

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

NEW MEXICO

*This profile was verified by staff of the New Mexico Department of Education in April 2000.
All information was current as of that date.*

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

There are four components to the **New Mexico Statewide Student Assessment System** that are guided by the SDE. Each serves a different purpose and targets certain grade levels.

Sources for this report include, but have not been limited to:

- The State Student Assessment System Handbook (November 1999)
- The (New Mexico State) Accountability Report (November 1999)

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)*
New Mexico Statewide Student Assessment System

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

1. **Reading Assessment at Grades 1 and 2:** each local school district determines the method(s) for assessing student progress in reading.
2. **New Mexico Achievement Assessment Program** at grades 3 through 9 is administered to all students in the content areas of:

- Reading/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science, and
- Social Studies.

The CTBS5/TerraNova Survey Plus test is used, along with a customized supplemental test booklet in order to assess student progress toward the New Mexico Content Standards and Benchmarks. Until 1999-2000, this assessment was used only in grades 4, 6, and 8. It is being expanded to include grades 3, 5, 7 and 9 in March 2000. The **CTBS5** is also used in the state as a stand-alone norm referenced examination.

3. **New Mexico Writing Assessment Program (WAP):** all students in grades 4 and 6 participate in the assessment, spending approximately one hour per day for a three-day period writing and revising compositions on-demand as a prompt and revision process. This can also be used as a district option in the eighth grade in preparation for the high school exam in grade ten. The tests fall by grade as follows:

- 4th grade – narrative
- 6th grade – expository
- 8th grade – persuasive

4. **New Mexico High School Competency Examination (HSCE):** The exam covers:

- Reading
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies, and
- each student must write a persuasive essay.

The assessment is administered for the first time in tenth grade and students must pass all six sections in order to graduate. Students who do not pass the first time may take the exam in the 11th grade and twice in the 12th grade before the graduation deadline or within five years after the completion of coursework.

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced*

NMAAP: Both norm and criterion referenced (CTBS plus additional items to make it criterion)

NMWAP: Criterion referenced

NMHSCE: Criterion referenced

- *Matrix or Census Testing:* Census

- *Item Types*

Three types of questions are used in the assessments issued by the state: multiple choice, writing prompts, constructed response. The NMAAP includes multiple choice and constructed response, but the proportions vary by subject. NMWAP uses a writing prompt and the NMHSCE has a mix of multiple choice and constructed response in the six subtests by subject.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*
 Reading Assessment at grades 1 and 2: District determined, reported to the state by June 1.
 NM Achievement Assessment Program: March 2000
 NM Writing Assessment Program: End of February through the beginning of March
 NM High School Competency Exam: Last week in January through the first 2 weeks in February

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*
New Mexico High School Competency Examination (HSCE): The exam covers:

- Reading
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies, and
- each student must write a persuasive essay.

The assessment is administered for the first time in tenth grade and students must pass all six sections in order to graduate. Students who do not pass the first time may take the exam in the 11th grade and twice in the 12th grade before the graduation deadline.

- *Other Assessments*

No other assessments are used by the state system at this time, although most districts provide additional assessments and are encouraged to do so by the state.

- *Transitional or Final Assessment System*

The system described is still transitional due to the extensive plans to change the high school examination and create a mandatory reading assessment in the early grades to replace the district option in effect for 1999-2000.

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

- **Reading Assessment at grades 1 and 2**

Each district determines how reading ability will be determined.

- **NM Achievement Assessment Program**

In collaboration with CTB/McGraw Hill, the teachers were involved in selecting items from the TerraNova that they felt were representative of the standards and then identifying areas that were not covered by the items. Test publishers prepared some initial possibilities for test items and teachers reviewed those as well, revised them or rejected them, developed additional items, and accepted those that fit the standards.

- **NM Writing Assessment Program**

The state has had a contract with Measurement Incorporated and they develop the prompts. Once the assessment is completed, a “range finding” is conducted with teachers and then state benchmarks and rubrics are used for scoring.

