

ENLACE New Mexico Program Audit

Submitted to:

ENLACE New Mexico

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By:

Excelencia in Education
1752 N St. NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20035

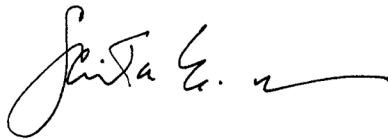
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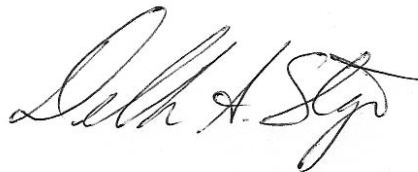
Foreword

The United States is experiencing a profound demographic shift from the baby boomer generation to today's young people of high school and college age. Increasing numbers of these young people are Latino. *Excelencia* in Education is a national not-for-profit organization committed to accelerating Latino student success in higher education and ensuring the high caliber of tomorrow's workforce. To accomplish this goal, we strive to apply the knowledge of what works to accelerate Latino student success at local, institutional, statewide, and national levels to public policy and institutional practice.

Given our national focus, we continually identify, assess and catalogue the effective efforts of communities, institutions, and states to accelerate Latino student success. Currently few communities demonstrate the willingness to take risks and make systemic changes in education on behalf of Latino students. ENLACE-New Mexico is a powerful example of a community and state willing to change to ensure all of their students, especially (but not exclusively) Latino students, are well educated and have the opportunity to attain high levels of academic achievement.



Sarita E. Brown
President
Excelencia in Education



Deborah A. Santiago
Vice President for Policy and Research
Excelencia in Education

Executive Summary

The over-arching goal of ENLACE-New Mexico is to empower the community, students, and educators in New Mexico to affect positive change in the public educational system, leading to increased student success, not just for Hispanics, but for all students. In fact, ENLACE, an acronym that stands for **Engaging Latino Communities for Education**, is also a Spanish word that means to “link or weave together.” ENLACE-New Mexico was created in 2001 with initial funding support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and is currently supported by the New Mexico legislature and other funders.

A critical, and legitimate, question by funders and the community of New Mexico is whether ENLACE is meeting its stated goals and objectives. *Excelencia* in Education undertook a program audit at the request of ENLACE-New Mexico to review ENLACE’s processes and performance and to verify, based on the information and data collected to date, that their stated goals and objectives were being met.

Audit Findings

Because the seeds of college-going are planted early, changing education conditions in elementary, middle, and high school and in the community are a critical impact of ENLACE and are not easily captured in standard evaluation practices. However, ENLACE has shown progress in meeting its two objectives:

1. *Bringing together disparate groups for a common cause to create common ground*
ENLACE partnerships include public school districts, community colleges, and universities, and the community (as in community based organizations and community members) are all critical partners and the primary stakeholders in the effort to develop an effective and equitable educational system.
2. *Creating a “flat” structure from a hierarchy in education*
ENLACE’s statewide collaborative has a broader and more unified focus for providing services and leveraging resources that is more effective than having each local site seek its own resources.

ENLACE-New Mexico has also shown progress in the following activities:

- Strengthening support for students through its multiple programs as measured by increased participation, increased student performance and retention, and increased college access;
- Changing educational institutions by engaging families and communities as measured by increased participation and improved parent skills and support; and,
- Creating a seamless pathway to college as measured by improved curriculum, improved teacher preparation, and strengthened links in the educational pathway.

Introduction

Excelencia in Education undertook this program audit at the request of ENLACE New Mexico. A 501(c)(3) organization, *Excelencia* in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by linking research, policy, and practice to inform policymakers and institutional leaders and promotes policies and practices that support higher educational achievement for Latino students and all students. *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce.

The purpose of this audit is to review ENLACE's processes and performance and to verify, based on the information and data collected to date, that stated goals and objectives are served. The program audit includes an overview of ENLACE's evolution of activities and a broad assessment of ENLACE's ability to meet their stated goals. This program audit is distinct from ENLACE evaluations conducted by other organizations and ongoing assessments and statewide evaluations of activities. Program evaluations conducted to date informed this program audit.

