

## ***New Mexico Narrative Report 2007-2008***

### ***Introduction:***

New Mexico Adult Basic Education (NM ABE) achievements during 2007-2008 were marked by the accomplishment of the following major goals:

- Data quality was enhanced by migrating from a survey-based collection of core outcomes to a data-matching process where student outcomes are tracked by matching with information obtained from databases in other agencies.
- Data reliability and validity were improved by designing and implementing a desk monitoring system.
- All 28 local programs participated in year one of the national Leadership Excellence Academy focusing on research and data collection for informed decision making.
- The Distance Education Task Force established pilot programs at two sites in collaboration with Project IDEAL.
- NM ABE's first Distance Education Policy was drafted.
- A comprehensive Learning Differences Policy was researched and developed to guide local ABE program staff and to provide resources.
- NM ABE participated in various professional development opportunities relating to College and Career Transition and started up an interagency ABE Transition Initiative.
- Four (4) local programs were visited and evaluated using an enhanced instrument and process.
- An array of professional development activities were offered focusing on improved instruction and covering: Math, Reading, Writing, ESL, Leadership Training, NRS, College and Career Transition, and Learning Differences.

### ***Question 1: Describe successful activities, programs, and projects supported with State Leadership funds and describe the extent to which these activities, programs, and projects were successful in implementing the goals of the State Plan.***

During 2007-2008, NM ABE used Leadership funds to support statewide policy and program improvement efforts via strategic planning and informal/formal local program evaluations. NM ABE also provided Leadership funding to a local non-profit organization, New Mexico Adult Education Association (NMAEA), to implement professional development activities in support of NM ABE goals:

- NMAEA is committed to enhancing the quality of ABE practitioners and programs. The association carries out this dedication through trainings, sponsorship, and support as demonstrated by the following accomplishments in 2007-08:
  - NMAEA provided professional development correlated with NM ABE priorities and field needs by:
    - Conducting four regional trainings (addressing Advocacy and Got Math) and a statewide, two-day Teacher's Institute, as well as needs based local training and technical assistance.
    - Conducting a professional development needs assessment for NM ABE practitioners and using the results to inform the content of the NMAEA conference.
  - NMAEA evaluated the effectiveness of all professional development activities. They are also improving their assessment system by:
    - Developing an internal tracking database and selecting an external evaluator to provide additional input and advice next year.
  - NMAEA took action to improve communication and increase public awareness of ABE by:

- Beginning a comprehensive improvement of their website to increase both its outreach and internal communications capabilities;
- Initiating the development of an ABE marketing campaign;
- Increasing statewide legislative awareness through civic engagement trainings for directors, teachers and students.
- NMAEA provided logistical and organizational support to ABE leadership groups including:
  - Supporting data integrity and LACES usage by organizing trainings and meetings;
  - Maintaining active participation in leadership planning meetings and forums.
- NM ABE achieved the following significant program improvement objectives with Leadership funding:
  - During 2007-08, four formal site evaluations and one informal visit were conducted, using the enhanced evaluation instrument.
  - Two sites placed on probation were able to be reinstated pursuant to the Program Probation Policy that defines critical expectations and provides a structure and process for continuous improvement.
  - NM ABE developed a Desk Monitoring tool to supplement Performance Checks and Data Audits. ABE provided training for program Data Technicians, and the tool was implemented.
  - The Learning Differences Policy was developed, approved, and implemented. The policy document includes comprehensive guidelines and references to assist programs in its implementation and application.
  - A Basic Learning Differences (LD) training and manual were provided for Program Directors. The training covered such topics as definitions and characteristics of LD learners; screening; sample screening tools/instruments and consent forms; understanding learner difficulties/deficits; setting objectives; developing instructional plans and imparting instruction; and classroom accommodations.
  - The Distance Education Task Force completed a draft Distance Education Policy, and has begun the policy approval process.

***Question 2: Describe any significant findings from the eligible agency's evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance.***

During 2007-08, NM ABE programs continued to emphasize improvement in program data quality. The outcome has been statewide improvement in data quality with achievements being made towards accurate, longitudinal data for tracking program progress. Key achievements are described in the following sections.

## **Key Achievements**

### **1. Focus on Data Quality**

NM ABE has taken steps to improve student intake, assessment, goal setting and follow-up with policies to ensure collection of consistent, reliable data from the 28 local programs. Most importantly, NM has continued working with a web-based data management system, LACES, that was deployed statewide in July 2006. To accommodate and enhance state/local program processes, customized procedures have been designed and implemented around the LACES database.

