Testimony of Peter Winograd, Director,
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US Senate Committee On Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
April 18, 2012

Chairman Harkin, Senator Enzi, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. Senator Bingaman, I bring you warm greetings from your home state of New Mexico. My colleagues Kevin Stevenson, Adai Tefera, and Meriah Heredia Griego, and I are honored to have this chance to talk about New Mexico's efforts to improve its education system.

The hearing today focuses on Accelerated Learning. In particular, how do we help more of our high school students to learn more and learn faster so they can make a successful transition to college and careers? We have organized our testimony today around three key questions:

1. Why is Accelerated Learning so important?
2. What do we know about Accelerated Learning?
3. Where do we go from here?

Why Is Accelerated Learning So Important?

One has only to look at the recent titles of the US Senate HELP Committee hearings to understand the daunting challenges we face as a nation:

- The Key to America's Global Competitiveness: A Quality Education.
- Is Poverty a Death Sentence?
- Building the Ladder of Opportunity: What's Working To Make the American Dream a Reality for Middle Class Families?
- Educating Our Children To Succeed in the Global Economy.
- The State of the American Child: Securing Our Children's Future.

We want to emphasize three recurring and interrelated themes that come from your hearings and the national and local discussions around these daunting challenges:

1. Too many Americans are undereducated. The United States must do a profoundly better job of developing its human capital if it is to remain competitive in the world. We know that you are familiar with the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data about America's rankings compared to other countries and the strong correlation within the United States about educational attainment and life earnings. Here are a couple of the statistics that are of most concern to us.

According to the Lumina Foundation (2012), only 39.3% of Americans between the ages of 25 and 64 held an Associate's degree or higher in 2010. In New Mexico, that number is 33.1%, which places us in the bottom 10 states in the country. As you know, New Mexico is known for its beauty, culture, and chile. New Mexico is also home to "big science" with the Very Large Array, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National

Laboratories, and Spaceport America. In 2010, New Mexico ranked 15th in the county in the number of individuals in science and engineering occupations as a percentage of the workforce (National Science Board, 2012). We know that the future belongs to the communities, states, and countries that have an educated population, the natural resources, the quality of life and the entrepreneurial spirit to take advantage of what is to come. We know that New Mexico must do a better job of educating all of its citizens, or our state and our children will continue to be left behind.

2. America's schools work better for some students than for others. I have had the privilege of working with inspirational teachers and principals over my 35 years in education. I have visited some outstanding schools across the country and in New Mexico. Moreover, America has some of the best higher education institutions in the world. In a recent international ranking, 44 American universities were ranked among the top 100 universities in the world (Times Higher Education, 2011-2012). It is clear that the students who are fortunate enough to attend the good schools and graduate from the great universities are well prepared for the future.

But equally clearly, we face enormous achievement gaps among children of different racial, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds. In New Mexico, for example, 15% of Native American 4th graders, 19% of African American 4th graders, and 23% of Hispanic 4th graders were proficient or above in math compared to 48% of White 4th graders on the 2011 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP, 2011). The achievement gap among Native American, African American, Hispanic, and White students is evident at every level of the education system. That same gap is evident when one looks at health, economic vitality or any other measure of social well-being.

Our challenge is as obvious as it is difficult. How do we strengthen our system of education so that it enables more of our students to fully develop their potential? If human capital is the most important resource for a more prosperous future, then we believe we must recognize the achievement gap crisis for what it truly is – a national emergency that requires our urgent attention.

3. **The American dream of education is in danger of dying**. Americans have always believed that education was the path to increased equality and a brighter future. Unfortunately, current data indicate that the gap between rich and poor students is widening, and this country is in danger of losing its heritage of using education as the path for upward social mobility. Recent scholarship by Dr. Greg Duncan and Dr. Richard Murnane (2011) and many other researchers have sounded the alarm clearly.

Dr. Murnane's testimony to this Committee last month stressed how changes in the economy have altered the demands for skills in the workplace, how the education gap between high-income families and low-income families is increasing, and that meeting the challenge of preparing all students to be college- and career-ready cannot be met by simply pushing teachers to work harder.

> We want to expand on Dr. Murnane's last point. Although we are talking about education, we want to stress that schools, by themselves, cannot address all of the challenges that children face. We must strengthen the systems of support – the social and health safety nets – that help children, families, and communities overcome the brutal inequalities that keep too many of our children from succeeding in school. Our research in New Mexico has revealed that far too many students are truant; use drugs, tobacco and alcohol; face violence; have unprotected sex; and engage in other risky behaviors. In addition, too few students are engaged in afterschool activities; have relationships with caring adults; or benefit from other sources of resiliency (UNM Center for Education Policy Research, 2012). For example, 21 of New Mexico's school districts had between 30% and 60% of their high school students classified as habitually truant, which is defined as students with ten or more unexcused absences (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2009-2010). We are deeply concerned that we are losing another generation of children and youth who will, in turn, become the parents of another lost generation, and that this cycle will continue.

Accelerated learning is important because we believe that these approaches can make schools more flexible and responsive to student needs, increase the rigor of the curriculum, raise student aspirations, and enhance the collaboration between high schools and colleges. We believe these critical changes must occur if America is to be globally competitive, if the achievement gap is to be addressed, and if education is to be the path to a better future. So how are our hopes for accelerated learning working out? We turn to that question next.

What Do We Know About Accelerated Learning?

Accelerated learning covers a number of approaches including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Programs, dual credit, concurrent enrollment, early college high schools, and others. Table 1 provides brief definitions of four of the main approaches from the recent literature (e.g.,Waits, Setzer, and Lewis, 2005; Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2006; Lowe, 2010).

Table 1. Definitions of Selected Accelerated Learning Programs.

Approach	Definition
Advanced Placement	Courses that follow the content and curricular goals as developed and published by the College Board.
International Baccalaureate	Courses that compose a 2-year liberal arts curriculum that leads to a diploma and meets the requirements established by the International Baccalaureate Program.
Dual Credit/Concurrent Enrollment	Courses in which high school students enroll in college classes. In many cases, students receive both high school and college credit for college classes successfully completed. Dual credit/concurrent enrollment courses can be taught by high school and/or college/university instructors and can occur on the high school campus, on the college/university campus, or via distance education.
Early College High Schools	High schools that offer students the opportunity to earn substantial amounts of postsecondary credit while still in high school in order to allow students to graduate with a high school diploma and an associate's degree in four or five years, instead of six. Early college high schools often focus on at-risk students by emphasizing real-world learning, relevance and relationships in a small setting.

For the purpose of this testimony, we will focus on New Mexico's experience with a statewide dual credit initiative. We focus on dual credit because it is an important topic in New Mexico's policy discussions and we have been conducting a year-long study on this reform. In addition, several of my fellow panel members will address Advanced Placement.

We believe that New Mexico's experience with dual credit is important for a number of reasons, including the fact that New Mexico looks now like what the United States will look like in the future. We are a multicultural, "majority-minority" state; we have communities of extreme wealth and of extreme poverty; we are both urban and rural; our future depends on a workforce able to fill jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and we share an international border. In addition, New Mexico is at the very bottom of most measures of educational achievement and attainment. So, to paraphrase Frank Sinatra, "If dual credit can make it here, it can make it anywhere."

