

New Mexico Narrative Report 2008-2009

Introduction:

The New Mexico Adult Basic Education (NM ABE) programs are lead by the state Adult Basic Education Division at the New Mexico Higher Education Department. Although more than 23,000 students are served annually at 28 program sites across the state, there remains a significant number of students the state is unable to accommodate due to limited resources. However, in spite of a slight decrease in state funding this year, NM ABE served 15% more students than last year, launched online learning opportunities, spearheaded co-enrollment in college for GED students, implemented accountability processes and streamlined services to increase student success and help more students improve their lives through education. NM ABE achievements during 2008-2009 were marked by the accomplishment of these goals:

- Data quality was enhanced by the continued transition from a survey-based collection of core outcomes to a data-matching process: student outcomes are tracked by aligning ABE data with data from other agencies
- Data reliability and validity were enhanced through continued refinement of program audits, state performance checks and the desk monitoring system
- An initiative to shift the priorities of the NM ABE funding formula from enrollment-based to performance-based funding was undertaken through formation of a Performance-Based Funding Task Force and consultation with a national organization under sponsorship of the U.S. Office of Vocational and Adult Education
- The ABE Transition to College and Careers project administered Ford Foundation funding to sponsor two pilot projects serving 50 students. The ABE Transition Task Force, an interagency advisory and work group, assisted with the selection of pilot projects and conducted a statewide survey of transition services
- Four local site visits revealed that these programs were using an increasingly research-based approach to developing best practices with regard to student orientation and the development of content standards within their own curricula
- An array of professional development activities was 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 2008-2009, NM ABE used Leadership funds to support statewide policy and program improvement efforts through strategic planning and informal as well as formal local program evaluations. NM ABE also provided Leadership funding to a local non-profit organization, the 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 training, sponsorship, and support as demonstrated by these accomplishments in 2008-2009:

- NMAEA developed and implemented a professional development tracking database, an automated financial management system, more formalized policies and procedures and a standardized evaluation process for its events and activities
- NMAEA supported workplace and transition goals with:
 - Training on New Mexico's Career Cluster Initiative and Career Readiness Certificate
 - The creation, distribution and training for a model that integrates WorkKeys and Key Train into the ABE curriculum
 - Transition to College and Career workshops for state practitioners, and participation in the planning and support of two College Transition pilot programs funded by the Ford Foundation
- NMAEA provided professional development linked with NM ABE priorities and field needs with:
 - A professional development needs assessment for NM ABE practitioners to inform the content of the NMAEA conference and other training
 - Eight regional and statewide trainings and conferences: some designed specifically for directors, teachers or data technicians, others for all ABE practitioners
 - Evaluation of all training efforts, using the results for training improvement
- NMAEA improved communication and increased public awareness of ABE with:
 - A comprehensive website redesign and initiation of a list serve and discussion boards to increase outreach and internal communications
 - Increased participation in state Working Groups
 - The development of an ABE marketing and public awareness campaign
 - Civic engagement training for directors, teachers and students on such topics as "The Politics of Adult Education," "Student Leadership in ABE Decision- Making," and "Building Skills for Election Day and Beyond"
- NMAEA provided logistical and organizational support to ABE leadership groups with:
 - Data integrity and LACES usage organizing training and meetings for data technicians and program directors
 - Active participation in leadership planning meetings and forums
- NM ABE achieved these significant program improvement objectives with Leadership funding:
 - Conducted three formal site evaluations and one focused site visit and provided technical assistance on the formation of effective advisory boards and the development of practical strategic plans linked to program operation and development
 - Refined program audits, state performance checks, and the desk monitoring system and provided ongoing training to the field
 - Accomplished the transition from survey-based follow-up on NRS core outcomes to data-matching
 - Developed a Contact Hours Policy to guide programs as they continue to expand distance learning and begin to co-enroll GED students in college classes
 - Implemented a Distance Learning Policy to guide programs in developing distance education initiatives

- Formed a task force to develop a performance-based funding formula to support programs in aligning their planning and outcomes with State goals and values

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 2008-2009, NM ABE programs continued to emphasize improvement in program data quality. Statewide improvement in data quality resulted, including progress towards accurate, longitudinal data for tracking program progress. Key achievements follow.