- NM ABE enhanced both the data audit process and continued semiannual performance checks to track local program progress toward state/federal goals.

- NM ABE has implemented a customized desk monitoring system where programs can monitor their performance data for better decision-making and further improvements.
- LACES and NM ABE have continued to make strides in creating a seamless, longitudinal database for enhanced tracking of student progress across fiscal year timelines.
- 2007-08 marks the first year for the State to move from surveys to data matching with other agencies for the purpose of tracking core NRS outcomes. Three of four core NRS outcomes are tracked exclusively by data matching, with post-secondary/training outcomes using a combination of survey and data matching methodologies.

## 2. Trends and Outcomes

### General Information

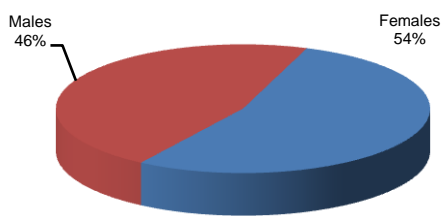
Statistics show that 90% of New Mexico students enroll in the lowest levels of ABE and ESL. NM ABE is considered primarily a GED program; however, few students enter prepared to study at this level. Of particular note,

- Only 10% of students enter ABE programs ready for instruction at Adult Secondary (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade equivalency) levels
- 53% of students enter at the ABE (below 9<sup>th</sup> grade) levels
- 37% of students enter as ESL students

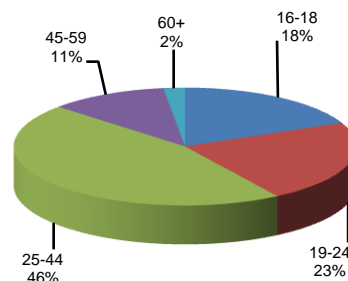
While enrollment in ABE programs has been steady at ~20,000 students per year, the number of students aged 16-24 has been slowly increasing, from 38% of the ABE population in 2005-06 to 41% in 2007-08. A gender shift observed from 2005 into 2007, where the number of female students steadily increased, has stabilized at 54% female to 46% male students. Hispanic females still constitute the majority of the ABE population in New Mexico with 39% of the total students served in 2007-08, a disproportionate segment of the student population compared to statewide ethnicity distributions.

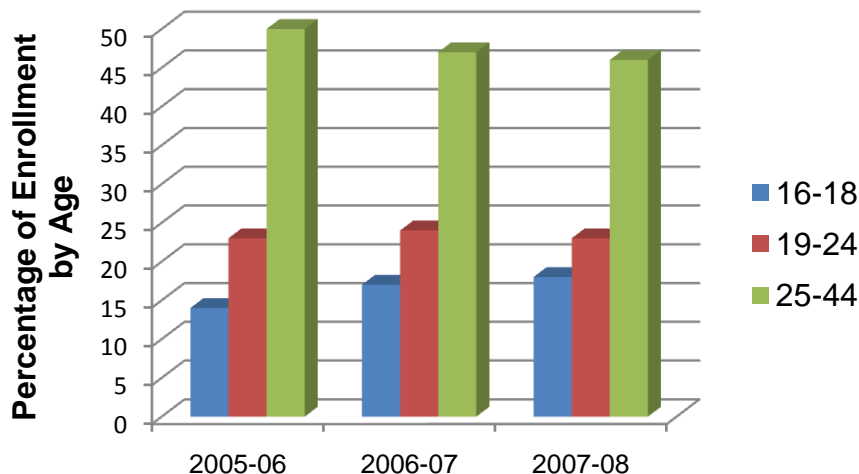
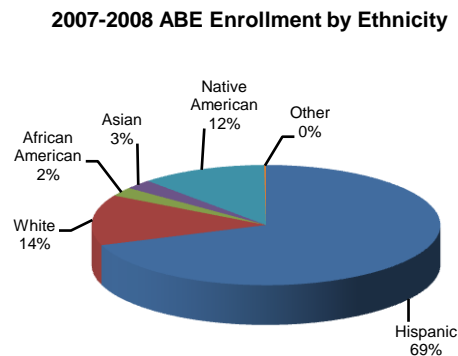
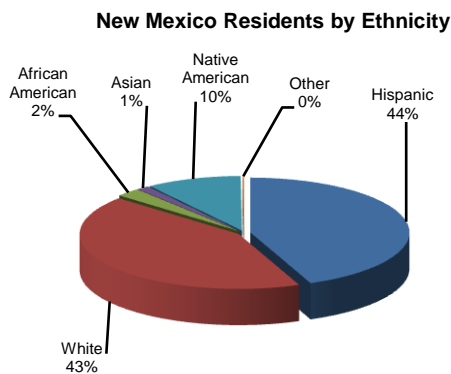
Students ages 25-44 constitute the majority of the ABE population, though that number has decreased from 50% in 2005-06 to 46% in 2007-08. There has been a concomitant increase in the number of students in the 19-24 range, increasing from 38% to 41% in the same time period. It is expected that the trend will continue, with the average age of ABE students continuing to decrease in the coming years. The following charts describe age, ethnicity, and gender demographics currently observed in the New Mexico ABE student population.

