

# Putting the Pieces Together



# Breaking Down Silos to Build Connected Pathways



What would happen if we stopped treating education, workforce development, and economic development as three different things? What if we saw them as connected outcomes, as milestones in the journey of a young person's life?

What if we were willing to challenge one another to rise above the status quo, and if we were willing to have difficult conversations on our way to reaching a shared goal? What if we were willing to think outside the box to identify bold, innovative solutions? And what if we removed the barriers that prevent young people from seeing and seizing a bright vision for their lives?

What would that community look like?

In Doña Ana County, New Mexico, we're well on the way to finding out.

## Building the Bridge from High School to College and Career



# Unusual Collaboration, Unusually Effective Results

When Stanford University introduced its now famous “Collective Impact” report in 2011, Doña Ana County was already four-years into proving that when multiple sectors of a community, especially those who don’t typically work together, could unify around a common goal, powerful, lasting change is possible.

The business leaders of this community didn’t have a roadmap or a plan on how to change the fact that one of every two students was dropping out, leaving them with a highly-underprepared, unqualified labor pool. The same dynamic prevented economic development leaders from drawing prospective high-tech and emerging industries into an otherwise optimal community to do business. At the same time, education leaders struggled with how to motivate kids to stay in school when job opportunities in growing career fields seemed limited.

Rather than pointing fingers, these same leaders chose to link arms and work together. They began talking together, wrestling with tough questions, and identifying the reasons that kids simply weren’t staying in school. They commissioned research, got a deeper understanding of the issues, and then identified best practices and worked to create a new vision of success for their community – all students graduate ready to engage in a 21st Century international workforce.

This vision now drives The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, a non-profit organization born out of this unique cross-sector collaboration. Rather than adding a new program to a county laden with community, state, and federal programs, The Bridge was formed with the mission to facilitate collaboration between programs and leverage the collective resources of the public and private sectors (resources that already exist) to increase student graduation rates and optimize the county’s workforce.

In just five years, lasting change is happening, and it’s not just changing Doña Ana County. The state of New Mexico is changing, too.



**Business & Community Leaders**



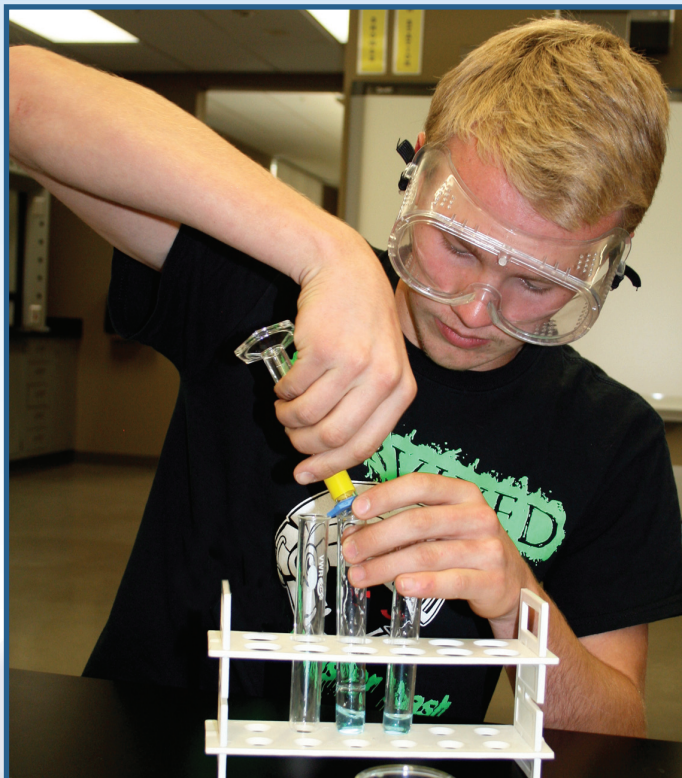
**Education Leaders**

## Impact Measures

- 51% Doña Ana County Graduation Rate Before The Bridge (2007)
- 72% Doña Ana County Graduation Rate (2011)
- \$6-\$20 Million Projected Increase in County Incomes
- 60 Action Team Members
- 26 Public Sector Partner Institutions
- 28 Private Sector Partner Businesses and Organizations
- 7 Action Teams
- 12 Parallel Initiatives
- 2,100+ Hours Invested by Leaders and Partners