1. Focus on Data Quality

New Mexico continues with a web-based data management system, LACES, that was deployed statewide in July 2006. To accommodate and enhance state/local program processes, NM ABE designed and implemented customized procedures around the LACES database. Some notable accomplishments include:

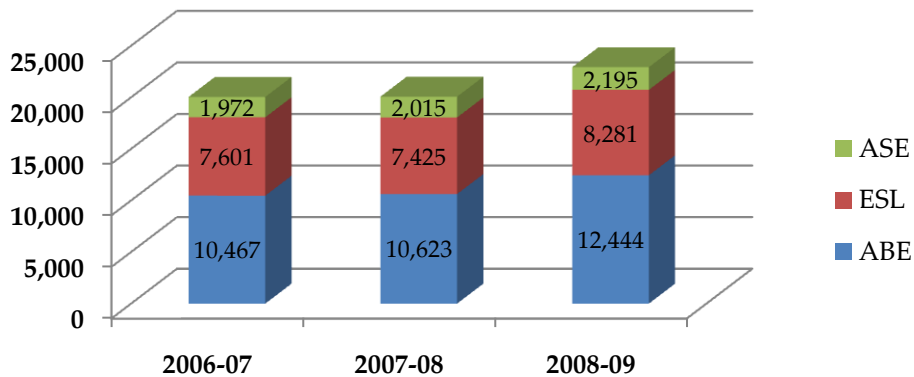
- NM ABE enhanced both the data audit process and continued semiannual performance checks to track local program progress toward state and federal goals
- NM ABE implemented a customized desk monitoring system so that programs can monitor performance data for better decision-making and further improvements
- LACES and NM ABE continued to make strides in creating a seamless, longitudinal database for enhanced tracking of student progress across fiscal year timelines

2. Trends and Outcomes - General Information

While in previous years enrollment in ABE programs has been steady at about 20,000 students per year, 2008-2009 saw a near 15% increase in enrollment to 22,920 NRS reportable students. A gender shift from 2005 into 2007, where the number of female students steadily increased, has stabilized at 53% female to 47% male students. Hispanic females still constitute the majority of the ABE population in New Mexico with 39% of the total students served in 2008-2009, 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 2008-2009. There has been a concomitant increase in the number of students in the 16-24 range, increasing from 38% to 42% 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 chart shows the enrollment distribution in New Mexico ABE programs for the past three years.

Enrollment Distribution 2007-2009



3) Federal Core Outcomes Measures

Database Evaluation and Improvement

Since 2003-2004, 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. NM ABE continues to work with local agencies and LACES to produce a seamless, longitudinal data system.

Data Matching Core Goals

Fiscal Year 2008-2009 marks the second year in which NM ABE reported 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, GED outcomes of ABE students were matched with the Oklahoma Scoring GED data clearinghouse. Postsecondary transitions are measured by comparing with the NM Higher Education Department’s database of New Mexico college students. Since not all students who meet core goals are locatable by SSN, NM ABE will continue to augment data match results with survey data to represent as full a cohort of these students as possible.

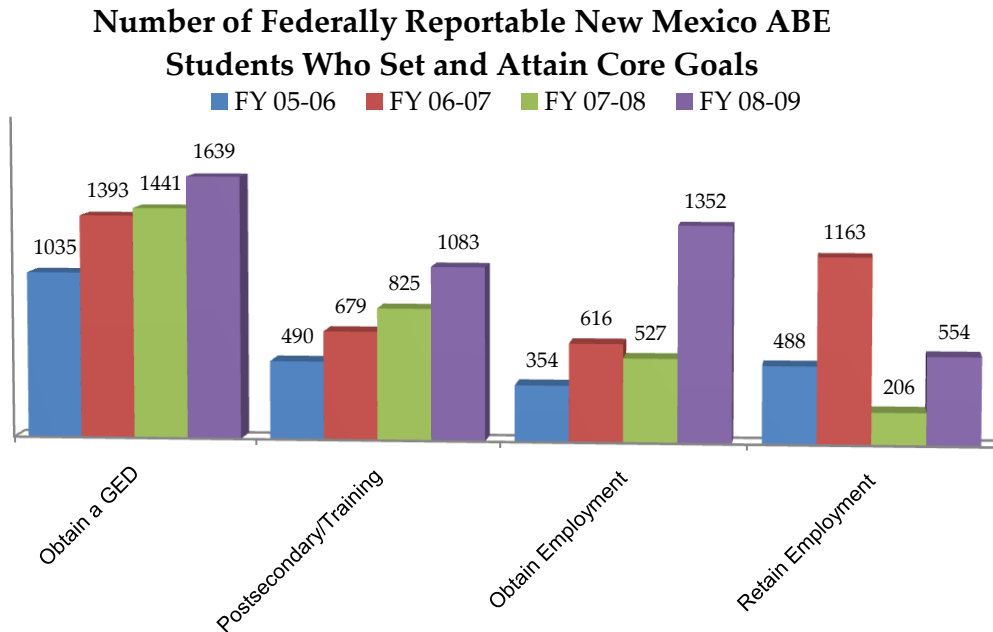
Key Points:

- Approximately 75% of NRS-reportable students have valid SSNs or TINs in the LACES database. Therefore the number of outcomes reported is a lower limit, and the number of students achieving a given outcome could be higher than reported.
- Core outcomes as measured by percentage of goal have *decreased* compared to 2006-2007, due to the increase in the number of participants included in calculating outcomes. Outcomes have *increased*, however, both in number and percentage of outcome compared to 2007-2008. The total number of participants achieving the goal of obtaining a GED is consistent with that obtained by survey methods. Of the 2,117 ABE students who obtained a

GED according to the data match, 1631 are reportable on NRS Table 5 with an additional 409 students populating NRS Table 13.

- The number of students having met the goal of Enter Employment is the highest ever reported in NM ABE, and more than double that reported in previous years. This is due to both enhanced data collection and reporting, and improved goal setting and follow-up at the local program level.
- The number of students with a goal of Retain Employment was over-reported in 2006-2007, and under-reported in 2007-2008 due to the transition to the LACES database. Barring other factors, 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 postsecondary institutions. These students are tracked via survey and added to the cohort of students tracked through data matching. Overall NM ABE reports a 21% increase in the number of Table 5 reportable postsecondary outcomes compared to 2007-2008. In addition to the 1,083 students who set and met the goal, 709 additional postsecondary transitions are reported on NRS Table 13.

The following figure illustrates the total number of students achieving core NRS outcomes over the course of the past four years. All four outcomes demonstrate significant increases in total number of outcomes compared to the previous year.

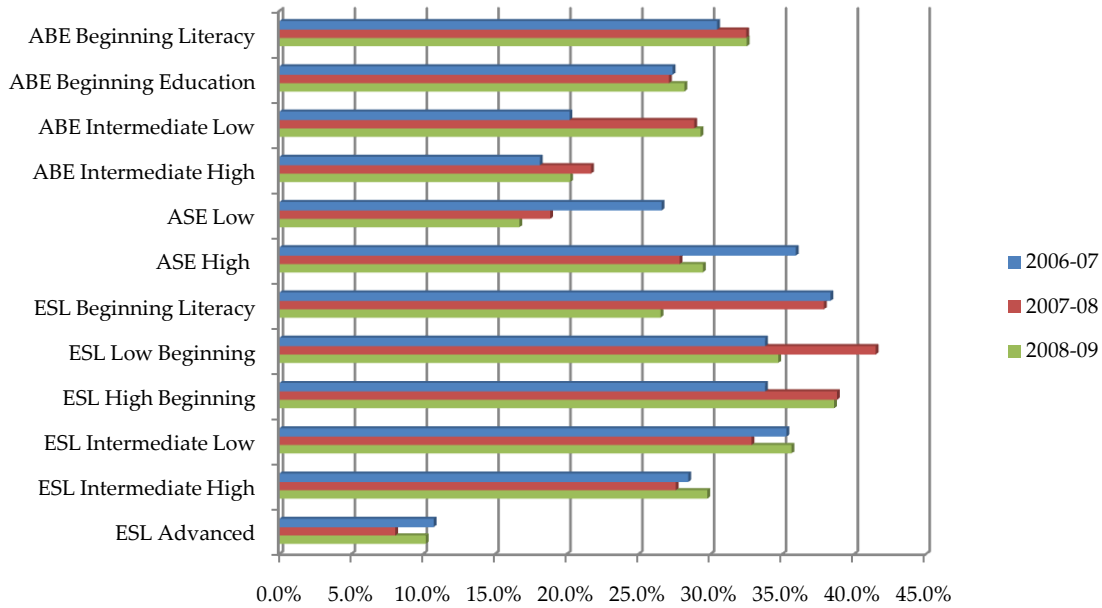


Educational Gains

While overall gains have remained fairly constant over the past three years with the LACES database, New Mexico has identified several educational functioning levels (EFLs) in need of targeted improvement. A chronic issue is that of students in ABE Intermediate High and ASE Low levels completing the GED without post-testing with another instrument; local programs

have been directed to increase post-testing of these students prior to taking the GED. Another targeted level is that of ESL Advanced students where completion rates have been consistently poor. The following figure shows percentages of students achieving level gains by their entering educational level for the past three years.

