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Photo by Alexander Suhorucov

Collective Impact Can Transform Student Outcomes in Doña Ana County.

Community leaders are more likely to solve complex problems when they join forces to identify and pursue a set of common goals. This is the idea behind **collective impact**, a five-tiered framework for achieving social change.(1) Doña Ana County (DAC) initiatives like the SUCCESS Partnership use collective impact to address equity barriers hampering student progress in our county and across the state. Educational shortcomings are evident in the data: New Mexico ranks last in college readiness for high school graduates and is tied for last in K-12 math and reading scores.(2) And although high school graduation rates are growing locally and statewide, New Mexico still ranks last in the nation for high school graduation.(3) These deficiencies affect marginalized populations disproportionately, aggravating existing gaps in educational achievement that can lead to long-term socioeconomic disparities.(4)(5)(6) Using collective impact, community leaders can harness assets that encourage equitable student outcomes and address factors that inhibit progress.



According to the Collective Impact Forum, the five conditions of collective impact are a common agenda, shared measurements, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a strong backbone team. The Center for Community Analysis is part of the backbone team for the SUCCESS Partnership.

Collective impact has already contributed to major headway in education.

Collective impact initiatives have influenced recent education transformations in New Mexico. The SUCCESS Partnership and other collective impact initiatives across the state have effectively advocated for tangible changes in policy, funding, and resources:

Broadband is expanding.

In 2019, 27% of households in Doña Ana County lacked an internet subscription.(7) CCA research indicated Hispanic and low-income households were the most likely to lack access to the internet or computers, which inspired the SUCCESS Partnership's #ConnectNM campaign.(8)(9) The SUCCESS Partnership and other community organizations across the state successfully advocated for increased broadband. Last April, Governor Grisham signed two bills to establish the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion and the Connect NM Council. (10) Today, the New Mexico Broadband Program is mapping broadband availability throughout the state to

New Mexico is providing more support for early childhood education.

Governor Lujan Grisham established the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) in 2019, following years of advocacy by collective impact groups such as the SUCCESS Partnership's Early Childhood Education Coalition of Doña Ana County.(13) The creation of the state-run department ensures a high-quality early childhood care and education system and acknowledges the importance of early childhood education and its providers. More recently, a state early childhood trust fund is expected to reach over \$4 billion by 2025.(14)



Further opportunities for growth exist in New Mexico.

Despite recent progress, many barriers continue to impede student success. Collective impact could help community leaders more effectively harness local assets to counteract unique challenges in graduating college- and career-ready students:

We can recruit and retain more teachers.

New Mexico had a teacher shortage years before the pandemic.(15)

Fortunately, our state is days away from passing a bill to increase salaries for licensed teachers.(16) Higher salaries can attract more teachers and incentivize current teachers to keep working in New Mexico. What else can we do to expand our teacher workforce?

We can reengage students and disconnected youth.

Many students suffered learning loss during school shutdowns due to lack of instruction, low-quality remote learning, or disengagement from remote learning. (17) The number of young people out of school and work also surged during the pandemic.(18) Can we help the "Covid generation" by finding a way to reengage students and disconnected youth?

We can improve access to mental health care.

In New Mexico, 56% of children with major depressive episodes do not receive treatment.(19) School-based mental health care may be the only option for some students, but there is a severe shortage of mental health professionals in New Mexico schools.(20) (19) Can we increase school-based services to expand access to mental health services for our students?

We can better prepare students for graduation.

New Mexico high school students are graduating unprepared for college and careers. Approximately 61% of recent high school graduates in New Mexico enroll in postsecondary institutions within 12 months of graduation.(21) However, over one-third of our state's high school graduates end up in remedial college courses.(22) Building the skills necessary for college and careers is essential, yet only 3.8% of students are engaged in work-based learning (WBL), and only 15% participate in dual credit.(21) How can we change middle school and high school experiences to better prepare students for the future?

students in post-secondary education.

We can enroll more

College enrollment has decreased locally, statewide, and nationwide over the past decade.(23)(24) The pandemic exacerbated this trend. Between 2019 and 2021, Fall semester student headcounts at Doña Ana Community College decreased by 851 students per year on average.(25) Economic downturns from the pandemic will make it harder for young people to find jobs. Still, a post-secondary degree or certification can help them enter industries more resilient to market changes.(26) What tactics can we use to get students to enroll in higher education?



