

EMERGING STRONGER



CHARTING A COURSE TOWARD BETTER STUDENT OUTCOMES



ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 -2024

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EMERGING STRONGER

Community Helping APS Chart a Course Toward Better Student Outcomes

Nearly a year ago, we reached out to our community with a question. What should our students know and be able to do when they leave Albuquerque Public Schools?

Members of our school board hosted community conversations at schools around Albuquerque. They met with families new to this country, Spanish speakers, tribal representatives, neighborhood groups, non-profits, and student organizations. We followed those up with online surveys, hoping to engage as many of you as possible. We gathered input from 2,024 parents, students, educators, and other community members.

So what did we hear?

You want students to be able to read, write, and communicate, among a host of other priorities. And you want them to leave APS with confidence, empathy, and time and self-management skills.

We used your input as the foundation for our new five-year goals and to establish the values we will cling to as we set out to make those goals a reality.

How do we achieve the goals? The strategic plan is our road map. It focuses everything we do at APS around our core mission of educating students, ensures that everyone at the district knows their role in achieving the goals, and demands that people be held accountable when they don't.

This is the first time the APS administration and board have collaborated on a plan that assigns specific actions with the expectation that student outcomes will improve over five years. The lives of our students will improve if we succeed, but we can't do it alone. We need everyone from parents and community leaders to our unions and elected officials to work with us to make this happen.

Respectfully,

Scott
Scott Elder
APS Superintendent

OUR COMMITMENT

GOAL I: READING

The percentage of third-grade students identified in the Yazzie-Martinez decision plus African American students who demonstrate grade level proficiency or above on the state English Language Arts (ELA) summative assessment will increase at least 10 points by 2028.

GOAL II: MATHEMATICS

The percentage of eighth-grade students identified in the Yazzie-Martinez decision plus African American students who demonstrate grade level proficiency or above on the state mathematics summative assessment will increase at least 10 points by 2028.

GOAL III: POST-SECONDARY READINESS

The percentage of high school graduates who earn credit in two or more Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Dual Credit courses, or earn an industry certification or Bilingual Seal, will increase by 2028.

GOAL IV: SKILLS, HABITS, AND MINDSETS

Increase the percentage of students who demonstrate the skills, mindsets, and habits most aligned to life success: perseverance, self-regulation, self-efficacy, and social awareness.

These goals represent our commitment to better prepare our students and give them the tools they need to succeed in life. The goals will be our North Star, guiding our district's work and helping us align our resources with the outcomes we all want.

RULES OF THE ROAD

WRAPAROUND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

APS will operate with an equitable distribution of school and/or community-based wraparound and support systems.

EQUITY

District resources will be allocated equitably.

HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Our curriculum and instruction will be district and standards-aligned, challenging, culturally and linguistically responsive, and differentiated to meet the academic needs of all students.

VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT

We welcome the voices and engagement of parents, guardians, students, and our community as we make decisions that affect school and district operations.

STAFF SUPPORT

APS will seek input from staff and provide them with adequate resources before launching new initiatives in schools. Those resources will include high-quality professional development, essential materials, and staffing needed to get the job done.

WE MUST DO BETTER

Success stories abound at APS, but too many of our students continue to struggle.

We have amazing success stories at APS, just look at our Class of 2023.

Evan Claar, one of Eldorado High School's National Indigenous Scholars, got into Stanford University. Eri McClain-Yu, a fencer and an Early College Academy graduate, is at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Abocha Ebakyelo, a refugee who fled war in Africa and enrolled at Del Norte his freshman year not knowing English, graduated in May and is planning to attend Central New Mexico Community College.

And Jaqueline Ortiz, the daughter of migrants from Mexico, has already earned 91 college credits and is at New Mexico State University's nursing program. The College and Career High School graduate's ultimate goal is to become a mid-wife.

These resilient students overcame a global pandemic and, like countless others over the years, thrived at APS. But many others are struggling, and the pandemic has only widened the gap for those students in Albuquerque and across the country.