Primary sources of information for this program audit include a combination of documents provided by ENLACE staff (such as grant reviews and program evaluations); public documents by ENLACE and other partners; interviews with ENLACE staff, participating students and parents; conversations with elected officials and other policy leaders; and observations from a site visit by *Excelencia* staff. ENLACE stakeholders included in this program audit were identified by ENLACE staff and interviewed by *Excelencia* staff. All responded thoroughly to questions, provided critical observations about what is working with ENLACE and shared their perspectives on what needs improvement. Their input guided the outline and topics of this program audit. A listing of the information sources used is available in Appendix 1.

The program audit begins with a brief description of ENLACE New Mexico and the ENLACE model and programs. Following this overview is the core of the program audit—a review of the stated goals and objectives of each regional ENLACE as well as a summary of the goals and objectives met according to programmatic documentation. The final section provides conclusions and observations from the program audit.

What is ENLACE?

ENLACE, an acronym that stands for **Engaging Latino Communities for Education**, is also a Spanish word that means to “link or weave together.” To some interviewed, ENLACE is synonymous with a single program (i.e. Family Resource centers or *Los Compañeros*). For others, ENLACE is better described as a movement, rather than any specific program. For example, testimony from ENLACE New Mexico to the Legislative Education Study Committee during the 2006 interim described the program as “a grassroots initiative dedicated to empowering marginalized Hispanic/Latino and other communities of color through a comprehensive P-20 educational pipeline.” Documentation and interviews show that ENLACE provides a framework for including promising practices throughout the educational pipeline and but is consistent in its message to engage students, parents, community, and education institutions with a common goal of educational achievement for all students.

ENLACE New Mexico started as part of a national project initiated by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase higher education attainment for Latino students in 2001. New Mexico

received funding to support three regional ENLACE sites as well as a statewide collaborative from 2001-05. Thirteen ENLACE projects across seven states comprised the original national project supported by the Kellogg Foundation and New Mexico was the only recipient of a grant for a statewide collaborative.

The ENLACE sites in New Mexico are community collaborations in three regions organized at three public institutions of higher education designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions because of their high enrollments of Hispanic and low-income students. The southern region is led by the New Mexico State University (NMSU). The central region is led by the University of New Mexico (UNM). The northern region is led by Santa Fe Community College (SFCC). Each of the regional partnerships includes at least one of the following: a college/university, community college, public school district, community-based organizations, and numerous parents and students.

Today, ENLACE is a collaborative that combines the strengths and assets of the three original sites and has expanded to two other regions encompassing the entire state. While each regional site tailors program offerings based on community strengths and needs, cross referencing is encouraged and sites share information and adopt one another's effective programs and activities. Since 2004 ENLACE New Mexico also receives support from the New Mexico Legislature as well as other state and national funders and the collaborative is headquartered at the University of New Mexico School of Law.

The ENLACE Model

The ENLACE model starts with partnerships as the vehicle for change—partnerships of education institutions with Latino students, parents, educators, and community leaders. The fragmented systems of K-12 and higher education operate independently from the parents, students, and community they are intended to serve. The theory behind ENLACE is that through collaboration, communities can bridge disconnects in the education system and improve their educational future. Further, ENLACE leaders acknowledge educational institutions alone cannot make the needed difference to improve student success. While ENLACE partnerships include public school districts, community colleges, and universities, the community (as in community based organizations and community members) are deemed critical partners and the primary stakeholders in the effort to develop an effective and equitable educational system.

The ENLACE New Mexico model focuses on parental and community involvement in schools to boost student achievement and to adopt both new and existing programs. Many of the programs and strategies adopted by ENLACE are traditional educational interventions or practices such as mentoring and tutoring programs and parent outreach programs, or have been identified as “best practices” through other organizations or studies. Program introduction and assessment reinforces ENLACE's model to link effective programs and develop a comprehensive educational strategy. ENLACE participants take note of what programs are working at the local level and integrate these programs into an educational movement for change in their communities. While current programs supported by ENLACE have evolved and changed, implementation strategies remain focused on the overarching mission of meeting the needs of students and families to improve academic achievement and graduation rates.

The ENLACE model encourages partnerships to directly change the educational achievement and aspirations of current Latino students and families, while simultaneously working on the conditions of education for all students in the future. The ENLACE model

features a variety of program components that fit generally into three integrated themes to improve educational achievement through partnerships.

- *Strengthening supports for students* by linking schools, parents and community members through mentoring, tutoring and leadership development to support student achievement in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum.
- *Changing educational institutions*, at all levels of the P-20 continuum, to be more responsive to the needs of underserved students by engaging parents and communities in partnerships to leverage public and private resources that offer creative ways to address education.
- *Creating a seamless pathway to college* through P-20 alignment and increased rigor in curricula and standards, improved cultural literacy, and teacher preparation to ensure that students make smooth transitions from one level of school to the next.