New Mexico's Dual Credit Program. In 2007 and 2008, New Mexico passed legislation aimed at increasing the rigor of high school. The state's high school redesign efforts included a number of changes but most pertinent to this testimony is that the number of units required for high school graduation increased to 24 units from 23 units. In particular, students are now required to take four units of math rather than three units, and one of those math units must be Algebra 2 or higher. In addition, the high school redesign required that – beginning with the 2009-2010 school year – at least one of those 24 units must be an honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or distance learning class.

In 2007, New Mexico also passed legislation establishing the statutory requirements for a "dual credit program," which allowed high school students to enroll in college-level courses that may be academic or career-technical, but not remedial or developmental, in order to earn credit toward a high school diploma *and* a postsecondary degree or certificate. In 2008, New Mexico passed legislation to include additional schools in the dual credit program, including the New Mexico School for the Blind, New Mexico School for the Deaf, and the New Mexico Military Institute. And in 2010, New Mexico passed legislation adding tribal colleges and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools to the dual credit program. In addition, the legislation passed in 2010 allowed high school core classes to be included in dual credit programs, and it restricted physical education activity courses.

The theory of change underlying the high school redesign and dual credit reforms is that accelerated learning approaches, including dual credit, are an effective way for New Mexico's high school students, particularly minority students and students in high poverty or rural areas, to gain access to higher education. More specifically, New Mexico's policy makers are counting on dual credit programs to enable students to earn credit at both high school and college simultaneously and to obtain an early glimpse of college life. This is essential in New Mexico where the aspirations of and expectations for too many of our students are low.

In addition, New Mexico policy makers hope that dual credit programs would encourage more students from underrepresented groups to consider higher education; result in better completion rates for both high school and college; reduce the need for remediation; create a shorter route to a high school diploma or college degree; reduce the cost of higher education; provide an

alternative for students tempted to leave high school and enter the workforce; and, when offered through distance education, provide equitable access to higher education opportunities for rural students.

The increase in graduation units, as well as the requirement that students take one of their units in an honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or distance learning class, took effect for the freshmen who entered high school in the 2009-2010 school year, scheduled to graduate next year as the class of 2013. Although this reform is in the early stages of implementation, we have already learned a number of lessons.

Lessons Learned. The University of New Mexico Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) has been working with the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), The New Mexico Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), the University of New Mexico (UNM), Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS), Doña Ana Community College (DACC), New Mexico State University (NMSU), The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, and a number of other partners to study the impact of dual credit on student success.

Although the official New Mexico dual credit program is relatively new, students have been participating in dual and concurrent enrollment programs at New Mexico colleges for more than a decade. The data contained in our analyses include the results of both state-sponsored dual credit, as well as other dual and concurrent enrollment programs taking place prior to the 2007-08 school year. Thus, our analyses of student performance and program effects are based on the multiple datasets available to us. What follows are some lessons learned from our analyses of approximately 20,000 high school seniors, 6,000 community college students, and 6,000 university students.

Lesson 1: Dual credit programs appear to be an effective approach to large-scale implementation of accelerated learning. This is important because some of the difficult challenges we face include ensuring that large numbers of minority, high-poverty, and rural students have the opportunity to participate in accelerated learning programs.

1. Dual credit enrollment has increased over time, both in numbers of students who are participating and in number of courses that are offered. In academic year 2010-11, 12,263 New Mexico students participated in dual credit programs, taking a total of 27,751 courses (see Figure 1). These figures represent 12.4% of all New Mexico public high school students, and approximately 3.5% of all courses offered at public high schools. Currently, the overwhelming majority of dual credit course takers are juniors and seniors. Unlike the current senior class, the current cohort of juniors will be the first class to graduate under the more rigorous New Mexico graduation requirements. Consequently, as more students begin to come under the new requirements, we expect substantial growth in dual credit enrollments over the next few years.

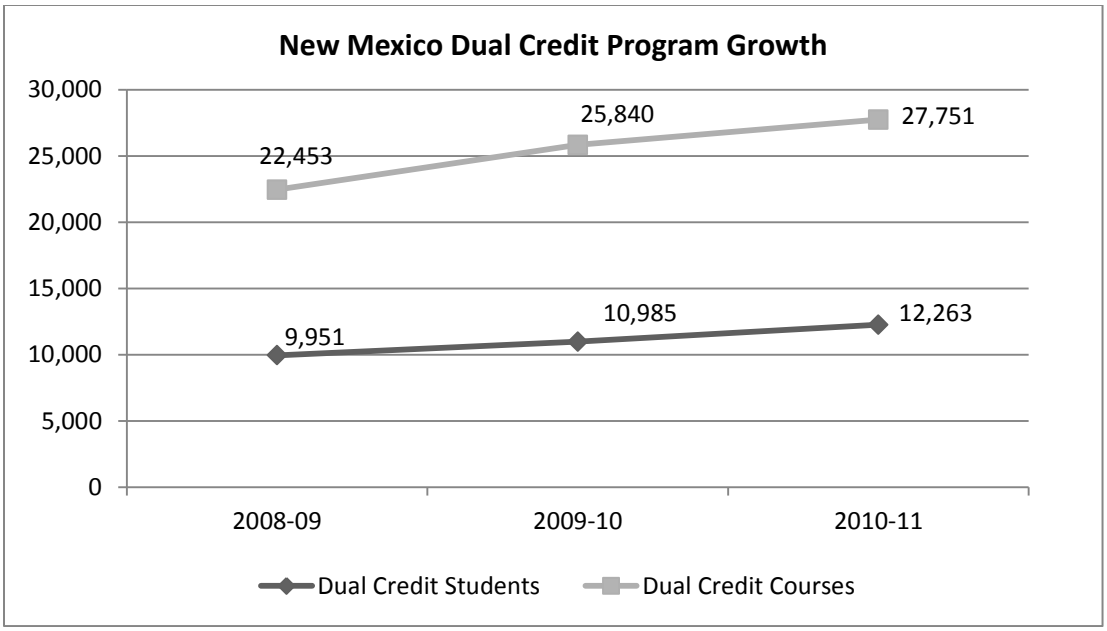

Figure 1: This chart shows the total statewide enrollment growth in New Mexico's dual credit program, in terms of both number of students enrolled and number of courses taken. Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department

2. New Mexico's Dual Credit program provides access to students across the state, in both urban and rural settings. As a part of the program, each New Mexico community college is assigned a Geographic Area of Responsibility, ensuring that every school district in the state has a partnership with a community college to offer dual credit courses. Additionally, colleges have implemented a variety of delivery methods (courses taught at a high school, online or distance learning, etc.) to further accommodate high school students where distance to a college is a potential barrier to access. As the map below illustrates, there are community colleges and universities across the state offering dual credit courses, with substantial enrollments at many colleges in rural New Mexico (Figure 2).