Statewide testing data shows that 32.6 percent of APS third-graders are proficient in English Language Arts, while 19.6 percent of our eighth graders are proficient in Math.

The gap between students who are economically disadvantaged and those who aren't is huge. Same goes for students of color versus their white counterparts and for our English language learners.

These results are unacceptable. We can and must do more to ensure that all of our students have the tools they need. Our city's future depends on it – as does the future of our state and nation.

We have a plan to improve outcomes for all of our students, a plan that sets goals that will be monitored and measured.

All of our students can succeed. We, as a district, must focus all of our resources to help them do that. We have to challenge them, step in when they're having a hard time, and provide them with an environment that allows them to blossom. But that, by itself, won't be enough.

We need parents to partner with us by prioritizing education and ensuring that their children are in school every day, that they're doing homework, and tapping into available resources if they're struggling.

We need the community to help us keep our schools safe so that students aren't worrying about their safety when they should be focused on their algebra assignment or the essay they need to write.

We need to come together and do our part to provide every one of our students with the high-quality public education they deserve. We will succeed or fail in this endeavor as one.

APS BY THE NUMBERS

THIRD-GRADERS PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

32.6%

EIGHTH-GRADERS PROFICIENT IN MATH

19.6%

NM-MSSA SPRING 2022

CHRONICALLY ABSENT STUDENTS

43%

APS ATTENDANCE FILES 2021-2022

ENROLLED IN COLLEGE THE FALL AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