Goals and objectives

As stated earlier, the purpose of a program audit is to verify an institution or program is meeting its stated goals and objectives based on available documentation; a program audit is not an evaluation with original analysis or research.

The documentation and input from interviews offered diverse descriptions of ENLACE's goals and objectives. For example, one publication described ENLACE's goal as "helping communities weave together existing programs and introduce new ones that increase opportunities for Hispanics to enter and complete college." Another publication cited ENLACE's goal as "increasing educational opportunities for underserved students; preparing them to pursue and succeed in postsecondary education and strengthening the educational pipeline." Another recent publication described ENLACE's goal as "increasing Hispanic graduation rates." While the descriptions are not inconsistent with one another, they do offer different emphases for the goals and objectives of ENLACE New Mexico.

The most inclusive goal statement of ENLACE-New Mexico is found in the Institute for Social Research's summary of ENLACE-New Mexico:

The over-arching goal is to empower the community, students, and educators in New Mexico to affect positive change in our public educational system, leading to increased student success, not just for Hispanics, but for all students.

Documentation shows that the objectives of ENLACE-New Mexico include:

- Bringing together disparate groups for a common cause to create common ground
- Creating a "flat" structure from a hierarchy in education

Program activities

As stated in the previous section, ENLACE program components fit into three themes to address ENLACE's goals and objectives.

1. Strengthening supports for students;
2. Changing educational institutions by engaging families and communities; and,
3. Creating a seamless pathway to college.

Documentation shows that each of the three ENLACE New Mexico sites established their own priorities, programs, and performance measures but and were aligned with the three operational themes and the broader common goal of increasing Hispanic educational achievement in New

Mexico. For example, Northern New Mexico ENLACE, led by Santa Fe Community College, initially focused programming efforts on student support and leadership development to improve the educational achievement of Latino students in its community. Albuquerque ENLACE, led by the University of New Mexico, initially focused on changing educational institutions by engaging parent and community involvement, peer mentoring, teachers, and college counseling to improve the educational achievement of Latino students. Southern New Mexico – ENLACE, led by New Mexico State University, initially began programming efforts focused on increasing literacy through culture, developing a middle to high school college preparation curriculum, and engaging parents by developing a parent university to improve the educational achievement of Latino students. Documentation also shows that each of the regional sites expanded program offerings to include other programs and themes as efforts evolved.

To be consistent with the documentation provided, this program audit uses the three main themes to reach ENLACE's goals and objectives in reviewing the reports and evaluations provided on their performance/impact to date. Evaluation reports provided for this program audit did not include information on all ENLACE programs, and the most recent evaluation provided was a 2005 report on ENLACE programs through the 2003-04 academic year. Available data was predominately descriptive statistics of participation (number served), but in some instances includes survey data and more substantial pre-/post-tests data with students. The most recent participation data available on ENLACE programs was for September 2007.

When examining the program evaluations to date, data on regional programs and activities was more readily available than data statewide. A review of the statewide ENLACE New Mexico collaborative is based on documentation of specific areas of collaboration delineated between the three sites, such as policy and evaluation.

Strengthening support for students

ENLACE New Mexico programs and activities to support student achievement in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum include mentoring, tutoring, and leadership development at various levels in the education pipeline. The following is a brief list of ENLACE programs implemented to strengthen support for students:

1. *Los Compañeros* Mentoring Program
2. Chicano Studies Program
3. Student Success Diagnostic Program
4. Student Ambassadors (Early Intervention) Program
5. Summer Bridge Program
6. AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Tutoring Program
7. AVID College Prep Program
8. EXITO/Pathways to Success
9. LEAP (Leadership, Educational Access, Academic Support and Parent Involvement)
10. *Leyendo por Vida* Program
11. Tech Ed Program
12. *Saber y Hacer* Program

The program evaluation and participation data reports provided for the program audit show progress in strengthening support for students for the majority of these programs. While increased graduation rates is a critical measure, increased student participation in support

programs, improved student performance and retention, and increased college access are also critical objectives contributing to increased graduation rates. Given that many ENLACE programs start with students at middle or high school, calculating the graduation rates of most participants requires more longitudinal data than the other objectives identified.

