

Recommendations to improve Education

Otero County Healthcare Services Department

Full report available at: <https://www.co.otero.nm.us/374/Community-Health-Assessment>



“Policies that set kids up for success – in education and in life generally – are smart strategies for reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. More education leads to higher earnings that can provide access to healthy food, safer homes, and better health care. And policies in communities can help put children on track for better health and prosperity by strengthening schools, job opportunities, economic growth, safe and affordable housing, and transportation”

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2015¹

Education

- Education is a community responsibility; elected officials, school administrators, teachers, parents, families, and other community members all have a role to play in supporting quality educational opportunities across the lifespan
- In New Mexico, the statewide 4-year graduation rate was **73.9%** in 2018
- Nationwide, students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, sexual and gender minority students, and students in foster care are less likely to graduate in four years

On-time High School Graduation by District, 2018

On-time high school graduation: Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, & Tularosa School Districts**					
4-year Graduation Rates by District, 2018 cohort: Overall and by Sex, Disability status, and English Learner status					
	Overall	Female	Male	Students with disabilities	English learners
Alamogordo Public Schools*	80.5%	82.4%	78.8%	70.4%	66.8%
Cloudcroft Public Schools	91.6%	99.0%	86.4%	***	***
Tularosa Public Schools	69.1%	75.5%	65.8%	53.4%	***

On-time high school graduation: Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, & Tularosa School Districts**			
4-year Graduation Rates by District, 2018 cohort by Military, Housing, and Economic status			
	Active Duty	Experiencing Homelessness	Economically Disadvantaged
Alamogordo Public Schools*	92.2%	65.3%	74.7%
Cloudcroft Public Schools	***	***	85.0%
Tularosa Public Schools	***	***	68.7%

On-time high school graduation: Alamogordo, Cloudcroft, & Tularosa School Districts**					
4-year Graduation Rates by District, 2018 cohort by Ethnicity and by Race**					
	Hispanic	Black	Native American	Asian	Caucasian
Alamogordo Public Schools*	77.6%	79.3%	***	***	82.9%
Cloudcroft Public Schools	***	***	***	***	90.2%
Tularosa Public Schools	81.6%	***	48.5%	***	79.0%

*In some cases, school-level data is available for some student groups; only district-level data is included here.

**Graduation data were obtained from the New Mexico Public Education Department and are available [here](#).

***Data not available for student subgroups

Scientifically supported strategies to improve education

- Recommended strategies to increase on-time graduation rates in NM include tailored support for vulnerable students, support for “**Community Schools**” that provide services shown to increase academic performance (e.g., school-based health centers, classes for parents, after-school programming), reducing class sizes, revisiting “zero-tolerance” policies to keep youth in school, and raising compensation for teachers, administrators, and support staff²
- Universal early childhood education programs including Early Head Start, universal pre-K, and pre-school programs with family support services are vital in ensuring a healthy start for all young children
- Scientifically supported strategies to improve **high school graduation rates** include:
 - Alternative high schools
 - Integrated Career & Technical Education and/or Career Academies
 - Mentoring programs and support services for students and families
 - “Community Schools” that build on community assets and prioritize a shared vision for student and school success³



Community Schools create conditions necessary for all students to thrive. Community schools promote health and educational equity, and improve student, family, and community outcomes.

Prioritizing health, education, and equity: School-Based Health Centers

- **School-based health centers (SBHCs)** are recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) to support health equity⁴
- Improved educational outcomes include school performance, grade promotion, & high school completion
- SBHC’s also increase delivery of vaccinations and other recommended preventive services, increase contraceptive use among sexually active young women, and increase prenatal care and birth weight
- SBHC’s lower asthma morbidity, emergency department & hospital admissions, other health risks & behaviors

Recommendations based on evidence, community input, and priorities

- Support specific recommended strategies to increase *on-time high school graduation*, especially for groups with lower graduation rates
- Support the “*100% Community Otero*” initiative through local policy and funding⁵
- Align local, state, and federal funding resources to *invest in Community Schools*
- Promote *college, career, and continuing education* offered locally through NMSU–A (including Pathways and Career Education–PACE), Otero County Extension, and dual credit and career programs through local school districts



Sources: ¹[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2015](#); ²[Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019](#); ³[RWJF, What works for Health](#); ⁴[The Community Guide, 2015](#); ⁵[NM 100% Community Initiative](#)