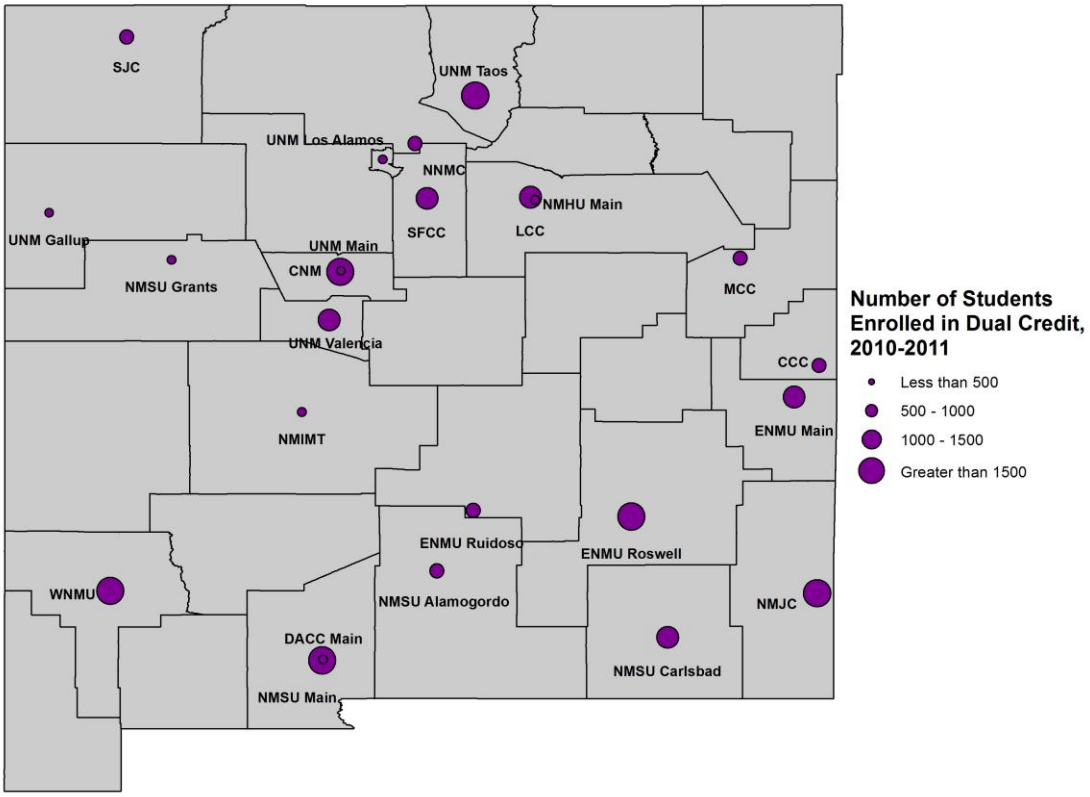

Figure 2: This map shows dual credit enrollments at each public college in New Mexico, with larger circles indicating higher enrollments. Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department

3. Dual credit has high levels of participation from minority students, but they are still underrepresented in the programs compared to overall state public school enrollments. Figure 3 reveals that 42.5% of New Mexico dual credit students are Hispanic. However, this is below the level of overall enrollment in public schools statewide. This underrepresentation is also true of American Indian students and Black students. One challenge to this analysis is that ethnicity is self-reported and not mandatory at the college level, resulting in nearly 10% of dual credit course takers categorized as "no response."

   A promising trend is that Hispanic student participation in dual credit is growing each year (see Figure 4), and growth in 2010-11 may reduce the level of underrepresentation. However, participation among Black students is stagnant, and American Indian student participation declined in 2010-11.

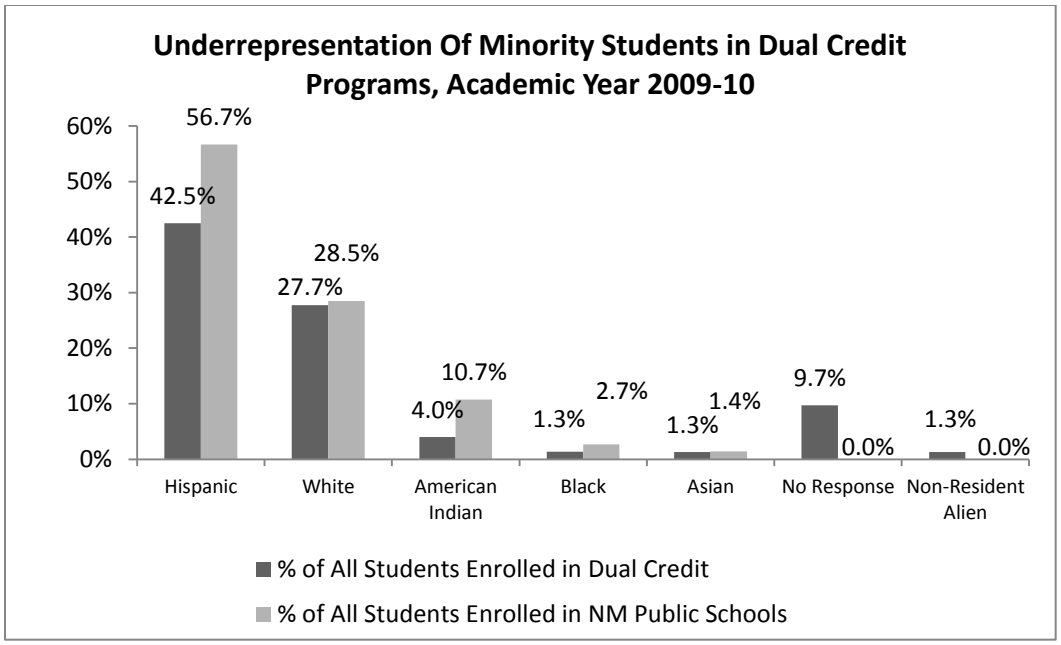

Figure 3. This chart shows the underrepresentation of minority students in dual credit programs. Source: New Mexico Higher Education and Public Education Departments

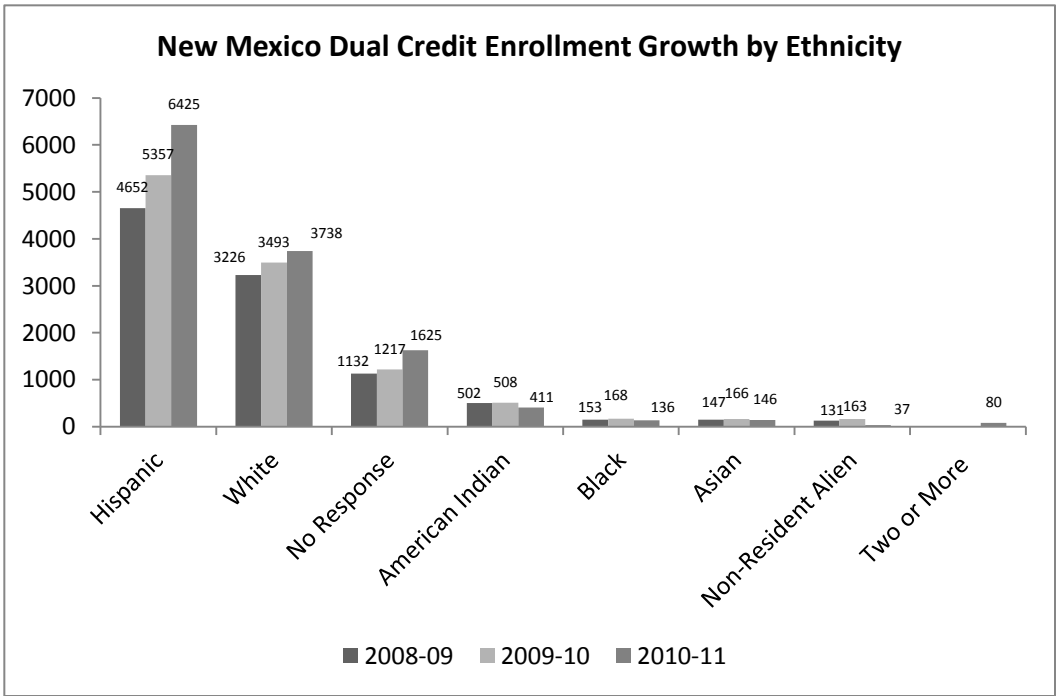

Figure 4. This chart shows New Mexico statewide enrollment by ethnicity of students taking dual credit courses each year. Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department