Increased participation

- According to a participant report for September 2007, there were over 8,500 students currently active in ENLACE programs. Participation ranged from kindergarten to college, with about one-third of participating students in college.
- The ENLACE program with the second largest student participation in 2007 was *Los Compañeros* with over 850 participants, representing 10 percent of student participants in ENLACE programs statewide.
- The ENLACE program with the third largest participation was *Leyendo por Vida* with over 350 participants, representing close to five percent of student participants in ENLACE statewide.
- In 2003-04, ENLACE in Northern New Mexico expanded, more than tripling the number of students served.

Increased student performance and retention

- According to the latest impact report provided, over 83 percent of ENLACE graduates went on to college (report from June 2006-January 2007).
- ENLACE has a 97 percent retention rate of students in the educational pipeline for most of its programs. This data point was shared repeatedly by different ENLACE participants when interviewed about the success of programs.
- The Year 5 evaluation of ENLACE revealed increases in achievement motivation among middle and high school students; enhancements in students' cultural awareness and self-concept; and betterment in students' knowledge, literacy skills, and overall academic abilities.
- On average, students who participated in the Student Success Diagnostic program at UNM were retained at a higher rate than other students and maintained a 2.9 GPA.
- A survey of mentors indicated student participation in the *Los Compañeros* program in 2003 was helpful. Specifically, teachers reported student participants' behavior in class and academic achievement were positively influenced by their participation in the *Los Compañeros* program.
- Retention of UNM freshmen in the Student Success Counselor Program is over 95 percent for program participants compared to 76 percent of all freshmen. According to the report, this program is based on best practices and research.
- In the Summer Bridge program, reading levels improved dramatically in 2 out of 3 locations. Participating teachers comment the culturally relevant class material is helpful in maintaining students' interest in reading.
- Average GPAs of ENLACE scholarship recipients at TV-I in 2003-04, over three terms, increased from 3.26 to 3.50 (on a 4.0 scale).
- Surveys of teachers in the Year 5 evaluation showed that most teachers considered ENLACE to be extremely helpful in improving students' achievement levels.

Increased college access

- Of the students who participated in Chicano Studies, the percentage planning to attend a four-year college increased from 44 to 52 percent. The percentage of students who took the ACT increased from 4 to 12 percent. However, reports state that recruitment for the program has been problematic.
- A survey of the Pathways to EXITO program at NMSU in 2004 found students' overall experience was positive and the program helped students better understand the importance of higher education. Further, of students in the freshmen ENLACE course, 89 percent received passing credit when changes were made to the program format.

Changing educational institutions by engaging families and communities

ENLACE's strategy to change educational institutions to be more responsive to the needs of Latino students engages parents and communities in partnership to leverage public and private resources. The following is a brief list of ENLACE programs implemented to change education institutions by engaging families and communities:

1. Family Centers
2. Family and Youth Resource Centers
3. AVID Parent Nights
4. Parent University
5. LEAP (Leadership, Educational Access, Academic Support and Parent Involvement).

Documentation shows progress in changing educational institutions by engaging families and communities as measured by participation and parent skills and support. Objectives for engaging parents and communities focused more on increasing the participant numbers, rather than setting any expectations of direct student outcomes, which would be much more difficult to assess from these activities.

Increased participation: Both students and parents participated in most of the programs to engage families and communities. Increasing their participation and expanding programs to other schools and communities is a critical measure of engagement.

- By far, the ENLACE program with the largest student participation is the Family Centers. Family Centers served over 5,000 student participants in 2007, representing about 60 percent of student participants in ENLACE programs.
- Over 9,400 parents were served through ENLACE Family Centers in 2007.
- The Family Centers have become a replicable model for other local schools, and other school districts in New Mexico.
- The New Mexico legislature included the Family Center model in the creation of the Family and Youth Resource Act.
- In Albuquerque, ENLACE partnered with Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) to establish family centers in three of the city's high schools with the highest Latino enrollments. The combined client base of the three centers rose from 300 in the first year to 1,000 parents and students midway through the second year.

Improved parent skills and support: Each ENLACE site included objectives to improve parents skills and support. Objective measures in the available documentation included helping parents

increase their own education, developing parents as educational coaches, and advocates, increasing family literacy, and creating a Parent University.

