

What if....

the Taos community, working together, could change outcomes for our kids for the better?

Five years ago, [Taos School Zone](#), a collective-impact initiative that is a special project of [Taos Community Foundation](#), began meeting with and surveying teachers, nonprofit organizations, school administrators, and community members to begin to understand their perspectives on the challenges to education in Taos County. We were asked by those groups to create a collective-impact report. This document contains observations gleaned from these interactions and sets forth ideas for a different model, one that might make it easier to put students and teachers at the forefront.

Included here is an Education Snapshot of Taos County, prepared by the [Center for Community Analysis](#) at New Mexico State University, with pre-COVID baseline educational data for the county, its three school districts (Questa, Peñasco, and Taos), and state charter schools. We have also included links to supporting documents, including background information for each concept and articles by experts in the field, for those who want to look more deeply into these concepts. Additional information and input gathered from the community are also available on TSZ's website: www.schoolzonetaos.org

How do we improve the outcomes shown in the Snapshot?

One thing we know: the schools need our help.



Early Childhood Education and Family Support for Every Child

Observations:

- High-quality early childhood education is recognized as a critical foundation to learning throughout the life of a child.
- Home visiting programs, sometimes referred to as family support and coaching, help families navigate their way through parenthood and early childhood and help prevent adverse childhood experiences. The Taos County organizations that offer home visiting have the capacity to serve more families; supply outstrips the demand.
- Extremely low salaries in the early childhood field make it difficult to inspire, hire, and retain qualified, knowledgeable educators.

What if...

We, the community, understood how critical early childhood education is and created a culture where all families are encouraged, accepted, and supported, so that:

- Every family has access to a family support or home visiting program from pregnancy to age 8?
- Early childhood education supports are expected from the state and federal government and there is no stigma to seeking support—because everyone gets it?
- Early childhood workers are paid a wage that reflects the importance of their work?
- Every child arrives at kindergarten prepared and able to learn?

Where does this happen?

- Seven European countries guarantee immediate access to early childhood education at the end of parental leave.

For more information see:

<https://doi.org/10.2797/966808>

More to read:

Galinsky, E. (2020). Mind in the Making. Website: "The 7 Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs."

<https://www.mindinthemaking.org/life-skills>

Stapleton, J. (2015). The Pew Charitable Trusts. Brief: "Family Support and Coaching Programs: Crafting the Message for Diverse Stakeholders."

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2015/10/hvmessagingbrief.pdf>

Heredia-Griego, M., et al. (2021). LANL Foundation. Research Report: "The Road to Readiness: Equitable Access to Career Pathways and College Transition Supports in Northern New Mexico."

<https://www.lanlfoundation.org/sites/default/files/inline/LANLF%20Road%20to%20Readiness%20Research%20Report.pdf>

What can you and your organization do differently to improve these outcomes?
Email info@schoolzonetaos.org with your organization's ideas.

Social and Emotional Health for Every Child and Every Teacher at Every School

Observations:

- New Mexico now ranks 49th in the nation in child well-being, based on such factors as poverty, violence, neglect, and unstable home situations—all classified as adverse childhood experiences or trauma. Taos County, by and large, ranks low in child well-being, even by New Mexico standards.
- Social workers are serving multiple schools—sometimes meaning a caseload of dozens of children—and the majority of children don't have access to critically needed support and interventions.
- Teachers and school staff in Taos County are reporting high rates of frustration and hopelessness because they cannot spend their time doing what they were trained and hired to do: teaching and counseling students.

What if...

- Every teacher, every school staff member, and every community member understood the relationship between trauma and education and committed to doing everything possible to prevent and/or treat childhood trauma?
- Our school districts made behavioral health resources a top priority and provided every child and every teacher with on-demand access to dedicated mental health resources?
- Social workers spent time training older children to lead groups of younger children, thus freeing themselves up to work with the children who most need them and introducing students to the possibility of a career in mental health services?
- Kids saw themselves as learners?

Where does this happen?

- Social workers in Taos schools formerly led general group sessions in classrooms and conducted smaller groups to deal with specific issues.
- Trauma-informed education training has occurred in Taos but should be an integral part of teaching and MUST be coordinated so that all students have access.

More to read:

New Mexico Department of Health; New Mexico Public Education Department; and UNM Prevention Research Center. (2019). Survey results: "New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey: High School Survey Results 2019, Taos County."
<https://youthrisk.org/pdf/countyreports/YRRS-2019-HS-county-report-taos.pdf>

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (2021). Fast Facts: "What are adverse childhood experiences?"
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

Portell, M. (2019). Edutopia Article: "Understanding Trauma-Informed Education."
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/understanding-trauma-informed-education>

What strikes you and your organization about this report?

What didn't you know and will now act on?

Email info@schoolzonetaos.org with your thoughts.

Community and Parent Involvement and Support for Every Child's Education

Observations:

- Parent/caregiver engagement can be the single most important factor in a child's success, but many Taos parents need support to more fully engage in their children's lives and education. They need to know what support is available and accessible and not feel stigmatized by taking advantage of it.
- Mentorship—a child having just one adult involved and supportive—has been shown to make a huge difference in outcomes for kids, but mentor programs need volunteers.

What if...

- Employers—including schools—put their people first and provided flexible schedules so that parents and caregivers could support their children?
- Our governmental bodies made sure that every high-attendance public event, including pancake breakfasts, rodeos, and concerts, provided information about resources for parents?
- Every child had a trauma-informed community member available to support the child and their parents by advocating for the child and serving as a sounding board for the parents when needed?
- There were a single point of entry for people who want to help, have something to offer, and want to find a match for their skills and interests?
- Every Taosño with time on their hands volunteered to work directly (or indirectly) with children to ensure one caring adult for each child?

Where does this happen?

- In Taos, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps' successful mentor program paired teens with younger students and made a difference for both, but without sustainable funding, the program couldn't be continued.
- Oregon's [SMART reading program](#) pairs students with volunteers for twice-a-week, one-on-one reading. Participating students are 60% more likely to reach literacy benchmarks, but also build self-confidence and create important, positive relationships with community members.

More to read:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Report: "Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health."
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf

New Mexico Prevention. (2021). Research Report: "2021 NM Community Survey Summary Report".
http://www.nmprevention.org/Project_Docs/2021%20NMCS%20State%20Level%20Short%20Summary%20Report.pdf

How will this data help in evaluating your work going forward?
Email info@schoolzonetaos.org.

Excellent and Equitable Education through Leadership and Collaboration

Observations:

- Taos County is rural, agricultural, and has a total population of about 36,000 people, with—at last count—26 schools. With limited resources, we are frequently unable to take advantage of funding opportunities designed specifically for places like this. This year, we lost a potential \$3 million because districts couldn't figure out a way for the four community schools to collaborate on the funding available specifically for rural community schools.
- Perceived and expressed competition between district schools and charters—district charters and state charters—limits opportunity for all students.
- Lack of coordination between schools means both duplication of effort and inequitable access to services.
- Staff members hired for and funded for one specific function are performing other tasks, e.g., school counselors managing testing or community school site coordinators performing traffic duty or staffing the student council, contributing to inefficiency and poor morale.
- When impactful programs are funded, they often lack a sustainability plan and then disappear, limiting the continuity needed for success. This wastes time, money, and energy and demoralizes staff.

What if...

- Leadership, communication, and strategic direction from all school districts were consistent and all three districts shared resources?
- The Public Education Department and local school, nonprofit, and foundation leadership focused on outcomes for kids instead of numbers? Every nonprofit program measured its impact on kids, and every donor required it? We could quit wasting time collecting and reporting meaningless data and quit wasting resources on programs that don't change outcomes?
- An entity with a countywide vision and a long-term plan for education coordinated initiatives like community schools, after-school and summer programs, volunteers, and grantwriting, and distributed donations among all the schools in the county?

Where does this happen?

- The [ABC Partnership](#) (Albuquerque and Bernalillo County) coordinates the work of all community schools in Bernalillo County.
- Washington and Oregon have [Educational Service Districts](#) that bring together public, private, and charter schools--some as small as 10 students--to facilitate collaboration.
- Elkhart County, Indiana, formed the [Horizon Education Alliance](#) to coordinate community education efforts across their largely rural county. Many other counties nationwide do the same.
- In California, each county has an Office of Education that works to improve educational outcomes countywide.