Lesson 2: Dual credit appears to be associated with improved student performance in terms of increased high school graduation rates, increased college attendance, decreased need for remediation in college, increased persistence from semester to semester in college, increased college graduation rates, and decreased time to completion and graduation in

college. Given the complexity of the student pipeline from high school through college, it is difficult for any one measure to completely capture student performance. Recognizing this, we looked at student performance at several different institutions and through several different lenses. It is encouraging that, in all cases, students who took dual credit courses showed higher levels of student performance. It is too early in our research to draw causal connections, but the initial results are promising.

1. Dual credit is associated with increased high school completion. An analysis of 5,223 11th graders at Albuquerque Public Schools showed that those who took at least one dual credit course graduated from high school at much higher rates. Of 11th graders in the class of 2011, 96.2% of those who took a dual credit course graduated from high school, compared to 74.9% of 11th graders who did not take a dual credit course (see Figure 5). The data presented in Table 2 reveal that those 11th graders who participated in a Free or Reduced Lunch Program and took a dual credit course graduated from high school at much higher rates than Free or Reduced Lunch participants that did not take a dual credit course. This is important because it shows the potential benefit of dual credit programs for low-income students.

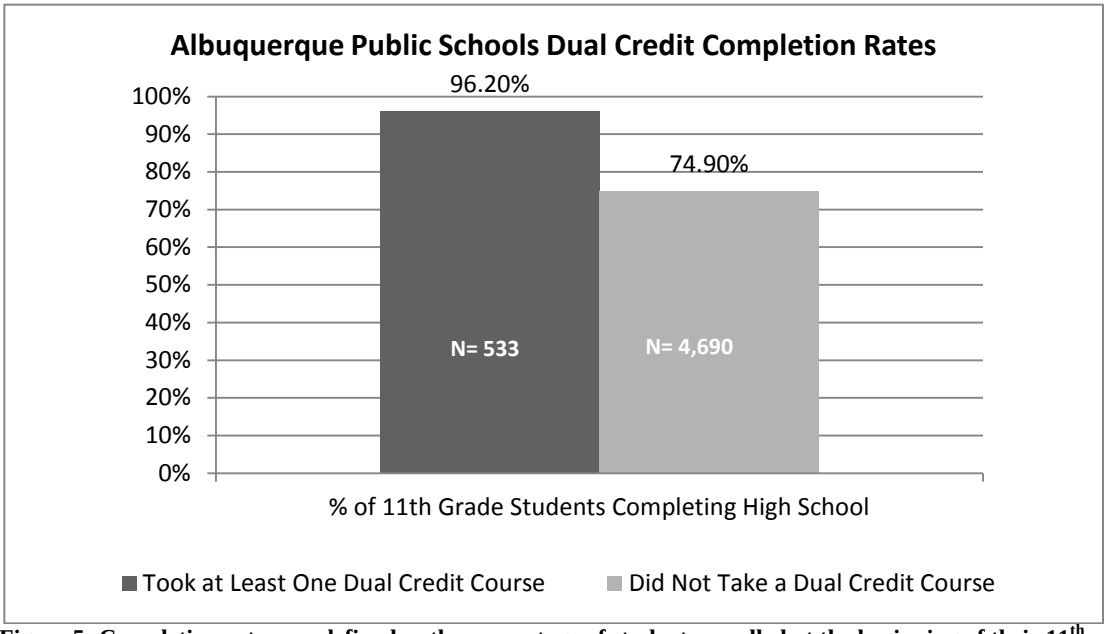

Figure 5: Completion rates are defined as the percentage of students enrolled at the beginning of their 11th grade year who graduated from high school. Source: Albuquerque Public Schools

Table 2. Completion rates are defined as the percentage of students enrolled at the beginning of their 11th grade year who graduated from high school. Source: Albuquerque Public Schools

Albuquerque Public Schools Dual Credit Completion Rates			
	Took a Dual Credit Course	**Did Not Take a Dual Credit Course**	**Total**
Participated in a Free/Reduced Lunch Program	86.8% (N=91)	44.6% (N=1,227)	47.5% (N=1,318)
Did Not Participate in a Free/Reduced Lunch Program	98.2% (N=442)	85.6% (N=3,463)	87.0% (N=3,905)
Total	96.2% (N=533)	74.9% (N=4,690)	77.0% (N=5,223)

2. Dual credit is associated with increased college attendance. Students who participated in New Mexico's dual credit program in their senior year attended college at much higher rates than their peers. Among the class of 2009, 4,524 students took a dual credit course during their senior year of high school, and 67% of these dual credit course takers enrolled in college in Fall 2009. That is significantly higher than New Mexico's typical college-going rate of approximately 50% (Winograd, Florez, and Garcia, 2010). We have been conducting surveys and interviews with dual credit program administrators, advisors, and other college and high school personnel and they believe that one of the most important benefits of dual credit programs is that they allow students who never viewed college as an option to realize that they can succeed in a college course.

3. Dual credit is associated with a reduced need for remediation. This is important because students who do not take remedial courses graduate from college at significantly higher rates than their remedial course-taking peers (Winograd, Florez, and Garcia, 2010). Our research indicates that 35% of the students who participated in dual credit took remedial courses at a New Mexico college, a percentage far lower than the state average of 47.1% (ibid). Figure 6 shows the percentage of students who took at least one remedial course from Fall 2009 to Fall 2010 at Central New Mexico Community College, Doña Ana Community College, New Mexico State University, and the University of New Mexico. At each institution, the remediation rates are lower for students who participated in dual credit programs while in high school.