- **NM High School Competency Exam**

Test domain specifications for the NMHSCE which describe the specific knowledge and skills that are assessed by the examination were originally developed with the assistance and review of the Statewide Assessment Task Force and their colleagues, and put into place with the first administration of the NMHSCE during the 1987-88 school year. As the exam evolved over the next ten years, new test items were added, old ones replaced, and performance-based test items (open-ended and constructed-response type items) were added. These changes led to a completely revised exam, with new domain specifications, administered first during the 1995-96 school year. Individuals from the State Department of Education, local New Mexico school districts, institutions of higher education, as well as publishers’ representatives were involved in the creation and review of new test item banks as well as new domain specifications for the NMHSCE.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

Each local school district determines the method(s) for assessing student progress in reading at grades one and two. Although the state strongly encourages districts to administer assessments in addition to those required by the state and many districts do, it is not a requirement.

5. *Is the state assessment system **FULLY** aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*
 - *Refining standards*
 - *Revamping assessments*
 - *Adding components to assessments**What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?*

Both the NMAAP and NMHSCE are criterion referenced and are matched to the state standards. State officials are constantly working to create closer alignment, and the high school exam will be changed for the 2001-02 school year to move from a minimum competency test to more a challenging standards assessment, more closely linked with standards and expecting more from students.

6. *What is the state’s approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The state is working on alignment through the gradual replacement of items on the NMAAP and will adjust assessment items as the state content standards and benchmarks are revised. The state has also created item maps to chart specifically which questions address which standards.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

The NMAAP (CTBS augmented) and NMHSCE results are used primarily for accountability purposes and programmatic decisions in accreditation and budget review. See the accountability section for further detail.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

By 2000-01, there will be a statewide reading assessment and by 2001-02, there will be a new high school graduation exam that will more closely match the standards and test higher order skills as opposed to the minimum competency test currently in place. Early childhood and assessment experts are coming together from around the state to design the new reading assessment. These are both in the development stages and specifics can not yet be outlined.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The state has been and is constantly working to bring the assessments into closer alignment with the standards. In addition, the state continues to work with the most remote districts on how to use data so that they can make data based decisions in their educational planning as required by the state.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Local school districts may exempt students from assessments who are identified as either non-English speakers or severely limited English speakers. Students exempted from an assessment due to the language assessment should be given an appropriate alternative assessment in the home language. School districts need not request written approval since state required assessments are used for language screening, but the number of students and test results are reported to the State Department of Education. Special education students are currently exempted on the basis of IEP specifications, but this will be changed as the state Alternate Assessment is instituted. Additionally, these exemptions are reported to the SDE.

Regarding language proficiency, it is recommended that a student take the achievement assessment during the same administration as all other students or be exempted entirely from that test due to oral language proficiency measurements as determined by the state-approved language assessment instrument. Students exempted from the **New Mexico Achievement Assessment Program** (grades 4, 6, and 8) due to limited English skills must be assessed with a standardized test in a language appropriate for each student. No student should undergo a

modified administration of the **writing assessment** due to limited English skills, but rather should have an appropriate alternative assessment in the home language. The state has developed a Spanish language version of the **New Mexico High School Competency Examination** and local districts are advised to keep written records of students who do take the Spanish language version of the NMHSCE, as that information may be needed following audits of student language assessments.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Students needing to take any of the mandated assessments under modified conditions must have those conditions specified in each student's IEP.

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

If an LEP student is exempted from the traditional assessments, the school must administer a norm-referenced or performance-based assessment in the student's home language.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

A task force is working on identifying or developing an alternate assessment for special education students who cannot participate under normal conditions and accommodations. The Bilingual Advisory Committee will recommend a single, norm-referenced instrument for all LEP students, who qualify, to use.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

The expectation is that all students in grades three through ten will be included in the state assessment program. A school must account for 90% of the students through the assessment program or one of the alternatives below before qualifying for incentives.

6. *Are changes planned for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

A task force is working on identifying or developing an alternate assessment for special education students who cannot participate under normal conditions and accommodations.

Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The **New Mexico Assessment** for grades three through nine reports aggregate student scores into four levels of proficiency:

- Beginning step
- Nearing proficiency
- Proficient
- Advanced.

These levels show how well students perform on the NM standards, but the test scores are also reported in terms of the nationally normed portion of the test. The percentages in each performance level were arrived at by dividing the total number of tests in each subject area at each performance level by the number of all tests in all performance levels. The districts were ranked by the percent of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories

The **New Mexico Writing Assessment Program** is scored using a six-point scale with six as the highest score. To pass the **High School Competency Exam**, students must score a 175 on each section of the test and a 3 on the writing exam. Each section ranges from a possible score of 40 to 340 points, depending on the subject tested.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

The state has developed targets for schools and districts for the 1999-2000 school year, and also a new system for the 2000-01 school year that will apply to all schools and districts, regardless of Title I status and will merge the accountability, accreditation and Title I systems currently in place so that data will be tracked in terms of growth. This will be called the Accountability Program. Each school and district will be rated on a points system based on both assessments and non-cognitive indicators. See the accountability program for a full description.