More to read:

The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance evaluates school and nonprofit educational initiatives for impact: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Website.
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/www/WhatWeDo>

Superville, D. R. (2017). Education Weekly Article: "How Are Charters and District Schools Working Together? In Many Ways."
<https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/how-are-charters-and-district-schools-working-together-in-many-ways/2017/04>

Has your leadership team discussed the contents of this document?
Email a summary of your deliberations to info@schoolzonetaos.org.

Success for Every Child After High School

Observations:

- Many Taos County kids aren't aware of opportunities available to them.
- Good jobs that don't require a college degree—especially jobs in the trades—aren't always valued by the community.
- Participation in high school programs that give students a leg up in college—dual credit classes, for example—does not reflect school population, especially with regard to children with disabilities.
- Students' experiences after they leave school are not tracked, so we don't have a clear idea of their post high-school accomplishments.

What if...

- Every child was asked about their interests early on and then nurtured in their pursuit?
- Taos County children were exposed to different careers and trades and opportunities from an early age, for example, employers visited classrooms to talk to students about what they do, demonstrate their work, and talk about how they arrived at their career?
- Employers viewed mentoring a youth as a teaching and supporting experience, and an opportunity to develop human resources, realizing the value of the time and money spent with a worker who can grow into higher levels of work?

Where does this happen?

- [Best Practices in Career and Technical Education Expansion](#) documents successful middle-school career, technical, and agricultural education programs in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, where in a recent year 61% of middle school students signed up for at least one CTE class.
- Career exploration has happened in Taos County. For seven years, beginning in about 2005, the Taos County Chamber funded a program called the Taos Business Education Collaborative, that included job shadowing, internships and mentorships. It served Taos High School only, but the model worked well by all accounts.

More to read:

Hanover Research. (2020). Research Report: "Best Practices in Middle School Career and Technical Education Expansion."

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/CTE/Best-Practices-in-Middle-School-Career-and-Technical-Education-Expansion.pdf>

Heredia-Griego, M., et al. (2021). LANL Foundation. Research Report: "The Road to Readiness: Equitable Access to Career Pathways and College Transition Supports in Northern New Mexico."

<https://www.lanlfoundation.org/sites/default/files/inline/LANLF%20Road%20to%20Readiness%20Research%20Report.pdf>

Association for Career and Technical Education, Career Cruising. (2017). Executive Summary: "Career Exploration in Middle School: Setting Students on the Path to Success." https://www.acteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ACTE_CC_Paper_FINAL.pdf

How will your organization incorporate this information into your future work?

Email info@schoolzonetaos.org with your conclusions.



SEPTEMBER 2021

TAOS COUNTY EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

Early Childhood Baseline Data

Page 2

K-12 Baseline Data

Page 5

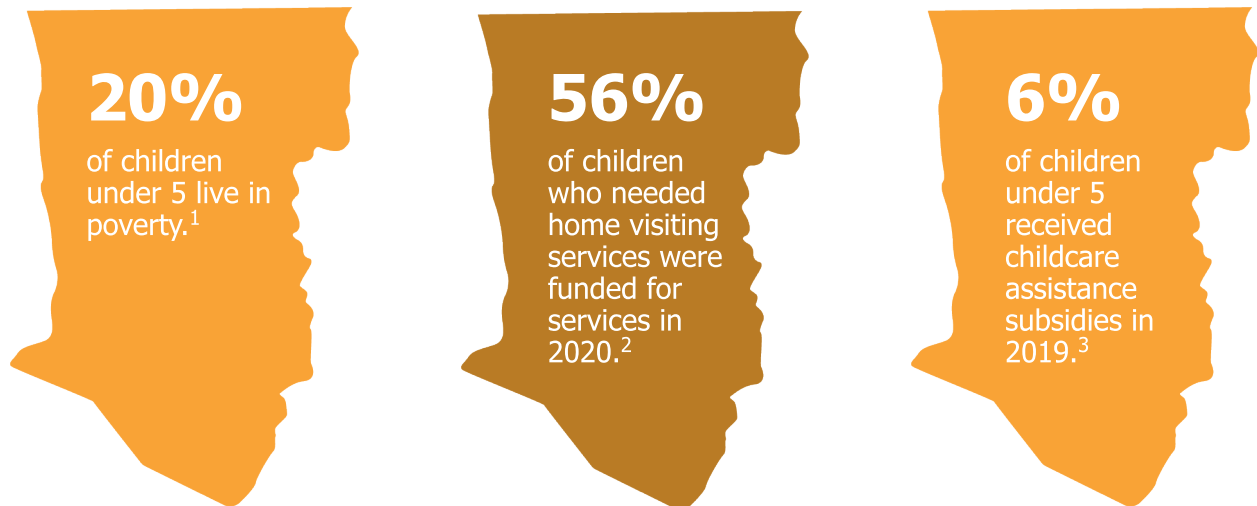
Post-Secondary and Career Baseline Data

Page 15

Early Childhood

CHILDREN ARE BORN INTO HEALTHY HOMES

Accessing early childhood programs and services is important to a child's well-being. Within Taos County, 1 in 5 children under the age of 5 lives in poverty. In 2019, 6% of children under age 5 received childcare subsidies. In 2020, just over half (56%) of the estimated number of children needing home visiting services were funded for services.



What are the **benefits of home visiting**?

- positive impact on reducing child abuse and neglect
- improves birth outcomes such as decreased pre-term births and low-birth-weight babies
- improves school readiness for children
- increases high school graduation rates for mothers participating in the program³

49

children under 5 years old are victims of child abuse or neglect in Taos County every year, on average.⁴



Notes: 1. MOE: $\pm 8\%$ American Community Survey (ACS) 2. "Need" estimated using the Universal Method defined by the New Mexico Early Childhood Development Partnerships (NMECDP): The estimated demand for home visiting is calculated as 80% of annual live births plus 40% of previous year births, based on the assumption that, given the opportunity, 80% of parents would utilize home visiting for the first 15 months of their child's life. https://www.nmeecd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NMECDP_NeedsAssessment_2020.07.20.pdf 3. National Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/home-visiting-improving-outcomes-for-children635399078.aspx> 4. Between 2007 and 2015 there were 441 reported victims of child abuse under 5 in Taos County, which averages to 49 per year.

Sources: NM Children, Youth, and Families Department and the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative, UNM Cradle to Career Policy Institute and the Home Visiting Collaborative, National Conference of State Legislatures, The New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department, New Mexico Department of Health Indicator-Based Information System, US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year statistics 2018.



CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL

Approximately 1,453 children under 5 years old live in Taos County. Of those, 34% get funded for free or subsidized, evidence-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. Research shows children who attend high-quality ECE programs are:

- less likely to be placed in special education
- less likely to be retained in a grade
- more likely to graduate from high school⁵

Children in Taos County **Funded for ECE**, 2020:



34%

of children under 5 years old get funded for evidence-based, free or subsidized ECE programs⁶

498 children funded

955 children not funded

What if we **break this down by age?**

Only 12% of children 2 years old and younger get funded for ECE programs compared to 65% of 3 and 4 years old. This illustrates a need for more funding directed towards the youngest of our children. The large percentage of 3 and 4 years old funded for ECE is mostly attributed to the increase in New Mexico PreK programs in recent years.



**Only
12%**

of children 2 years old and younger are funded for ECE.



**Whereas
65%**

of 3 and 4-year-old children are funded for ECE.

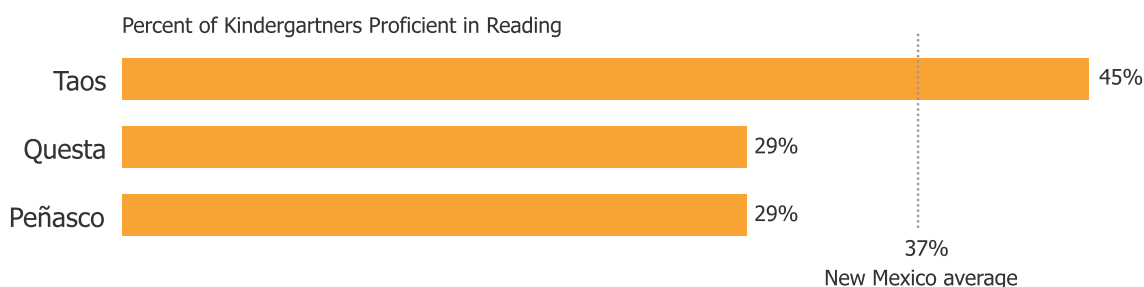
Notes: 5. McCoy, Yoshikawa, Ziol-Guest et. al. "Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium and Long-Term Educational Outcomes," Educational Researcher. 6. "Evidence-based" programs include; Early Head Start, Head Start, subsidized licensed child care, and NM PreK programs. Counts are not unduplicated; children may occupy spots in more than one funded program. Analysis by the Center for Community Analysis at NMSU.