# Goal: Advance Early College High Schools

## Maximizing High School-to-College Completion



Students' vision of the future is often limited by perception or life experience. While our country heralds a four-year college degree as the pinnacle of educational success, the truth is, only one in three young people achieve this goal. What if students were exposed to college while they were still in high school, integrated with training in real and relevant career pathways?

The first major outcome of The Bridge's work was establishing New Mexico's first early college high school (ECHS) through a ground-breaking collaboration between three of the county's educational institutions. Arrowhead Park Early College High School opened with its first class of Trailblazers in 2010 as a STEM-focused Las Cruces Public school, located on land donated by New Mexico State University, with dual credit courses provided by Doña Ana Community College.

Students who graduate from Arrowhead Park will have the ability to earn both a high school diploma and an Associates Degree in the course of four years. This places students in an incredibly advantageous position. They graduate ready to fill high-demand, STEM-related middle skills jobs in their community or two years closer to earning a four-year degree, saving students, their families, and taxpayers significant amounts of money. Additionally, the students will have a profound economic impact on their community when they engage in the workforce two years sooner than their peers, equipping them to build stronger futures for themselves and their families.



Targeting students who are first generation college attenders, the school set a new standard for not just educational excellence, but efficiency in educational investment.

This year, Gadsden Independent School District opened its first ECHS at the new Chaparral High School. Chaparral, one of the state's largest colonias, is now home to a branch of Doña Ana Community College, a partnership which made the second ECHS possible. The rural community of Hatch will open its ECHS in 2013 thanks to the new Doña Ana Community College branch there.

In the true spirit of partnership between business and education, a second ECHS is also underway in Las Cruces focus on preparing students for the largest and one of the best paying employment sectors in the county – healthcare. The career pathways and curriculum are literally being built by employers in the healthcare industry working alongside education leaders. The result will be a first-of-its kind, custom-designed ECHS to serve the community for years to come.

# Signs of Impact

## Academic Impacts:

### 2 Early College High Schools:

- 342 Las Cruces (third year)
- 19 Gadsden (just opened 2012)

### Arrowhead Park ECHS Outcomes:

- 100% of students advance to next grade level
- 95% pass rate for dual credit courses
- 85% of dual credit courses completed with "A" or "B" grades
- 99% attendance rate
- 95% pass rate in Algebra I, 90% pass rate in Algebra II
- 50% of sophomores qualified for college credit through Advanced Placement Tests

## Students Demographics:

- 78% Hispanic
- 63% First Generation College Attendees
- 43% Low Income
- 11% Gifted and Talented
- 4% English Language Learners

## Economic Impacts:

- 361 Students Trained in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Career Fields
- 16% Reduced Cost to Educate Students at AP ECHS
- 2 Years Reduced Time to Workforce Entry
- 2 Years Reduced Time to College Graduation

