity to invest in New Mexico's students and their education.

- PED should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies implemented by local school districts on student achievement outcomes.
- To aid this goal, PED could strengthen staff and resources to support local school districts in identifying and implementing evidence-based interventions to address lost instructional time due to the pandemic and provide monitoring to ensure they are implemented to fidelity.

PED should track which districts are using different assessments.

- PED should provide guidance and support to local school districts to utilize the results from these alternative assessments in evaluating local interventions to address unfinished learning due to the pandemic.
- PED should also work with the districts to develop a formative assessment strategy that can track and monitor student progress and growth in real-time.



APPENDICES

Appendix A. Timeline of Major Events During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid-19 Timeline	
March 13, 2020	Governor orders schools closed for three weeks
March 27, 2020	Governor extends school closure through remainder of school year
March 27, 2020	The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, provided \$13.5 billion to the ESSER Fund (ESSER I).
March 1, 2020	PED cancels K-5 Plus for FY 21
March 1, 2020	PED waives all testing due to closing of schools for remainder of school year
July 24, 2020	In person Learning postponed through Labor Day
September 8, 2020	Schools in 25 counties cleared to begin hybrid learning
December 27, 2020	The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA), provided \$54.3 billion in supplemental ESSER funding, known as the ESSER II fund.
March 11, 2021	The American Rescue Plan Act, passed on, provided \$122.7 billion in supplemental ESSER funding, known as the ESSER III fund.
April 5, 2021	NM schools required to reopen in person learning
May 14, 2020	LEAs received access to ESSER I funds
February 1, 2021	PED Seeks testing waiver from USDE for 2020-2021 school year
February 2, 2021	LEAs received access to ESSER II funds
April 1, 2021	USDE approves PED Spring Testing Waiver
May 24, 2021	ARP ESSER III Interim Award memo from PED to LEAs
June 1, 2021	PED submitted plan for funds expenditure to USDE
June 24, 2021	PED requires LEAs to post Reentry Plans

Note. The LFC's previous learning loss reports estimated that students lost between five and eight weeks of instructional time, with the youngest students losing the most time.

Appendix B. Assessment Waivers by State for 2021-2022

State	Waiver for 2020-2021	Notes
Alabama	Waiver of accountability and school ID for 20-21	Extension waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Alaska	Waiver of accountability and school ID for 20-21	
Arizona	Waiver of accountability & school ID for 20-21	
Arkansas	N/A	
BIE	Waiver of accountability & school ID for 20-21	
California	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Administered all assessments, all districts required to administer the statewide summative assessments except in instances where the state concludes not viable b/c of pandemic. Shortened assessments and extended testing window for greater flexibility in administration. Waiver of the one percent cap on participation in alternate assessment 20-21.
Colorado	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Administered general and alternate assessments in math to students in grades 4, 6 & 8. General and alternate assessment in reading/language arts to students in grades 3, 5, & 7. All other grade assessments offered by not required. Will administer high school reading/language arts and math and the SAT to all students. General and alternate science in grade 8 and high school.
Connecticut	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Delaware	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	LEA created assessments in reading/language arts/math and science for all grade levels.
District of Columbia	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year and waiver of assessment requirements for 20-21	
Florida	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Georgia	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Hawaii	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Idaho	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver to permit new field test (Idaho Alternative Assessment) in science in grades 5, 8, & 11 in 20-21.
Illinois	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Indiana	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Iowa	N/A	
Kansas	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Kentucky	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Louisiana	N/A	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.

State	Waiver for 2020-2021	Notes
Maine	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Field test new general and alternate assessments in science in grades 5, 8, & 11 for 20-21 school year. Will not report the results to parents nor the public
Maryland	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Massachusetts	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Michigan	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Assessment waivers denied to waive science reporting
Minnesota	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Mississippi	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Missouri	N/A	
Montana	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver to permit state to field test new science assessment and alternative science assessment in 20-21 for grades 5, 8 & 11.
Nebraska	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver to permit state to field test of science assessment in grades 5 & 8 in 2020-2021. Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Nevada	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
New Hampshire	N/A	
New Jersey	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver for shortened assessment for reading/language arts, math and science.
New Mexico	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
New York	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
North Carolina	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on participation in the alternate assessment for 20-21
North Dakota	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Ohio	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on participation in the alternate assessment for 20-21
Oklahoma	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on participation in the alternate assessment for 20-21
Oregon	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of assessment requirements for 20-21. Administer general and alternate reading/language arts to all students in grades 3, 6, 7, & 11 and general and alternative science assessment to all students in grades 5 & 8. All other grades, assessments offered but not required and will provide information to parents.
Pennsylvania	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Puerto Rico	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	