Sources: Legislative Finance Committee, the NM Department of Early Childhood Education, the New Mexico Public Education Department, and the NM Department of Health.

CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL

Research shows that language and reading skills learned in the early years are a solid predictor of a child's later success in language arts and mathematics.⁷ Kindergartners in Taos Municipal School District are 8 percentage points more proficient in early literacy skills than the average student in New Mexico, based on DIBELS test scores. Students in Questa and Peñasco School Districts sit below the state average by 16 percentage points.

Percent of **Kindergartners Proficient in Reading** by School District, 2019:



Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, Webfiles 2019, DIBELS

THE ECE WORKFORCE IS SUPPORTED

Annual **Median Wages for Early Childhood Educators** in Taos County, 2019:



What is a median?

The median divides a population in half. Approximately half of workers earn a wage less than the given median, while the other half earn more than that. The median provides a better idea of a typical worker's salary than the average, which tends to be inflated by a few top earners with very high salaries.

Notes: 7. Pace, Alper, Burchinal, et al. "Measuring Success: Within and cross-domain predictors of academic and social trajectories in elementary school, Early Childhood Research Quarterly." Median wages for childcare and preschool teachers are from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions 2019. Median wage for kindergarten teachers was calculated from salaries for first-year teachers in county school districts.

Sources: Legislative Education Study Committee Report and Data Reference Guide 2020.

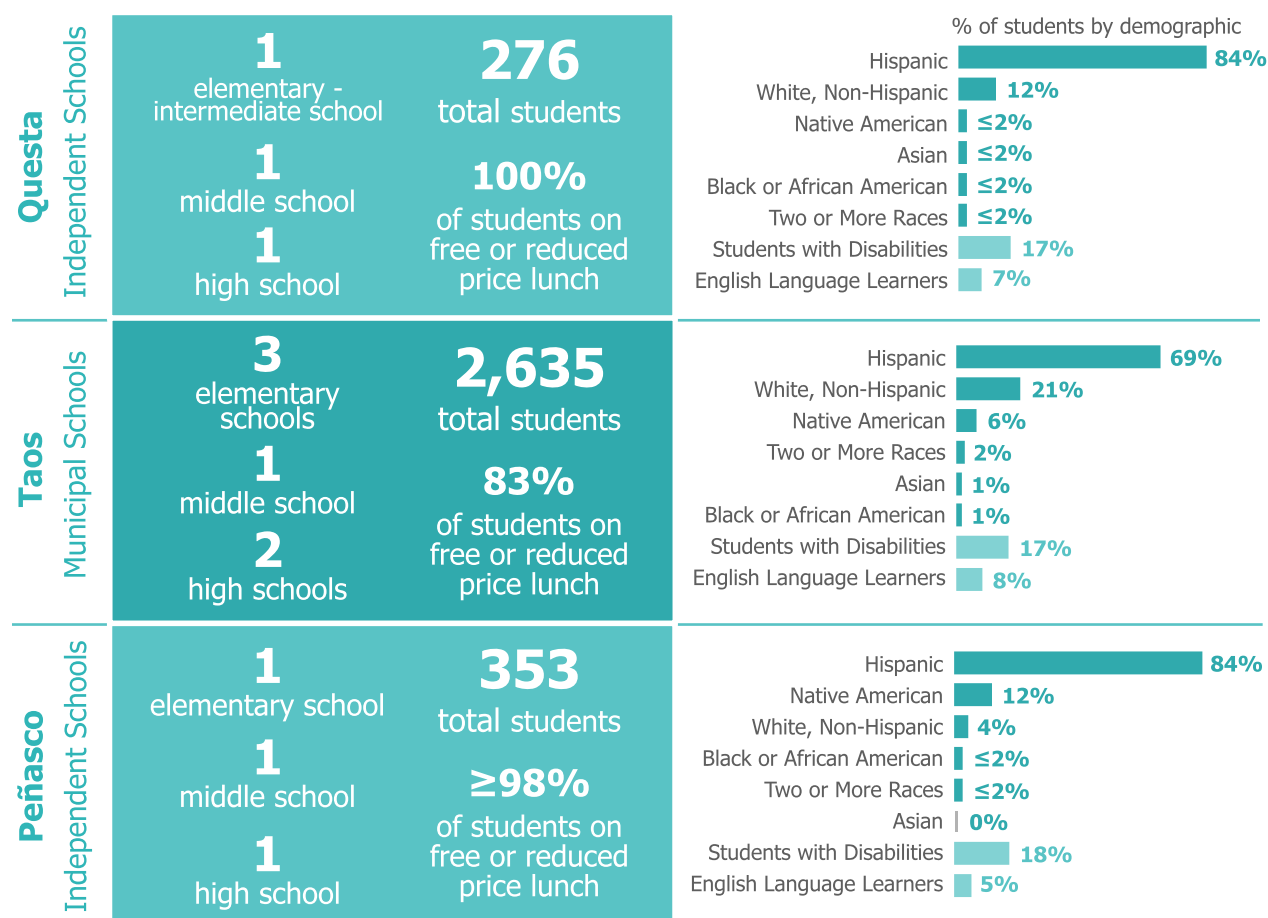
K-12 Success

PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN TAOS COUNTY

Taos County is home to 3 public school districts and 7 public charter schools that serve an area of 2,203 square miles. Approximately 3,431 students in grades K-12 attend public schools. The county is also home to an elementary school at Taos Pueblo that lies one mile north of Taos, 6 public charter schools in Taos, and 1 charter school in Questa.

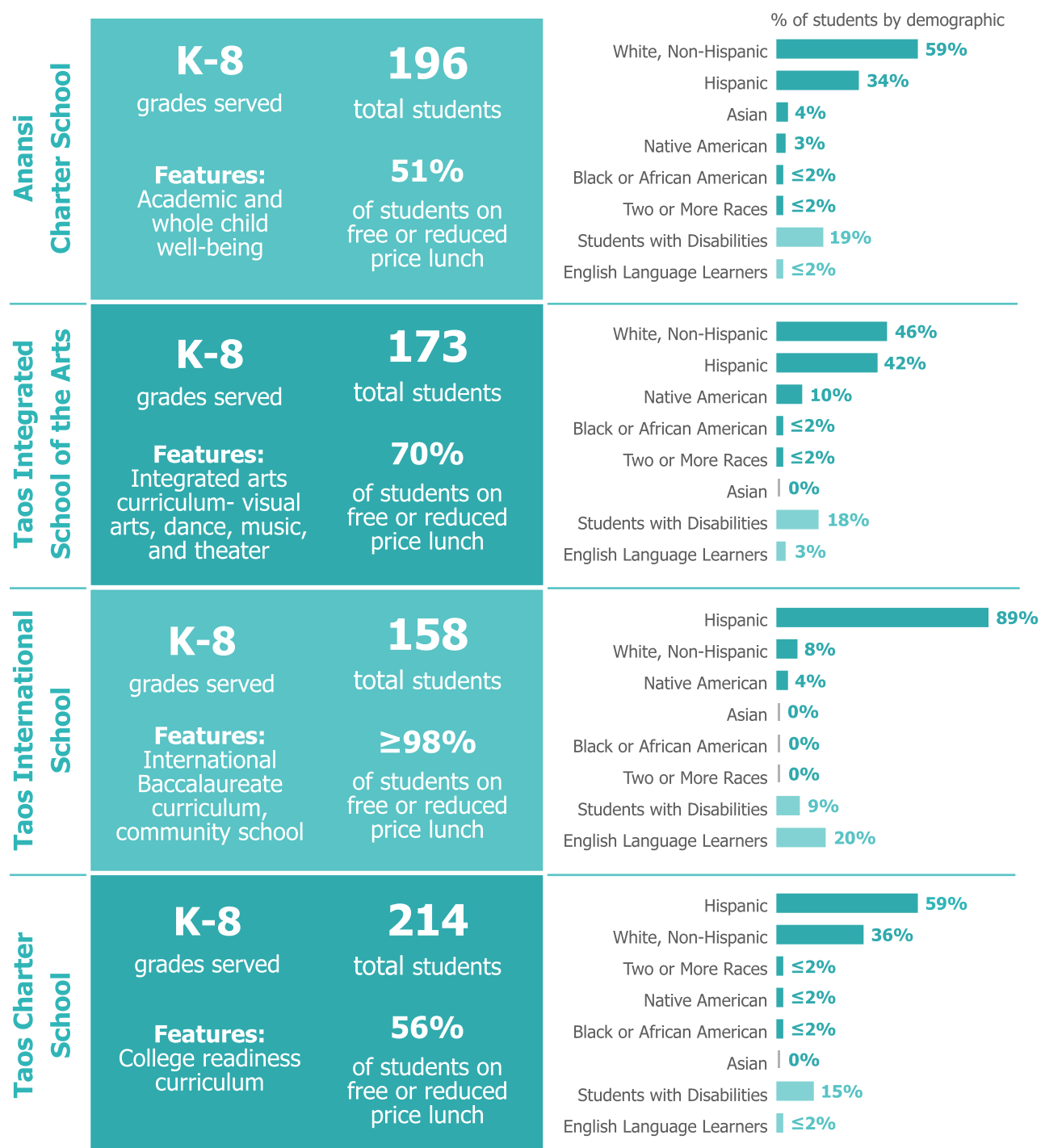
Taos School Zone was instrumental in the development of four community schools: Enos Garcia Elementary, Vista Grande Charter High School, Taos International Charter School, and Peñasco Elementary. All received \$150,000 implementation grants from NMPED to support becoming community schools, an evidence-based strategy for incorporating social services and enrichment programs to support the whole child and their family.