- Documentation shows ENLACE met its established benchmark of serving 200 parents a year with math, GED, and other classes to promote family interest in education and advocacy.
- Family Center “knock and talks” have volunteers physically track down dropouts in an attempt to re-enroll them in school. From 2001-2004, over 235 “knock and talks” resulted in 40 students returning to school.
- APS superintendent Joseph Vigil credited ENLACE for helping the district cut its dropout rate by working with parents to bring dropouts back to school.
- A survey conducted with participants of Parent University at NMSU suggests the program had a positive impact on participants’ lives. Participants felt the program had improved their skills to advocate effectively for their children and others in the community.

Creating a seamless pathway to college

ENLACE program components also foster alignment of services to educational achievement and increased rigor in curricula and standards, improved cultural literacy, and teacher preparation. The following is a list of some of the programs implemented to create seamless pathways to college:

1. Hispanic Teacher Pipeline
2. Champion Teachers program
3. Educational Assistants Scholarship Program
4. Cultural Competency Training Workshops
5. Leadership Plenty Training Program (Pew Partnership)
6. Chicano Studies Awareness and Social Justice Curriculum
7. Summer Bridge Curriculum for Increasing Literacy
8. Student Ambassadors Program
9. Parent Civic Engagement Program

Documentation provided for the program audit shows progress in creating a seamless pathway to college as measured by improved curriculum, improved teacher preparation, and strengthened links in the educational pathway.

Improved curriculum

- ENLACE developed *Saber Y Hacer*, a 63-part, skills-based college preparatory program for grades 6-12. They leveraged their resources from the Kellogg Foundation to secure a grant from the College Board and engaged middle and high school teachers, assistant principals and a parent to develop a road map to higher education. The program was field-tested in a middle and high school.
- ENLACE plans to share the *Saber Y Hacer* curriculum for wider use across the state and the nation with those interested in implementing college preparatory programs. The curriculum is being translated into Spanish to make it a bilingual tool.
- The ENLACE Youth Leadership program serves about 90 high school students annually and relies on an experiential and culture-based curriculum to develop grassroots and institutional leadership for education reform in northern New Mexico.

Improved teacher preparation

- ENLACE in Northern New Mexico trained teachers who now use AVID techniques routinely in their classes. Since 2001, these techniques have reached over 800 students.
- Students in the TVI Ambassador program expressed interest in becoming teachers and maintained consistently high GPAs while in the program.
- Research findings suggest the Hispanic Teacher Pipeline (HTP) scholarships help relieve some of the financial burden posed by attending college full-time. A number of recipients made reference to their financial inability to attend college prior to having received their ENLACE HTP scholarship.
- In 2004, records showed 10 college students who received funding to complete their degree in teaching at UNM are teaching in the (Albuquerque Public School) APS district. An additional 5 students were expected to graduate and begin teaching in the APS district.

Strengthened links in pathway

- Southern New Mexico and Las Cruces Public School Board are collaborating through an ACTION team to determine barriers and best practices to the educational success of Hispanic students.
- In 2004, over 70 Future Educators worked with over 400 APS school children.

ENLACE New Mexico Collaborative

The statewide ENLACE New Mexico Collaborative efforts are focused on leveraging resources for the entire state of New Mexico while the local site initiatives are tailored to meet the needs of the individual communities they serve. While the statewide goals of the Collaborative are an integration of the regional sites' goals and objectives, the Collaborative also focuses on bringing awareness and scale to the programs deemed effective at the community level. A critical tenet of the Collaborative is that a broader and more unified focus for providing services and leveraging resources is more effective than having each local site seek its own resources. While this level of coordination can be messy and complicated, especially for such things as data collection and evaluation, the Collaborative believes there is also greater impact and influence for improving education in New Mexico. The Collaborative lists its priority areas as statewide strategies in policy, evaluation, communications, and in student leadership development.

Policy

ENLACE leaders and participants are learning, through trial and error, to inform, influence and change education policies to better serve Latino students. This requires identifying effective strategies for supporting Latino students' education and then engaging in policy discussions to inform and encourage replication of these strategies to impact more students and sustain the work begun at the local community levels.

A benefit of the diverse representation that defines ENLACE partnerships (ie school districts, colleges, parents, students, community leaders) is a well-rounded view of statewide issues. While some of the partners are more experienced in developing policy, the ENLACE New Mexico Collaborative also strives to integrate and build on community voices to develop

policy recommendations. Several of those interviewed stated both parents and students believe they can change their local and statewide education system through ENLACE's policy efforts.