State	Waiver for 2020-2021	Notes
Rhode Island	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
South Carolina	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
South Dakota	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Tennessee	N/A	
Texas	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Utah	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Vermont	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Virginia	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Washington	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
West Virginia	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	Waiver of the 1% cap on alternative assessment participation.
Wisconsin	Waiver of accountability & school ID for the 20-21 school year	
Wyoming	N/A	

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary & Secondary Education. (Retrieved 2021, August 27). State Requests for Waivers of ESEA Provisions for SSA-Administered Programs. Available: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-state-plans-assessment-waivers/>.

Appendix C. States Reopening Plans for Schools for 2021-2022

Note. States highlighted in yellow have mandated in-person instruction.

STATE	2021-2022
Alabama	No state-wide order in place regarding instructional models for 2021-22
Alaska	No state-wide order in place regarding instructional models for 2021-22
Arizona	Districts will draft their own reopening plans for the 2021-22 school year
Arkansas	State requires districts to offer in-person instruction 5-days per week
California	Gov. Newsome 'expects' all schools to be open for full-time in-person instruction
Colorado	In-person learning decisions left to individual districts
Connecticut	Districts asked to plan for all students to return to school for full-time, in-person instruction this fall as long as health conditions support face-to-face teaching
Delaware	Governor Carney's goal is to have all schools open for in-person learning by fall
District of Columbia	Mayor Bowser announced schools planning full-time in-person instruction for start of 2021-2022 school year
Florida	Districts must offer in-person learning five days a week
Georgia	No statewide order in place regarding instructional models for 2021-22
Hawaii	All schools open for full-time in-person instruction for 2021-22 school year
Idaho	All schools planning for full-time in-person instruction for 2021-22
Illinois	All schools must resume full-time in-person learning for 2021-22
Indiana	Districts set own calendars and make individual decisions about when or if students return to in-person classes
Iowa	Bill signed by Gov. Reynolds in January requiring districts to offer in-person learning five days a week
Kansas	Bill signed by Gov. Kelly in April requiring all schools to provide a full-time, in person attendance option for all students
Kentucky	State Department of Education expects all public schools will be open for face-to-face instruction in the 2021-22 school year, though no order in effect
Louisiana	State Department of Education working with Dept. of Health on guidance for reopening in 2021-22
Maine	All counties designated safe to open for in-person, full-time instruction, some districts continue to offer hybrid instruction
Maryland	State Board of Education passed a resolution that all schools must provide 180 days of in-person learning with teacher in classroom for all students in 2021-22
Massachusetts	All districts required to provide in-person, full-time academic instruction five days a week for 2021-22
Michigan	State law went into effect on March 22 which incentivized school districts to offer at least 20 hours a week of in-person instruction (ensures districts that received the least amount of federal aid will get \$450 per pupil as long as students are back in classrooms)
Minnesota	Schools not able to offer remote learning options in 2021-22 unless legislation is passed this summer
Mississippi	No state-wide order in place regarding instructional models for 2021-22
Missouri	State Department of Education expects all public schools to 'return to provisions in place prior to the pandemic, including full-time onsite instruction and virtual education enrollment as allowed by statute'
Montana	State Department of Education July 2020 guidance allowed for 'full reopening scenarios, including near full capacity of attendance and operations in a tradition setting, with remote learning'
Nebraska	Gov. Ricketts predicts schools will be able to return to normal operations with fewer virus precautions in the 2021-22 school year
Nevada	Schools must develop plans that cover in-person learning, under a directive from Gov. Sisolak
New Hampshire	Districts required to begin offering five-days-a-week in person instruction in April 2021
New Jersey	Full-day, in person instruction for 2021-22
New Mexico	All schools must offer in-person schooling, however not strictly mandated
New York	Full in-person learning, no remote option for 2021-22
North Carolina	Gov. Cooper signed legislation March 11 requiring all schools to open for in-person learning (districts must offer remote option for families who choose), full guidance for 2021-22 is not yet finalized
North Dakota	State of Emergency lifted April 30, State Superintendent encouraged schools to continue mask wearing, physical distancing, and contact tracing
Ohio	Gov. DeWine urged schools to open buildings on a hybrid or five-day a week schedule, although no official requirements
Oklahoma	All schools open in person or in a blended hybrid model
Oregon	All K-12 schools required to offer either part-or full-time in-person instruction. Full-time distance learning only allowed under specific circumstances. As of May, no state guidance on remote options and in-person learning for 2021-22