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS, 2019-20



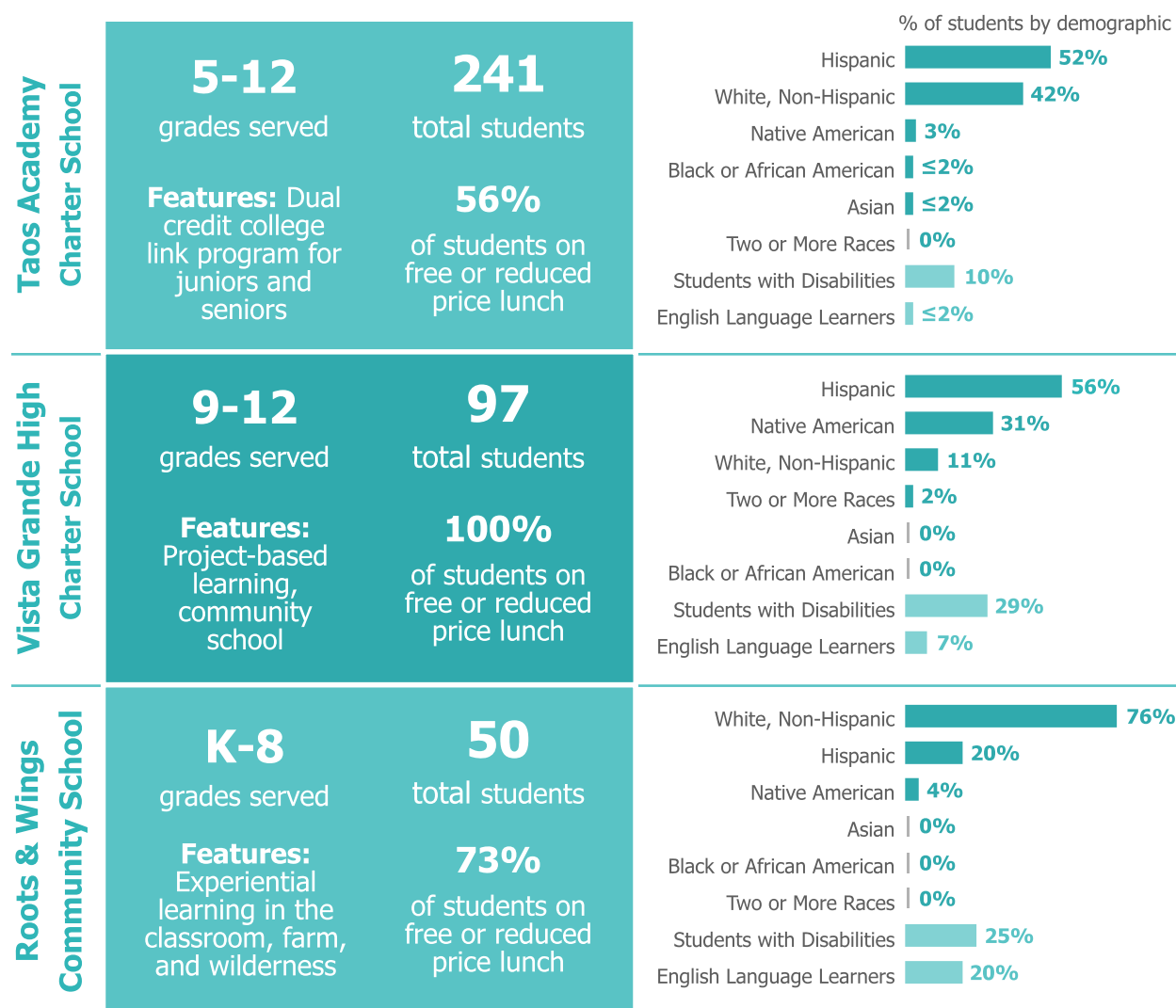
Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, SY 2019-20 and New Mexico Public Education Department. Note: Categories represented by ≤2% or ≥98% are masked to protect student privacy.

CHARTER SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS, 2019-20



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, SY 2019-20 and New Mexico Public Education Department. Note: Categories represented by ≤2% or ≥98% are masked to protect student privacy.

CHARTER SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS, 2019-20 (cont.)



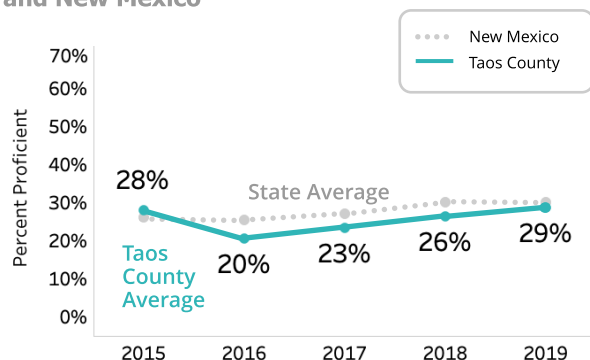
Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, SY 2019-20 and New Mexico Public Education Department and school websites.
 Note: Categories represented by ≤2% or ≥98% are masked to protect student privacy.

3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY

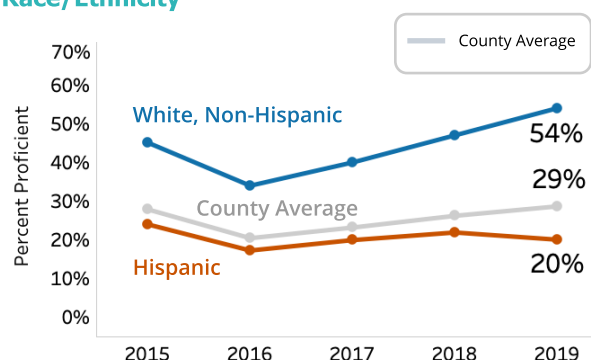
Reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade is an important developmental milestone for a child's education. It is considered the final year children are "learning to read" and will subsequently begin "reading to learn." Research shows students not proficient by the end of 3rd grade were four times more likely not to finish high school than students proficient at reading.⁸

Percent of **3rd-Grade Students Proficient in Reading** (based on PARCC scores):

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency in Taos County and New Mexico

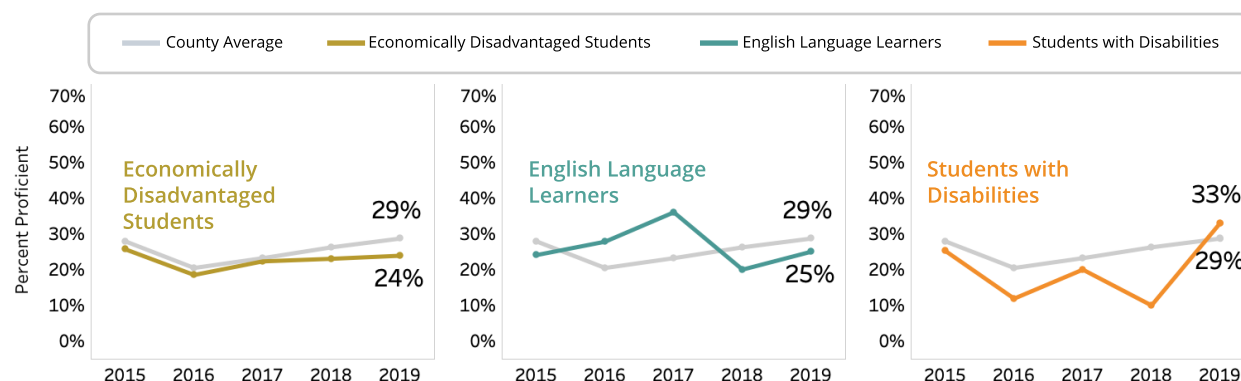


3rd Grade Reading Proficiency in Taos County by Race/Ethnicity*



*Insufficient data available for Native American, Asian, Black or African American, and Multiracial students.