- ENLACE creates an opportunity for Latino parents, many without strong English language skills or educational achievement themselves, to be advocates for their own children, and leaders for their community's children.
- ENLACE includes the voices of students. ENLACE shared policy recommendations created by ENLACE students and integrated these recommendations into the statewide policy agenda.
- ENLACE organizes an annual ENLACE Legislative Day when community members, parents, and students converge at the New Mexico Legislature to advocate on behalf of ENLACE and to share their personal experiences and successes with ENLACE programs.

Policy successes are critical measures of the statewide ENLACE's ability to meet its goals and objectives. The main measures for ENLACE's policy work is the statewide replication of programs, representation in education policymaking bodies, and funding support by the New Mexico State Legislature.

The most significant example of statewide replication of ENLACE's activities is the inclusion of the ENLACE Family Center model in House Bill 212 as a replicable activity for support in 2004. The most significant example of increased representation in education policymaking bodies was the unanimously passed House Joint Memorial Bill 35 by the New Mexico legislature requesting that ENLACE New Mexico programs be represented on public education department task forces, councils, and advisory groups.

Funding is another measure of the statewide ENLACE's ability to reinforce its goals and objectives. The New Mexico Legislature appropriated funds to the Higher Education Department (HED) for ENLACE in FY2006 in equal distributions of \$237,500 to the three lead institutions (\$712,500). For FY2007, the Legislature provided equal allocations of about \$297,000 to the three lead ENLACE institutions, for special projects expansion (\$197,000) and for the statewide ENLACE collaborative component (\$99,900). In addition, the University of New Mexico (UNM) received appropriations totaling approximately \$95,000 for FY2006 and FY2007 to support the ENLACE *Los Compañeros* program. Further, ENLACE programs at 16 member schools of Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) received funding through the Public Education Department (PED) Family Youth and Resource Program (created by the 2004 Legislature) in FY2007; and the PED Truancy and Dropout Program in FY2007 provided \$90,000 for an ENLACE dropout prevention program.

Along with their successes, ENLACE participants identified three main challenges to their statewide policy work which they continually work to address.. First, ENLACE participants acknowledge a perpetual need to mobilize and engage their communities and their elected officials. In tandem, the process to identify priorities for a unified ENLACE policy agenda requires a critical and ongoing forum in which ENLACE sites and participants to discuss local differences in priorities. A second challenge is sufficient funding both to support expanding ENLACE programs to serve new communities throughout the state while securing additional investment required to establish new community-based partnerships and link them to the statewide efforts for policy and evaluation. In the short-run, very limited efficiencies of scale exist for adding new communities to ENLACE. The third main challenge identified for statewide policy efforts was strengthening the support from both PED and HED in policy arenas since ENLACE receives funds from for different programs and reporting requirements vary.

Communication

A critical part of statewide communication for ENLACE is increasing awareness of ENLACE programs and activities to improve student opportunity and achievement. Among ENLACE's achievements is the recognition of ENLACE's statewide contributions to date by communities, the New Mexico State Legislature, the Governor of New Mexico, and national organizations.

For example, in 2003, Governor Richardson, the Legislature, and the citizens of New Mexico committed to improving the entire education system from preschool to higher education. ENLACE New Mexico, begun in 2001, aligned directly with this commitment. As a result, ENLACE's Family and Youth Resource Centers were recognized as a model in New Mexico's Family and Youth Resources Act (HB212, 2004), and legislation was passed to include ENLACE representation on public education department task forces, councils, and advisory groups (HJMB 35, 2004). Further, Governor Richardson participated in events with students and recognized ENLACE's contributions to the state.

Beyond statewide recognition, ENLACE New Mexico is recognized for its efforts at the national level. For example, ENLACE was recognized by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and offered as a model to emulate for its work with parents and communities. In addition, ENLACE New Mexico was selected as a semi-finalist for the national Examples of *Excelencia*, a national initiative to systematically identify and honor programs boosting Latino students' college enrollment, performance, and graduation.

Evaluation

Key to program evaluation is the accurate design and selection of methodology based on clarity about the program elements and intended and actual outcomes, usually of a single program. ENLACE encompasses over 25 programs and many more diverse partners in multiple communities all playing a role in program implementation and in the broader goal of increased educational achievement.

As part of their continual assessment of what is and what is not working, leaders of the ENLACE Collaborative determined the current program evaluation used was not producing the information they needed to respond to legislative and funding inquiries on outcome measures of success. They decided to restructure the system of evaluation for the statewide Collaborative into three components. Previously, the Institute for Social Research at the University of New Mexico provided regional program evaluation and descriptive statistics (participation numbers) of those served by ENLACE.