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The percentages in each performance level in the NMAAP were arrived at by dividing the total number of tests in each subject area at each performance level by the number of all tests in all performance levels. The districts were rated by the percent of students in the Proficient and Advanced categories. See the accountability program for a full description of calculations for the current and future accountability systems.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

Only those students not participating in the English or Spanish versions of the state assessments have not been included. Some students from the state's Native American tribes have not been able to participate due to their limited proficiency with English and/or variations in tribal language. Although Spanish-speaking students have been tested in their

native language, this has not been consistent in the past and so these students will not be tracked until the 2000-2001 school year.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

A new system for the 2000-01 school year will apply to all schools and districts, regardless of Title I status and will merge the accountability, accreditation and Title I systems currently in place so that data will be tracked in terms of growth. Each school and district will be rated on a points system based on both assessments and non-cognitive indicators. See the accountability program for a full description.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

In 1998-99, eleven schools were identified as in need of improvement. In 1999-2000, 25 schools were identified as being in this category (see the accountability section). These determinations are based on student assessment scores and non-cognitive indicators.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports*

Students receive New Mexico Achievement Assessment Program norm-referenced comparative scores and performance level reports describing their progress toward state content standards. The percentile ranking, NCE and performance level scores are reported to students. A curriculum analysis will be added this year.

- *School reports*

State statute now requires all schools, school districts and the state to report on five educational indicators: student achievement, student dropout, student attendance, school safety and parent and community involvement.

- *District reports*

The district must report student achievement as measured by the state assessment system and local assessments. The annual school district accountability report called the **School District Report Card**, must include, according to state statute, information on five educational indicators:

1. **Student achievement**
2. **Student dropout,**
3. **Student attendance,**
4. **School safety**

Schools were asked to collect and report information to the State Department of Education for the 1998-99 school year on the following aspects of school safety.

The existence of a school-level safety plan with:

- (a) Prevention programs and activities,
- (b) Policies and procedures, and
- (c) Emergency response procedures;

Responses to questions on the Quality of Education Survey that are related to school safety (Questions 1 and 2);

And the number of police-reported incidences on school property.

5. Parent and community involvement

Schools were asked to collect and report information to the State Department of Education for the 1998-99 school year on the following three aspects of parent and community involvement:

1. The existence of a school-level plan with:

- (a) goals and benchmarks for increasing parent and community involvement in the educational process and school decision-making,
- (b) goals and benchmarks for increasing community partnerships with local businesses and service agencies, and
- (c) provisions for reporting progress in attaining the benchmarks;

2. Responses to questions on the Quality of Education Survey that are related to parent and community involvement; and

3. The existence of a school newsletter that is prepared for multiple audiences and is distributed regularly to the community.

Data on these five indicators were collected for the first time during the 1998-99 school year.

The scores for the NMAAP and the HSCE are also reported with **district rankings**. The ACT is also reported here as the college entrance examination used in New Mexico. Although the ACT is a norm-referenced examination, the ACT is not used as an indicator of the general performance of New Mexico high school students. The ACT is an indicator only of those students expressing an interest in attending college, and how well they might perform at that level.

The results of the **Quality of Education Survey** is also to be included in the accountability report. It is important to note, however, that the survey was not designed as a scientific survey based on probability but rather as a site-level census. The questionnaires include questions in the following areas:

- 1. parent – teacher relationships and communication
- 2. the quality of educational and extracurricular programs
- 3. instructional practices and techniques
- 4. resources
- 5. school personnel, including the principal, and
- 6. parents' views on the teaching staff expectations for students.

The district report cards may also provide information on additional indicators identified in the district Educational Plan for Student Success. However, these indicators must be

submitted to the SDE for review. The report card is further required to include the results of the parent survey on the quality of the schools.

In addition to legislatively mandated student indicators, school districts have requested that other student indicators be included in the state report.