## Per Arrowhead Park ECHS Class:

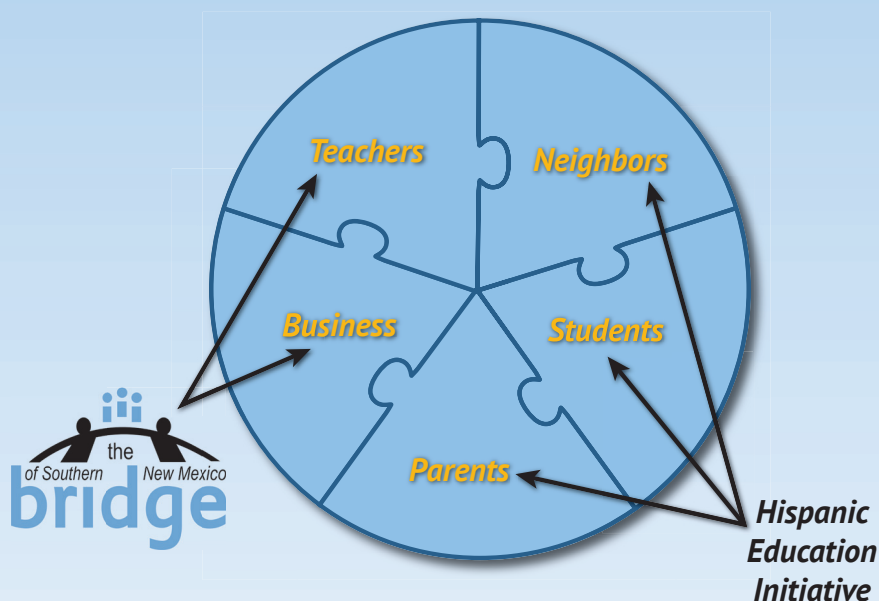
- \$7 million lifetime boost to the economy
- \$100,000 to \$400,000 in increased incomes
- \$250,000 remediation savings

# Goal: Building a Community of Mentors

## Influencing Students for Good



One downside of the societal, technological, and cultural shifts we've experienced over the past century is a breakdown in how we train and equip the next generation for the future. Strong intergenerational family structures used to be the place where young people learned everything for adulthood. However, the breakdown of the historical family training ground, compounded by the challenges faced by a large number of families who live in poverty, have left young people with a desperate need for mentors.



In an effort to create a comprehensive “Community of Mentors”, two of the five total strategies are now in place, and one is moving quickly toward implementation.

### Teacher Mentoring

- 220 Pre-Service Teachers Participated in Service Learning/Mentoring Program
- 7,500 Service Learning and Mentoring Hours by Pre-Service Teachers
- 21 Participating K-12 Schools
- Classroom Teachers Reported Many of the Students Mentored Demonstrated an Increase in Grades, Attendance, and Conduct

### Teachers

Through the NMSU College of Education, the teachers of the future will now learn mentoring skills as part of their education, and they'll have “real world” experience through Service Learning to put their training to practice. Additionally, The Bridge is leveraging the influence of its board of directors to work with state agencies to integrate mentoring into the core competencies to which the state's teachers are accountable. This two-pronged approach will expand this outcome to statewide-impact, as well as position NMSU as an educational leader in the state and the nation in restoring teachers to serving their students in a mentoring role.

## *Parents*

Parents play a key role in supporting their student's educational success, but for some parents, the twist and turns along that pathway are difficult to navigate. The Hispanic Education Initiative identified that the children of immigrant parents are especially at risk of not completing high school or entering college for a host of reasons.

Thanks to a partnership with ENLACE, which is in turn partnering with other organizations in the county like TRIO and the parent centers in the Gadsden district, The Bridge is helping build the capacity of the home by supporting the development of a college and career-ready curriculum for parents that includes closing the technology divide for parents. A fusion of the best practices from ENLACE, 4-H, AVID, and Boston's Tech Goes Home will shape this curriculum and provide cross-mentoring from parent to student, as well as student to parent in the technology component.

## *Businesses*

One of the great barriers to employability for young workers is an absence of "soft skills" in their years of training. Basic employment skills of dependability, attendance, proper attire, and workplace communication are deficient in the younger workforce, leaving employers frustrated with rising turnover rates and costs for hiring and training. Students, whether they've graduated or not, have no expectation or understanding that these skills are even valued and desired by employers.