Final Thoughts

Collective impact has helped pave the way for improved education and career outcomes in Doña Ana County and statewide, and it can address countless more issues affecting our students. Five conditions define collective impact, but **the foremost component of collective impact is community involvement**. Solutions lie within the experiences and expertise of the entire community, from policymakers, teachers, and employers to students and parents. Those solutions become apparent when we strategize together. If you or someone you know would like to help bridge the gaps in our local education system, there are many ways to get involved.

Three Ways to Get Involved:

1. The SUCCESS Partnership is forming a kindergarten-to-career coalition to promote equitable education and access to post-secondary and career opportunities. Join the K-Career Coalition by completing the interest form on the SUCCESS Partnership website.

2. The SUCCESS Partnership is hosting virtual Community Learning Sessions to inform the public about current approaches to transform education. The next virtual Community Learning Session is scheduled for Feb 24th at 4:30 pm. Click here to register for the next Community Learning Session. You can also register on the SUCCESS Partnership website or the SUCCESS Partnership Facebook page.

3. Ngage New Mexico and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Coalition of Doña Ana County are working on a two phase children's museum project. The first phase is ¡Vamos Niños! Play to Learn, a mobile children's museum that will travel the county. The second phase is a brick and mortar children's museum to be located in Las Cruces. Ngage New Mexico and members of the Children's Museum Committee are partnering with the City of Las Cruces for the planning and design phase. Join the Children's Museum Committee or become a volunteer on the mobile unit by completing the interest form on the ¡Vamos Niños! website.

(1) Centering Equity in Collective Impact, Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2022 (2) Pre-K-12 Rankings, U.S. News

website.

(2) Pre-K-12 Rankings, U.S. News
(3) What is driving the upturn in graduation rates in Doña Ana County?
(4) Educational attainment differences by students' socioeconomic status, Musu-Gillette, 2015
(5) Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018, de Brey et al., 2019

(5) Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2018, de Brey et al., 2019
(6) Barriers to educational opportunities for Hispanics in the United States, Schneider et al., 2006
(7) The Digital Divide in New Mexico Dashboard
(8) Doña Ana County Education Context Report, 2020

(8) <u>Doña Ana County Education Context Report, 2020</u>
(9) <u>Operation #ConnectNM</u>
(10) <u>Governor signs state broadband 'Connect New Mexico Act'</u>
(11) <u>New Mexico State Office of Broadband</u>

(12) New Mexico Broadband Map (13) Gov. Lujan Grisham signs Senate Bill 22, establishing Early Childhood Education and Care Department (14) Lawmakers scrutinize explosive growth of early childhood fund

(14) <u>Lawmakers scrutinize explosive growth of early childhood fund</u>
(15) <u>2018 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report, NMSU SOAR Lab</u>
(16) <u>New Mexico teacher pay increase heads to governor's desk after unanimous House vote</u>
(17) COVID 10 and student learning in the United States: The burt sould lest a lifetime. Dere described to the country of the latter of

(16) New Mexico teacher pay increase heads to governor's desk after unanimous House vote
(17) COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime, Dorn et al., 2020
(18) A Decade Undone: 2021 Update, Measure of America, 2021
(19) Hopeful Futures Campaign

(19) <u>Hopeful Futures Campaign</u>
(20) <u>Promoting access to school-based services for children's mental health, Brueck, 2016</u>
(21) <u>New Mexico Comprehensive College and Career Pathways Assessment Report, 2022</u>
(22) <u>Fall 2018 Remediation Data, New Mexico Higher Education Department</u>

(22) Fall 2018 Remediation Data, New Mexico Higher Education Department
(23) Undergraduate Enrollment Fast Facts, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019
(24) New Mexico Postsecondary Enrollment Headcount, New Mexico Higher Education Department
(25) Southern NM Population and Education Snapshot, 2021
(26) Young workers hit hard by the COVID-19 economy, Economic Policy Institute, 2020



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P.S. Have you heard? CCA is on the radio!

The Center for Community Analysis has partnered with KTAL radio to provide datacentered radio segments to the community, known as Data Deets. For the latest Data Deets tune in to KTAL Radio at 101.5 FM, and listen to previously aired Data Deets on our