

Transforming the New Mexico High School Experience

An Approach Grounded in Research



In New Mexico, we value young people as assets to their communities. High school transformation has the power to change the experience and outcomes for our young people, resulting in healthier and more prosperous communities. New Mexico's future depends on innovative ways to keep young people connected to their communities, engaged in school, and prepared for future career opportunities. The time is now to leverage current investments in our greatest asset – our young people. This will improve youth outcomes, expand college and career opportunities, build local economies, and strengthen our communities for generations to come.

This synthesis document elevates the shared recommendations across six research reports, listed below, produced from 2021 through 2023 to guide a cohesive New Mexico career-and-college transformation framework.



Research-Based Recommendations Aligned to the Transformation Framework



Aligned Systems and Infrastructure

- Coordinate and Fund Comprehensive Career Readiness Structures
- Incentivize and Support Seamless Partnerships
- Build and Develop Talent Pipeline to Support Career-and-College Readiness Programs



Academics Integrated with Career

- Align Graduation Requirements and Academics to Career Readiness
- Expand Access and Support for High-Quality Work-Based Learning



Culturally Responsive Instruction & Personalized Supports

- Cultivate Community Engagement and Public Will Building
- Build on Assets with Rigorous, Culturally Responsive Programming

Recommendations with Strategic Actions/Investments

ALIGNED SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Coordinate and Fund Comprehensive Career Readiness Structures



- Establish and coordinate a NM Pathways Alliance, P20 Alignment team and Youth Pathways Council for ongoing advisement, alignment, and community accountability.
- Dedicate personnel to work at the intersection of the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED), the Higher Education Department (HED), Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), the business community, and Tribal governments.
- Evaluate and update funding and policy structures around dual-credit and career pathways to ensure these college acceleration strategies are fully funded and incentivized for both secondary and postsecondary partnerships.
- Expand Local Education Agency (LEA) budgets to support comprehensive college and career pathways planning, programs, and Work-Based Learning (WBL) initiatives.
- Leverage a state data platform to include local labor market analysis to prioritize family-sustaining careers aligned to state education and workforce development opportunities.

Incentivize and Support Seamless Partnerships

- Support intermediaries to facilitate collaboration, partnerships, and action between PED, employers, school district leaders, and postsecondary institutions to align PED's priorities to New Mexico's workforce needs.
- Convene employers and educators to build cross-sector working relationships, reduce silos and barriers, and encourage collaboration for improved post-secondary outcomes.
- Reduce fiscal and policy barriers for districts and higher education institutions to establish strong, aligned dual-credit career pathways and programming.
- Create communities of practice for schools and districts to learn from one another.

Build and Develop Talent Pipeline to Support Career-and-College Readiness Programs

- Design strategies and incentives to increase the number of educators qualified to teach dual-enrollment and Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, especially in rural areas.
- Explore innovative policies that create "team teaching" partnerships between high schools, post-secondary, and industry professionals.
- Create alternative dual-credit credentialing programs to increase qualified high school teachers and provide opportunities for industry professionals to teach while remaining in their chosen fields.

ACADEMICS INTEGRATED WITH CAREER

Align Graduation Requirements and Academics to Career Readiness



- Align graduation requirements to graduate profiles, emphasizing both college and career. Integrate academic and technical learning by connecting state standards across fields of study and allowing for integrated course experiences to meet graduation requirements.
- Allow certain CTE courses to do "double duty," simultaneously counting for CTE and one of the required core academic subjects.
- Promote flexible CTE options, credit for work-based learning, and career pathways aligned to New Mexico's labor market.
- Consider aligned core sequences and/or overarching themes for tribal/rural schools that face barriers to traditional career pathways (e.g. Entrepreneurship, Leadership).

Expand Access and Support for High-Quality Work-Based Learning

- Invest in funding for district or regional coordinators and paid internship experiences.
- Involve Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs) to develop regional systems of WBL that include state resources, district/tribal coordinators, and networks of employer mentors/champions.
- For employers, promote financial incentives that are clear and accessible with limited bureaucracy to increase access for underserved students and communities.
- Develop a continuum of experiences that begins with career awareness, cultivates career exploration, and culminates in paid internships/pre-apprenticeships programs.
- Leverage diverse opportunities (virtual, school-based enterprise, on-campus summer options) to meet the needs of urban, rural, and tribal youth, including transportation funding to ensure equity.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION/PERSONALIZED SUPPORTS

Cultivate Community Engagement and Public Will Building

- Ensure ongoing outreach and communication regarding college and career options, specifically engaging and addressing the needs of marginalized populations.
- With input from employers, families, and community leaders, develop and resource a strategy to build public understanding and ownership of a career and post-secondary readiness narrative that emphasizes opportunities for New Mexicans and the impact on the economy.



Build on Assets with Rigorous, Culturally Responsive Programming

- Align comprehensive pathway strategies to the existing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Framework and asset-based, personalized and integrated academic, social, and emotional learning supports to establish a culture of belonging, safety, and care.
- Work with Tribal Leadership to develop Cultural Career Pathways to ensure tribal representation within state structures (including funding equity).

This Document Identified Shared Recommendations from the Following Reports and Research:

X3 Data Report. A Comprehensive Overview of the Impact of the X3 Internship Programs

Future Focused Education. 2023.

New Mexico's Students for the Future Workforce

Hunt Institute / PED. 2022

Bringing High-Quality College and Career Pathways to Rural New Mexico

ConnectED: The National Center for College and Career. 2023.

New Mexico Comprehensive College and Career Pathways Assessment Report

LANL Foundation / PED 2022.

New Mexico College and Career Readiness Policy Recommendations

Linked Learning Alliance. 2022.

Building a System of College and Career Pathways in New Mexico

Learning Policy Institute/ Connect Ed. 2021.