With strong relationships between the business community and its educational partners, The Bridge has succeeded in planting the seeds of soft-skills training within the educational continuum of Las Cruces Public Schools' students. A pilot program using an existing award-winning curriculum is being launched in 2013, with the plan to expand its impact in reaching all middle and high schools students in Doña Ana

County's three districts. The key to success for this program will lie in the business community's willingness to play a role in their building their future employees and entrepreneurs by stepping into schools and inviting students into their businesses. The effort to engage them deeply in this program is currently underway.

## *Vision Statement*

*All students graduate with the qualified work ethics, life skills, and character to succeed in the 21st Century workforce.*



## Parent Mentoring

- 3 Districts Participating in Pilot
- 6 Participating Schools
- 28 Parents Participating in Training and Feedback on Curriculum
- Secured Grant Funding to Build Stronger Relationships with Children as well as Parents' Workforce Skills



# Goal: Supporting Dual Credit

## Building College Expectations in High School



Supporting student success means identifying the best tools available and making the accessible to as many students as possible. One such tool is dual credit courses. Dual credit courses are taken by high school students but count toward both high school and college course requirements. The student takes the dual credit class once, but gets “credit” in both places. For some, this is their first exposure to college, but they discover that in passing the class, they can succeed in college. It can be a life-changing experience.

These courses provide incredible return on investment of educational dollars, as studies show students who take dual credit courses are more likely graduate and go on to attend college, and less likely to need remedial courses in college. However, due to the fact that both public education and higher education departments are funded for these courses, there is a misconception that the courses are “double funded” by legislators, and funding has been cut in the past.





The Bridge set about to prove their case in the value of this investment by the state, and, in partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools, commissioned a first-of-its-kind study on the effectiveness and impact of dual credit courses. The findings were powerful and far beyond initial expectations. They've been presented to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee and the Legislative Education Study Committee. Equipped with better information and evaluation of the data, legislators are in a better position to make good education policy and funding decisions. The Bridge is leveraging its influence and relationships to continue advocating for increased access to these courses for all students and sufficient funding to support them.

To view the full report, visit our website at: [thebridgeofsnm.com/Current Initiatives/ Advancing Dual Credit](http://thebridgeofsnm.com/Current%20Initiatives/Advancing%20Dual%20Credit).



## Return on Investment in Dual Credit Courses

### Academic Impacts:

- 96% Complete High School (22% higher than non-DC students)
- Twice the Graduation Rate for Students Low-Income Students
- 5% More Likely to Graduate College in Six Years
- 12% Fewer Students Need Remediation at Community College Level
- 6% Fewer Students Need Remediation at University Level
- 2% to 3% Increase in College Persistence Rates
- 8% to 10% Faster Completion of College Course Credits
- ½ to 2.3 Years Shorter Time to College Graduation

### Statewide Economic Impacts:

#### Savings:

- \$1.4 to \$3 Million in Remediation
- \$2 to \$4.5 Million in Funding Formula (Assoc. vs. Bach. Degree)
- \$432 to \$4,356 per Student in Higher Ed. Costs
- \$3 Billion Potential Lifetime Public Assistance

#### Statewide Potential Increased Economic Impacts:

- \$200,000 Increased Lifetime Earnings Per Student
- \$20 million to \$64 million in Incomes
- \$18 million to \$58 million in Disposable Income
- \$2.2 million to \$7 million in Federal Revenue
- \$1.3 million to \$4.1 million in State Revenue