1. Advanced Placement Enrollment Statistics
2. Participation in the New Mexico Scholars Program
3. Enrollment Statistics
4. Student Ethnicity
5. Percentage of Graduating Class Applying to Colleges
6. Percentage of 12th Grade Seniors Who Graduate
7. Financial Indicators

- *State reports*

The **State Accountability Report** presents data for the five indicators outlined above for all 89 New Mexico school districts. In addition, State Statute requires that the Quality of Education Survey be sent home with all students in New Mexico to survey parental attitudes toward their children's education. The results of the statewide questions (questions 1 – 10) from the survey are reported.

Indicators compiled in the annual State Accountability Report also include:

- enrollment trends,
- funding and expenditure levels,
- graduation and college-bound statistics,
- specialized program support and participation levels,
- student performance and
- achievement information.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

Districts are required to either publish test results in a local newspaper or use some other method to distribute achievement data to the public so that parents and the larger community have access to the information. They may be published no later than November 15th of each year.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Due to the high number of small schools in the state, disaggregation does not take place in instances where the n<10 students. However, disaggregated data on ethnicity and gender are reported at the state level but not the district level and all other disaggregated data is made available as requested. A new electronic school data reporting system, however, will allow the state to disaggregate for the number students receiving free and reduced lunches; it has

not been reported yet. Although migrant status has not been reported until this point, the respondent acknowledged that it will need to be addressed by the state in the near future.

5. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

The 1999 Accountability Report for the state included data dated to 1996-97.

6. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The test results for special education students have been reported, and the 1999-2000 school year will be the first time that scores for limited English proficiency students will be reported, again due to the new electronic reporting system in the state.

7. *What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

The state has worked with the districts on how to use data so that they can make data based decisions in their educational planning as required by the state. In addition, a school or district in program improvement must conduct a needs assessment and create an improvement plan based on the data that demonstrated the school or district to be probationary. The SDE will review the plan and give final approval or feedback. Once approved, the plan is implemented and the school or district is re-evaluated at the end of one year.

8. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

Specific changes have not been outlined to coincide with the changes in assessment and accountability.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

Reporting on the five aspects outlined has become a central focus in the state.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

The accountability system remains in a transitional process, but has developed definitions of adequate yearly progress and program improvement based on multiple indicators, both

cognitive and non-cognitive. The accreditation levels will be altered for the 2000-2001 school year.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The HSCE is administered for the first time in tenth grade and students must pass all six sections in order to graduate. Students who do not pass the first time may take the exam in the 11th grade and twice in the 12th grade before the graduation deadline.

Seniors who do not pass the examination but fulfill the other course and credit requirements are given the option of graduating with a certificate of completion or returning within the next five years to retake the exam, pass it, and receive a diploma. Students also may receive an exemption, waiver, or modification to the exam based on their enrollment in bilingual education or special education programs. The NMHSCE assesses competencies in the content areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as written composition. Students take the test for the first time in the tenth grade and must pass all six subtests in order to receive a high school diploma. Sophomores who fail any part of the NMHSCE have another chance in their junior year and two chances in their senior year to successfully complete the exam before graduation deadlines. Student not passing the exam receive a **Certificate of Completion** instead of a diploma.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The components of the New Mexico Accountability System for 1999-2000 are as follows:

- Student Assessment
 - CTBS/TerraNova norm referenced portion (grades 4, 6, and 8 for 1998-1999 and grades 3 through 9 for all subsequent years)
 - CTBS/TerraNova criterion referenced portion (grades 4, 6, and 8 for 1998-1999 and grades 3 through 9 for all subsequent years)
 - NMHSCE (grade 10)
 - Subsets to be included: reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
 - The writing assessment (WAP) will be included when scores are comparable from year to year
 - Non-Cognitive Measures: Student Attendance and Dropout
- School safety, parent/community involvement and other curricular indicators will be added as indicators over time.