STATE	2021-2022
Pennsylvania	State guidance allows districts to decide whether in-person or remote or mix
Rhode Island	Districts have local control on how to open
South Carolina	Gov. McMaster signed legislation in April that requires school districts to offer full-time, in-person instruction five days a week for 2021-22 school year
South Dakota	State Education Department issued guidance that gives local districts autonomy to decide
Tennessee	Districts decide
Texas	Requires school districts to offer daily, on-campus learning. As of June 4, unclear if state would provide districts with option to offer remote schooling for 2021-22 school year.
Utah	No state-wide order in place regarding instructional models for 2021-22
Vermont	Once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, local districts and schools are expected to return to normal operations and full in-person learning in the fall.
Virginia	Legislation signed in March by Gov. Northam (SB 1303) requires districts to offer full-time in-person learning by July 1 (bill expires 8/1/2022)
Washington	Starting this fall, schools will be required to offer in-person instruction five days a week to all students who want it
West Virginia	Five-day, in-person learning required for 2021-22 school year
Wisconsin	School districts make own decisions about instructional needs
Wyoming	Education department expects all school to deliver full-time, in-person learning for 2021-22, although not required

Source: Education Week

Appendix D. New Mexico School Districts Adoption of K-5 Plus or Extended Learning Time Programs in Academic Year 2022

District	Confirmed Yes / No	ELTP	K-5 Plus	K-5 Plus 140 Pilot	Estimated Enrollment
Albuquerque Public Schools	✓	✓		✓	77,714
Las Cruces Public Schools	X				23,829
Rio Rancho Public Schools	✓	✓			17,020
Gadsden Independent Schools	✓	✓			12,679
Santa Fe Public Schools	✓	✓			12,206
Farmington Municipal Schools	X				11,051
Gallup-McKinley County Schools	X				10,720
Hobbs Municipal Schools	✓	✓			10,304
Roswell Independent Schools	✓	✓			10,119
Los Lunas Public Schools	✓	✓			8,245
Clovis Municipal Schools	X				7,779
Carlsbad Municipal Schools	X				6,931
Alamogordo Public Schools	✓	✓		✓	5,731
Central Consolidated Schools	✓	✓			5,393
Deming Public Schools	✓	✓	✓		5,090
Artesia Public Schools	X				3,796
Belen Consolidated Schools	✓	✓		✓	3,784
Lovington Municipal Schools	✓	✓	✓		3,713
Los Alamos Public Schools	X				3,670
Grants/Cibola County Schools	✓	✓	✓		3,349
Española Public Schools	✓	✓			3,222
Bernalillo Public Schools	X				2,826
Bloomfield Schools	X				2,645
Portales Municipal Schools	X				2,628
Aztec Municipal Schools	✓	✓			2,608
Silver Consolidated School District	X				2,468
Moriarty-Edgewood School District	✓	✓			2,290
Taos Municipal Schools	✓	✓			2,072
Ruidoso Municipal Schools	✓	✓			1,962
Pojoaque Valley Public Schools	✓	✓			1,829
Las Vegas City Public Schools	✓	✓			1,441
Socorro Consolidated Schools	✓	✓	✓		1,405
West Las Vegas Public Schools	X				1,388
Zuni Public School District	✓	✓			1,233
Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools	X				1,197
Hatch Valley Public Schools	✓	✓			1,195
Cobre Consolidated Schools	✓	✓		✓	1,118
Tucumcari Public Schools	X				920
Raton Public Schools	✓	✓			881
Tularosa Municipal Schools	X				857
Dexter Consolidated Schools	X				856
Eunice Public Schools	X				810
Loving Municipal Schools	X				622

Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools	✓	✓			613
Estancia Municipal Schools	X				595
Dulce Independent Schools	✓	✓		✓	578
Cuba Independent Schools	✓	✓	✓		549
Texico Municipal Schools	X				549
Pecos Independent School District	✓	✓			542
Jal Public Schools	✓	✓			514
Capitan Municipal Schools	X				495
Lordsburg Municipal Schools	X				466
Clayton Municipal Schools	✓	✓			424
Cloudcroft Municipal Schools	✓	✓			419
Mora Independent Schools	✓	✓	✓		413
Chama Valley Independent Schools	✓	✓	✓		399
Hagerman Municipal Schools	✓	✓	✓		391
Tatum Municipal Schools	✓	✓			359
Cimarron Municipal Schools	X				352
Peñasco Independent Schools	✓	✓	✓		345
Logan Municipal Schools	X				337
Magdalena Municipal Schools	X				300
Melrose Municipal Schools	X				277
Questa Independent Schools	X				269
Fort Sumner Municipal Schools	X				262
Jemez Valley Public Schools	✓	✓			262
Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools	X				245
Dora Consolidated Schools	X				227
Mountainair Public Schools	X				212
Jemez Mountain Public Schools	✓	✓	✓		208
Floyd Municipal Schools	X				203
Grady Municipal Schools	X				171
Quemado Independent Schools	X				163
Elida Municipal Schools	X				155
Animas Public Schools	X				153
Hondo Valley Public Schools	✓	✓			147
Maxwell Municipal Schools	X				140
Carrizozo Municipal Schools	✓		✓		138
Springer Municipal Schools	✓	✓			137
San Jon Municipal Schools	✓	✓			116
Reserve Independent Schools	X				113
Lake Arthur Municipal Schools	✓	✓			94
Des Moines Municipal Schools	X				86
Mosquero Municipal Schools	X				81
Wagon Mound Public Schools	✓		✓		67
Corona Public Schools	X				62
Roy Municipal Schools	X				58
House Municipal Schools	X				57
Vaughn Municipal Schools	✓	✓			54

Source: PED

Appendix E. PED Interventions to Address Unfinished Learning

PED has a plan with interventions designed to address unfinished learning. Following are specific examples that outline tremendous support from the legislature and federal government:

- a. School districts are using ARP ESSER funding to provide high-dosage tutoring.
- b. Professional development support and technical assistance for schools and districts that focuses on accelerating learning and MLSS at \$16 million.
- c. Supporting early literacy, early numeracy, middle school mathematics in anticipation of students needing strong foundations for success in Algebra, and work in math identity at \$8 million.
- d. Funding assessment tools close to the classroom that help educators determine skill-level mastery (Mastery Connect) at \$2 million.
- e. PED has developed an instructional scope that is aligned to strong formative assessment practices and our balanced assessment system that includes formative testlets and the interim assessment for all LEAs to use.
- f. Funding a major initiative at \$38 Million that will provide salaries, stipends, and support for a job corps, or “Educator Fellows”, designed to support teachers and enter the profession as educational assistants. This is both a workforce development/pipeline project as well as a project designed to get more adults into classrooms to help teachers with small group instruction, high dosage tutoring and targeted instruction. Often, educational assistants are key to success for master-level teachers and student differentiated instruction.
- g. Providing the learning management system Canvas to support all students, educators, and LEAs across the state and provide high quality instructional materials. Canvas also houses a collection of professional development resources for all educators across the state.
- h. PED developed a Roadmap for Accelerated Learning and Renewal for all LEAs to use that includes best practices, guidance, and resources mapped across the school year.
- i. PED launched intensive supports and scaling of family engagement statewide. Family engagement – when equitable and effective - has a proven impact on decreasing chronic absenteeism and increasing literacy rates. Programming includes four key components: leadership development; professional learning (sp. home visit training); building and sustaining school and district capacity through direct technical support and coaching from PED; ongoing professional development to include a virtual suite of family engagement training.

