

## DISTRICT GRADUATION RATES UP

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 10 February 2017 10:42

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### ***GMCS gets a chance to shine***

The annual graduation rate at Gallup-McKinley County Schools went down one percentage point in 2016, but remained steady with rates in the mid-60s for 2015 and 2014, state Public Education Department statistics show. The district-wide graduation rates for elementary, middle and high schools in New Mexico were released Jan. 16.

Gov. Susana Martinez issued a news release on the state's graduation rates on Jan. 16. In the release, Martinez noted that more students are graduating from state high schools than ever before. Graduation rates increased for Native-American, Hispanic, African-American, low-income and disabled students, according to the governor's statistics.

### **GALLUP SCHOOLS**

Officials at the Gallup-McKinley County School District have been very busy over the years, working to improve teacher quality and in getting parents more involved in student education. The Gallup district tracks ninth-graders who graduate within four years and accounts for transfers and students who are held back.

Gallup area schools' graduation rate remains lower than the statewide rate of 71 percent, which is up from 69 percent in 2015. There are 89 school districts in New Mexico.

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“Although there are significant improvements in our academic system, we are not satisfied with our district’s current graduation rates,” Interim Superintendent Mike Hyatt said of the current GMCS graduation rates. Hyatt was appointed to the superintendent’s job about a month ago and after the Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education firing of Frank Chiapetti. “We do, however, expect our graduation rates to increase as students are taught with appropriate and higher expectations, have more experience with rigorous state testing, and work in an overall improved system of education at GMCS. For those current students who have not graduated or who are not at grade level, we have increased our credit recovery opportunities and are continuously working on improving the education system as a whole to better meet their individual academic needs.”

In 2013 the Gallup district’s graduation rate was 71.3 percent and the highest it has been since a low of 52.8 in 2008. The rate was 64.9 in 2014, 66.6 in 2015 and sits at a straight 65 percent for 2016. The Gallup school system is consistency ranked in the lower statewide percentile with respect to performance.

The graduation numbers don’t really come as a surprise to at least one school board member. Lynn Huenemann, who chose not to run again Feb. 7 for another school board term, said, “Just looking at the numbers on the surface I think it represents something good,” Huenemann said. “I think we still have to keep our focus on progress. I’m not dismissing what has been accomplished.”

Martinez was pleased at the news conference which she announced with state Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera by her side. The news conference took place at the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce.

“With more students graduating high school than ever before, New Mexico is better preparing our kids to enter the work force than ever before,” Martinez said. “When we raise the bar and give our kids the resources they need to succeed, they rise to the occasion. We still have a lot of work to do and it starts by protecting classroom spending and stopping the failed practice of passing our kids from grade to grade when they cannot read.”

### **Graduation Rates Trend Data for GMCS**

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by %

2008

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

All Students

52.8

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55.3

64.1

65.8

69.4

71.3

64.9

66.6

65.0

Female

59.2

58.2

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67.3

68.3

73.9

77.8

69.7

74.2

69.0

Male

46.1

52.3

61.0

63.2

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64.9

65.0

60.1

60.0

61.0

Caucasian

67.2

80.0

82.2

83.3

85.6

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84.0

79.2

76.7

82.0

Hispanic

56.9

53.2

61.8

75.1

78.3

78.9

69.9

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71.9

66.0

American Indian

51.3

53.8

63.3

63.3

67.2

69.3

62.7

64.9



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64.0

Asian

73.4

88.9

\*

83.1

\*

63.6

\*

85.2

\*

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### Economically Disadvantaged

56.1

51.8

58.6

62.2

64.7

68.9

62.0

65.1

63.0

### Students w Disabilities

39.7

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49.0

67.4

52.5

56.8

64.1

63.8

64.0

60.0

English Language Learners

\*

46.0

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55.8

59.7

65.1

\*

64.3

65.2

63.0

Non Hispanic

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65.0

\* not reported

These students graduated on time in 4 years

Compiled from NMPED - Graduation - Data and Statistics

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Sun Correspondent***