53%

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE 2019-2020

AP COURSE ENROLLMENT

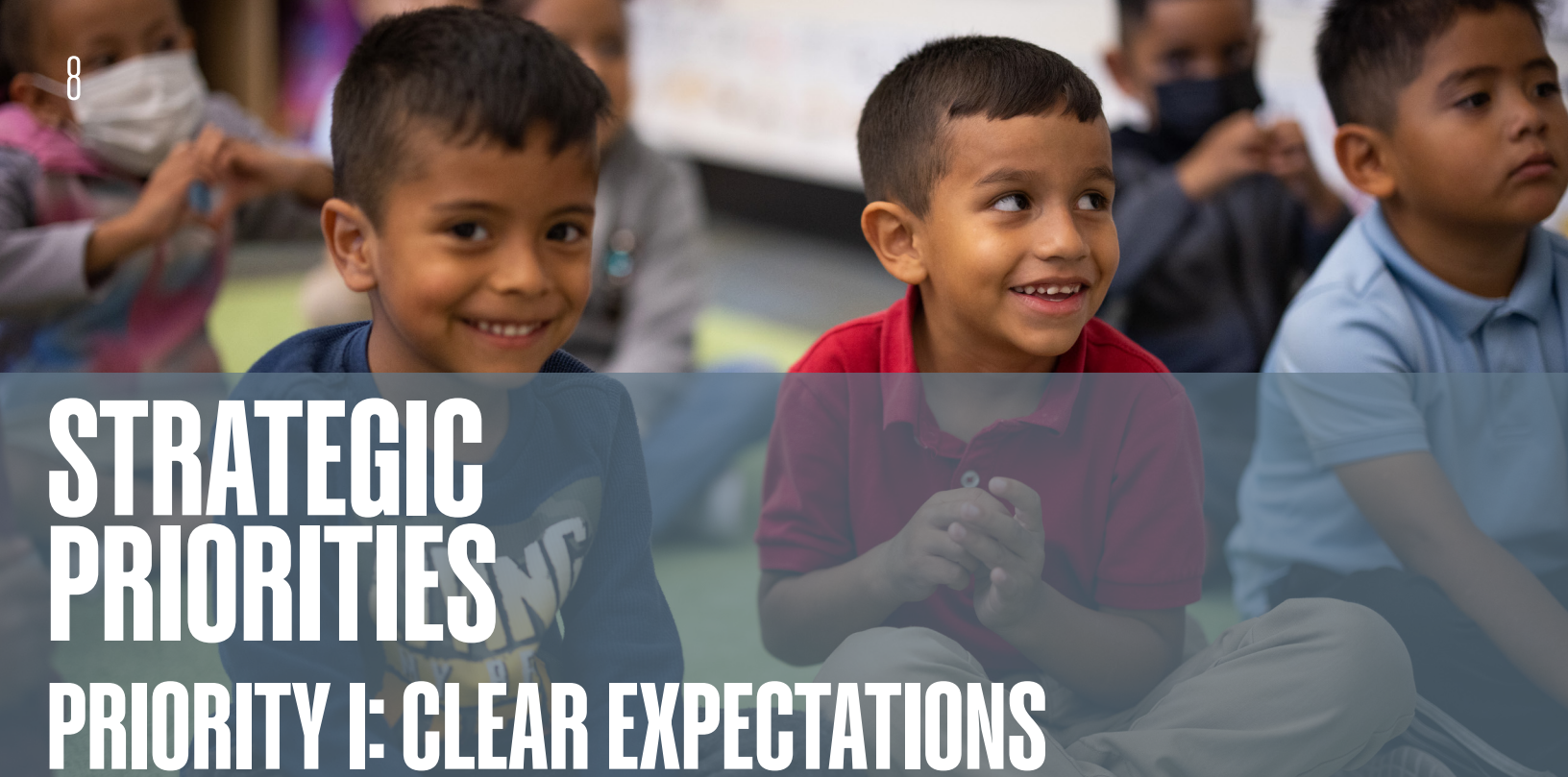
8,701

APS COURSE GRADES FILES 2021-2022

AP EXAM PASS RATE

52%

COLLEGE BOARD 2021-2022



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY I: CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Why

- We believe every child can learn and has the right to a high-quality public education.
- We owe it to each one of our students to do everything we can to provide them with the tools they will need to be successful in life.
- If we want to move the needle for our students in any meaningful way, we need to set high expectations for ourselves and for them and aim for dramatic gains.
- We need to all be pulling in the same direction in order to achieve the board’s ambitious five-year goals.
- We won’t reach those goals unless we prioritize accountability. Without it, the temptation to throw up our hands and return to business as usual will be too great.