# *Goal: Measuring Impact & Return on Investment*



## **Understanding and Investing in What Works**

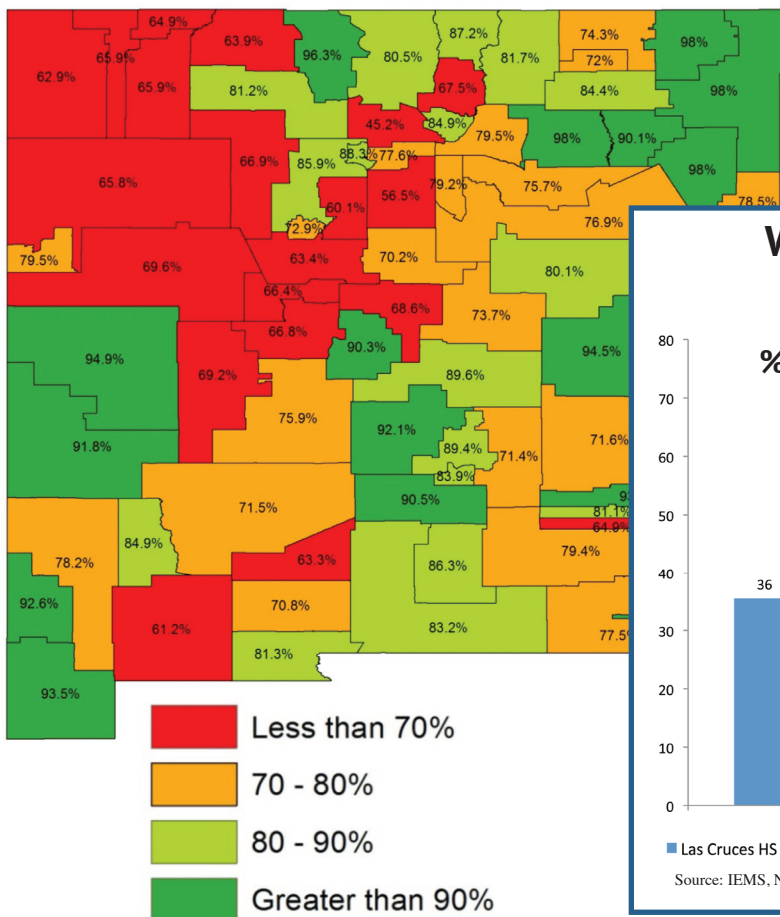
New Mexico is a state that is data rich, and analysis poor. Understanding what the data tells us about what works and what doesn't is critical to building the systems and structures that support student success and understanding the economic impacts of a well-prepared workforce.

However, while New Mexico has mountains of data, it doesn't have coordinated systems for extracting it or tying it together across systems. It also needs measurement partners to cull through the data, conduct meaningful analysis, and communicate broadly what the data is telling us.

Much like business, The Bridge is committed to quantifying outcomes, evaluating return on investment (ROI), and supporting best practices. Without a strong set of measurement partners, this would be impossible to do. However, by connecting evaluation assets already present in the state, The Bridge is supporting development of an evaluation network that could serve the state in connecting data and outcomes between education, workforce, and economic development.

The Center for Education and Outreach at New Mexico State University, the Arrowhead Center, and the Center for Education Policy Research at the University of New Mexico are learning to work collectively in their areas of strength to present a better picture of how policy and practice impact student outcomes and their related economic impacts.

## 4-Year High School Graduation Rate, All Students, By District, Class of 2011

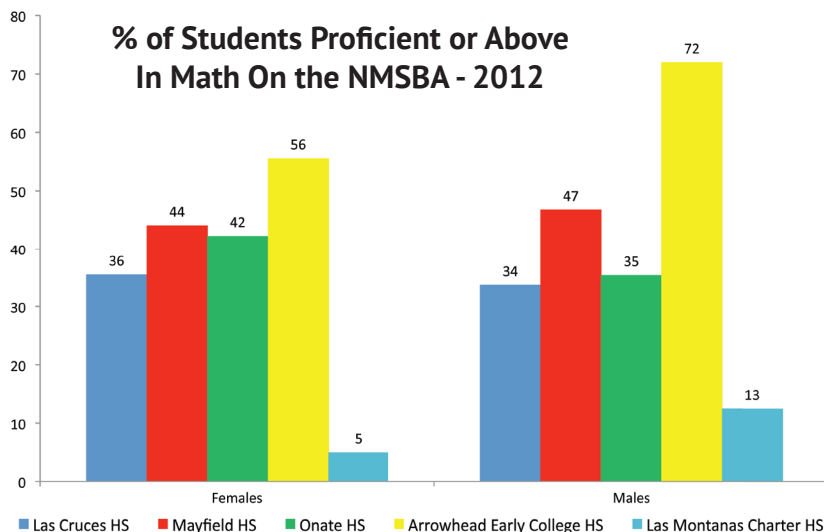


Source: NMPED, 4-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate, Class of 2011.