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency in Taos County by Other Demographics*:



*Note: To protect student privacy when enrollment numbers are small, exact percentages are not available for some years. All reported percentages for Taos County represent the maximum possible proficiency rate, but **the true proficiency rate may be less than or equal to the reported number for certain years.**

Notes: 8. National Conference of State Legislatures

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx> Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, Webfiles 2019 and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

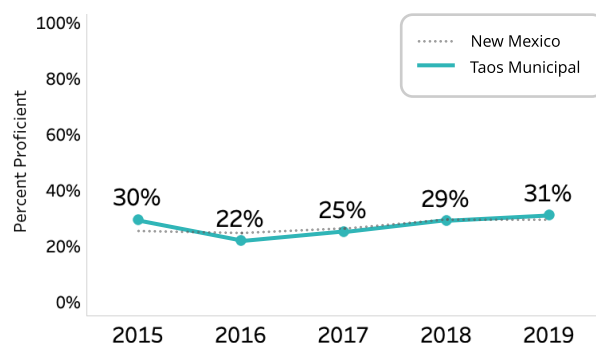


3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

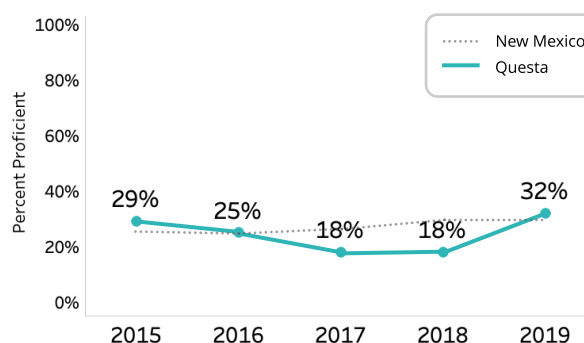
In Taos Municipal Schools, 3rd-grade reading proficiency follows the same trends as the state. Questa Independent Schools showed a slight decline in reading proficiency from 2016-2018 but reached a high of 32% in 2019. Peñasco Independent Schools consistently performed below the state average.

Percent of **3rd-Grade Students Proficient in Reading**, by District:

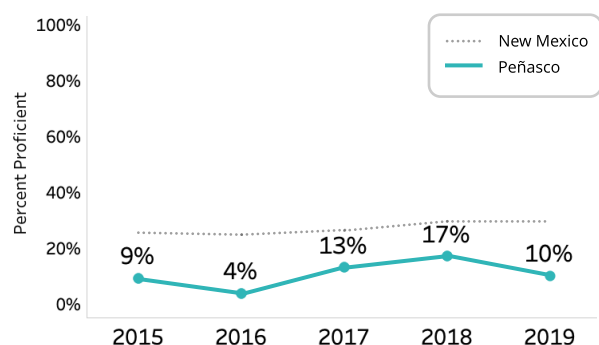
Taos Municipal Schools: 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Questa Independent Schools: 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Peñasco Independent Schools: 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Charter Schools: 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency*

73% of 3rd graders proficient in reading at **Anansi Charter School**, 2019

50% of 3rd graders proficient in reading at **Taos Municipal Charter School**, 2019

*Insufficient data available for remaining charter schools.

*Note: To protect student privacy when enrollment numbers are small, exact percentages are not available for some years. All reported percentages for individual school districts represent the maximum possible proficiency rate, but **the true proficiency rate may be less than or equal to the reported number for certain years.**

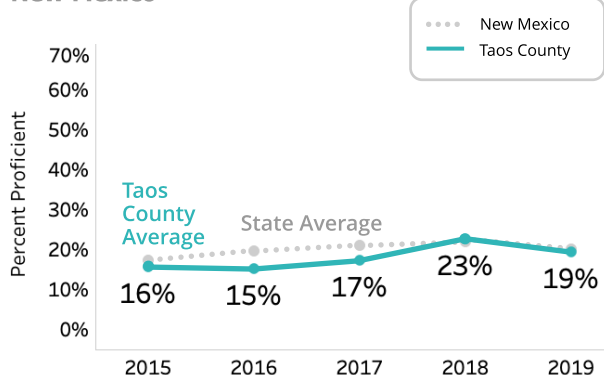
Source: New Mexico Public Education Department, Webfiles 2019 and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

8TH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY

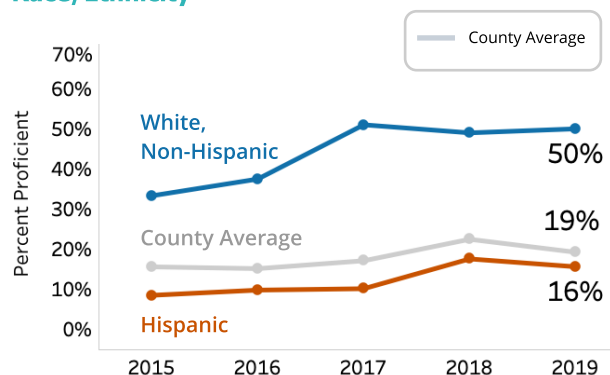
"Eighth-grade academic achievement displays a stronger relationship with eleventh- or 12th-grade ACT scores, and therefore college and career readiness, than does any other factor—more than students' family background, high school coursework, or high school grade point average."⁹

Percent of **8th-Grade Students Proficient in Math** (based on PARCC scores):

8th Grade Math Proficiency in Taos County and New Mexico

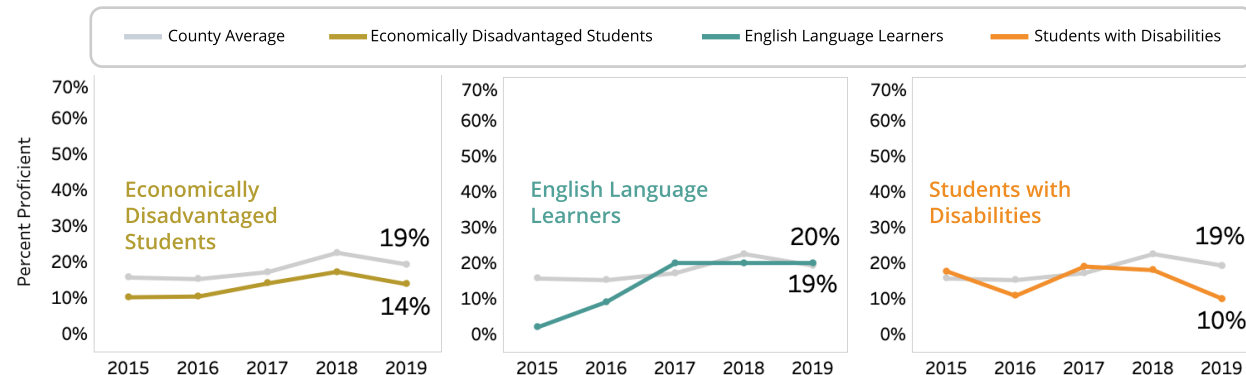


8th Grade Math Proficiency in Taos County by Race/Ethnicity*



*Insufficient data available for Native America, Asian, Black or African American, and Multiracial students.