Educational Gains 2007-2009

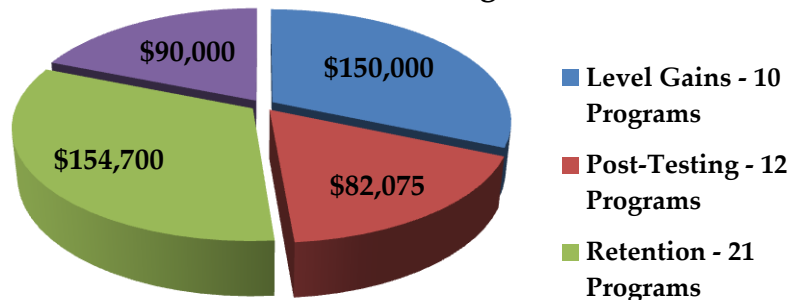


Incentive Funding

In addition to federally mandated reporting, program and state specific performance measures are tracked and measured annually. For the past five years, local NM ABE programs have received incentive funding for meeting and/or exceeding state standards. The incentive measures for 2008-2009 included: educational gains, post-test rates, retention rate, and GED attainment. 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.

The following chart shows the distribution of incentive funding for 2008-09.

2008-09 Incentive Funding Distribution



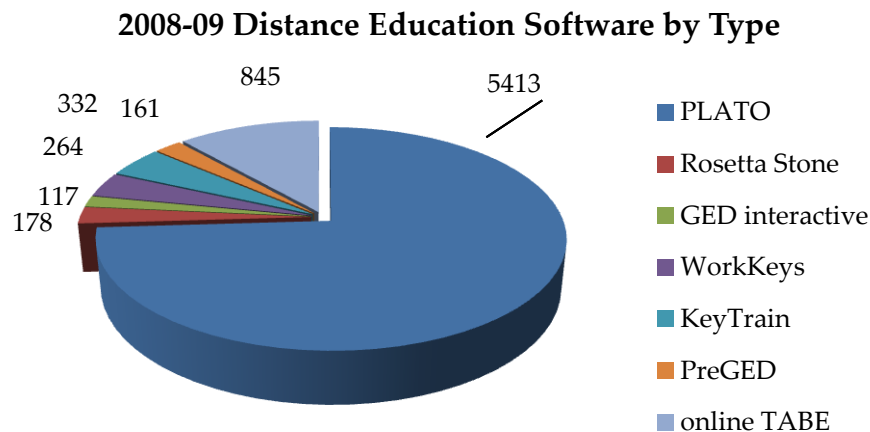
Highlights:

- Twenty-four of the twenty-eight programs received at least one incentive
- Five local programs received all four incentives
- Four local programs received three out of four incentives

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. PreGED is a new software package being utilized at various program sites. 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 2008-2009, NM ABE funded one new and two continuing ABE programs participating as members of New Mexico's Distance Education pilot project initiative. Three additional ABE programs are participating on a limited basis with full pilot project membership beginning in 2009-2010. The following chart illustrates the use of distance-based applications in New Mexico for 2008-2009.



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 2008-2009, NM ABE spent an estimated \$297,137 of Title II funds to support WIA activities and services. The NM ABE community worked to integrate Title II activities in a variety of ways:

- The New Mexico Higher Education Department, the Department of Workforce Solutions, and the Department of Human Services have established a College and Career Transition Task Force. Their goals are to create an environment of comprehensive support for disadvantaged and low-skilled New Mexicans and to integrate institutional structures for training and advancement, driven by economic development priorities.
- As part of the State transition initiative, and in response to economic changes, the State is developing a co-enrollment policy to guide the growing number of programs beginning to co-enroll ABE students in college and career-technical education classes.
- All New Mexico ABE/ESL programs are working toward full integration of employability skills into their curricula. Most programs experienced enrollment increases during the economic downturn this past year, though the few programs serving tourism-dominant locations experienced a decrease as students were forced to leave the area or take on second jobs.
- Twenty-three of the state's twenty-eight programs are actively involved with their area Workforce Connections offices, Workforce Investment Boards, and/or One-Stops. Some have regular representation at meetings, and a growing number have Workforce Investment Board members serving on their own ABE advisory councils. In addition to participating in meetings and planning, these collaborations engage in program-specific activities including:
 - Providing youth and family specific activities in an effort to keep youth in school or provide ABE services, as appropriate
 - Providing the intake, assessment, and educational components for TANF customers
 - Developing relationships with local businesses and their employees to provide various workforce readiness services and training, as well as workplace tutoring, in addition to GED and ESL classes
 - Serving students in the corrections system through pre-release classes, workplace literacy training for newly-released inmates, and transition to trades programs for incarcerated adults
 - Through One-Stop centers, providing assessment and intake, advisement, screening, training, interest profiling and career exploration, and agency referrals; coordinating Career Readiness certification; offering workshops in life-skills, goal-setting, resume-writing; teaching workplace literacy; and involving clients in the use of WorkKeys, Key Train, Discover, and Skills Bank

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 2008-2009, six NM ABE programs and organizations received funding which totaled \$227,476 to provide EL Civics activities and services. Together, these programs and organizations served 1,803 students and accomplished the following:

Catholic Charities—serving 211 students

- An increase in the cost to apply for U.S. citizenship appears to have caused a slight drop in the number of students enrolled for citizenship classes.
- Catholic Charities has a high retention rate in its Civics courses, with 90% of students achieving 12 hours or more.
- This program, along with others that use BEST Literacy, had to address the challenge presented by the Center for Applied Linguistics decision to alter the scoring process. This change resulted in lower recorded level gains for students who actually made progress and would have received level gains under the original scoring method.
- The program increased participation in Citizenship courses by adding a Beginning One level Citizenship class to receive students from focused literacy classes.
- The program is seeing a growth in the number of ESL Literacy and ESL Low Beginning students seeking to prepare for the citizenship test. They are collecting data in an effort to determine the reason.
- Overall, the 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 skills, health, and transition to higher education.

Doña Ana Community College—serving 518 students

- The ESL/Citizenship Coordinator provided instructor training and mentoring for instructors. The coordinator also formed a partnership with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service regional field office to provide training for instructors and students.
- The program has integrated the MALDEF curriculum into its three-cluster structure that includes Civil Rights, Future Transitions, and Civic Leadership.
 - In the Civil Rights cluster (democracy and the K-12 educational system) used *Change Agent: Democracy in Action* as a framework. Activities included conducting mock elections; using authentic media, including the internet, to explore presidential election issues; using experiential activities to explore the Bill of Rights in depth; participating in family literacy activities.
 - In the Future Transitions cluster (career and educational system exploration) students learned about job resources, including state agencies and job fairs. Participants learned about soft skills for the workplace, attended a workshop about setting financial goals, and learned about resources for free financial counseling. Students 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) used the MALDEF curriculum to explore qualities of successful leaders and facilitators. In an experiential context, participants developed skills in public speaking, project preparation and presentation, and leading and planning meetings.
- The ESL/Citizenship Coordinator gathered data to study the ongoing effectiveness of the program.

New Mexico Junior College—serving 233 students

- The program has integrated the EL/Civics project into all ESL classes.
- Students explored the events surrounding the Constitutional convention and discussed the evolving views of the constitution over time.
- Participants attended a town hall meeting as part of their examination of the value of civic rights and responsibilities.
- Students were given the opportunity to register to vote.

NMSU-Alamogordo—serving 89 students

- Using citizenship classes, field trips, and writing exercises, the program placed special emphasis on government education. They examined the voting process in depth, from studying the issues to marking the ballot.
- Students visited the County Courthouse and the State Capitol as background for writing exercises in which they practiced using information as a basis for political opinion.
- 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.

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.
- Teachers participated in ESL teacher cohorts and took part in a variety of professional development workshops with civics specialists.

UNM-Valencia—serving 209 students

- Students demonstrated their understanding of identified civics themes through class projects, presentations, and community projects. Instructors reported measurable increases in knowledge for 90% of students assessed.
- Participants heard presentations about civic issues such as domestic violence and nutrition, and they created poster presentations about the issues.
- Students wrote to their elected representatives; family literacy students formed a Parents Council; and the students in general have shown a marked increase in self-advocacy skills and activities.
- Through the EL Civics program, students achieved a 22.3% increase in average hours attended, going from 50.6 to 61.9 hours.