

New Mexico School for the Deaf

Three Year Strategic Plan

2015-2018

Executive Summary

New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD) presents the following executive summary of its strategic plan. Included in this document is the following information:

- Summary of NMSD's programs and services
- NMSD's Mission, Vision, and Beliefs Statements
- Accreditation standards and NM Performance Based Budget Outcomes
- List of strategic plan goals and topic areas

The New Mexico School for the Deaf is the state's first public school founded in 1885 by Lars Larson, a deaf man who used his own funds to open the school and become its first superintendent. Through his persistent efforts, the Territorial Constitution recognized and established the school in 1887. The school is administered by a five member Board of Regents appointed by the governor. This system of governance is similar to that of other special schools, universities, and post-secondary programs in New Mexico. Services for families and students are free of cost.

Now in its 131st year, as a statewide agency, NMSD continues to grow and change to meet the unique needs of the children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The school remains dedicated to the purpose established in 1885 which was to provide comprehensive and quality educational services to deaf and hard of hearing children enrolled in its programs. What continues to evolve is the breadth and nature of the services that NMSD provides to its consumers and stakeholders. Today, NMSD has multiple functions serving children and families. In addition to its academic programs, the campus in Santa Fe operates as the hub and resource center for its extensive early intervention and outreach programs serving deaf and hard of hearing children and youth from birth through age 22 in the whole state of New Mexico.

Academic Programs

NMSD's main campus in Santa Fe is home to its Pre-K through 12 academic

programs. NMSD also operates satellite preschools in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Farmington. All educational programs are in compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts C and B and follow New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and State Standards and Benchmarks.

Students who do not live in proximity to the Santa Fe campus have the opportunity to board on campus during the week in modern cottages in order to attend our school programs. Families from remote areas with very young children also have the opportunity to apply to reside on campus in family housing units so their preschool age children can attend NMSD's preschool program and along with their families be immersed in language and communication.

NMSD provides an American Sign Language (ASL) and English environment for all students. It is through principles of bilingual education that students are instructed through ASL as their most accessible language with the goal of maintaining and developing ASL as they acquire literacy in English. For every student, ASL and written English are formally taught as curricular subject areas. Students' ASL and written English skills are formally and informally assessed and students who need additional support receive intervention through teachers, specialists and tutors. Spoken English is also assessed and, when appropriate, support services are provided. These services can include, but are not limited to, development of a wide variety of speaking, listening, vocabulary, and language skills. In addition, spoken English instruction is provided to identified students to develop and support literacy skills. Every student has a Communications Consideration Addendum and Language Plan as a part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) to document their language needs and services.

Students at NMSD are deaf or hard of hearing as a requirement for consideration of admission and have an IEP. At NMSD, IEPs are constructed using assessment data to develop meaningful goals for students. Related services staff are included in the educational planning process and address the specific needs of students in supporting their educational success. These include but are not limited to Speech and Language, Audiology, Auditory Habilitation, Spoken English Support, ASL Support, Counseling, Social Work, Art Therapy, Behavior Support, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy. The curriculum is whole person oriented. This means that areas of social-emotional, and

critical thinking skills are integrated into the curriculum as well as consideration of a child's family and cultural backgrounds and identities. NMSD is committed to a barrier free communication environment. As a result, students have the opportunity to access incidental learning both inside and outside the classroom and develop as a whole person, with a sense of belonging and able to participate fully in their educational experience.

Early Intervention Programs

NMSD is the state's primary provider for early intervention services for infants and toddlers who are identified as deaf or hard of hearing and their families. The NMSD Early Intervention and Involvement Department has a long standing partnership with the New Mexico Department of Health to ensure coordinated and timely early intervention services. Two programs operate under this umbrella: the *Parent Infant Child Program* and the *Deaf Mentor Program*. Both of these programs provide early intervention services in every county in the state of New Mexico to children, who are deaf or hard of hearing, age birth to six, and their families. All services occur in the young child's home and community. Home visits occur weekly from each program at a time that best suits the family. Services are individually tailored through state and federally regulated practices to meet each child and family's strengths and needs.

Early access to language and communication is critical for healthy brain development and pivotal to future educational success, but families do not always have the necessary information and resources to support their deaf or hard of hearing child as they learn. Developmental Specialists from the *Parent Infant Child Program* have expertise and training which allows them to team with families to find the strategies, services and technologies that will best support their child's development within their family's culture and routines. Supports for a child's communication mode (sign language and/or speech) and languages (ASL, English, home language) are tailored to each child and family to maximize immediate access to language and cognitive development.

The *Deaf Mentor Program* facilitates the understanding that with early and ongoing access to language being deaf is a difference, not a disability. Most parents who have a deaf or hard of hearing child have never even met a deaf person other than their own baby. They are filled with questions. By simply introducing a parent to a Deaf Mentor, many of the anxieties that parents have can be drastically reduced. Deaf Mentors are also

state-certified Developmental Specialists. The services they provide work in tandem with the Parent Infant Child services that a family receives, focusing on such areas as literacy, positive self-identity, and acquisition of American Sign Language.