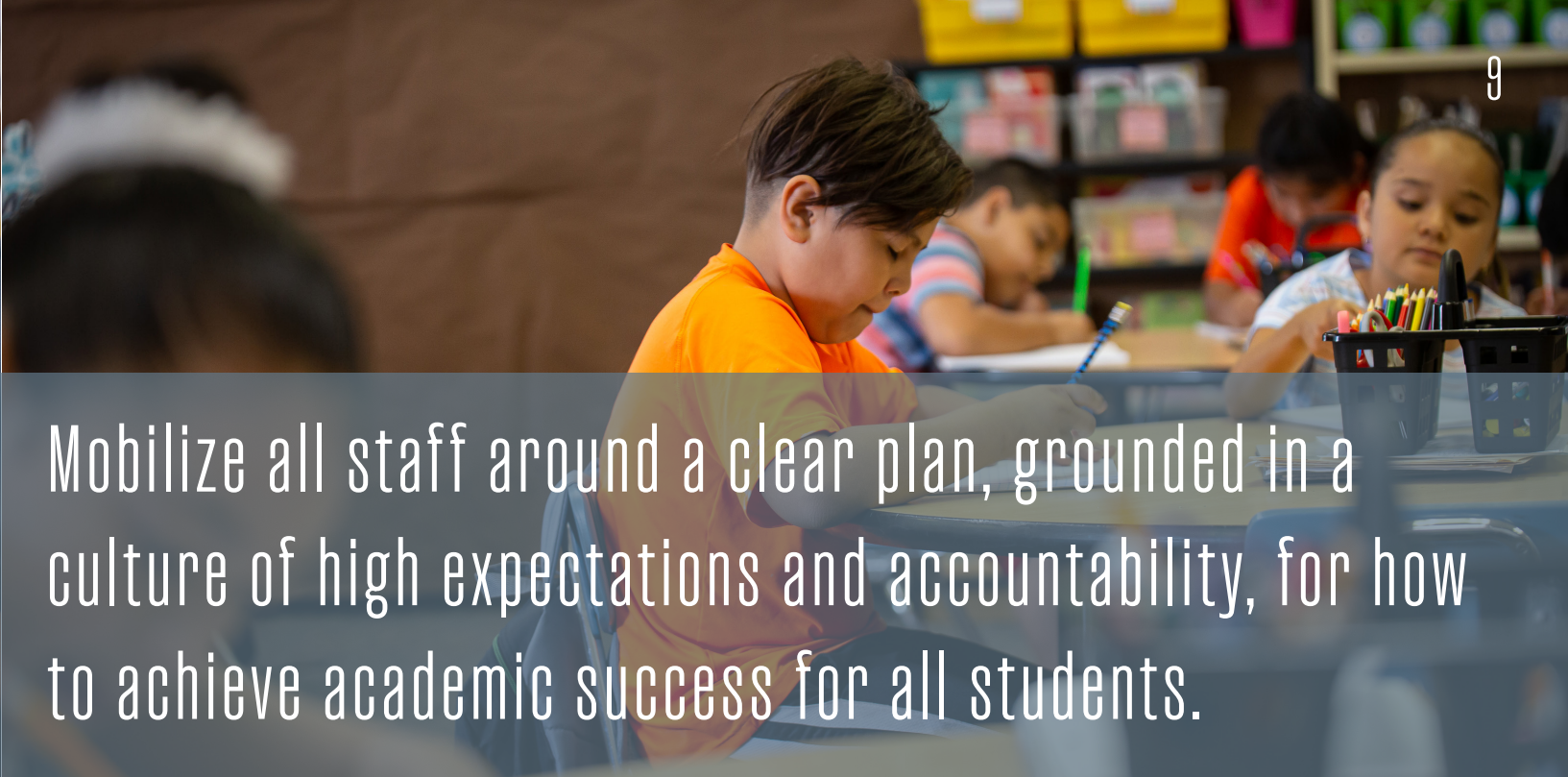
“EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.”
– NELSON MANDELA

WHY ARE OUR MATH AND LITERACY GOALS FOCUSED ON YAZZIE-MARTINEZ STUDENTS ?

In 2018, a judge in Santa Fe ruled that New Mexico isn’t doing enough to provide a sufficient education to Native Americans, English learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged children, and students with disabilities. The landmark Yazzie-Martinez ruling requires us to do more for those at-risk students.

We know our district can’t improve student outcomes in a meaningful way without improving the outcomes of our Yazzie-Martinez groups and our Black students, who are also struggling. Collectively they make up about 70% of our students.

If we can improve instruction for those who are struggling, those who are not will also benefit. All students are important, and we are committed to helping each and every one of them succeed.



Mobilize all staff around a clear plan, grounded in a culture of high expectations and accountability, for how to achieve academic success for all students.

How

- We will vigorously communicate our goals and strategic plan to ensure that all 12,000 APS employees, the families of our 70,000 students, and our entire community is aware of where we’re headed and how we plan to get there. We will be clear about our expectations and upfront about everyone’s roles and responsibilities as we cultivate buy-in for the journey we are embarking on.
- We will work with our schools, teachers, students, and families to refresh our vision and mission statements to reflect our commitment to high expectations for all students and staff and elevate the needs of students, especially low-income, Native, Black, and Hispanic students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.
- We will create a report card to track the progress we are making on our goals and our strategic plan, and we will be transparent with staff, students, families, and our community on that progress. We will use that report card to hold ourselves accountable and to help us decide when we need to pivot because something we’re doing isn’t working.
- We will make it clear what decisions are to be made at the district level and which ones are made at the school level. As we’re making those decisions, we will strive to give the staff at our schools a voice in decisions that impact the classroom and to ensure that we’re being responsive to the needs of schools.
- We will continue to invest in our principals to make them stronger school leaders and we will do a better job of managing them and providing them the support they need so that they can transform their schools and get them on track to meet our goals.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY II: RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION

Support leaders and teachers to provide students with rigorous, culturally sustaining, grade-level instruction that leverages high-quality instructional materials and is continually responsive to students' progress.