The first component of the revised evaluation approach created an ENLACE Evaluation Team composed of research scientists from the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University, in conjunction with a K-12 master teacher data collector. They are working to produce evaluation report by June 2008. Secondly, the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute was brought in to conduct a more integrated and comprehensive evaluation of ENLACE's efforts statewide. The third component of evaluation is participants' and leaders' own cluster evaluation to determine the more immediate impact of program activities for potential changes or replication. This component of evaluation is ongoing.

Lessons learned

The documentation provided on ENLACE included the identification of lessons learned to date on implementation. These lessons learned guide changes and improvements in the community

engagement, the program component, and replication of ENLACE New Mexico. The lessons learned include the following:

- Effective recruitment and selection of participants needs to balance a participants' need with their ability to commit to ENLACE programs. Often the students with the greatest academic needs are not those most accessible and willing to participate without additional recruitment and investment from the program staff.
- Teachers are challenged to meet student needs when basic classroom materials are not provided.
- Effective communication of program objectives among teachers, administrators, program managers, and evaluators is essential to support ENLACE goals.
- The level of staff commitment appears to be a strong contributor to program effectiveness.
- Changes in program organization may be required to adapt to local school conditions.
- Abrupt changes in data collection methods affect the evaluation process and findings across multiple sites
- Research based programs, like AVID, if implemented according to the model, are more likely to have a positive effect on student retention and achievement.

Conclusion

ENLACE New Mexico is changing the culture of high schools. Students tutor other students, discuss college plans, enroll in advanced placement classes to meet university requirements. Parents attend workshops and site team meetings, while teachers gain confidence in their abilities to teach students who are underachieving and conduct in-service training to teach techniques to other teachers.

When describing the impact of ENLACE, a critical question to consider is whether the conditions of education have been altered to improve the outlook for future generations of students. For example, direct service strategies are the foundation of systemic change, as effective programs are scaled up and embedded in schools and colleges. In only six years of operation, ENLACE has built on an existing social structure to provide direct services to local communities while linking these strategies to broader change. Therefore, while the goal of ENLACE is to increase the graduation rates of Latinos in high school and college, the strategies and impact of program efforts span the P-20 educational pathway. Because the seeds of college-going are planted early, changing education conditions in elementary, middle, and high school and in the community are a critical impact of ENLACE and are not easily captured in standard evaluation practices. Funders may want to consider investing more resources to more accurately capture the effects of ENLACE and lessons learned for other efforts to consider.

A critical premise of ENLACE is that partnerships can result in systemic changes as local schools, colleges and universities work together in new ways. In addition, connecting disenfranchised Latino communities to the educational process can shift the work from a series of disconnected projects into an educational movement. Therefore, a summary of how these different partners work together may suffice to demonstrate how ENLACE is meeting its objective of systemic change.

Ultimately, while changes can be made to the education system, if they do not translate into positive impact on students, then the changes are only symbolic. Similarly, if the strategies do not result in changes to the system, the impacts will help those participating students only as

long as external funding lasts. ENLACE's theory of action assumes investing in multi-pronged strategies will create the student-level and systems-level impacts that define ENLACE's goals and objectives. Therefore, getting incremental results, even if they are limited improvements in a small arena, signals change is possible and provides momentum for sustaining ENLACE's work.

As ENLACE New Mexico continues to grow and evolve, participants will face continuing challenges. Some of the main challenges observed in the program audit are as follows.

Flexibility: ENLACE leaders believe their combined practices hold great promise for improving the educational outcomes and graduation rates of Latino youth but require on-going flexibility to try new ways of connecting Latino communities with their schools.

Partnership Sustainability: Establishing the ENLACE partnerships to outlive fleeting external funds requires building relationships and laying down community roots to address educational disparities for the long term. In turn, these partnerships signal to students that their educational achievement matters to everyone.

Evaluation: This program audit was complicated by the limited coordination of program evaluations, data, and documentation statewide of the multiple sites and programs that make up ENLACE. ENLACE is addressing this with the revised evaluation efforts. By externalizing evaluation and policy framework facilitation, the leadership is bringing in more rigor and reinvigorating its statewide efforts.