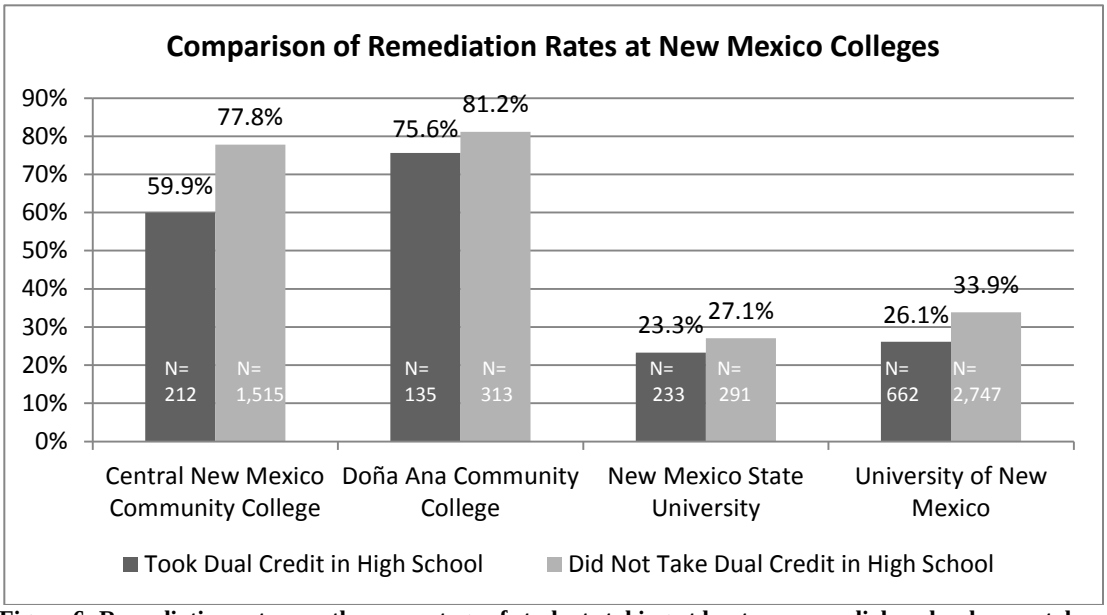

Figure 6: Remediation rates are the percentage of students taking at least one remedial or developmental course from Fall 2009 to Fall 2010. Sources: CNM, DACC, NMSU, and UNM Offices of Institutional Research

4. Dual credit is associated with increased persistence and progress toward degrees. Students who participated in dual and concurrent enrollment programs show higher rates of persistence from semester to semester, as well as increased progress toward degrees. Figure 7 and Figure 8 show the results of an analysis of over 6,000 University of New Mexico students from the freshman classes of 2007 and 2008. Students who took dual credit courses persisted to their sophomore, junior, and senior years at higher rates than their peers. Also, students who took dual credit courses earned college credits at a faster rate than their peers. In addition to these findings, an analysis of approximately 2,700 students at Central New Mexico Community College, Doña Ana Community College, and New Mexico State University showed that students who took a dual credit course in high school had higher rates of persistence to their sophomore year than non-dual credit taking students (see Figure 9).

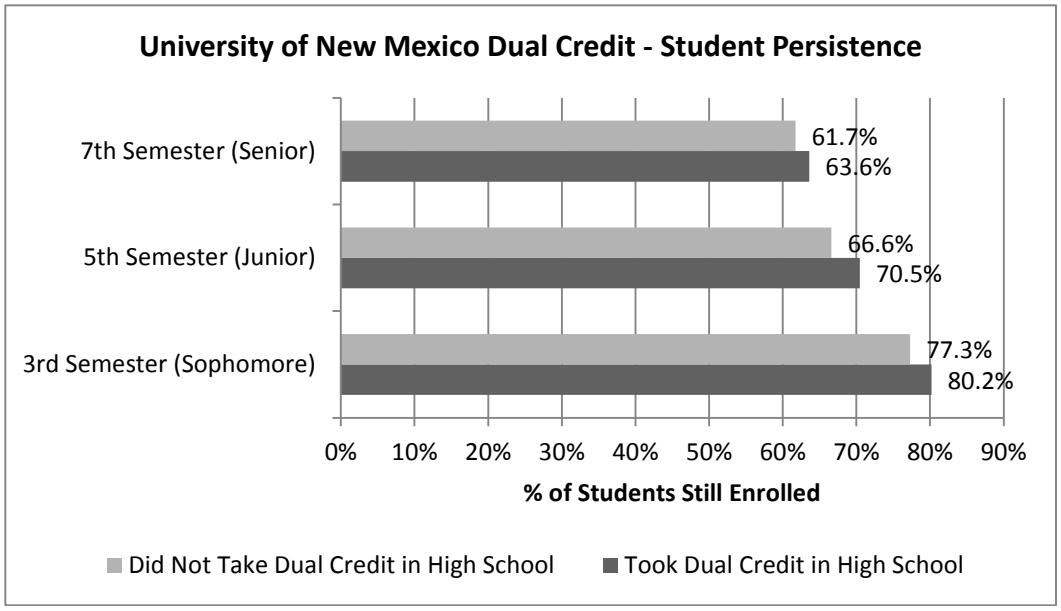

Figure 7. Persistence is defined as students who were still enrolled at the census date of the specified semester. These data are for UNM full-time, first-time entering freshmen in Fall 2007 and Fall 2008. Sample consists of 904 Dual Credit and 5220 non-Dual Credit students. Source: UNM Office of Institutional Research

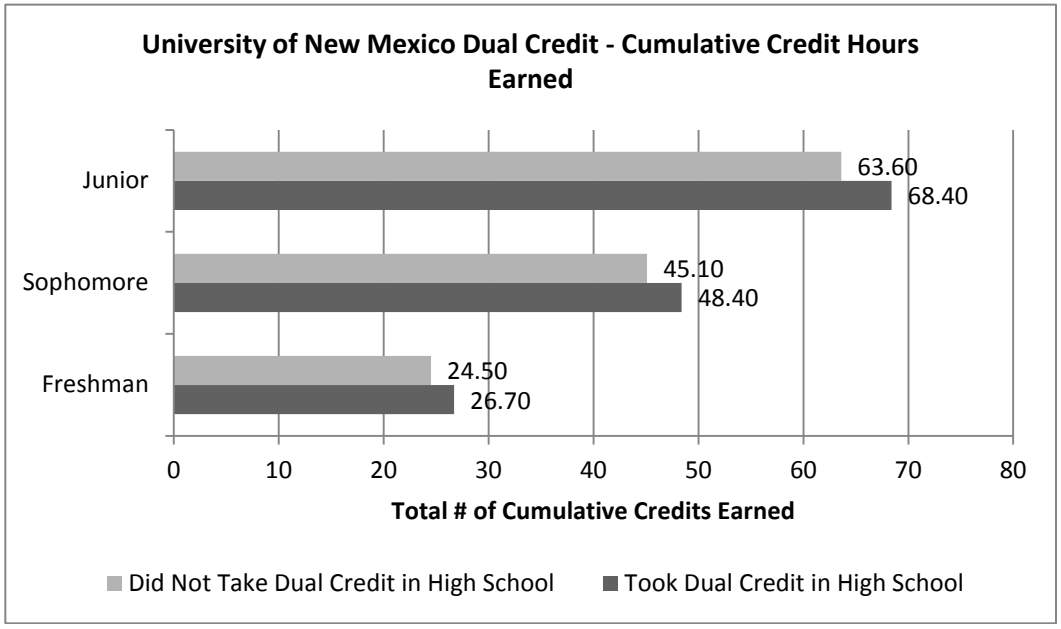

Figure 8: This chart shows the number of cumulative credit hours earned by the end of the spring semester of each year. These data are for UNM full-time, first-time entering freshmen in Fall 2007 and Fall 2008. Sample consists of 904 Dual Credit and 5220 non-Dual Credit students. Source: UNM Office of Institutional Research