Outreach Programs

NMSD provides a wide array of training and support to stakeholders throughout the state. Educational Consultants at the Center for Statewide Educational Consultation and Training (CECT) work collaboratively with families, schools and agencies to provide individualized consultation designed to meet the unique learning, communication, and language needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and youth being educated in their local school districts and communities. ASL Coaches provide ASL Instruction services in families' homes and in public school programs. CECT regionally based services are provided free of charge to families, public school programs, and charter school programs for students who are either on an IEP or a 504 plan.

CECT provides a broad range of information and support to public schools, families, and students with a special focus on language, communication, social-emotional engagement and literacy development. Public schools can receive support and training related to quality educational programming, the IEP process, student evaluations, post-secondary transition support, and IDEA Part C to Part B transition support. CECT offers a variety of classes, workshops and training opportunities for both families and educators. These learning opportunities focus on a wide range of topics such as family education, American Sign Language, social and academic opportunities for students, professional development for members of the educational team, mentoring for K-12 interpreters, and a biennial statewide conference.

Summary

The educational programs and services provided by NMSD are evidence of the agency's understanding and commitment to the diverse needs of deaf and hard of hearing students. Deaf and hard of hearing students acquire and use language and access their learning environments in a wide variety of ways. For example, some students are bilingual in American Sign Language and English, while some use spoken English or Spanish. Some have auditory access to environmental sounds and/or spoken language

through cochlear implants or hearing aids, while others do not. Although some students access their education through an interpreter, many educational settings in New Mexico have a difficult time finding qualified educational interpreters. In addition, many students do not have the skills to access the curriculum through an interpreter. Interpreted communication does not equate to the quality and experience of direct communication (when many adults and children can sign directly with each other). For these reasons, all NMSD programs work toward raising awareness about the kind of educational environments and supports that are essential to ensuring true access to students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Deaf and hard of hearing children are at high risk for limited acquisition of language and literacy. Most deaf/hard of hearing children are born into families where there is no prior incidence of deafness and/or visual communication making early and quality ongoing services to families critical to the deaf child's development.

The complexity of meeting the needs of students warrants the multi-tiered approach to reaching out to children who are deaf or hard of hearing provided by NMSD's school, early intervention, and outreach programs. NMSD documents accountability and continuous improvement through accreditation with AdvancEd and the Conference of Educational Administrators for Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) and its strategic plan. In keeping with high expectations for excellence in alignment with the school's purpose, the NMSD community dedicates itself to the following Vision, Mission, and Beliefs as reviewed and embraced by its community.

New Mexico School for the Deaf

Vision, Mission, and Beliefs Statements

Vision

Children and students in New Mexico who are deaf/hard of hearing will become lifelong learners and contributing, well-rounded successful individuals in an increasingly global society.

Mission

The mission of the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD), New Mexico's first public school, is to provide for the unique needs of children and students who are deaf/hard of hearing, their families, and professional partners by providing a comprehensive array of school and statewide programs.

As a statewide service agency, NMSD collaborates with families, school districts, agencies and communities throughout the state to meet the critical language, communication, and learning needs of children and students in New Mexico who are deaf/hard of hearing, birth through high school.

As a school, NMSD provides an American Sign Language and English bilingual learning environment that includes direct, ongoing access to language and communication in and out of the classroom with a wide range of peers and adults. The students are interactive learners who receive dynamic high quality standards-based instruction in a variety of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Beliefs

In an environment of respect, trust, and safety, we believe in...

- viewing people who are deaf/hard of hearing from a cultural and linguistic perspective
- having high expectations that positively affect self-esteem, identity and whole person development
- providing early, ongoing, and fluid access to communication through natural language models
- developing proficiency in American Sign Language and English which is critical for fluent communication, literacy and academic achievement
- providing high quality early intervention and involvement services designed to help families give their children the earliest possible on-going opportunities for language, learning and meaningful relationships
- fostering strong partnerships with families through learning and social opportunities
- identifying each student's unique strengths and using them as the foundation for learning and development
- supporting the development of auditory skills and spoken language as appropriate to the strengths and needs of the individual child/student
- ensuring the child/student is a consistent and active participant in planned and incidental learning experiences in and out of the classroom
- embracing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity
- developing competence in the use of advanced technology
- having high quality and committed staff who possess and maintain expertise in their respective area
- supporting all students in the pursuit of their personal and professional aspirations

NMSD Accrediting and Accountability

Standards and Outcomes

Conference of Educational Administrators for Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) Accreditation Standards:

1. Philosophy/Mission Standard
2. Governance and Leadership Standard
3. School Improvement Planning and Viability Standard
4. Finances Standard
5. Facilities Standard
6. School Climate and Organization Standard
7. Health and Safety Standard
8. Educational Program Standard
9. Assessment and Evidence of Student Learning Standard
10. Student Services Standard
11. Student Life, Student Activities, and Residential Living Standard
12. Learning Resources and Information Technology

Performance Based Budget (PBB) Outcomes:

1. Percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade demonstrating academic improvement across curriculum domains
2. Percent of students in grades three to twelve who are significantly cognitively delayed demonstrating sufficient growth across curricular domains
3. Rate of transition to postsecondary education, vocational-technical training schools, junior colleges, work training or employment for graduates based on a three-year rolling average
4. Percent of students in grades three to twelve who are late language learners who demonstrate significant gains in language and communication as demonstrated by pre- and post-test results
5. Percent of parents satisfied with educational services from the center for educational consultation and training (statewide outreach)
6. Percent of parents with children receiving outreach services indicating ability to make informed decisions about educational options and programs
7. Percent of individualized education program meetings that address special factors of language and communication

AdvancED Accreditation Standards

1. Vision and Purpose
2. Governance and Leadership
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Documenting and Using Results
5. Resources and Support Systems
6. Stakeholder Communications and Relationships
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Three Year Strategic Plan Summary 2015-16 through 2017-18

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	AdvancED Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><u>NMSD deaf/hh students make academic progress reflecting high expectations for their potential</u> Goal #1 topic: Utilizing assessment data to guide instructional practices Goal #2 topic: Family engagement Goal #3 topic: Reggio Emilia concepts in the cottage</p>	<p>Standard 9 Standard 11 Standard 11</p>	<p>Standard 4 Standard 6</p>	<p>Outcome 1, 2, 4, & 7</p>	<p>Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)</p>
<p><u>NMSD provides leadership so that babies in NM are receiving early intervention services by 6 months of age</u> Goal #1 topic: Deaf Mentor Goal #2 topic: Reduction of age at entry into early intervention</p>	<p>Standard 8 Standard 8</p>			<p>Early Intervention and Involvement Team (EIID)</p>
<p><u>NMSD has workforce capacity to meet current and future needs of its 0-3 and school age population in all programs</u> Goal #1 topic: Compensation plan Goal #2 topic: Recruitment and retention planning Goal #3 topic: Supervision and evaluation</p>	<p>Standard 2, 4 & 6</p>	<p>Standard 2</p>		<p>Human Resources Director and Program Directors</p>
<p><u>NMSD students have tools necessary to transition from high school to college/career.</u> Goal #1 topic: Summer employment in students' communities Goal #2 topic: NMSD collaboration with CNM and/or SFCC to increase first year higher education success Goal #3 topic: Align NMSD transition department, student coursework, independent living skills program in the cottages, and student career exploration/job preparation classes</p>	<p>Standard 8 Standard 8 Standard 8 & 11</p>	<p>Standard 3 & 5 Standard 3 & 5 Standard 3 & 5</p>	<p>Outcome 3 Outcome 3 Outcome 3</p>	<p>High school Principal, Transition Coordinator, Student Life Director</p>
<p><u>NMSD Outreach has expanded connections with students and families across the state</u> Goal #1 topic: Developing deeper relationships with families of CECT students Goal #2 topic: Engaging families whose home language is Spanish</p>	<p>Standard 8 Standard 8</p>	<p>Standard 6 Standard 6</p>	<p>Outcome 5, 6 & 7 Outcome 5, 6, & 7</p>	<p>Center for Educational Consultation and Training Team</p>

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	AdvancED Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><u>NMSD has educational and event facilities to achieve its academic, early intervention, and outreach mission.</u> Goal #1 topic: Project progression in Facilities Master Plan</p>	Standard 5 & 7			Project Manager, Director of Business and Finance, and Superintendent
<p><u>NMSD staff and students have necessary technology to maximize agency efficiency, safety, and student learning</u> Goal #1 topic: Utilization of intranet Goal #2 topic: Security camera technology Goal #3 topic: Office 365 and utilization of the Cloud</p>	Standard 7 & 12			Coordinator of IT Services, Webmaster, Director of Business and Finance
<p><u>NMSD provides leadership to increase stakeholder awareness and alignment of resources for deaf/hh students across the state.</u> Goal #1 topic: NM Task Force report and facilitation of priorities Goal #2 topic: Public relations materials</p>	Standard 2 & 3 Standard 3	Standard 6 Standard 6	Outcome 7	Superintendent, Director of Development and Community Relations
<p><u>NMSD student supports are measured for effectiveness and reflect the diverse cultural and socio-economic landscape of NM.</u> Goal #1 topic: Integrated service delivery model to address the whole child.</p>	Standard 10	Standard 3 & 5	Outcome 1, 2, 3, & 4	Student Support Services Team