8th Grade Math Proficiency in Taos County by Other Demographics*



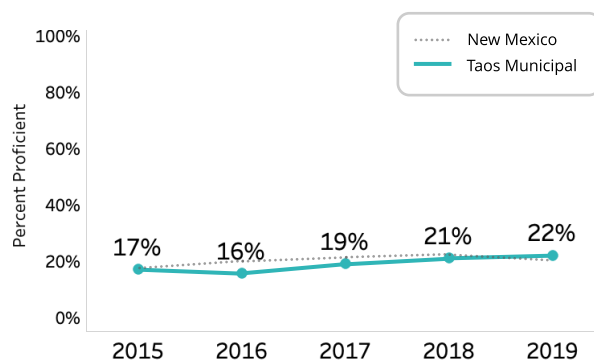
*Note: To protect student privacy when enrollment numbers are small, exact percentages are not available for some years. All reported percentages for Taos County represent the maximum possible proficiency rate, but **the true proficiency rate may be less than or equal to the reported number for certain years.**

8TH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

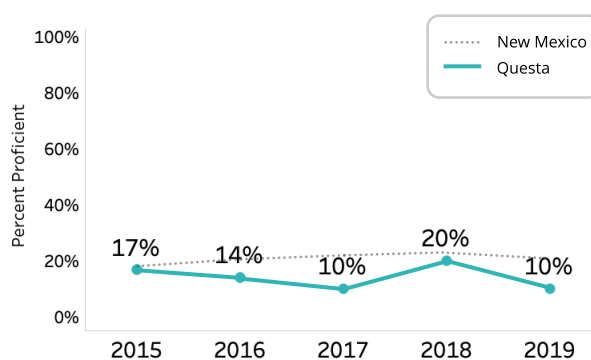
Eighth-grade students in Taos Municipal Schools have consistently followed roughly the same upward trend in math proficiency rates as the rest of the state, with an increase of 5% between 2015 and 2019. Due to smaller class sizes, trends are much harder to detect for Questa Independent Schools and Peñasco Independent Schools as proficiency rates can fluctuate wildly between years.

Percent of **8th-Grade Students Proficient in Math**, by District:

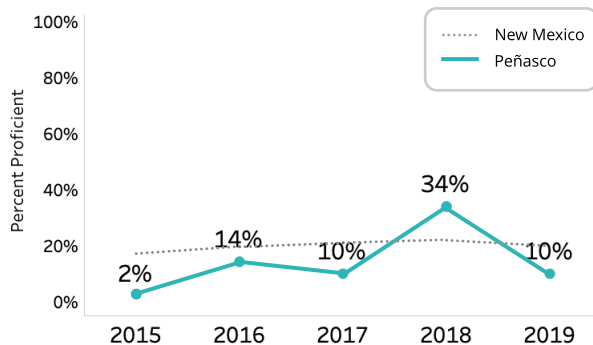
Taos Municipal Schools: 8th Grade Math Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Questa Independent Schools: 8th Grade Math Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Peñasco Independent Schools: 8th Grade Math Proficiency* Compared to State Levels



Charter Schools: 8th Grade Math Proficiency*

53% of 8th graders proficient in math at **Taos Academy**, 2019

52% of 8th graders proficient in math at **Anansi Charter School**, 2019

50% of 8th graders proficient in math at **Taos Municipal Charter School**, 2019

*Insufficient data available for remaining charter schools.

*Note: To protect student privacy when enrollment numbers are small, exact percentages are not available for some years. All reported percentages for individual school districts represent the maximum possible proficiency rate, but **the true proficiency rate may be less than or equal to the reported number for certain years.**

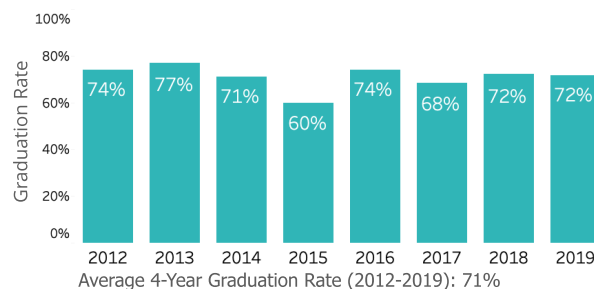
Source: New Mexico Public Education Department.

STUDENTS GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL

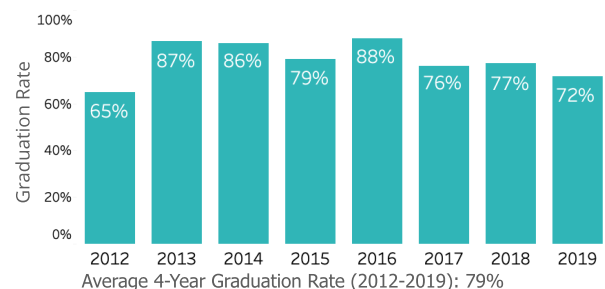
In 2019, the statewide high school graduation rate in New Mexico was 75%. Within Taos County, the 2012-2019 graduation rates have been lowest on average for Taos Municipal Schools and highest for Taos Academy. Due to small class sizes, graduation rates are quite variable among the Questa and Peñasco school districts, as well as Vista Grande High and Taos Academy. For example, in 2019, there were only 27 seniors enrolled within Questa Independent Schools compared to 192 seniors in Taos Municipal Schools.

4-Year [High School Graduation Rates](#), by District:

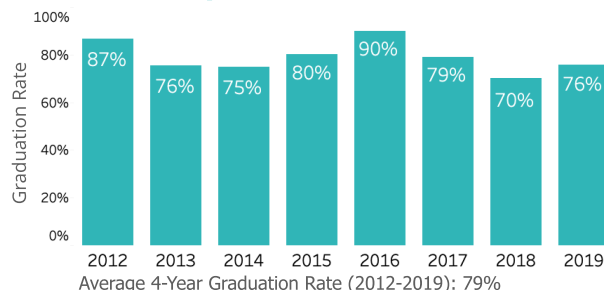
Taos Municipal Schools



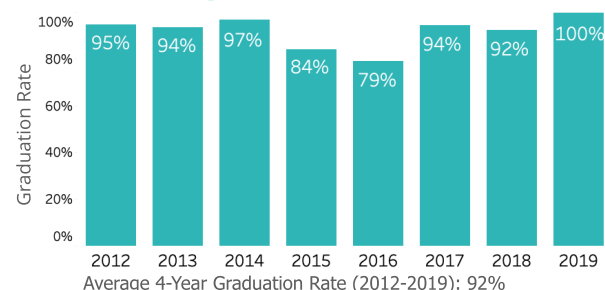
Questa Independent Schools



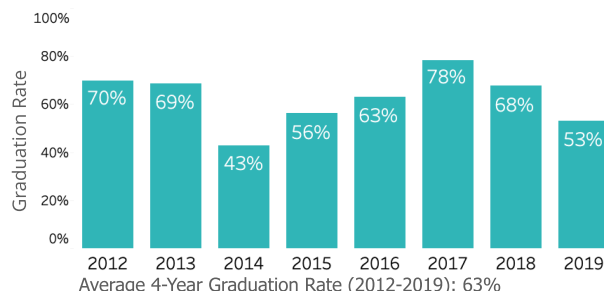
Peñasco Independent Schools



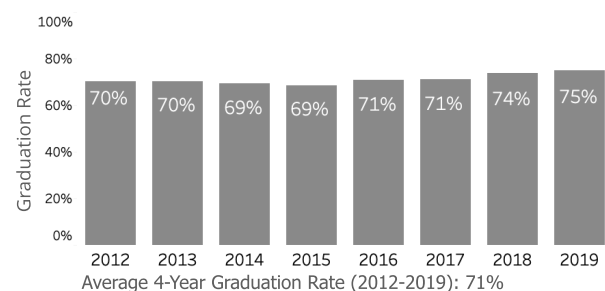
Taos Academy Charter School



Vista Grande High Charter School



New Mexico Statewide



Note: Graduation rates represent the percentage of students from a given cohort who have graduated within 4 years of entering high school, after adjusting for any of those who have moved or transferred schools. Average Graduation Rates are calculated strictly as the mean of the annual graduation rates, without accounting for differing class sizes (non-weighted).