Why

- In 2018, a judge ruled that New Mexico isn't providing a sufficient education to at-risk students, including Native Americans, English learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged children, and students with disabilities. The landmark Yazzie-Martinez ruling requires schools to do more to educate these at-risk students.
- Most of our students aren't at grade level in Math or English Language Arts, according to state assessments. And while that has been the case for a while, the pandemic has made the situation worse. Nationally, students lost ground in reading and math, among other subjects.
- A company brought in to talk to APS students, parents, and staff to give us a sense of what we're doing well and what we need to improve on found that our students want more rigor in their coursework. They are asking to be challenged, and we have to deliver on that. Among the company's other findings:
 - We need to do a better job of using high-quality instructional materials in our classrooms to ensure that students are being challenged and that they're doing grade-level work.
 - We need to provide better and more frequent professional development in order to improve student outcomes.
 - We need to do a better job of holding ourselves accountable.

How

- We will insist that students be taught math and English Language Arts at grade level and that principals are supporting this work.
- We will have high expectations for all students and ensure equitable access to high-quality instructional materials and effective instruction. We will use culturally relevant materials that reflect our diverse student body.
- We will ensure that teachers have access to pacing guides in math and English Language Arts to help keep them on track so that when they reach the end of the year their students will be ready to move on to the next grade.
- We will make sure that our math and English Language Arts teachers have the training they need to interpret the various assessments given to their students so that they can use those results to understand what is and isn't working and pivot to provide students with the instruction they need to learn the material.
- We will prioritize professional development for our educators to ensure they have the skills they need to get students where they should be in math and English Language Arts.
- We will do a better job serving our special education students. Specifically, we will provide the services and training necessary to effectively educate students with disabilities in regular classrooms where possible. When a student's disability prevents instruction in a regular classroom, we will provide specialized settings and programs.
- We will come up with a consistent grading system that accurately measures student knowledge and skills across the district so that an A at one school means the same as an A at any other APS school.

"IF YOU DON'T GET OUT THERE AND TRY TO SOLVE YOUR OWN PROBLEMS, IT'S NEVER GOING TO CHANGE."

-DOLORES HUERTA

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY III: ENGAGED STUDENTS

Cultivate safe schools and classrooms that keep all students engaged in their learning by ensuring they each have access to robust academic, social emotional learning, and extracurricular opportunities that meet their individual needs.

Why

- A staggering 43% of our students were chronically absent in 2022. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of classes or of school days for any reason. This is a huge obstacle we must overcome if we expect to improve student outcomes.
- The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on children's mental health, so much so that the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Children's Hospital Association have declared a national state of emergency in children's mental health. The organizations cite soaring rates of mental health challenges among children, adolescents, and their families over the course of the pandemic, which, they say, worsened the situation that existed prior to the pandemic.
- Investigations done across the U.S. and in New Mexico have found that students of color are disproportionately suspended or expelled compared to white students. An investigation by Pro Publica and New Mexico In Depth found that in this state, Native American students are expelled far more often than any other group and at least four times as often as white students.
- Students deserve a voice in decisions that affect them. Penn State researchers note that leadership "instills confidence, and helps children solve problems creatively, work in a team, and work collaboratively with others."

**"A FOUNDATION IS NOT BUILT IN A DAY BUT WITH THE SWEAT AND TEARS OF HARD WORK. DON'T GIVE UP BECAUSE YOU DON'T GET WHAT YOU WANT; YOU GET WHAT YOU WORK FOR."
— AUTHOR UNKNOWN**