Schools have been considered for interventions and incentives using the following categories:

1. Exemplary

CTBS (NRT):	2 or more standard errors above the predicted score
CTBS (CRT):	>90% of all students and each subgroup score proficient or above
NMHSCE:	Average score of 190 or above

Alternate Assessments:	TBD
Dropout:	0% in grades 7 and 8, 1% or less in grades 9-12
Attendance:	94% or higher
2. Good	
CTBS (NRT):	between 1 and 2 standard errors above the predicted score
CTBS (CRT):	66% - 90% of all students and each subgroup score proficient or above
NMHSCE:	Average score of 180 to 189.9
Alternate Assessments:	TBD
Dropout:	0.1% - 1.0% in grades 7 and 8, 1.1% - 4.0% in grades 9-12
Attendance:	94% or higher
3. Acceptable	
CTBS (NRT):	within one standard error above the predicted score
CTBS (CRT):	40% - 65% of all students and each subgroup score proficient or above
NMHSCE:	Average score of 175 to 179.9
Alternate Assessments:	TBD
Dropout:	1.1% - 2.5% in grades 7 and 8, 4.1% - 7.0% in grades 9-12
Attendance:	94% or higher
4. Probationary	
CTBS (NRT):	below one standard error above the predicted score
CTBS (CRT):	<40% of all students and each subgroup score proficient or above
NMHSCE:	Average score of < 175
Alternate Assessments:	TBD
Dropout:	>2.5% in grades 7 and 8, >7.0% in grades 9-12
Attendance:	< 94%

NOTE: The following components are being reviewed and considered by the SBE.

The baseline year for these ratings is the 1998-99 school year. In the future, subgroups will include special education students, students with limited English proficiency and economically disadvantaged students. If failure to meet the attendance rate is the sole reason that a school is rated probationary, then the requirement is waived. The CTBS (NRT) includes: reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, while the CTBS (CRT) combines language arts and reading. The NMHSCE includes all five subject areas.

Exemplary Rating:	at least 50% of the data elements must be rated exemplary and 0% probationary
Exemplary AYP:	maintain exemplary status
Good Rating:	at least 50% of the data elements must be good or higher and 0% probationary
Good AYP:	improve on 5% of the data elements, maintain outstanding status or reach exemplary status
Acceptable Rating:	more than 40% of the data elements are acceptable or higher

- Acceptable AYP:** improve on 10% of the data elements, maintain acceptable status or reach outstanding status
- Probationary Rating:** 60% or more of the data elements must be probationary
- Probationary AYP:** improve on 50% of the data elements rated as probationary, maintain 80% of the remaining data elements, cannot drop any data elements that are acceptable or above into probationary or reach acceptable status

Adequate Yearly Progress has been defined as the following:

1. A school's actual assessment score is equal to or above the predicted score on the CTBS or the actual score is moving closer to the predicted score for those below prediction in the cohort groups
2. A school experiences an increase in the percentage of students in the proficient or above rating using cohort data
3. A school experiences an increase in the average scale score on the NMHSCE from year to year
4. There is a decrease in the percentage of students dropping out from year to year
5. The attendance rate has increased or remained the same from year to year.

The New Mexico state incentives program under the **Incentives for School Improvement Act (Chapter 22)** uses the following indicators:

1. student performance on standardized tests at the three designated grade levels
 2. student performance on the HSCE at grade 10.
- The Incentives Program also takes into account variation among schools in terms of SES, as well as the number of LEP students and student mobility.

The state has used the following process for identifying **High Improving Schools**:

1. Student assessment data from the CTBS and NMHSCE was aggregated to the school level
2. The mean scale scores for each grade and subject area (reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies) were determined
3. Separate regression calculations were made for each subject area and grade level to determine a school's level of improvement and to give consideration for socio-economic factors (student achievement scores are statistically adjusted for LEP, mobility and SES (free and reduced lunch) status)
4. To put variables on the same scale, standardized residuals were determined for each subject area for each year
5. The difference in average residuals for each grade between the previous two years was used to determine change or the "**school change score.**"

The school change scores are listed from greatest to lowest improvement so that the schools with the top 10% of students can be identified. These high improving schools with 10% of student enrollment qualify for monetary rewards. Each school receiving an award is responsible for assembling a committee to decide how the money will be used. State law specifies that the money may not be used for salaries, salary increases or bonuses.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Districts are rated using the same process and scale as schools, simply aggregating school scores and data to the district level.

All school districts are participating in the ‘Standards for Excellence’ accreditation process. The process requires all districts to:

- 1) focus on student learning for all students,
- 2) shift from point-in-time evaluation to ongoing evaluation,
- 3) refocus from process evaluation to student performance evaluation, and
- 4) move from periodic data review to trend analysis and meaningful interpretation of data.

