

## **New Mexico School for the Deaf**

### **Five Year Strategic Plan**

**2018 - 2023**

#### **Executive Summary**

*Updated January 20, 2020*

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

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

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

Now in its 135th year, as a statewide agency, NMSD continues to grow and change to meet the unique needs of the children who are deaf or hard of hearing. The school remains dedicated to the purpose established in 1885 which was to provide comprehensive and quality educational services to deaf and hard of hearing children enrolled in its programs. What continues to evolve is the breadth and nature of the services that NMSD provides to its consumers and stakeholders. Today, NMSD has multiple functions serving children and families. In addition to its academic programs, the campus in Santa Fe operates as the hub and resource center for its extensive early intervention and outreach programs serving deaf and hard of hearing children and youth from birth through age 22 in the whole state of New Mexico.

#### **Academic Programs**

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

programs. NMSD also operates satellite preschools in Albuquerque, Farmington, Gallup, and Las Cruces. A new preschool program was established in Gallup beginning in the 2017 - 2018 school year. All educational programs follow the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts C and B and New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and State Standards and Benchmarks.

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

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

Students at NMSD are deaf or hard of hearing as a requirement for consideration of admission and have an IEP or 504 Plan. At NMSD, IEPs or 504 Plans are constructed using assessment data to develop meaningful goals for students. Related services staff are included in the educational planning process and address the specific needs of students in supporting their educational success. These include but are not limited to Speech and Language, Audiology, Auditory Habilitation, Spoken English Support, ASL Support, Counseling, Social Work, Art Therapy, Behavior Support, Physical Therapy, and

Occupational Therapy.

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

### **Early Intervention Programs**

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

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

The *Deaf Mentor Program* facilitates the understanding that with early and ongoing access to language being deaf is a difference, not a disability. Most parents who

have a deaf or hard of hearing child have never even met a deaf person other than their own baby. They are filled with questions. By simply introducing a parent to a Deaf Mentor, many of the anxieties that parents have can be drastically reduced. Deaf Mentors are also state-certified Developmental Specialists. The services they provide work in tandem with the Parent Infant Child services that a family receives, focusing on such areas as literacy, positive self-identity, and acquisition of American Sign Language.

### **Outreach Programs**

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

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

### **Summary**

The educational programs and services provided by NMSD are evidence of the agency's understanding and commitment to the diverse needs of deaf and hard of hearing students. Deaf and hard of hearing students acquire and use language and access

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

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

**New Mexico School for the Deaf**  
**Vision, Mission, and Beliefs Statements**

**Vision**

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

**Mission**

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

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

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

**Tag Line**

Dream! Explore! Achieve!

**Beliefs**

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

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

## **NMSD Accrediting and Accountability**

### **Standards and Outcomes**

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

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

#### **Performance Based Budget (PBB) Outcomes:**

1. Rate of transition to postsecondary education, vocational-technical training school, junior colleges, work training or employment for graduates based on a three-year rolling average.
2. Percent of local education staff satisfied with educational services from the Center for Educational Consultation and Training (Statewide Outreach).
3. Percent of individualized education program meetings that address special factors of language and communication.
4. Percent of students from grades K-12 with Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Goals in Reading and/or Math demonstrating progress as documented by quarterly IEP progress reports.
5. Percent of first year signers who demonstrate improvement in American Sign Language based on Fall/Spring Assessments.
6. Percent of parents indicating that programs from the Center for Educational Consultation and Training (Statewide Outreach) have increased their ability to understand their child's language and communication access needs.
7. For NMSD's Early Intervention Program, percentage of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C Early Intervention Performance Indicators that are met. Performance indicators are outlined by OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs and adopted by NM DOH).

#### **AdvancED Accreditation Standards**

1. Leadership Capacity
2. Learning Capacity
3. Resource Capacity

Five Year Strategic Plan Summary 2018-19 through 2022-23  
 (Updated 1/14/20)

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	Advanced Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><b>A. <u>NMSD students are prepared for future success through academic and social-emotional programs and supports that reflect high expectations for their potential</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Implement a Student Achievement Improvement Plan                      Goal #2 topic: Revise and update curriculum in all instructional areas                      Goal #3 topic: Update and align professional development for instructional teams                      Goal #4 topic: Expand upon and streamline communication with families to ensure family engagement                      Goal #5 topic: Develop a K-5 plus or extended learning program that allows NMSD to respond to current legislation                      Goal #6 topic: Embed and streamline instructional technology used by both staff and students                      Goal #7 topic: NMSD’s transition Program will expand upon current programming by fully developing its curriculum including dual credit options, implementing the aquaponics program and having a cohesive plan of supports for recent graduates                      Goal #8 topic: Implement behavioral supports, curricula and strategies that lead to successful social-emotional development in all students                      Goal Topic #9: Increase awareness of the scope of early childhood and preschool programs and services.</p>	<p>Standard 8, 10, 12</p>	<p>Standard 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 3.8</p>	<p>Outcome 1, 4, 5</p>	<p>Director of Instruction (DOI)                       Curriculum Specialists                       DOI/Principals/Specialists                       DOI/Principals                       DOI/Elementary Principals                       Tech Teacher Specialist                       Transition Coordinator                       Principals/Assistant Principal                       ECE Principal                      Albuquerque Preschool Supervisor</p>