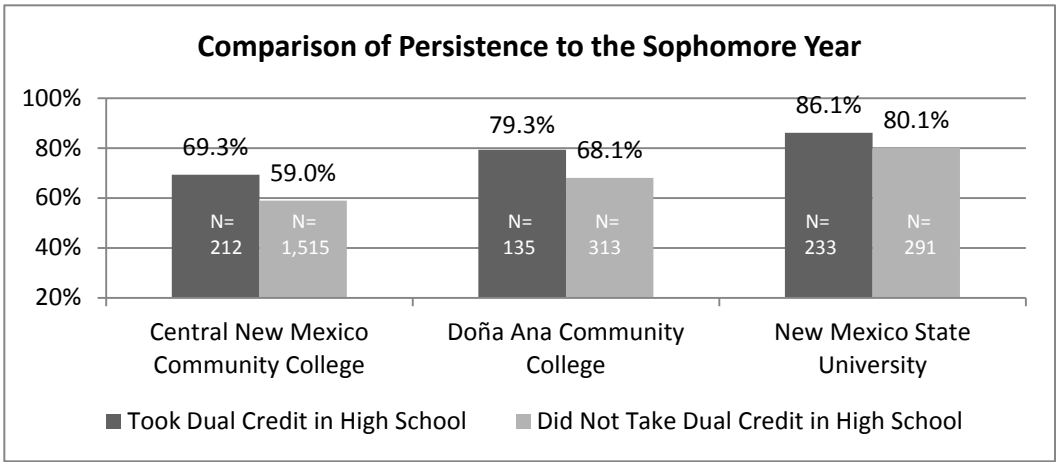

Figure 9: Retention rates are based on the percentage of first-time, full-time students in fall 2009 re-enrolling during the fall 2010 semester. DACC and NMSU retention rates include students retained at any campus in the NMSU system. Source: CNM, DACC, and NMSU Office of Institutional Research

5. Dual Credit is associated with higher college graduation rates. Students who took dual credit courses during high school realized higher graduation rates than their peers. An analysis of the University of New Mexico incoming freshman class of 2005 shows that dual credit students had a graduation rate nearly 5% higher than those who did not take dual credit (see Figure 10).

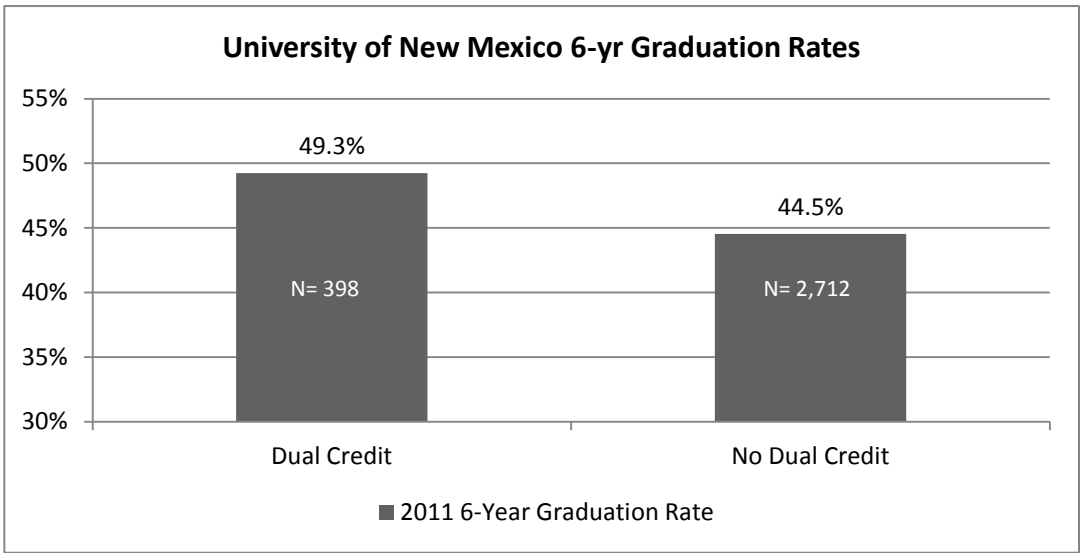

Figure 10: Graduation rates are the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen in Fall 2005 who graduated with a bachelor's degree or enrolled in the 3rd semester of the PharmD program by the spring semester of 2011. Source: UNM Division of Enrollment Management

6. Dual Credit is associated with faster time to completion. Of the students who graduate with a certificate or degree, those who participated in dual credit programs during high school graduated at faster rates and took fewer courses than their peers. An analysis of Central NM Community College and University of New Mexico graduates shows a substantial reduction in time to graduation for dual credit students (see Figure 11)

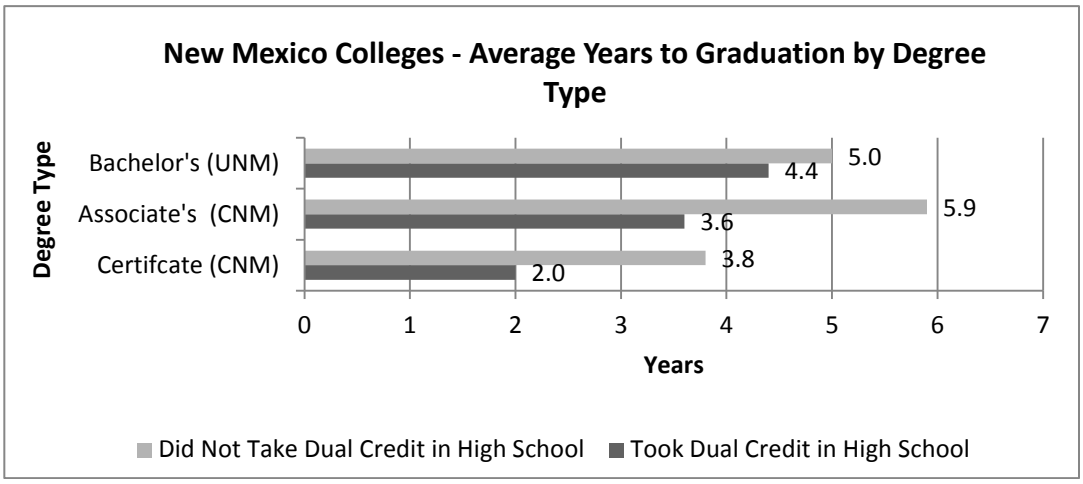

Figure 11: Data are from 2008-10 graduates at CNM and UNM. Years to graduation are calculated by subtracting the semester and year of first enrollment from the semester and year of graduation. The CNM sample consists of 1265 Dual Credit and 5696 non-Dual Credit students. The UNM sample consists of 639 Dual Credit and 8944 non-Dual Credit students. Source: UNM Office of Enrollment Management and CNM Office of Institutional Research

Lesson 3: The content and delivery of dual credit programs needs to be refined to ensure consistency and rigor across a large statewide program. In addition, the program needs to be carefully monitored in order to ensure that it is meeting the state's goals of improving students' success effectively and efficiently.