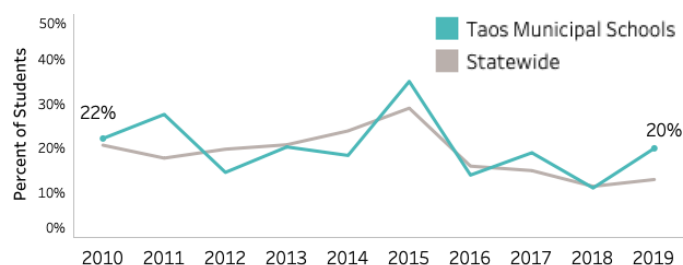
Source: New Mexico Public Education Department.

NON-GRADUATES AND DISCONNECTED YOUTH

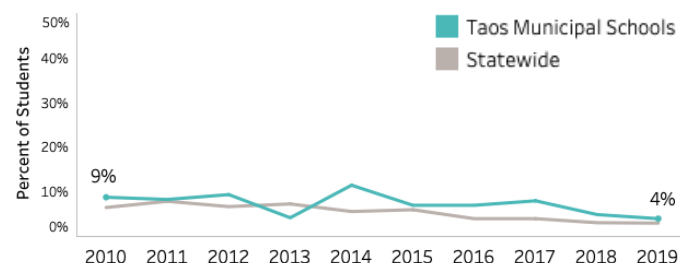
Non-graduating high school students from Taos Municipal Schools have followed similar trends compared to the rest of the state over the past 10 years. Most non-graduates either drop out or cannot be (or are not) tracked. In recent years, the proportion of students who continue enrollment past the 4th year has increased. Data is unavailable for Peñasco and Questa school districts.

Outcomes of **Non-Graduates in Taos Municipal Schools** and New Mexico, by Cohort Year:

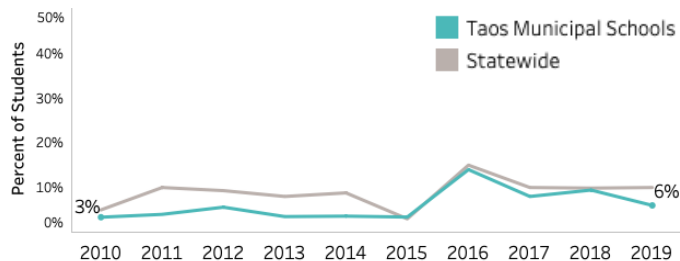
Percent of all Enrolled Students who Dropped Out or whose Status is Unknown:



Percent of all Enrolled Students who Exited with Intent to Get a GED or Other Credential:



Percent of all Enrolled Students who Continued Enrollment Past 4th Year:



Note: Percents are calculated based on all students ever enrolled in each school. Each student counts once at each school attended. Students who completed coursework but did not pass an exit exam are excluded from these graphs; fewer than 10 students in Taos Municipal Schools fit this category each year. Due to small class sizes, data is unavailable for Peñasco and Questa school districts to protect student privacy.

Percent of **Disconnected Youth** in Taos County, 2015-2019:



18%
of those aged 16 to 19 are neither enrolled in school nor working.

What does Disconnected Youth mean?

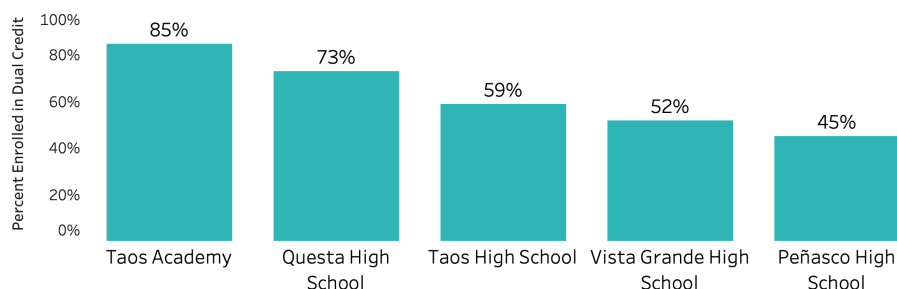
Disconnected youth are young people who are neither working nor in school. Some struggle to stay in school because they lack educational support or have faced personal challenges. Others may lack the skills required by the job market but are not enrolled in further education or training for financial or other unidentified reasons.

Sources: New Mexico Public Education Department, US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates 2019, and the Opportunity Nation website: <https://opportunitynation.org/disconnected-youth>

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Dual Credit (DC) courses allow students to earn simultaneous high school and college credit. Research has shown that students who take DC courses graduate from high school at a higher rate than their peers, require less first-semester remediation in college, and are more likely to enroll in college and earn a degree.¹⁰ These courses have been a popular method to increase college access for traditionally under-served students. However, gaps in access to DC are common.¹¹ Possible obstacles to enrollment include grade-point average requirements, lack of transportation to post-secondary institutions, lack of internet access, and other common opportunity gap factors.

Percentage of students from the 2018 cohorts who **Participated in Dual Credit**, by School:



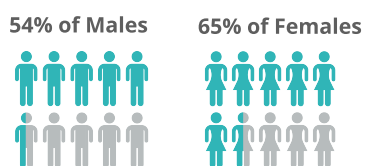
Demographic Spotlight: **Taos High School** Dual Credit (DC) Enrollment, 2018 cohorts

Taos High School, the largest high school in the county, displays gaps in access to dual credit opportunities common to large high schools.

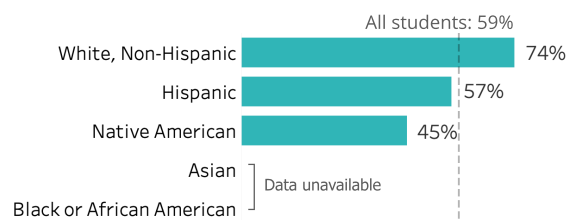


Currently, there is not enough data available to determine whether other schools in Taos County follow similar trends.

DC Enrollment by Gender, Taos HS:



DC Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, Taos HS:



DC Enrollment by Other Demographics, Taos HS:

50%

of **Economically Disadvantaged** students were enrolled in DC.

47%

of **English Language Learners** were enrolled in DC.

35%

of **Students with Disabilities** were enrolled in DC.

Note: Data for some subgroups are not provided, possibly due to low population counts which require the data to be masked for student privacy. However, missing subgroup participation rates may contribute to the overall school average. Sources: 10. Rodríguez, Highes, & Belfield: Using Dual Enrollment to Enhance Career and Technical Bridging College and Careers: Education Pathways; 11. Pierson & Hodara: Expanding Underrepresented Students' Access to and Enrollment in Dual-Credit Courses and New Mexico Public Education Department College and Career Readiness files FY18.

Post-Secondary & Career

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In 2018, over one-fourth of Taos County residents aged 18-24 were enrolled in college or graduate school (including public and private schools). Females aged 18-24 within Taos County were almost twice as likely as their male counterparts to be enrolled. Enrollment at the University of New Mexico (UNM) Taos branch decreased by 35% from 2016 to 2020. (Similar trends were seen across UNM branches. At the main UNM campus in Albuquerque, enrollment dropped by 18% from 2016 to 2020.)

Percent of Taos County Residents Aged 18-24 **Enrolled in College or Graduate School**, 2015-2019:

28%

of residents aged 18-24 are enrolled in college or graduate school.



21%

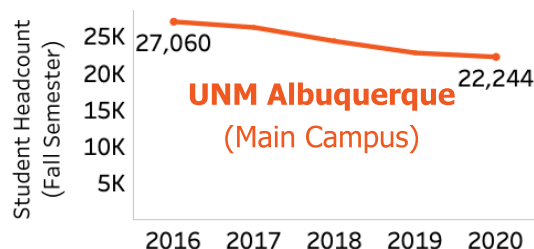
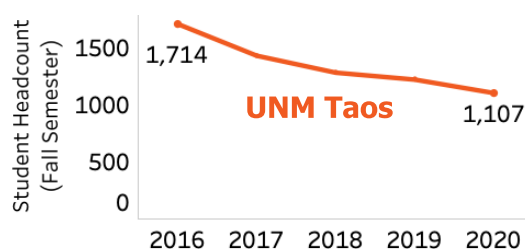
of all college-aged males (18-24) are enrolled in college or graduate school.