Leadership: ENLACE New Mexico is preparing for a change in leadership at the statewide level. This creates both an opportunity and a challenge to the coordinated efforts of ENLACE. Because of its importance, ENLACE community members have insisted upon participation in the selection process. In this manner, the commitment to engage and include community representation in its work remains strong.

Appendix 1. Information Sources

Interviews conducted (September 20-22, 2007)

ENLACE parents (10 representatives)

ENLACE community organizers (3 representatives)

ENLACE New Mexico executive director (Karen Griego)

ENLACE Santa Fe staff (Ron Martinez, Erwin Rivera, Kristen Krell, Meredith Machen)

University of New Mexico ENLACE Los Compañeros students (18 students)

Rick Miera, Representative, District 11, Chair of Education Committee, New Mexico House of Representatives

Veronica C. García, Ed.D., Secretary of Education, Public Education Department, New Mexico

Kurt A. Steinhaus, Ed.D., Education Policy Advisor, Governor Bill Richardson, New Mexico

Antonio Gonzales, teacher, Albuquerque High School, and alumnus, ENLACE Los Compañeros

Documents reviewed

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. ENLACE - *Connection: What Makes a Difference in the Education of Latino U.S. Students: Learning from the Experience of 13 ENLACE partnerships*. May 01, 2007.

Wearing a Path to Success for Latino Students: ENLACE. W.K. Kellogg Foundation. 2006.

ENLACE staff. *Challenges and Solutions to Closing the Achievement Gap: Voices of Santa Fe's Middle and High School Students*. May 2004.

Multiple newspaper articles on ENLACE and programs.

ENLACE Program reports

State ENLACE Annual Narrative Report: New Mexico to W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2002-03)

State ENLACE Annual Narrative Report: New Mexico to W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2003-04)

Local ENLACE Annual Report: Albuquerque to W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2003-04)

Factsheet: ENLACE Albuquerque

Factsheet: Northern New Mexico ENLACE

Factsheet: Southern New Mexico ENLACE

Albuquerque ENLACE 2003-04 Program Overview

Southern New Mexico ENLACE program descriptions

Northern New Mexico ENLACE program descriptions

ENLACE Best Practices (program listing and summaries)

Examples of *Excelencia* 2006 nomination

Scope of Work for ENLACE New Mexico

Policy information

ENLACE Networking Meeting – Developing Policy Goals and Action Strategies for ENLACE. Summary document provided by National Center for Community and Educational Partnerships.

Increasing Hispanic Graduation Rates – Policy Agenda 2006-07

ENLACE Legislative Planning Meeting summary notes (2006)

van Moorsel, P. ENLACE Program at Certain Schools. State of New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee Bill Analysis. Bill number HB 325. 48th Legislature, 1st session, 2007. February 13, 2007.

Herman, P. Staff Brief: The Family and Youth Resource Act and other Support and Parental Involvement Programs. State of New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee. September 12, 2006.

Report to the First Session of the Forty-Eighth Legislature. State of New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee. January 2007.

Public School-Related Legislation – Forty-Sixth Legislature, First Session, 2003 (After Executive Action). Legislative Education Study Committee. May 23, 2003.

Program Data and Evaluation

Guerin, P. *Report in Brief: ENLACE in Albuquerque*. Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico. October 2002.

Summary of ENLACE in New Mexico: ENgaging LATino Communities for Education. Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico.

ENgaging LATino Communities for Education: ENLACE in New Mexico. Factsheet. Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico.

ENLACE Day in Santa Fe Brings Education to the Forefront. E-Newsletter. 2004.

Data reports retrieved from ENLACE New Mexico database on September 28, 2007.

- ENLACE student participation report for 28 programs statewide.
- Male/Female Breakdown of Statewide Numbers for currently active ENLACE students.
- Ethnicity breakdown for statewide active ENLACE students.

Data report on ENLACE impacts from July 1, 2006 to January 2007 provided by ENLACE New Mexico staff.

New Mexico Higher Education Department. ENLACE Performance Measures. Northern New Mexico ENLACE. January, May, and August 2007.



Excelencia in Education aims to accelerate higher education success for Latino students by providing data-driven analysis of the educational status of Latino students, and by promoting education policies and institutional practices that support their academic achievement. A 501(c)(3) organization, based in Washington, DC, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers, adding value to their individual efforts with the means and momentum to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce. For more please visit www.EdExcelencia.org

Excelencia in Education
1752 N St. NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20035