1. A challenge for dual credit programs is ensuring consistency in rigor and curriculum across a variety of delivery methods. Annually, about 40% of New Mexico dual credit courses are offered on high school campuses. In most cases, these courses are taught by high school faculty, with oversight or approval from college academic departments. Some policy makers are concerned that courses offered at high schools do not provide the same benefit and are perhaps less rigorous than courses taught on a college campus. For example, an analysis of New Mexico dual credit courses shows that students taking courses taught at a high school earn higher grades than those taking courses taught at a college (see Figure 12). This variation in GPA raises concerns among policy makers that these high school-located courses may be less rigorous than their counterparts offered at college campuses. It is important to note, however, that New Mexico is an extraordinarily rural state. Transporting high school students over long distances to college locations is simply not feasible.

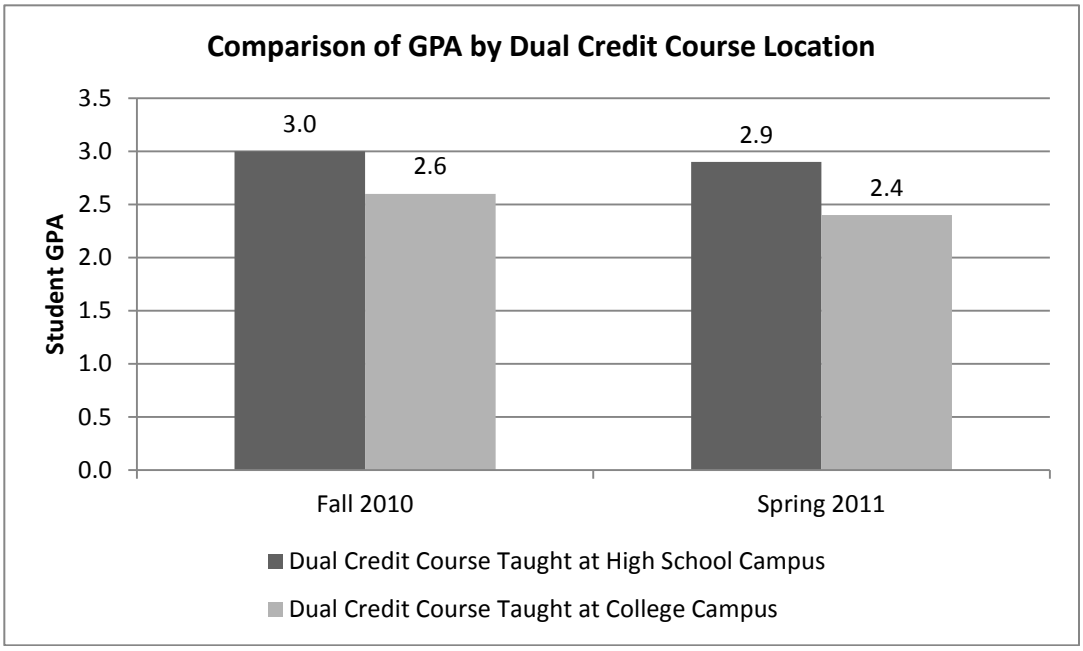

Figure 12: This chart shows the average GPA (on a 4-point scale) of students taking dual credit courses at a college campus compared to at a high school campus. For this analysis, online or distance education courses are categorized as being offered at the college campus. Source: New Mexico Higher Education Department

2. New Mexico has one of the most generous dual credit programs in the nation, designed to promote access for any interested high school student. New Mexico's statewide program requires that colleges waive student tuition and fees, and that public school districts provide funding for books and instructional materials. The result is a statewide program with minimal, if any, financial barriers to entry for students. The state also provides full funding to both the high school and college for the dual credit course, independent of the course location or delivery method. The rapid growth in participation in dual credit has created concern among policy makers that some higher education institutions are taking advantage of the program, essentially receiving state funding for courses which they expend little or no effort to deliver (a college course taught at a high school campus by a high school faculty member, for example).

3. A number of policy makers are concerned that student enrollment in dual credit programs will grow and the costs of the program will rise. We estimate that New Mexico currently spends approximately $33 million on dual credit programs, including instructional materials. Recall that currently about 11% of high school students are enrolled in dual credit courses and that approximately 3.3% percent of high school courses offered are dual credit courses. If the program proves to be successful and becomes more widespread, the costs will increase as well. New Mexico is currently wrestling with how to think about balancing the immediate costs of the dual credit program with its potential long-term benefits and how to best structure the funding mechanisms to support program growth efficiently.

4. Finally, there is persistent skepticism by policy makers that the gains in student performance as a result of dual credit programs are misleading and overstated. Most of the current performance data on New Mexico dual credit students is from prior to the complete implementation of the New Mexico High School Redesign (first graduating class with new requirements will be in Spring 2013). As a result, some argue that the students who "self-selected" to participate in dual credit programs were already more likely to attend and succeed in college, and their increased performance is not in fact a result of taking dual credit courses. This is an important question and one that must be answered by future research.

Lesson 4: High schools and higher education institutions can, in fact, work together. This is no small feat. New Mexico has a number of promising partnerships that can teach us much about how high schools, higher education institutions, and the community can work together for the benefit of the students. Here are some of those promising partnerships:

1. In 2008, Superintendent Winston Brooks, President Katharine Winograd, and President David Schmidly established a partnership among Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), and the University of New Mexico (UNM). This partnership has doubled the number of APS students taking dual credit courses at CNM and doubled the numbers of students who transfer from CNM to UNM Most importantly for us, this collaboration enabled us to get the data needed to assess the impact of dual credit for these three institutions.

2. In 2011, the University of New Mexico was awarded a "Latino Student Success" grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education, one of only 12 such awards in the nation. The grant is a collaboration between UNM, APS, CNM, and a number of Albuquerque-based community organizations. Using the principles of "collective impact," these organizations are developing a community-wide plan to ensure that more Albuquerque Hispanic youth graduate with post-secondary degrees and certificates. Because of the low educational attainment rates in Albuquerque among Hispanics, the plan requires a three-pronged strategy of ensuring that more Hispanic students graduate from high school, finding ways to get more Hispanic students into the college pipeline, and ensuring that students are retained and graduate at higher levels once they enroll in a community college or university.

3. In 2010, Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana Community College, New Mexico State University, and a public-private partnership called The Bridge of Southern New Mexico opened Arrowhead Park Early College High School. The impetus for this collaborative effort was the community's concerns regarding dropout rates, workforce adequacy, and the future of Southern New Mexico. The school relies heavily on dual credit classes and is aimed at helping students progress quickly along career pathways in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The school opened in Fall 2010 and in the next year, all 112 students went on to tenth grade. Discussions are currently underway for more Early College High Schools in the Las Cruces, Gadsden, and Hatch districts.

Again, most importantly for us, this collaboration enabled us to get the data needed to assess the impact of dual credit for students in the southern part of the state.

