



Education in New Mexico

The New Mexico Race Matters Coalition works to eliminate structural racism so all New Mexico children may reach their full potential.

New Mexico is a minority/majority multicultural state where 67% of the children are racial minorities: 51% are Hispanic, 12% are Native American, 2% are African American and 2% are Asian, while only 33% are white non-Hispanic. Despite their high numbers, children of color in New Mexico tend not to fare as well as their white counterparts due to the numerous disparities they face.

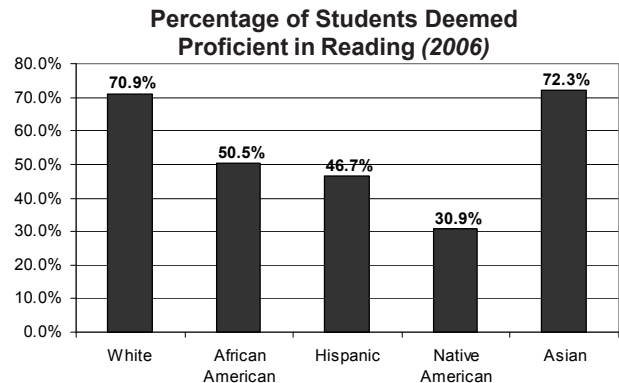
Disparities are often created and maintained both intentionally and inadvertently through policies and practices that contain barriers to opportunities. We call this structural racism. Structural racism is evident in New Mexico as unequal outcomes in the health, success and wellness of children of color. Because of its negative impacts on behavioral health across generations and along the life span, structural racism should be eliminated in New Mexico.

National Data:

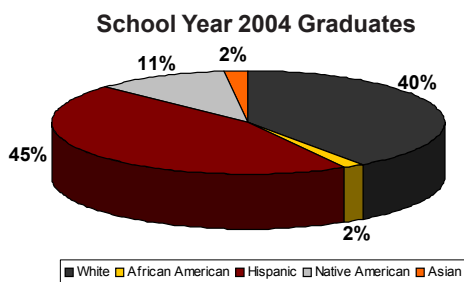
- Black and Latino students are more educationally segregated now than two decades ago.¹
- Whites and Asians represent greater a greater portion of those who participate in and complete higher education than African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. According to one study, the single largest barrier to college entrance for African Americans and Hispanics is high school completion. While 16% of all 18 year olds in the U.S. are Latino, only 7% of the college degrees in the U.S. are awarded to Latinos. African Americans represent 14% of 18 year olds and only 10% of the college degrees awarded.²

New Mexico Data:

- Of the 130 schools in New Mexico previously deemed “in need of improvement,” only slight increases for all ethnic categories in both reading and math proficiency took place from 2005 to 2006. The adequate yearly progress target in reading and math proficiency is 100%; however, there are large disparities between white children and children in other ethnic categories in both reading and math.³
- Fewer than 44% of Hispanic, Black, and Native-American 4th graders were proficient in math compared to 70% of white and Asian youth on the NM State Assessment Tests.⁴



Source: *Making Schools Work -2206, NMPED and Making the Grade: An Analysis of AYP and New Mexico's Schools in Need of Improvement; New Mexico Public Education Department, October 20, 2006.*



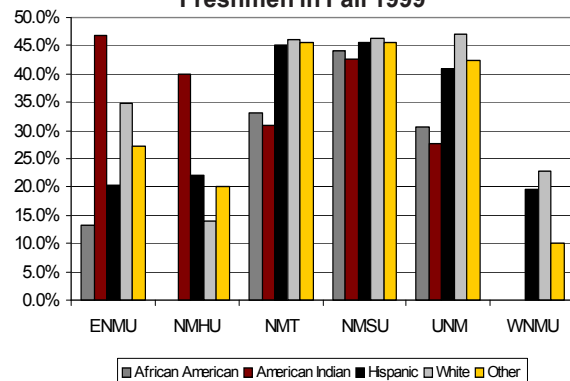
Source: *New Mexico Public Education Department*

- Graduation and dropout rates differ across the different ethnic groups. Hispanic students show the highest dropout rates, the lowest graduation rates and the least number of transfers.⁵
- In 2002, Hispanics had the highest dropout rate by ethnicity at 29.6% while whites were at 15.1%.⁶
- What some people consider de facto segregation a historical issue, it continues

to be a problem within the Albuquerque Public Schools system (APS).⁷ Northeast Heights residents are predominantly Caucasian and middle- to upper-middle class, while South Valley residents are predominantly Hispanic and lower-middle to working class.⁸

- According to the state's Equity Index for Gifted Programs, Caucasians and Asians are over-represented, and Hispanics, American Indians and Blacks are under-represented in the gifted programs in New Mexico schools.⁹
- Of the 2,108 elementary school teachers within APS, 63% self-identify as Caucasian,

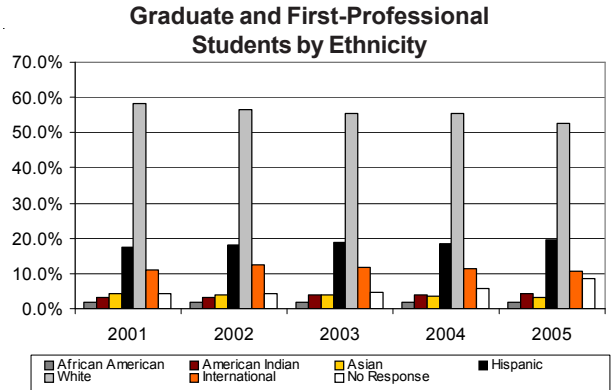
6-Year Graduation Rates by Ethnicity of Students Who Were First-time, Full-time Freshmen in Fall 1999