Appendix F. State ARP ESSER III Plans for Data System Enhancements

State	Data Systems
Alabama	Use ESSER I money to enhance the state's data reporting system
Arkansas	Provide LEAs with access to an early warning system to identify at-risk students, determine needed interventions, and address disproportionalities within student sub-populations
Connecticut	Create a research consortium to assess effects of pandemic (In ESSER I, \$2 million to expand district access to the state's data system) Devote \$16 million to support students with disabilities, including \$13 million to help districts address delayed, interrupted, or inaccessible IEP supports and services; \$2 million for reading support & \$1 million for expanded evaluation. (ESSER II)
Delaware	-Administer surveys to gather information on student connectivity, academic needs, necessary resources and supports, communication structures, and wellness and social-emotional learning -Plans to collect more qualitative data from LEAs to ascertain individual district teaching models, attendance policies, and professional development approaches -Ensure multiple functioning modes of data collection, such as universal screening data, progress monitoring data, and implementation data
DC	Invest money in accelerating improvements in data systems to collect course-level and academic data, expand access to early childhood data to support kindergarten readiness, and build technical assistance resources
Georgia	Modernize data systems and communications protocols to identify and track the academic progress, participation, and engagement of students experiencing homelessness
Hawaii	-Expand universal screeners and progress monitoring plans -Collect and monitor summer learning data, including diagnostic data, student attendance, quantitative and qualitative student performance data, and student feedback -Conduct additional analyses, such as studying the differences in achievement based on a student's primary learning model
Idaho	Use ARP ESSER funds to expand the state's statewide longitudinal data system and support data management, research, and analysis
Indiana	-Use a portion of ESSER II funding to support the modernization of a grants management system
Louisiana	Plan to provide literacy screeners and improve statewide data systems (ESSER II)
Maryland	- The MSDE will implement a new Statewide system to collect school-level fiscal data from LEAs
Massachusetts	Partner with The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to create a resource targeted at evidence-based strategies called The Academic Excellence Roadmap
Minnesota	-Expand the Kindergarten Entry Profile (KEP) -Implement data collection to evaluate the impact of ARP ESSER funds on an ongoing basis
Missouri	Upgrade its data system to ensure the availability and usability of data which will include hardware and software upgrades as well as the implementation of Ed-Fi®, Common Education Data Standards (CEDS), and School Codes for Exchange of Data (SCEDS) protocols - \$4.3 million (ESSER II) Longitudinal Data System - \$15 million (ESSER II) Assessment System Redesign
Montana	-Invest \$5.4 million in data modernization -Provide districts with access to their performance data in the GEMS site, which includes enrollment, graduation, and summative assessment data -Encourage districts to adopt an Early Warning System and offer professional development on using such systems
Nebraska	-Continue modernizing data collection to better inform teaching, learning, and equity advancements -Plans to analyze data collection strategies that effectively capture summer and afterschool program participation
Nevada	- \$150,000 to build out reporting features in the statewide student information system related to specialized instructional support personnel (school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, and library media specialists) - \$450,000 to develop an education-focused labor market data dashboard with accompanying professional development training for educators with a goal of aligning Career and Technical Education courses and pathways to local labor markets -Develop a customized data system to support gifted education compliance monitoring, professional development, data quality, and results-based accountability

State	Data Systems
New Hampshire	\$6 million (GEER I and ESSER I) to create a new state-level learning management system in collaboration with the University System of New Hampshire to support continued course access opportunities for students and demand-driven professional development for teachers
New Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Add new data metrics to capture the learning environment of every public school student and their attendance rates -Maintain a daily dashboard of operation for every school to provide updated listings of available learning models -Implement screener assessments to determine appropriate level of support each student needed to master the academic year's prerequisite skills and concepts -Implement new management systems that track benchmark and interim assessment data to inform stakeholders of education-related decisions
New Mexico	NA
North Carolina	Invest in a competency-based education platform to support accountability reform, track student performance over time and develop remediation and acceleration strategies. Provide an impact analysis of Covid-19 on public schools, students and families to identify learning gaps and guide instructional priorities \$500,000 to collect, analyze, and report data on Covid-related academic impact (ESSER II)
Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collect data on social, emotional, and mental health supports, professional development of staff on social-emotional and mental health of students, and reading support and improvement for students -Partnering with Standards Aligned System- Education Value-Added Assessment system to implement a system where districts can voluntarily submit local assessment data and receive analytics
Rhode Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand research and analysis capacity to understand the impact of Covid-19 upon students, working with the University of Rhode Island, Brown University, and Harvard University, to unearth and identify patterns, particularly for student subpopulations, and look for replicable best practices -Double-down on its commitment to providing technical assistance and training for districts to better report data to the SEA, and better access and use the data available to them
Washington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with the University of Washington this summer to review the data collected via the Covid-19 Student Survey -\$55,000 (ESSER II) for changes to school district fiscal reporting system
Wyoming	Used a data analyst to analyze and interpret state assessment data, make assessment data accessible to all stakeholders, and provide training. A second official will help districts analyze the data (ESSER II)

Source: FutureEd (2021, July 6). How States Are Using Federal Funds for Learning Recovery. Available: <https://www.future-ed.org/how-states-are-using-federal-funds-for-learning-recovery/>.