Here's an example of what we can know if we just have the right tools and the right partners for evaluation.

## What Do We Know About Student Performance At APECHS?

### % of Students Proficient or Above In Math On the NMSBA - 2012



Source: IEMS, New Mexico State University. Note: Schools and subgroups with <10 students are not included in analyses.

## Gains in Student Performance Have the Potential to Reduce State Expenditures

### Lookback Analysis – Average Credit Hours Attempted

|                           | Non-DC Students (SCH) | DC Students (SCH) | Difference (credit hours) | Est. Formula Savings per Student |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| CNM Certificate Graduates | 52                    | 44                | (8)                       | \$1,520                          |
| CNM Associate's Graduates | 96                    | 93                | (3)                       | \$570                            |
| UNM Bachelor's Graduates  | 167                   | 160               | (7)                       | \$1,330                          |

Data are from 2008-10 graduates at CNM and UNM. Years to graduation are calculated by subtracting the semester and year of first enrollment from the semester and year of graduation. The CNM sample consists of 1265 Dual Credit and 5696 non-Dual Credit students. The UNM sample consists of 639 Dual Credit and 8944 non-Dual Credit students. Formula savings based on estimated cost of \$190/SCH. Source: UNM Office of Enrollment Management and CNM Office of Institutional Research

# Goal: Expanding Our Impact

## Changing the County, Changing the State

There is great power in harnessing the collective impact of a community to tackle a tough issue. The solution lies in helping everyone understand, not just the problem, but their role in designing and implementing solutions. When we all take ownership of an issue, we share a commitment to resolving it.

Building on The Bridge's model, New Mexico is pioneering a ground-breaking, statewide initiative between education, workforce development, and economic development to build a strong economic future for the state and its citizens. A state small in population but huge in innovation and opportunity may well become one of the great turnaround stories in these challenging economic times.

The Bridge's work for Doña Ana County is not done. We still have work to do in accomplishing the vision that ALL students graduate ready to succeed in an international workforce.

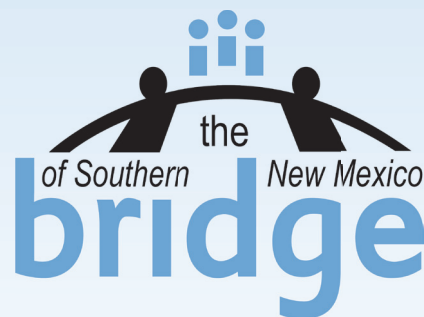
We are grateful for the support of our investment partners who have made what we do possible: The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana Community College, New Mexico State University (NMSU), El Paso Electric, US Bank, the BNSF Foundation, Las Cruces Machine, Pioneer Bank, Sitel, CenturyLink, TRAX International, Advanced Care Hospital of Southern New Mexico, Citizens Bank of Las Cruces, NMSU College of Education, Jacobs Technologies, Sunspot Solar, GenCon Construction, EMI Technologies,



Northrise Ventures, Adventure Travel, the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, Digital Solutions, the Hispano Chamber of Commerce de Las Cruces, along with visionary individual investors in our community.

Join us! We are still expanding our impact by expanding our networks of involvement and investment, and we want you to be a part of this amazing success story.

You can learn more and get involved by calling us at 575-541-7325 or visit [thebridgeofsnm.com](http://thebridgeofsnm.com). Thank you for your desire to help us continue connecting the dots and literally building bridges to success for the youth of this county!



[www.thebridgeofsnm.com](http://www.thebridgeofsnm.com)

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