Ranking

Districts have been ranked statewide on norm referenced, state mandated tests and college entrance examinations. In addition, rankings are done for student dropout and returning teacher salaries. School districts may find themselves tied for, say, first place or third place with another district. If a district ties with another district, both districts will receive the same rank. For the norm referenced (standardized) examinations (CTBS and ACT), the districts’ simple rankings are presented within clusters, or groupings, of similar school districts. Districts are then ranked within their respective cluster.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

Schools and districts must meet absolute targets for the 1999-2000 school year. The new system will chart growth in 2000-01.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

The expectation is that all students in grades three through ten will be included in the state assessment program. If a school cannot account for 10% of the students through the assessment program or one of the alternatives below, the school will not qualify for incentives. Students will be included as follows:

- CTBS: students will be included if they take the assessment under standardized conditions
- CTBS Plus Custom (criterion-referenced) Assessment: all students will be included (regardless of modifications)
- Spanish Language Assessment: the Bilingual Advisory Committee will recommend a single, norm-referenced instrument for all LEP students, who qualify, to use

- Special Education: A task force is working on identifying or developing an alternate assessment for special education students who cannot participate under normal conditions and accommodations.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

They are not aligned and use different definitions for AYP. However, they will be aligned under the new system for 2000-01.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

The following subgroups will be identified at each school and their progress will be assessed under the accountability program:

- Special Education Students
- Limited English Proficiency Students
- Economically Disadvantaged Students (defined by FRPL)

All Students, including these subgroups are required to make adequate yearly progress.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

All schools receiving state or federal funding must comply with state and federal requirements, so involvement in the assessment and accountability systems will vary by school using this criteria.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Effective for the 2000-01 school year, schools and districts, including charter districts and charter schools will be monitored and classified using a new **Accreditation Classifications Rubric**. The Accreditation Classifications will be as follows:

- Level 1: Exemplary, Good, Acceptable
- Level 2: Probationary Level
- Level 3: Disapproved.

The Criteria upon which the classifications are determined include:

1. **Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) Goals:** The school or district must show that there is documentation of student progress toward the EPSS goals and that the budget reflects specific monetary resources budgeted and expended for the implementation of strategies for each EPSS goal.

Exemplary, Good and Acceptable: 2 points

Probationary Approval: 1 point
Disapproved: 0 points

2. **Statewide Indicators:** (Student Achievement, Attendance, Community Involvement, Dropout, and Safety) demonstrates that the school has 50% of its data points in exemplary and 0% data points in probationary.

Exemplary: 4 points
Good: 3 points
Acceptable: 2 points
Probationary Approval: 1 points
Disapproved: 0 points

3. **Regulatory Compliance:** The school or district must show that through district support that school/district meets with few exceptions the requirements of the SBE regulations, federal regulations, and state statutes as applicable.

Exemplary: 2 points
Good: 2 points
Acceptable: 2 points
Probationary Approval: 1 points
Disapproved: 0 points

When finding the sum of the above outlined points structure for each Accreditation Classification, the following rubric is used to determine the **Total Rating** and **Recommended Accreditation Classification:**

- 8 = Exemplary
- 7 = Good
- 6 = Acceptable
- 3-5 = Probationary
- 0-2 = Disapproved.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Creating a single system of accountability from three systems: accountability and incentives, accreditation and Title I will be the challenge for the current and coming years.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Phase I – Performance Warning

Based on the process used for the New Mexico Accountability Program, schools and districts that are on probationary status during their first year shall be placed on performance warning. The school and district and the EPSS coordinator are notified of this designation by the state.

Phase II – School Improvement Designation

Schools and districts on performance warning that continue in probationary status after one year are candidates for school improvement because the required adequate yearly progress has not been made (improving from probationary status to acceptable). A hearing before the Educational Standards Commission (ESC) may be requested by the school or district to provide additional data. The ESC will advise the SBE as to its recommendation for the school or district, and the SBE formally designates schools and districts in need of improvement. The district superintendent and LEA president will hold a public meeting to explain the rating to the community and collect input on improvement. The school or district will then conduct a needs assessment and create an improvement plan based on the data that demonstrated the school or district to be probationary. The SDE will review the plan and give final approval or feedback. Once approved, the plan is implemented and the school or district is re-evaluated at the end of one year.