How

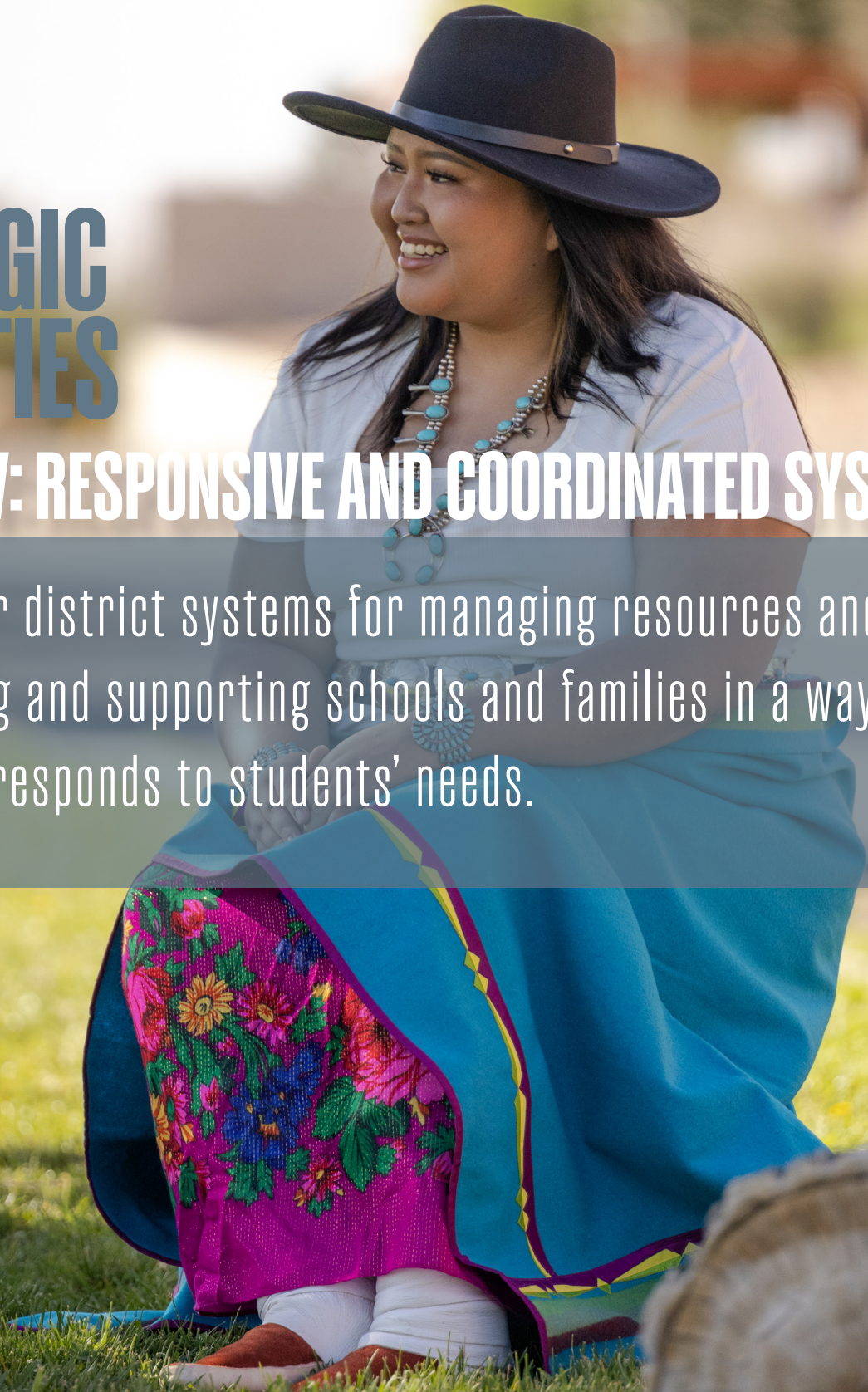
- We will strive to create a welcoming, equitable, and engaging culture where students want to come to school every day. We will create that culture by challenging our students, treating them with respect, dealing with them fairly, and meeting their emotional needs.
- We will prioritize social-emotional learning at APS and work with schools at all levels to integrate it into their daily routines so that students will develop those skills and be better equipped to handle life's obstacles.
- We will work with families, students, and staff to come up with a plan that outlines what the district, schools, and community partners can do to reduce student absences and meet the needs of our families.
- We will work with our school leaders and teachers to come up with a disciplinary process that treats all students fairly and disciplines them in an equitable and consistent way. We will also scale up our restorative practices, which focus on repairing the harm caused by a student's behavior rather than just punishment.
- We will support school leaders and teachers as they launch student leadership programs that give students a voice in decisions made at their schools and at APS.
- We will inform students and their parents of behavioral and mental health services available at APS. We will also look for ways to increase those offerings to better support our students who need help.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PRIORITY IV: RESPONSIVE AND COORDINATED SYSTEMS