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	Advanced Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><b>B. <u>Babies and young children in NM are receiving early intervention services by 6 months of age by qualified staff</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Create a professional development plan for Early Intervention and Involvement staff related to JCIH guidelines and new FIT standards and requirements.</p> <p>Goal #2 topic: Increase intra-program and interagency communication.</p> <p>Goal #3 topic: Increase training and materials to staff and supports to families regarding spoken language and early visual communication.</p> <p>Goal #4 topic: Decrease age at which families and children are accessing deaf professionals.</p>	Standard 8.17, 8.19, 8.20		Outcome 7	Early Intervention and Involvement Team (EIID)
<p><b>C. <u>NMSD has workforce capacity to meet current and future needs of its 0-3 and school age population in all programs</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Develop and implement a modern method for performance appraisal for all classified staff</p> <p>Goal #2 topic: Develop and implement a modern method for performance appraisal for all instructional professional licensed staff</p> <p>Goal #3 topic: Modernize and enhance the existing payroll system</p> <p>Goal #4 topic: Recruit qualified educational and early intervention staff</p> <p>Goal #5 topic: Increase retention of staff</p> <p>Goal #6 topic: Develop higher quality-assurance for the interpreting department</p>	Standard 2, 6 & 7	Standard 1.6 & 3		<p>Human Resources Director, Superintendent, Directors</p> <p>HR Director</p> <p>Superintendent Directors</p> <p>HR Director</p> <p>Interpreter Coordinator</p>

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	Advanced Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><b>D. <u>Grow a variety of supports for D/HH students attending public school programs statewide</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Expand professional expertise and consultation within the CECT Team</p> <p>Goal #2 topic: Utilize the Communication Considerations Addendum as the impetus to increase statewide awareness of the unique linguistic, educational and social needs of D/HH students</p> <p>Goal #3 topic: Increase support and incentives to enhance recruitment of CECT staff</p>	Standard 3 & 8		Outcome 2 & 6	Director of Center for Educational Consultation and Training (CECT) and Team
<p><b>E. <u>NMSD has educational and event facilities to achieve its academic, early intervention, and outreach mission.</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Implement the New Mexico School for the Deaf Facilities Master Plan and Technology Plan</p>	Standard 5 & 7	Standard 3.7 & 3.8		Project Manager, Director of Business and Finance, Superintendent  IT Manager
<p><b>F. <u>NMSD students participating in the student life program develop social, life and leadership skills</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Develop a professional development plan for Student Life Staff in child development and working with children with special needs</p> <p>Goal #2 topic: Develop Cottage Curriculum and ILSP (Independent Living Skills Program) Manual</p> <p>Goal #3 topic: Implement a Level System of earned privileges</p> <p>Goal #4 topic: Increase recognition of Student Life's services, activities and to promote family involvement.</p>	Standard 11		Outcome 1	Director of Student Affairs  Student Life Team
<p><b>G. <u>NMSD's accounting systems and automated processes strengthen internal controls, track payments</u></b></p>	Standard 4	Standard 3.8		

Goal Areas	CEASD Standards Alignment	Advanced Standards Alignment	PBB Outcomes Alignment	NMSD Position or Team Responsible
<p><b><u>and purchases and generate reliable financial information for the operation of NMSD.</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Maximize existing accounting system by maintaining system modules, modernizing practices with system upgrades, and developing position specific skills sets</p>				<p>Director of Business and Finance</p>
<p><b>H. <u>NMSD has relationships and products that build community and inform stakeholders by enhancing awareness and visibility of its programs and services statewide.</u></b></p> <p>Goal #1 topic: Expand social media demographics</p> <p>Goal #2 topic: Use NMSD and Santa Fe Community resources to develop more compelling marketing materials to increase awareness/visibility to advance the school's mission</p> <p>Goal #3 topic: Develop specifications and guidelines for publication requests from NMSD departments</p> <p>Goal #4 topic: Identify a digital management system to organize marketing materials</p> <p>Goal #5 topic: Develop a database that efficiently houses the various stakeholders, affiliations and purposes</p>	<p>Standard 3</p>	<p>Standard 1.1, 1.8</p>		<p>Development and Community Relations Department</p>