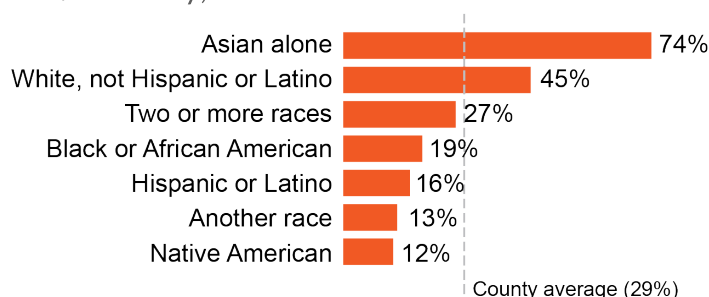
38%

of all college-aged females (18-24) are enrolled in college or graduate school.

Enrollment Trends at UNM Taos and UNM Albuquerque, All Students, 2016-2020:



Population over 25 years old with a **Bachelor's Degree or Higher** within Taos County, by Race/Ethnicity, 2015-2019:



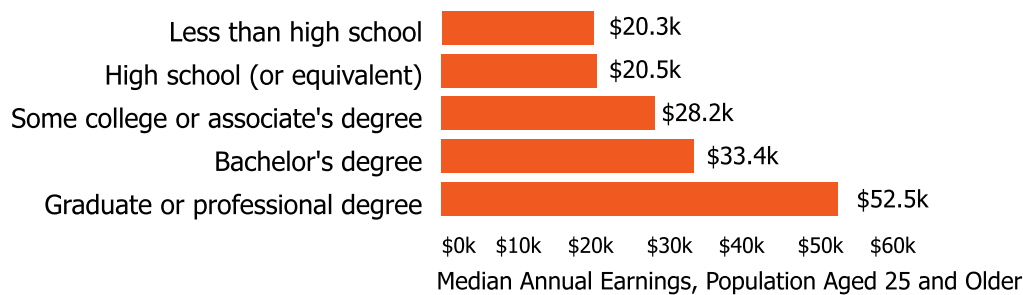
79%

of high schoolers in Taos County plan to go to college or some other school after high school.¹²

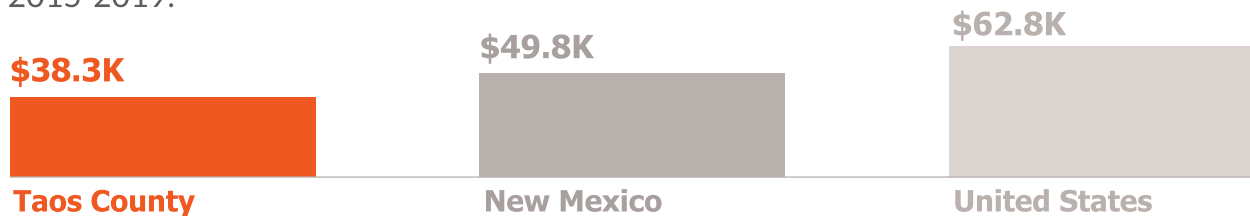
Notes: UNM student headcounts include students of all degree levels (undergraduate and graduate). Native American includes Alaska Natives. Sources: US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates 2019, the University of New Mexico Office of Institutional Analytics, and 12. New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey, Taos County, Grades 9-12, 2019

MEDIAN EARNINGS ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Median Annual Earnings by Educational Attainment for Population Aged 25 Years and Older, Taos County, 2019:

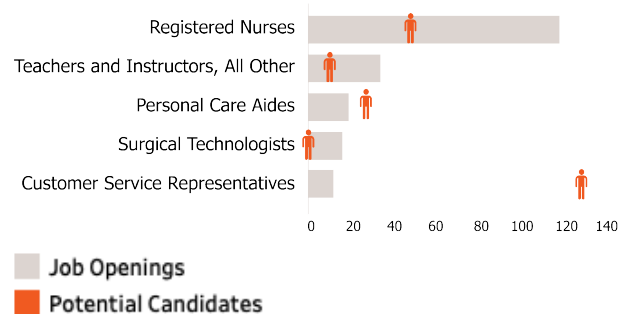


Median Annual Household Income in Taos County, New Mexico, and the United States, 2015-2019:

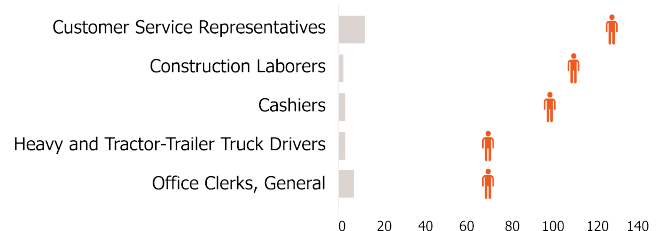


RATIO OF JOBS TO CANDIDATES

Top 5 Careers With Job Openings in Taos County, July 2021:



Top 5 Careers Sought by Job Candidates in Taos County, July 2021:



Notes: To view an interactive version of this graph visit:

<https://cca.nmsu.edu/interactive-data-dashboards/ratio-of-jobs-to-candidates-taos/>

Sources: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), Economic Research & Analysis Bureau, and US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates 2019.

Taos

County is home to many different kinds of people. Although we can be fractious at times, one value we all share is that we want our children to thrive—all of them. Education can bring us together as a community. Every child has to have equal access to the tools they need to thrive and we all have to work together to make that happen.

Our community, our kids, and our future **depend on it.**

Taos School Zone

Linda Warning, Chair
Laurie Mitchell Dunn, Vice Chair
John and Janet Mockovciak
Eleanor Romero
Julie Turner
Helen Forte, Ex Officio
Catherine Horsey, Coordinator



With support from The Daniels Fund, Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation, and Taos Community Foundation.

Collective impact cohort meetings were facilitated by Janie Corinne, M.P.H., Personal and Public Health Consultant. Thanks also to the i2i Institute, Mary Passaglia, and the Taos School Zone teacher support committee. Regina Nippert of the Budd Center at Southern Methodist University provided early guidance to Taos School Zone. Jeff Baker provided the cover photograph of Taos Mountain. We particularly acknowledge and appreciate the partnership with the Center for Community Analysis at New Mexico State University.

And to all the teachers, administrators, nonprofit leaders, volunteers, and elected officials who have educated us in the last five years: thank you for the work you do every day in our community.

What if...

Your leadership team spent 30 minutes discussing the Taos County Education Snapshot and how you could incorporate it into your work?

We are asking you to do just that and send a summary of your conclusions to info@schoolzonetaos.org.

We will aggregate the information and acknowledge your contribution in a future issue of Taos News.

Information Sources Used for This Report:

- Taos County Education Snapshot: 2021, Center for Community Analysis, publicly available data from a variety of sources
- Nonprofit network discussions from past four years
- TMS teacher/staff surveys from past two years
- Community school site coordinator conversations
- Six collective-impact focus group meetings: early childhood, K-12, and post-secondary/career

Individual Participants:

This work was informed by conversations with community members from the following groups; however, the opinions contained in this document are the opinions of Taos School Zone only.

- Bond Plumbing/Valverde Energy
- Bridges Project for Education
- Holy Cross Medical Center
- Paso a Paso Early Childhood Network
- Peñasco Independent School District
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- The Salamander Company
- Taos Alive
- Taos County Chamber of Commerce
- Taos Community Foundation
- Taos Day School
- Taos Education and Career Center
- Taos HIVE
- Taos Municipal Schools
- Taos Pueblo Health & Community Services
- Taos School Zone
- Taos Ski Valley
- UNM – Taos
- Vida del Norte Coalition

Nonprofits that participated in Nonprofit Network meetings:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Bridges Project for Education
- DreamTree Project
- Embudo Valley Tutoring Association
- Girls Scouts of New Mexico – Trails
- Harwood Museum
- HEART of Taos
- Holy Cross Medical Center
- Imagination Library of Taos County
- Millicent Rogers Museum
- National Dance Institute
- New Life Pregnancy Center
- Oo-Oo-Nah Art and Cultural Center
- Peñasco Elementary School
- Puppet Theater Los Titiriteros
- Questa Creative Council
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Share NM
- STEMarts
- Taos Academy
- Taos Alive
- Taos Behavioral Health
- Taos Center for the Arts
- Taos Charter School
- Taos Community Foundation
- Taos Education & Career Center @UNM-Taos
- Taos International School
- Taos Land Trust
- Taos United
- Three Rivers Education Foundation
- TMS – Enos Garcia Elementary
- TMS – Taos High School
- True Kids 1
- TWIRL Taos
- UNM – Taos
- Vista Grande Charter School
- Wumaniti Earth Native Sanctuary
- Youth Heartline