Lesson 5: Dual Credit programs and other accelerated learning programs must overcome a number of fundamental issues if they are to make a permanent difference for large numbers of students. These issues include:

1. **Collaboration.** Collaboration between the K-12 public schools and higher education institutions is a much more difficult challenge than it appears. The alignment of high school graduation standards and college admission standards, articulation agreements about which courses will count for what kinds of credit, concerns about college reputations and status, concerns about younger high school students attending college campuses with older students, regulations about which colleges can offer dual credit in which geographic regions of the state, and the practice of blaming public schools for the poor performance of students in higher education are some of the issues potential partners must resolve if they are going to work together.
2. **Funding.** Most current funding mechanisms rely heavily on student enrollments and thus pit high schools and colleges against one another in terms of who gets the credit for dual credit students. These same funding mechanisms can pit high schools, community colleges, universities and families against one other because it may be less expensive to take some courses as dual credit rather than waiting until the student has graduated from high school and is attending the university. In addition, in these tight budget times, some legislators and educators are concerned about "double-funding" programs, in that both high schools and colleges would get funding credit for the same students. Finally, it is important to consider how the costs of transportation, technology, and instructional materials will be covered when public schools, colleges, and families are struggling to make ends meet.
3. **Quality and Accountability.** High schools and higher education institutions often bicker about which courses can be taught at what locations and by whom and they use the issue of quality to mask a wide range of concerns. In addition, it is very difficult to get the data needed to assess the impact of these programs. A number of states have developed effective strategies for overseeing dual credit programs, including collaborative approaches to program approval, periodic program reviews, student outcome analyses, regular collegial meetings, course approvals, periodic reviews of district/college agreements, and annual reporting (Lowe, 2010). We think these are promising strategies that should be expanded.
4. **The Value of a College Degree.** Some of the most interesting debates about dual credit programs come from the differences in people's deeply-held beliefs about the purposes of high school and college. Although most of the New Mexicans we work with agree that all students should graduate from high school, there is less agreement that all students should go to college. The national debates about the current value of a college education show that this difference of opinion is nationwide. In addition, we often encounter the higher education perspective that stricter admission requirements and high rates of applicant rejection are the hallmarks of a better university. We don't think that everybody needs a four-year college education, but we also don't think that the

staggering disparities in educational attainment related to race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status should go unchallenged.

Lesson 6: **We need to ensure equity and accessibility of accelerated learning programs to all students.** One of the most disheartening findings to come out of our research is that dual credit, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs come too late for too many minority and high poverty students. We lose too many children to poor health care and lack of developmental support in the four or five years before they get to school, and we continue to lose them in elementary and middle schools. Even the most effective accelerated learning programs are limited to the students who make it through the system to high school and are prepared enough to take advantage of these more rigorous learning opportunities.

We know that America's future depends on the success of all of its students, yet we face incredible challenges when it comes to ensuring that all students have access to a rigorous curriculum that prepares them for both college and career. The recently released Office of Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) reveals heart-wrenching statistics about the state of educational opportunity in our nation and the tremendous work left to be done. In 2009, for example, 55% of high schools with lower enrollments of African American and Hispanic students offered calculus; compared to only 29% of high schools serving mostly African American and Hispanic students. Additionally, African American students were three times as likely, and Hispanic students twice as likely, as White students to be retained in all grades. The CRDC data also reveal that African American and Hispanic students represented more than 70% of all students involved in school-related arrests or referrals to law enforcement (U.S. Department of Education 2012a).

The conversations about accelerated learning programs must take place in the larger context of educational opportunity and we need to continuously ensure that these programs are accessible to all of our students. For example, for three of the largest school districts in New Mexico, the CRDC data reveal that in 2009 Hispanics in Albuquerque Public Schools made up 58.7% of the 90,375 students in the district, but only 38.5% of students taking at least one AP course. Likewise, Hispanics in Las Cruces Public Schools made up 71.9% of the 24,970 students, but comprised only 44.2% of students taking at least one AP course. Finally, in Santa Fe Public Schools, Hispanics made up 76.8% of the 12,550 students, yet only 43.8% of students taking at least one AP course.

The evidence is growing that students who enroll in accelerated learning benefit from improved high school graduation rates, increased college enrollment, and higher college graduation rates. As this Committee continues to examine accelerated learning programs across the nation, we encourage you to emphasize the importance of ensuring Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs are equitably funded and accessible to all students. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan clearly articulated that "[t]he power of the data [CRDC] is not only in the numbers themselves, but in the impact it can have when married with the courage and the will to change. The undeniable truth is that the everyday educational experience for many students of color violates the principle of equity at the heart of the American promise. It is our collective duty to change that" (U.S. Department of Education 2012b).

Where Do We Go From Here?

We want to offer four key recommendations that we believe will help promote accelerated learning. These include:

1. Help focus attention on the positive results of dual credit, Advanced Placement, and other approaches to accelerated learning. We can learn much from these attempts to make the education system more flexible and responsive to the needs of all of our students. We would argue that there is widespread agreement that the silos surrounding early childhood programs, K-12 education, higher education, and workforce development need to come down. Successful accelerated learning programs can teach us much about how different parts of the education system can work together.

2. Keep the vision of a highly-educated America alive. We cannot overstate the importance of statesmen and stateswomen articulating what America should be. This country is founded on the belief that all men and all women, regardless of color or creed, are created equal. Our history is a story of struggling to make that promise hold true for all of our citizens and that struggle continues today. Your steadfast advocacy for education in general, and the importance of accelerated learning in particular, is crucial to the future of so many of our children. We quoted Frank Sinatra earlier so we can quote Abraham Lincoln now: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." We have overwhelming evidence that our current education system is becoming more a source of division rather than a force for the common good. Accelerated learning is an important attempt to make the American dream of a good education a reality for more of our students. Thank you for your efforts so far but the fight is far from over.

3. Use all of your policy levers to get the adults in different parts of the education system to work together for the benefit of the students. In recent years, we have seen a number of influential grants from the Department of Education including Race To The Top; Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge Grant; the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems; as well as from the Department of Labor including the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Program (TAACCCT). We know that several education bills have been and are being considered by Congress, including the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We understand that the issues are complex but we would urge you to make sure that there are funds to support dual credit, Advanced Placement, early college high schools, International Baccalaureate programs and other forms of accelerated learning in any legislation that is passed. In addition to funding, please consider ways to incentivize collaboration between high schools and higher education institutions. Finally, please include accountability systems with real teeth that focus both on ways to ensuring rigor within accelerated learning programs, and on careful analyses of student outcomes from those programs.

4. Continue the federal pressure for states, school systems, and higher education systems to gather and share data that can be used to determine the impact of our efforts. We clearly need to pay attention to privacy issues, and I believe we have good safeguards in place to do just that. But it is obvious that we struggle to understand which of our education efforts are helpful and which are a waste of irreplaceable human capital. Despite important legislation

like the America COMPETES Act; federal requirements in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; the requirements in the Race To The Top Grants; other federal grants and strong advocacy by organizations like the Data Quality Campaign, too many state agencies, school districts, and higher education institutions are unable or unwilling to use data to inform our policy debates.

Our call for better data is not just an esoteric request from a group of researchers. We cannot tell if accelerated learning programs are accessible, high quality, and making a difference for the students who need them the most. We need data that lets us understand whether accelerated learning makes a difference in terms of graduation, college enrollment and completion, time to graduation, and economic impact. We need data that gives us guidance on how to scale up these efforts so they make a difference for more students. In summary, we need data to help us understand if we are really addressing the challenges that face our country.

We began our testimony by talking about the challenges that the United States faces in terms of global competiveness, the achievement gap, and education as the pathway to the American Dream. We do believe that accelerated learning can help us face those challenges, but much more needs to be done to ensure that our educational system is as strong as it can be. We deeply appreciate the commitment of this Committee to the welfare of our children and our future.

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