Source: *UNM Provost's Report, Management Dashboard Data Report: January 8, 2007, pp7.*

35% as Hispanic, and 2% as Native American, Asian or Black. Of the 1,687 secondary school teachers (middle and high school), 72% identify as Caucasian, 25% as Hispanic, and 3% as Native American, Asian or Black. When grouped together, 28% of APS teachers are people of color. The APS student population is very different: 64% of students are children of color.¹⁰

- At UNM, whites far outnumber other ethnic groups in graduate and professional school. In 2005, 52.2% of those enrolled in the graduate program were white, 19.4% were Hispanics, 3.2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.3% were American Indian, and 1.6% were African American.¹¹
- The level of student access to and success at our community colleges mirrors the gender and ethnic profiles of our adult population. In response to the Accountability in Government Act, student access and success are two of the community college's performance measures for the state. A positive indication of success with graduates of color is that the percentage of graduates from ethnic minority groups meets and exceeds that of the adult population. In New Mexico, the 2004 community college profile showed that 41% of the student body was Hispanic, 11% were Native American, 3% were Black, were 2% Asian, and 44% were white. Since only 14% of fulltime community college students graduate, this has a significant impact on communities and families of color.¹²



Source: UNM Provost's Report: Graduate Education Profile; April 11, 2006; p.6

Two True Stories about Structural Racism in New Mexico:

A parent tells this story:

In 2002, we moved our daughter Chloe into the Albuquerque Public School system. Chloe was just entering the 6th grade. She is a tall African-American girl who had a history of good academic performance. She was kind and respectful towards others, and was very excited to make new friends and meet her new teacher. After a couple weeks at school, Chloe came home complaining that some girls were trying to start a fight with her. The following day, the girls began to push Chloe and she pushed back at one of the girls to get her away. All the girls involved were taken to the principal's office but Chloe was the only girl who was disciplined with suspension. We were very concerned about this and went to speak to the assistant principal. The assistant principal stated, "She is a big girl and the other kids are intimidated by her and that she needs to keep space around her when she is near other kids."

We decided to let this incident go, but more incidents keep occurring. Every time, Chloe was disciplined with suspension even though she continued to get good grades and made the honor role. We noticed that she was becoming discouraged and that's when she told us that whenever the Anglo kids got into trouble they were disciplined with mediation. Chloe's father and I began making regular visits to the school and talking with the administration. Finally, we seemed able to convince them that our daughter was a good kid. They changed their disciplinary actions toward her as a result.

It is our belief that our daughter was stereotyped because she was above average in height and was one of the few African-American girls at her middle school. We feel that this stereotyping was the result of untrained administrators who projected their own, however unintentional, biases.

We will continue to worry about the other children of color at the middle school. We were lucky we could take time off from our jobs and had the knowledge it takes to confront the system so we could deal with this problem.

Students Need Teachers Who Look Like Them

A parent tells this story:

My son dropped out of high school in the fall of his senior year, only four credits short of graduation, because he felt he received unfair treatment at his school because he is Hispanic. He is a bright boy who had loved math in middle school. This was due in large part to his 7th grade math teacher Mr. Gonzales. Having a mentor who connected with him and was a role model of his ethnicity made all the difference.

But there were no role models of color present in his predominantly white high school. He felt he was treated differently because of his ethnicity and began acting out. When he got into trouble, he felt that he was treated more harshly than the white kids who got in trouble for doing the same things. He got to where he hated going to school and finally decided it was best to quit. He did go on to earn his GED, but the bad taste of being treated with less respect than his white peers will always stay with him.

Recommendations:

- Include anti-racism as an explicit learning outcome for all students and staff in K-12.
- Training in anti-racism, cultural competency and learning style differences should be mandatory for New Mexico teacher.
- Transform parent-teacher organizations into parent-teacher-student equity taskforces.
- All schools should report dropout rates and disciplinary action by race so districts and schools can be held accountable.

Endnotes

¹ (Kozol, Jonathan, Still Separate, Still Unequal: American's Educational Apartheid, 2005)

² (Kelly, Patrick 2005. "America Becomes More Diverse: The Impact of State Higher Inequality." National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Boulder, CO: Lumina Foundation for Education")

³ (Making the Grade: An Analysis of AYP and New Mexico's Schools in Need of Improvement: New Mexico Public Education Department, October 2006)

⁴ (NM State Assessment Test Results 81805.pdf)

⁵ (APS "Cohort Status Report," Graduation and Dropout Status for Students in the Classes of 2001, 2002 and 2003)

⁶ (www.abqpartnership.org/ag04.pdf)

⁷ (Dominguez and Contreras, 2004; Contreras, 2004)

⁸ (APS's "Organization and Structure for Success," Town Hall Report: Commissioned by New Mexico First (September 2005))

⁹ (Ibid)

¹⁰ (Ibid)

¹¹ (UNM Provost's Report: Graduate Education Profile; April 2006, p. 6)

¹² (Meeting Our Mission-New Mexico's Community Colleges 2005-2006 Annual Accountability Report)

This fact sheet was developed by members of the New Mexico Race Matters Coalition. The New Mexico Race Matters Initiative is funded in part by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD). This fact sheet, as well as others, is available online at www.nmvoices.org.