Establish clear district systems for managing resources and communicating and supporting schools and families in a way that authentically responds to students' needs.



Why

- Everything we do at APS – from preparing budgets and communicating to the way we deploy technology – needs to be rooted in the needs of our students and schools.
- Too often, schools calling Central Office with a question are receiving different answers from different departments and are left frustrated and confused.
- Principals and other school leaders currently don't have much of a say in how funding for their schools is spent.
- Our district is inconsistent in messaging to families when a significant incident happens at their child's school.
- APS seized more guns on its school campuses during the 2022-2023 school year than in any prior year. Fifteen guns were reported or confiscated from an APS school last school year, leaving students and staff at those schools on edge and fearing for their safety.

“THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CRAZY ENOUGH TO THINK THEY CAN CHANGE THE WORLD ARE THE ONES WHO DO.”
– STEVE JOBS

How

- We will do a better job of communicating and coordinating at Central Office so that we are consistent in what we are telling schools. We will strive to get to a place where a principal can call two departments at Central Office with a question and get the same answer from each department.
- We will work to engage with our families on a consistent basis, alerting them promptly of any shelters in place at their child's school and informing them of any major decisions being made that will affect their child – be it weather delays, changes to bell schedules, or changes in health policies. We will also work to give them information on actions they can take to help their child succeed in the classroom. Because not all of our families are English speakers, we will do our best to provide the information to families in their native languages.
- We will implement a student-based budgeting process that gives principals the flexibility to make investments in staffing and programs they feel will help improve student outcomes at their schools.
- We will invest in a new accounting software system that will help us streamline our work and make us more efficient as we allocate resources.
- We will continue to invest in fencing and other infrastructure improvements to make our schools safer and to work with our school communities and community partners on ways to keep guns and other weapons out of our schools. We will also roll out our new crisis alert system that will eventually give every APS employee the ability to call for help with the click of a button.
- We will create a better system for deploying technology to schools to ensure that teachers and other school-based staff have the resources they need to do their jobs effectively.