Phase III – Second and Third Years of School Improvement Designation

All school improvement districts and schools will remain in that category for at least two years but no more than three years. Schools are re-evaluated at the end of the second year and their status is determined. If the school or district has made AYP for two consecutive years, it is removed from improvement. If not, they continue for a third year if their status improved to the acceptable level for one of the two years. If not, they are placed in Corrective Action.

Phase IV – Corrective Action

The SDE submits those schools meeting the criteria for corrective action to the ESC for recommendation. Schools and districts may hold a hearing to provide additional data. The ESC then advises the SBE as to its findings. The SBE then approves a *diagnostic team*, which will recommend one of the following corrective actions to the state superintendent:

- SDE takes over supervision of the school
- The diagnostic team develops a corrective plan of action
- Budget decisions are reviewed and approved by the SDE
- SDE develops curricula and/or a staff development plan for the school
- Assign school staff to study schools that are “high performing”
- Provide SDE staff to perform functions in the school
- Require the school to offer additional learning opportunities and interventions.

Until AYP is achieved two out of three years, a school or district will remain in corrective action. At any time after one full year has elapsed, the ESC may recommend that the district or school be reconstituted or closed, that staff be replaced or that the structure be reorganized.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

The state has developed the process and makes the determination for both jurisdictions.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*
 - *Evaluation and Planning*

- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Once a school or district is designated as in need of improvement a school support team member and the SDE liaison work with the school or district to improve their status. The liaison is often the SDE district EPSS coordinator.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

State designated personnel (school support team members, a diagnostic team and the SDE liaison) provide assistance. The diagnostic team is to reflect the ethnic and linguistic composition of the student population.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

Similar support structures are provided for both, but additional support is provided for those identified as low performing.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

A school or district in this category must demonstrate adequate yearly progress (improving their status to acceptable) and maintain that progress for two out of three consecutive years in order to be removed from that designation.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

The school or district in program improvement must conduct a needs assessment and create an improvement plan based on the data that demonstrated the school or district to be probationary. The SDE will review the plan and give final approval or feedback. Once approved, the plan is implemented and the school or district is re-evaluated at the end of one year.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The process is under review and may change in the coming years.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

The state assessment system, including:

- CTBS (NRT) and (CRT)
- NMHSCE

Are used to determine AYP and program improvement.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following?*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?

Although a transitional plan for 1999-2000, the state has developed three performance levels for students under Title I:

Partially proficient: Percentile ranking of 1-39 on the CTBS
Categorization of “emergent readers” on the state reading assessment or scoring 1 on the optional reading assessment
Scoring a 1 or 2 on the writing assessment
Not passing the reading or math portions of the NMHSCE on the first attempt

Proficient: Percentile ranking of 40-59 on the CTBS
Categorization of “competent readers” on the state reading assessment or scoring 2 on the optional reading assessment
Scoring a 3 or 4 on the writing assessment
Passing the reading and math portions of the NMHSCE on the first attempt

Advanced: Percentile ranking of 60-99 on the CTBS
Categorization of “reads easily and fluently” on the state reading assessment or scoring 3 on the optional reading assessment
Scoring a 5 or 6 on the writing assessment
Passing all portions of the NMHSCE on the first attempt.

Using these levels, schools must have a lower percentage of students in the partially proficient range than in 1995 of its total enrollment on the CTBS. In the case of districts, adequate yearly progress is defined as having the percentage of students in the partially proficient range decrease every year after 1995 in all grades tested on the CTBS.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts play a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The district identifies schools that have not made adequate yearly progress according to the state definition by reporting those schools to the state. Schools may also appeal these decisions to the district. The state identifies districts for program improvement.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Schools and districts that have not decreased their percentage of partially proficient students since 1995 by at least 5% within the first two years will automatically be identified as in need of improvement. Additional improvement plans also must be written once identified. Schools and districts can get out of improvement if they make AYP for two of the three years following identification.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

School support teams provide the requested assistance through the state School Improvement Unit, similar to the system outlined in the accountability section. Regional offices are not used. Additional monetary awards have not been allocated, but such schools were given priority if they applied for CSRD funding. Districts have not received similar support.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

See previous question and answer.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

They were not an important element, according to the Title I respondent.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Title I will be included in the new accreditation system for all schools and districts and these systems will all be aligned for the 2000-01 school year.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

Although not for 1999-2000, they will be aligned for 2000-2001.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The Title I and accountability programs have been working to bring the systems into alignment and this has been a primary focus and challenge for each of the programs.

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