2007-2008 ABE Enrollment by Gender



2007-2008 ABE Enrollment by Age





### 3) Federal Core Outcomes Measures

#### Database Evaluation and Improvement

Since 2003-04, local ABE programs have experienced progress in all outcome areas. However, outcomes have been inconsistent due to a previously unreliable data collection system. With the continued refinement of the LACES system, NM ABE expects steady improvements. State staff continues to work with local agencies in the training of proper data entry protocol. There are some changes that have occurred this year with the transition in LACES to a fully-longitudinal system; these changes have obviated a need to re-evaluate the method in which students are carried over from one fiscal year to the next. NM ABE continues to work with local agencies and LACES to produce a seamless, longitudinal data system.

#### Transition to Data Matching

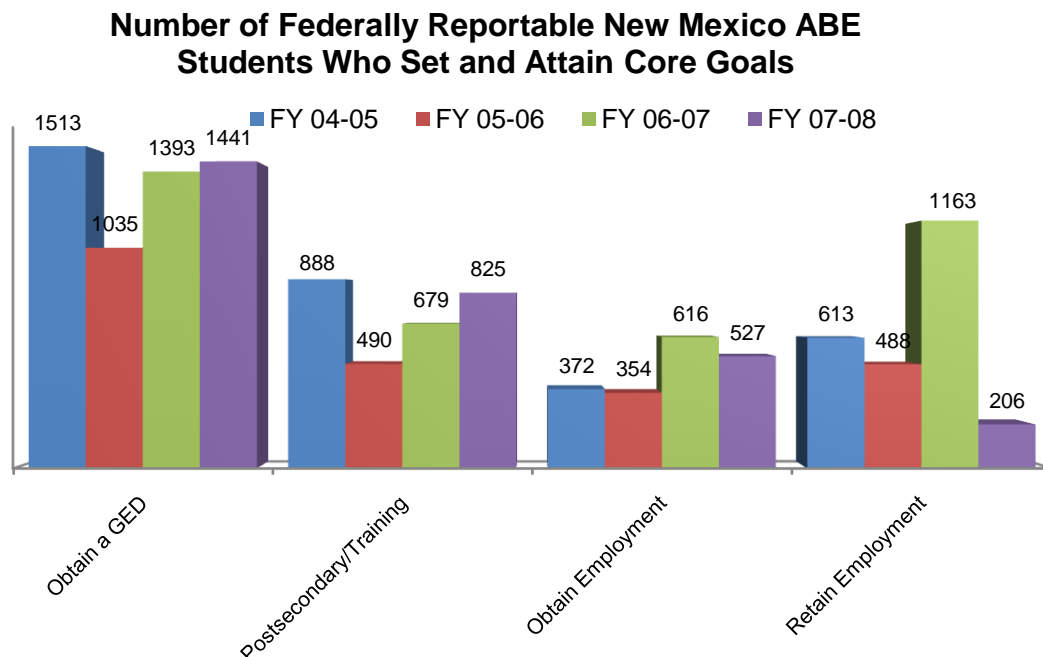
2007-08 marks the first year in which NM ABE reports NRS core outcomes by applying a data-matching methodology. In an effort to shift from error-prone and time intensive survey collection, NM ABE is now comparing employment goal data with that collected by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for the purpose of reporting on employment goals. In addition, agreements were reached with Oklahoma Scoring to match GED outcomes of

ABE students with the national clearinghouse. Post-Secondary transitions are measured by comparing with the NM Higher Education Department's database of New Mexico college students. Since not all students who meet post-secondary and/or training goals are populated in the State Higher Education database, NMABE will continue to augment data match results with survey data to represent as full a cohort of these students as possible.

**Key Points:**

- Approximately 74% of NRS-reportable students have valid SSN's or TIN's in the LACES database. Therefore the number of outcomes reported is a lower limit, and the number of students achieving a given outcome is likely higher than reported.
- Core outcomes as measured by percentage of goal have *decreased*, due to the increase in the number of participants included in calculating outcomes.
- The total number of participants achieving the goal of obtaining a GED is consistent with that obtained by survey methods. Of the 2,348 ABE students who obtained a GED, 1,441 were NRS reportable.
- The 14% decrease from 2007 to 2008 in the number of participants entering employment can be attributed to the exclusion of students with no valid SSN/TIN in the data match.
- The number of students with a goal of Retain Employment was likely over-reported in 2006-07, and under-reported in 2007-08 due to the transition to the LACES database. The number should stabilize in following years as complete cohorts are entered and tracked in LACES.
- New Mexico tribal colleges are not yet included in the data matching process. Additionally, some reportable ABE students enter workforce-training programs without formally enrolling in post-secondary institutions. These students are tracked via survey and added to the cohort of students tracked through data matching. Overall there is a 21.5 percent increase in the number of reported post-secondary outcomes compared to 2006-07.

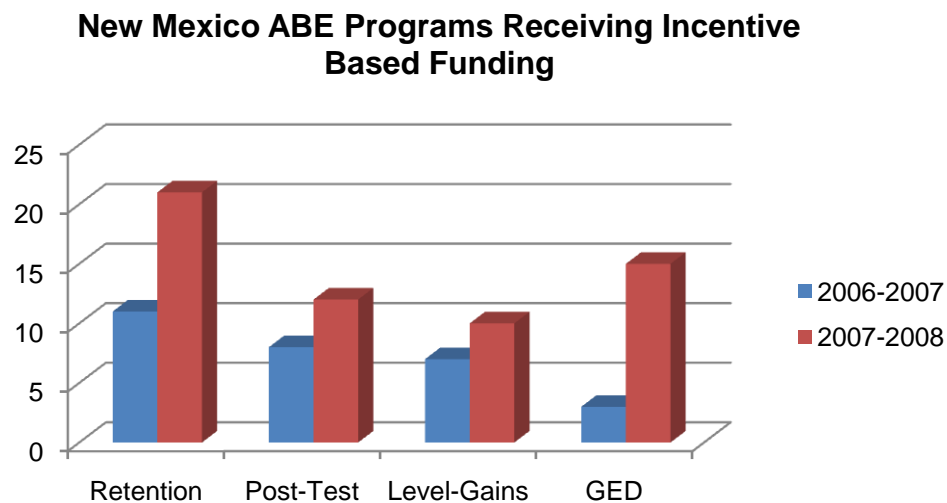
The following figure illustrates the total number of students achieving core NRS outcomes over the course of the past four years.



#### 4) State Core Outcome Measures

In addition to federally mandated reporting, program- and state-specific performance measures are tracked and measured annually. For the past four years, local NM ABE programs have received incentive funding for meeting and/or exceeding state standards. The incentive measures for 2007-08 included: student retention, post-test rates, educational level gains, and GED attainment. These measures were selected based on overall importance to state improvement efforts. Different weights were assigned to show measures having the highest priority.

The following chart shows the number of local programs that met and/or exceeded the specific performance measures and compares to the previous year's distribution of incentive funding.



#### Highlights:

- Twenty four of the twenty eight programs received at least one incentive.
- Six local programs received all four incentives.
- Five local programs received three out of four incentives.
- The state-wide focus on quality and performance improvement, and movement toward performance-based funding, are helping local program directors to make more informed, data-driven decisions.

#### Distance Education

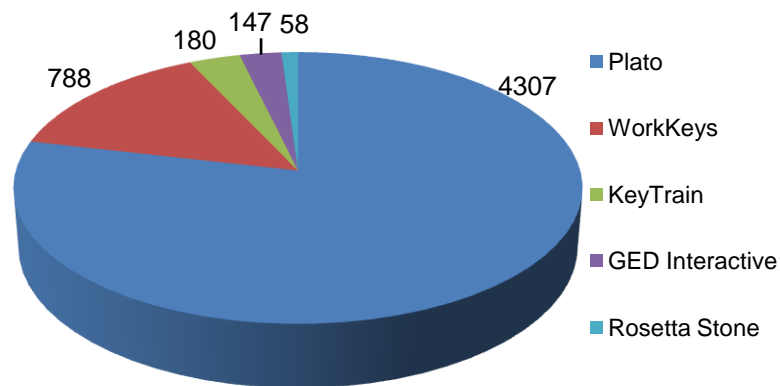
NM ABE programs continue to increase the use of technology in both traditional classrooms and in Distance Education programs. Numerous instructional programs have been implemented including Plato, WorkKeys, Key Train, Rosetta Stone, and GED Interactive software. These programs have the synergistic benefit of enhancing student computer literacy while simultaneously providing basic literacy and numeracy instruction.

The ABE Division of the New Mexico Higher Education Department has partnered with the national Project Ideal to build effective distance education programs for adult learners and help teachers develop materials and tools. In 2008-09, New Mexico will have one new and two

continuing ABE programs participating as members of New Mexico's Project Ideal pilot project program. An additional three ABE programs are participating on a limited basis with the intent of applying for pilot project membership in 2009-10.

Forty-four staff members from 15 ABE sites located throughout the state have been selected to participate in a training session on how to administer the online TABE test (a standardized placement and progress test for ABE students). Twelve sites have requested and received access to Rosetta Stone language instruction software to teach ESL. The following chart illustrates the use of distance-based assessments in New Mexico for 2007-08.

**2007-08 NM Distance Ed. Software by Type**



***Question 3: Describe how the eligible agency has supported the integration of activities sponsored under Title II with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities. Include a description of how the eligible agency is being represented on the Local Workforce Investment Boards, adult education's involvement on the State Workforce Investment Board, the provision of core and other services through the one-stop system and an estimate of the Title II funds being used to support activities and services through the one-stop delivery system.***

During 2007-2008, the NM ABE community worked to integrate Title II activities in a variety of ways:

- Adult Basic Education, the Higher Education Department, and the Department of Workforce Solutions are establishing a collaborative taskforce to increase the number of employers, employees, and potential employees participating in and benefiting from the Career Readiness Certification Program.
- All New Mexico ABE/ESL programs are working toward full integration of employability skills into their curricula.
- Most ABE programs maintain regular contact with their local Workforce Investment Boards. Seven have regular representation at meetings, and some have Workforce Investment Board members serving on their own ABE advisory councils. Eleven out of 28 programs have formal working collaborations with their local Boards.
- In addition to participating in meetings and planning, other activities include these:
  - Many programs target youth, ages 16-24, in an effort to keep them in school and/or receive ABE services. Four programs, including various Indian reservations, particularly focus efforts on providing services for youth and families.

- Ten programs provide the assessment and the educational component for TANF customers.
- Several ABE programs are developing relationships with local businesses and their employees that involve providing various workforce readiness services in addition to GED and ESL classes.
- Four provide services for students in the corrections system. There are pre-release classes (SOAR), workplace literacy training for newly-released inmates, and a transition to trades program for incarcerated adults.
- Thirteen programs collaborate with one-stop centers, and several house them. Through one-stop centers, they provide GED/ABE services as well as other services, including:
  - Assessment and intake, advisement, screening, training, interest profiling and career exploration, and agency referrals;
  - Career Readiness certification;
  - Workplace tutoring;
  - Workshops in life-skills, goal-setting, resume-writing;
  - Workplace literacy and WorkKeys, Key Train, Discover, SkillsBank.
- Many colleges housing ABE programs have developed their own workforce development centers that work closely with their ABE programs, local businesses, and Workforce Investment boards, committees, and one-stops.
- One program is seeking to install virtual one-stops at each state prison facility.
- An estimated \$119,590 of Title II funds were used to support WIA activities/services.

***Question 4: Describe successful activities and services supported with EL Civics funds, including the number of programs receiving EL Civics grants and an estimate of the number of adult learners served.***

During 2007-08, seven (7) NM ABE programs and organizations received funding which totaled \$226,331 to provide EL Civics activities and services. Together, these programs and organizations served 1,361 students and accomplished the following:

**Catholic Charities—serving 59 students**

- Citizenship courses have resulted in an increase in the number of students preparing for and passing the citizenship test.
- Seventeen students have begun the citizenship testing process, and ten have reported passing the test. Three students and one staff member were sworn in as citizens in June.
- Students at Intermediate Low level or above attained citizenship faster than lower level students. Students at lower levels achieved citizenship faster with tutoring.
- Curricula focus on teaching skills to increase student involvement with their children's education and with their community and workplace.
- While learning computer skills, students learned skills in English, life, employment, and transition to higher education.
- Overall level gains were 43.3%.

**Doña Ana Community College—serving 419 students**

- The part-time interim ESL/Citizenship coordinator was hired full time and provided instructor training.
- The EL Civics program continues to implement an integrated, three cluster structure: Civil Rights, Future Transitions, and Civic Leadership.
  - In the Civil Rights cluster (democracy and the K-12 educational system) activities included attending school board meetings; using national statistics to explore teacher salary disparities; conducting mock parent-teacher conferences to address scenarios



they developed; participating in family literacy activities; using the Change Agent as a framework to study the election process and to explore the question “What is peace?,” and comparing and contrasting duties with responsibilities.

- In the Future Transitions cluster (career and educational system exploration) students learned about job resources, including state agencies and job fairs, and some eligible students participated in a local project of the National Farm Workers’ JOBS program; they also participated in transitional workshops about planning for, applying to, enrolling in, and financing college.
  - Civic Leadership (a tool to help organize community action for education ) activities included visiting agencies and organizations involved in community health and safety, where they practiced their English skills learning safety procedures; participating in volunteerism and delivering presentations describing gains in their English skills and community awareness; learning about environmental issues using a US EPA curriculum and Al Gore’s global warming documentary; and planning a community agency awareness project.
- Information collected by the coordinator from the instructors throughout the year indicated that the teachers felt EL Civics activities were beneficial for students and had been successfully incorporated into their curriculum. They appreciated resources and trainings and would like to see more curriculum guidance.

#### **New Mexico Junior College—serving 201 students**

- Students completed the citizens’ rights and responsibilities workbook and learned about voter registration during a field trip to a county courthouse.
- Students learned about the history and government of the United States using the Constitution as a focus, through both workbook activities and field trips.
- Instructors combined traditional instruction with classroom technology to help students improve their English language skills.

#### **NMSU-Alamogordo—serving 89 students**

- Using citizenship classes and field trips, the program placed special emphasis on the Government/Educational goal.
- Students visited a university, a museum, a public library, a county clerk’s office, and the State Capitol.
- Students attended workshops on money management and credit issues, DWI prevention, and DWI detection techniques.
- Through EL Civics classes and activities, the students increased knowledge and skill levels to meet their intended outcomes, improved attendance, and became more community-oriented. 48% of ESL students completed a level.

#### **Santa Fe Community College—serving 543 students**

- EL Civics students showed a higher level gain rate than the general ESL population.
- The overall level gain was 40.9%. The greatest gain was at level 2, which rose to 62.5%.
- 98.7 % of students surveyed indicated at least two behavioral changes that demonstrate an increased knowledge of and participation in civic issues.
- The program integrated the civics classes into 30 regular ESL courses, and the Civics Resource Library provided authentic civics materials including maps, circulars, healthcare brochures, library card applications, bus schedules, and financial literacy information.
- 50 new tutors were trained for ESL and Basic Literacy, and monthly in-services were scheduled.

**UNM-Taos—serving 29 students**

- The retention rate was high for EL Civics students (19 of 21 students in one class and 10 of 10 in the other), and six of the nine students who had set an employment goal met it.
- To raise awareness of the role of volunteerism and the availability of public services, student teams produced and presented photo essays, including interviews, on community resources that interested them. Examples include the volunteer fire department, public health department, library, town hall, animal shelter, and a health fair.
- Other activities included writing to U.S. and state senators and representatives as part of learning about government as students watched and discussed the presidential election process; conducting fundraising activities for the new Literacy Center; and exploring the UNM registration process and library.

**UNM-Valencia—serving 182 students**

- Students demonstrated their understanding of identified civics themes through class projects, presentations, and community projects.
- Students also participated in a state-wide campaign of letter-writing to their representatives, and they are working with the Valencia County Commission Chair to plan and execute a fund-raiser for the local Literacy Council.
- Through the EL Civics program, students achieved a 22.3% increase in average hours attended, going from 50.6 to 61.9 hours.
- The NRS level gains for ESL students rose from 23% to 34.4% -- an 11% increase.