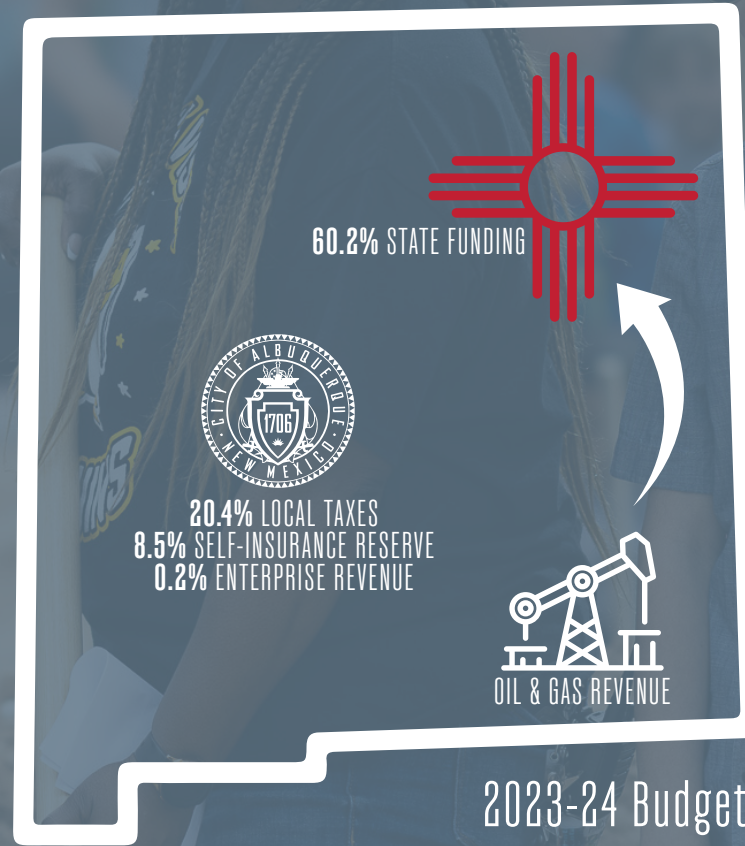


ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

APS is proud to serve about 70,000 students across 142 schools. Our student body is among the most diverse in the nation. We are the largest of New Mexico's 89 school districts, serving about a fourth of the state's public school students.

BUDGET \$2.2 BILLION

Where the money comes from:



Facilities
142 schools
Elementary 88
Middle 28
High 22
K-8 Schools 4

16 million+ square feet of facilities
49 years is the average age of district buildings

Employees
10,827 Full-time
1,499 Part-time
School-Based
9,266 Full-time
1,097 Part-time

Students
Pre-K-12 71,119
Economically Disadvantaged Students 69%
Special Education Students 22%
English Learners 19%
Gifted Participation 4.3%
American Indian 5.4%
Asian 2.4%
Black 2.6%
Hispanic 66.2%
Multi-racial 3.5%
Pacific Islander 0.1%
White, non-Hispanic 19.9%

Transportation
360 Buses
30,707 Students transported daily
1,400 Routes
9,800 Stops per day
23,692 miles traveled daily
360 Bus drivers

School Nutrition
3,213,993 Breakfasts served
5,798,602 Lunches served

How the Money is used:

Salaries: \$757,340,000
Benefits: \$266,830,000
Purchased Services: \$297,470,000
Supplies and Materials: \$163,440,000
Capital Outlay: \$532,860,000
Transfers to Charter Schools: \$14,140,000
Debt Service: \$191,010,000



46%
Salaries & Benefits



13%
Purchased Services



7%
Supplies & Materials



24%
Capital Outlay

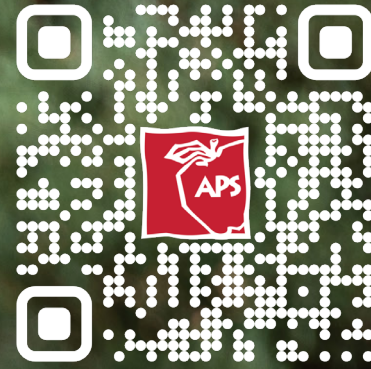


1%
Transfers to
Charter Schools



9%
Debt Service

OUR PURPOSE



MOVING FORWARD

We have goals spelling out where we want to be in five years. We have guardrails, lines the board doesn't want us to cross as we work to reach the goals. And we have a strategic plan, a roadmap for achieving our five-year goals.

Now what?

Now we roll up our sleeves and get to work. Without that, these are all just words on a page.

There are a host of tasks that fall under each one of our strategic priorities, and it's up to each and every one of us to do our part to give our students what they need to succeed.

We will use the plan to:

- Refocus all of the district's resources and everything we do at APS toward improving student outcomes and achieving our five-year goals.
- Track our progress toward achieving these goals and determine whether our strategies are working.
- Pivot to a different strategy if something we're trying isn't working.

Executing the strategic plan will be a Herculean task. We can't do it overnight, but our goals are attainable if we all pull in the same direction and keep our focus on where we want to be.

This is the first time the APS administration and board have collaborated on a plan that assigns specific actions with the expectation that student outcomes will improve over five years.

But as we've said, we need parents and our community to join us on this journey if we're going to be successful.

This is important work, work that has the potential to change our children's lives for the better.

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“STUDENT OUTCOMES DON'T CHANGE UNTIL ADULT BEHAVIORS CHANGE.”

– AJ CRABILL
COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS



ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS