To live up to the aspirations laid out in New Mexico’s State Constitution and laws, and, most importantly, to nurture our children’s, families’ and communities’ well-being and healing, we must ensure that novice and experienced educators receive the support they need to help transform our public schools. New Mexico needs to develop strategies, pedagogies, and systems that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive to all students’ assets, needs and interests. [...] As we commit to implementing our own education laws and other pedagogical reforms called for by professional organizations, we need to recognize that preparing and supporting teachers is an important part of this transformative work.

Kersti Tyson, PhD
Director of Evaluation and Learning
LANL Foundation

LANL Research Report: Recommendations for Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Northern New Mexico, August 2020
# Table of Contents

- **Leap Into the Gap** | Page 4
- **Introducing LEAP** | Page 6
- **Training Educators Statewide** | Page 8
- **LEAP Educator Equity Profile** | Page 11
- **LEAPing Over Barriers** | Page 12
- **Teacher Spotlight: When the Chalkboard Calls** | Page 16
- **Leaping Into Teaching** | Page 18
- **The LEAP Curriculum** | Page 21
- **Teacher Spotlight: The Road Not Taken** | Page 22
- **LEAP by the Numbers** | Page 24
- **Teacher Spotlight: A Story of Perseverance** | Page 30
- **LEAP Teachers' Self-Assessments** | Page 32
- **Who is LEAP?** | Page 34
The gap has many faces. Each year, the gap between teacher vacancies and new teachers entering the market widens. At the start of the 2019 academic year, New Mexico’s public school districts had 644 vacancies, including 173 elementary school openings, and another 151 in special education. Yet mirroring the nationwide trend, each year fewer and fewer New Mexico college students enroll in the teacher training programs offered by institutions of higher education (IHE). In New Mexico, admissions to IHE teacher training programs dropped 28 percent between 2015 and 2017. Unfortunately, of those enrolled in IHE educator programs in 2017-18, on average only 41 percent completed the program.

In fact, New Mexico’s teacher attrition rates are much higher than other states—the second highest in the nation, with an annual turnover rate of about 23 percent. Teacher “churn” is costly for everyone. It costs approximately $9000 for a rural district to replace a single teacher (the cost can be up to $21,000 for an urban district). Thus it will cost New Mexico’s school districts a minimum of $5.7 million to replace the 640 teacher vacancies in 2019 alone.

When one quarter of the teacher workforce either moves or leaves each year, it is also New Mexico’s students who are lost in the gap. Many of these teacher vacancies will be filled by long-term substitute teachers, particularly in rural or high-poverty districts. For example, in 2018 Farmington Municipal School District’s use of long term substitutes doubled to fill about half of the districts’ vacant positions, while in Carlsbad, the district spent $577,853 for substitute teachers to work 45,727 classroom hours. Most of these substitutes have little teaching experience and have no accountability...
for student performance. High teacher turnover rates have been found to negatively affect the achievement of all students in a school, not just students in a new teacher’s classroom.

If underachievement isn’t enough, New Mexico’s students become victims of the equity gap when the teacher pipeline fails. Students in high-poverty and high-minority settings bear the brunt of teacher shortages. Considerable evidence shows that shortages historically have disproportionately impacted our most disadvantaged students and that those patterns persist today. When there are not enough teachers to go around, the schools with the fewest resources and least desirable working conditions are the ones left with vacancies.

So too does New Mexico continue to face a substantial diversity gap between students of color and teachers of color in the classroom. Although New Mexico’s student population is estimated to be 62 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Native American, and only 22 percent Anglo, in 2018 the racial characteristics of our teaching force were estimated to be 53 percent Anglo, 39 percent Hispanic, and only 4 percent Native American. Although the number of teachers of color in the workforce continues to increase, the trend is not keeping pace with the changing student demographics, and the disparity between teachers and students of color in schools indicates both systemic recruitment and retention failures. While there are many benefits to a racially diverse teacher workforce, research suggests two benefits in particular: (1) teachers of color enhance school experiences and academic outcomes for students of color, and (2) they are more likely to seek out difficult-to-staff teaching positions in low-income communities of color. Both of these outcomes help combat acute teacher shortages and poor educational quality in the hardest-to-staff schools.

The gap has not gone unnoticed. For many years, legislators, public school officials, universities and teacher organizations have worked to stem the steady leak in the teacher pipeline. These efforts have most recently brought welcome changes to teacher compensation and evaluation—two factors leading to higher than average attrition rates in New Mexico.

It isn’t enough.

Enrollment in IHE teacher training programs continues to drop every year, despite positive changes in alternative licensure procedures. Although more candidates are now enrolling in IHE alternative licensing programs than in traditional programs, even these numbers are declining every year. If we want to put more qualified teachers in New Mexico’s classrooms and keep them there, something has to change.

We need to LEAP into the gap.

“It’s very scary. We just don’t have qualified people in the classroom across the state. It’s a crisis. It really is.”

Susan Brown, Dean of the New Mexico State University College of Education, 2019, Carlsbad Current Argus
**LEAP is different.** Launched by Cooperative Education Services in 2019 as the state’s first and only non-IHE teacher education program, the Leading Educators through Alternative Pathways (LEAP) program is changing the way that teachers enter the profession. LEAP is a one-year, intensive alternative licensure program designed to address systemic challenges in New Mexico’s teacher pipeline. LEAP is committed to reducing barriers to entry, increasing teacher diversity, and instituting culturally responsive teaching practices. LEAP reduces New Mexico’s teacher churn by putting competent professionals in statewide classrooms on day one of each academic year, and transforming them into highly qualified teachers in a fraction of the time required by traditional IHE programs.

**LEAP IS RIGOROUS.**

The LEAP alternative licensure pathway is not for everyone, and candidates are carefully screened to ensure they can thrive in the challenging environment posed by immediate classroom placement and the demands of a rigorous, fast-paced curriculum. Beginning with a week-long summer institute, LEAP teachers must complete 270 instructional hours in a blended learning environment, with more than 170 hours of face-to-face instruction taught exclusively by highly effective teachers. LEAP instruction is application-based, asking participants to immediately apply pedagogical strategies to classroom instruction, and draws heavily from teachers’ daily problems of practice. In addition, LEAP facilitators worked in conjunction with district mentors and coaches to establish growth measures for teachers based on InTASC, New Mexico’s Teaching Framework, Council of Exceptional Children Standards, and the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (IDA). Finally, every LEAP teacher is a reading teacher. All LEAP teachers, regardless of grade level licensure or subject endorsement, receive direct instruction on teaching students to read across disciplines, as well as direct instruction in working with students with reading disabilities.

**LEAP IS CONSISTENT.**

LEAP is committed to consistency in teacher training. Traditional and alternative licensure programs administered by colleges and universities differ widely in their program curriculum and requirements, creating inequities in the training and qualifications of teacher candidates across the state. The LEAP curriculum is research-based and data-driven. In addition to foundational teaching skills, the LEAP curriculum focuses on addressing identified state gaps in reading, special education, and culturally responsive teaching. All LEAP teachers receive identical training and LEAP works directly with school districts around the state to train the candidates that districts have chosen and hired to meet the unique needs of their local community.
LEAP is a one-year, intensive alternative licensure program designed to address systemic challenges in New Mexico’s teacher pipeline in ways that college and university programs cannot.

“We need to create the kinds of pathways that don’t burden or penalize you for becoming an educator.”

- Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Community Townhall for Education, Dec. 2019

**APITUDE-DRIVEN**
Select and train teachers who have the persistence to stay in the field.

**APPLICABLE**
Practitioner-based, grounded in current research, and is applied to everyday classroom practices.

**ACHIEVABLE**
Works within the schedule of a full-time teacher.

**AFFORDABLE**
A teacher certification program that does not accrue student debt.
Unlike IHE-based programs which generally places candidates within the college or university’s local region, LEAP’s reach is statewide. In 2019, LEAP placed 128 teachers in districts across every region of the state, directly contributing to the 11 percent decrease in teacher vacancy between 2018 and 2019. What’s more, LEAP works directly with school districts in every region of the state to help fill vacancies in rural and high-poverty districts where teacher recruitment is most challenging. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 46 percent of LEAP teachers worked in the state’s highest poverty districts, 34% worked in New Mexico’s RLIS/SRSA (rural) districts, and 21% worked in the state’s highest minority districts.

Entering the teaching profession can be an expensive enterprise—so expensive that students frequently incur more than $10,000 dollars in student debt to complete both traditional and alternative licensure IHE teacher training programs. The high cost of these programs represents a substantial barrier to entry to the teaching profession. In addition to tuition costs, traditional teacher training programs require candidates to complete unpaid student teaching for a minimum of one semester, presenting yet another barrier to entry to working professionals with families to support. In contrast, LEAP teachers pay a maximum of $2,000 in total program fees. However, many school districts cover the program costs for their LEAP teachers, resulting in no direct costs to the teacher. In addition, LEAP partners with New Mexico’s Workforce Solutions to offer tuition assistance to eligible candidates whose districts do not cover program costs, further reducing the out-of-pocket expenses for teachers. Finally, because LEAP teachers start in the classroom on day one as paid Level 1 teachers, they do not incur the expense of completing unpaid student teaching hours.
Promoting diversity in New Mexico’s teacher workforce is central pillar of the LEAP commitment to teacher training. In 2019, more than half of all LEAP teachers represented racial minorities. Thirty nine percent of LEAP teachers were Hispanic, 6 percent were Native American, 4 percent were African-American, and 3 percent were Asian. However, the diverse characteristics of LEAP teachers extend well beyond ethnicity. In 2019, more than half of all LEAP teachers were over the age of 30, and 82 percent came to teaching as a second career. With diverse backgrounds in engineering, social sciences, criminal justice, the U.S. military, healthcare, and many others, LEAP teachers leverage their real world, professional experience for the benefit of their students.
LEAP IS STREAMLINED

Like most alternative licensure pathways, LEAP is a “learn as you go” program in which teachers enter the classroom on day one, often filling vacancies in high-poverty, high-minority, or difficult to fill subject areas such as STEM course and special education. Where the time requirement of two-year programs can introduce barriers to entry into the teaching profession for working professionals and older candidates with family considerations, LEAP offers an intensive one-year program of study, streamlining the information teachers need to be immediately successful in the classroom and introducing a strong mentorship program to support teachers as they learn on the job. LEAP embraces what every experienced teacher already knows: the classroom is the only place teachers really learn to teach, and our students are often our best instructors.

LEAP IS MENTORSHIP

One of the most defining characteristics of the LEAP program that sets it apart is LEAP’s commitment to the personal and professional growth of every teacher in the program. In addition to meeting in regional cohort groups each month for face-to-face instruction, each LEAP teacher has an on site teacher mentor at his or her school for day-to-day instructional coaching, and receives a minimum of seven site visits from LEAP facilitators throughout the academic year to observe and provide coaching, feedback, and next-step implementation plans to help teachers improve their daily instructional practice. LEAP facilitators provide 1:1 support for every teacher candidate as needed, helping new teachers successfully navigate the challenge of balancing the daily pressures of classroom teaching with academic requirements.

LEAP IS FLEXIBLE

The 2019-2020 academic year brought unprecedented challenges to the teaching profession as the SARS-CoV-2 virus quickly created a global pandemic, closing districts across the country and forcing every brick-and-mortar school to become an online learning institution. As rapid changes swept across the teaching profession, LEAP adapted. Unlike IHE programs which might be locked into rigid coursework and credit hours for program completion, LEAP has the program and curricular flexibility to adapt to any rapid change in the education system. Not only was the LEAP blended learning environment already suited to an instant transition to online learning, LEAP facilitators immediately shifted curriculum focus to introduce new teachers to online learning tools and digital curriculum delivery. In addition, LEAP facilitators provided 1:1 support for struggling teachers as they tried to complete program requirements in the “new normal” of limited access to resources, limited access to students, and even the temporary closure of testing facilities needed to complete licensure requirements.

LEAP IS COHORT-BASED

The LEAP program model embraces a cohort-driven model where teachers learn together in regional professional learning communities. Cohort models encourage co-construction of knowledge and the formation of community practices, creating a collegiate rather than competitive learning environment in which students feel safe to take risks, explore deeper learning, and provide emotional and professional support to one another. When looking at factors affecting both completion rates in teacher education programs and teacher retention rates in the workforce, several studies suggest that teachers who are members of collegiate environments stay in the profession longer than those who do not. When teachers complete the LEAP training program, they have built a professional learning community with regional roots and statewide reach.
LEAP’s EDUCATOR EQUITY PROFILE

LOW INCOME

46 percent of LEAP teachers work in New Mexico’s highest poverty districts.

RURAL ACCESS

34 percent of LEAP teachers work in New Mexico’s RLIS/SRSA (rural) districts.

MINORITY ACCESS

21 percent of LEAP teachers work in New Mexico’s highest minority districts.

LEAP Addresses Statewide Needs in Vacancies and Hard-to-Staff Districts

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education published Educator Equity Profiles (EEP) for each state. The EEP is designed to compare certain characteristics of educators in schools with high and low concentrations of students from low-income families and minority students. In working to ensure that all students have access to excellent teachers and leaders, LEAP helps state and district leaders fill hard-to-staff vacancies around the state with qualified professional educators. LEAP partners with local school districts and organizations such as Teach for America to ensure that students in the state’s highest poverty and high minority districts have teachers dedicated to culturally responsive teaching and learning.
The greatest barriers to entering the teaching profession continue to be program requirements. From admission requirements that historically screen out racial minorities, to program costs that exclude low income candidates, to time commitments that make completing a degree impractical for working professionals and those supporting families, often IHE-based teacher education programs create unintentional barriers in the name of raising standards to produce higher quality teachers.

Yet higher standards don’t always produce higher quality teachers. Instead, arbitrary checkpoints such as grade point averages often screen out minority candidates. This is particularly relevant in New Mexico, as research indicates that overall, minorities have less attrition from teaching (Guarino et al., 2006) and that Hispanics in particular have the lowest attrition rate (Kirby et al., 1999). Further research published in 2017 indicates that the “best and the brightest” demographic—known as highly selective graduates—from prestigious colleges and with high GPAs have an 85 percent greater likelihood of leaving the profession than less selective graduates in the first three years of teaching. In addition, the qualities that make a good student do not always equate to those that make a good teacher, and many analysts suggest that restrictive filters for candidates be placed at program exit points, rather than program entrance points. Thus LEAP remains committed to encouraging all qualified applicants—particularly those from New Mexico’s diverse racial backgrounds—by reducing barriers to program entry.

"More than twice as many teachers of color are certified via an alternative pathway (25%) as white teachers (12%)."

--Learning Policy Institute, Sept. 2016

The Leading Teachers through Alternative Pathways (LEAP) program has been deliberately designed to address “The Gap” by reducing barriers to entry to the teaching profession, addressing challenges in teacher diversity and culturally responsive teaching, minimizing factors leading to high teacher turn-over, and filling immediate vacancies with qualified, educated professionals.
Program Entrance Requirements

LEAP is not for everyone. As a streamlined, one-year program of intensive study, the curriculum is rigorous, time-intensive, and application-based. In addition, as alternative licensure candidates, LEAP teachers must be mentally and emotionally prepared to face the challenge of stepping into a classroom and teaching students before their own professional teacher training is complete. To ensure that LEAP candidates are prepared to meet program demands while simultaneously minimizing barriers for qualified minority and low-income candidates, LEAP has designed the following minimum entry requirements for prospective applicants.

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- Completion of a Bachelor’s degree prior to the program start date
- Minimum 2.75 GPA in prior Bachelor’s or Master’s degree program of study
- Recommendation of his/her district superintendent or school HR Director
- Letter or notice of intent to hire for the current academic year from school or district
- Completion of the ProScan Personal Dynamic Survey
- Submission of a current professional resume
- A written letter of interest containing a reflection on the results from his/her ProScan Survey indicating how the results of the survey might impact the candidate’s classroom performance
- Two reference letters addressing the skills LEAP candidates display in being committed to community, content, and or, students
- NM Basic Skills Test (recommended but not required)*

* LEAP encourages all candidates to take the NM Basic Skills test prior to program admission, but passage of the test is not a program entrance requirement. However, LEAP offers academic support to teachers struggling to pass the exam to ensure that passage of the test is not a barrier to program admission.

Midpoint Academic Achievement Requirements

Qualified candidates who meet the entrance requirements begin an intensive year of study. At the end of the first semester, all candidates must demonstrate completion of the following academic milestones to advance to the second semester:

**MIDPOINT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- 90 percent attendance at monthly face-to-face regional meetings for direct instruction
- A score of 85 percent or higher on standards-aligned assignments
- Completed mentor checkpoints as reported by LEAP mentors, including peer observation, monthly follow up, classroom modeled lesson, etc)
- Interview with LEAP Regional Facilitator

- $1500 TOTAL COST OF TUITION, NOT INCLUDING TRAVEL TO AND FROM DISTRICT MEETINGS.
- $325 ESTIMATED COST OF BOOKS AND/OR MATERIALS
Program Exit Requirements

In New Mexico, alternative licensure teachers hold temporary two year licenses which allow them to teach while completing program requirements. In order to become a fully licensed Level 1 teacher, candidates must receive a certificate of completion from an NMPED accredited teacher education, as well as pass the required NES or Praxis licensure exams. To receive a certificate of completion from LEAP, candidates must meet the following program exit requirements:

- 90 percent attendance at monthly face-to-face regional meetings for direct instruction
- A score of higher on 85 percent of standards-aligned assignments
- Formal observation and documentation of Effective* or higher on Domain 4
- District recommendation of continued employment
- Completed mentor checkpoints as reported by LEAP mentors, including peer observation, monthly follow up, classroom modeled lesson, etc
- Completion of required professional knowledge exams appropriate for grade level licensure and subject area

Making the Cut

Although LEAP is a new program, our teacher candidates demonstrated remarkable perseverance to complete program requirements. In 2019, LEAP accepted its first cohort of 128 candidates. In total, 13 candidates dropped the program during the first semester, and two candidates were unable to meet the academic requirements at the end of the second semester. 115 candidates (90 percent) remained in the program at the end of the academic year.

Although the LEAP program is designed to be completed within a single academic year, teachers have a total of 24 months to take all required licensure exams prior to the expiration of their temporary alternative license. At the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, 98 percent of teachers still enrolled at the beginning of second semester had completed required coursework, and as of December 1, 2020, 43 percent of LEAP teachers had passed all required licensing exams to become program completers. Because 95 percent of the teachers in Cohort 1 have been re-employed in New Mexico districts, the number of program completers is expected to continue to rise substantially before July 2021.
For many people, their job is just a job—a means to an end. Each day they go to work, ghost through their day, come home, rinse, and repeat. Many people may go a lifetime and never find a job they love. But for a lucky few, their calling comes young. Gabrielle Begay clearly remembers the moment she knew she wanted to be a teacher.

“My second grade teacher, Mrs. Rico, asked us to come to the front of the room and go over our spelling words,” Begay said. “So there I am at the chalkboard pointing to my spelling words, and that’s when it hit me. I thought, this is cool! I want to be a teacher! It’s crazy, but Mrs. Rico actually took a picture of me and captured that moment. My mom still has it somewhere.”

Still, even when the calling comes, it can be easy to ignore. Begay’s father is a special education teacher, and with all the best of intentions he discouraged her from entering the teaching profession.

“He said, you’re so bright, you can do anything you want,” Begay recalls. “He told me that teaching is not the same as it was years ago. There’s too much testing, you have to teach to the test, and you won’t make that much money. He used every chance he got to try and talk me out of it.”

Even so, when Gabby went to college, she still declared teaching as her major and stuck with it for almost two years. But her experience in the education department was lackluster at best.

“I just didn’t have a good rapport with the department; it was not a friendly atmosphere,” Begay said. “So I changed majors to social work but I didn’t like that either. Going into my junior year, I settled on criminal justice.”

She enjoyed her classes enough that she even considered going to law school a few years down the road. When she heard of a job opening at Magistrate Court, she applied and was hired as a court clerk. After working there for a year, she came to the conclusion that spending her life in court wasn’t for her.

“It was just such a negative environment,” Begay said. “Very rarely did you see success stories, and rarely did you see someone who did what they were supposed to do.”

Begay’s mother was friends with the superintendent of the local school district, so the two met for lunch. Encouraged to pursue teaching, she submitted her application and interviewed with Central Elementary and was offered the job.

“They said they needed me to start in two weeks because they were going to have summer school and I was going to be teaching kindergarten all summer,” Begay recalled. “So I had to just jump right in. My first day was a disaster. The other teacher had left me alone on the playground to watch the kids, and coincidentally a little boy fell off the monkey bars and broke his arm.”

When Gabby applied for the job, she was told she’d have to enroll in an alternative licensure program to qualify for a temporary teaching license. She assumed that meant going to the
university to get her Master’s degree in education until she heard about LEAP.

“I was really stressed out--overwhelmed with both the job and the paperwork needed to apply for licensure,” she said. “Being a new teacher, starting a new job, going to the summer institute—it was a lot. But it helped that other teachers from my district were also doing the LEAP program, so I wasn’t going through the program alone.”

As a cohort-based program, LEAP provided Begay with an instant network of other professionals with whom to discuss problems and find solutions. LEAP also offered direct support in the classroom.

The hardest part of teaching kindergarten for me was all the singing and dancing. That just isn’t me. But my mentor teacher reminded me that they’re just children--they aren’t going to judge you.”

“I had no idea what I was getting into before I became a teacher—the evaluation system, classroom management, the lesson planning,” Begay said. “LEAP really helped me get organized. The best support that I got was the 1:1 coaching. Ali Nava was a godsend—someone you wanted in your corner helping you along the way.”

Every LEAP teacher is also trained as a reading teacher, and Begay noted the immediate applicability of the curriculum to her classroom needs, as well as to her licensure exam.

“As a kindergarten teacher, I used the information Jessica Powell provided in class on phonemic awareness and structured reading in my lessons,” Begay said. “A lot of what we learned was also on the licensing exam, so I felt well prepared to pass my tests at the end of the program.”

Even though she had originally planned to take a traditional path to teaching and get her education degree at the university, Begay said she has no regrets about pursuing teaching through an alternative licensure program.

“For me personally, I think this route worked out better,” she said. “Every job I’ve ever had, they just kind of throw me in there. Instead of sitting back and observing and waiting on things, it was good for me to get in there and get to work. There’s no way they can prepare you in a college classroom for what you’re going to experience in a kindergarten classroom. There is nothing that compares.”

While her college classes might not have prepared her for teaching, Begay said her prior work experience was invaluable.

“My life experience helped me out a lot. Work in the grocery business for nine years and the courts for one year—you’re working with the public, all sorts of personalities,” she said. “You learn to be patient when you work with the public, and those experiences really help in a kindergarten classroom working with kids who have so many different personalities and needs.”

What’s more, Begay said that the LEAP program also eliminated the financial barrier to teaching. Begay’s district paid the cost of her tuition to the program, along with her books, lodging, meals and travel for the face-to-face instruction sessions.

“I did lay out the financial advantages between pursuing my Master’s degree and doing the LEAP program,” Begay said. “LEAP made more financial sense for me, especially because I’m also enrolled in the University of the Southwest’s Master’s program now, and they accepted my LEAP credits, which saved me a lot of money.”

Under LEAP’s agreement with the University of the Southwest, the university will accept up to 12 credit hours of work from the LEAP program toward a student’s Master’s degree—at a 65 percent savings in tuition.

“LEAP is cost effective, comprehensive, and you receive the support you need—professionally, personally, and emotionally,” Begay said. “You are a person at LEAP, not a number. They know you, they know your story, and they are there to help you when anything comes up.”

As Gabrielle Begay starts her second year as a kindergarten teacher, she has some decisions to make. Will she continue as a kindergarten teacher? Or move up to middle school one day? But while the course of her career is still in the early exploration stage, one thing is certain: teaching has always been her calling, and she’s finally doing what she loves.
LEAP Into Teaching

LEAP teachers are culturally and demographically diverse, bringing previous life and professional experience to classrooms throughout New Mexico. They are dedicated to culturally responsible teaching in the state’s highest minority and high-poverty districts, in the most rural areas.

THE RIGHT STUFF.

Profile of a LEAP Candidate.

It’s a fact: LEAP teachers are different. The difference between a LEAP candidate and a teacher in a traditional educator preparation program isn’t just the nature of their education; it lies in the teachers themselves.

Unlike most of their counterparts in traditional university programs, every LEAP teacher comes to the program having already completed his or her undergraduate degree. In the 2019-2020 academic year, LEAP teachers entered their classrooms with Bachelor’s degrees in subjects as diverse as business, communications, psychology, biology, chemistry, engineering, fine arts, social work, history, zoology, foreign languages, criminal justice, and education.

LEAP teachers also have higher than average racial and age diversity than their counterparts in traditional teacher preparation programs. Fully half of all LEAP teachers come from minority racial ethnicities. In 2019, 39 percent of LEAP teachers were Hispanic, while 6 percent were Native American, 4 percent African-American, and 3 percent Asian. While these numbers are still shy of teacher representation proportional to the racial diversity in New Mexico’s population, they represent...
a substantial step toward increasing teacher workforce diversity.

Unlike their peers in traditional IHE teacher training programs, 77 percent of LEAP teachers are over the age of 25, and more than a quarter are over age 40. Many LEAP teachers have families of their own, bringing the understanding and empathy of parenting to the classroom community, as well as first-hand knowledge of juggling the competing demands of school work and family that many families in our school community face. Finally, 90 percent of LEAP candidates were working professionals before entering education, coming to teaching from careers in business, science, health care, media arts, oil & gas, public safety, social work, the judiciary, engineering, and trades. Students benefit directly from the practical, real-world experience each LEAP teacher brings to his/her classroom and curriculum, particularly in secondary education where many graduating seniors are preparing to enter the workforce.

Moreover, LEAP teachers are committed to closing equity gaps in education. Through partnership with Teach for America, 21 percent of LEAP candidates come from outside of New Mexico, bringing both regional and global perspectives into their classrooms. Working within the framework of the Teach for America mission, each of these teachers is placed in one of New Mexico’s low income schools, joining the many other LEAP teachers around the state working in our most challenging districts. In total, 46 percent of LEAP teachers work in the state’s highest poverty districts, 34 percent work in rural districts, and 21 percent work in the state’s highest minority districts. All across the New Mexico, LEAP teachers are helping to bridge the equity gap in education.

In July 2019, LEAP rolled out its Summer Institute training to 82 candidates in three regions: Gallup, Roswell, and Santa Fe. By August, 46 additional late-hire candidates had applied to the LEAP program, and a second summer institute was added to the roster to serve the needs of districts filling last minute vacancies prior to the opening of the school year. Of the total 128 participants in the summer and late-hire training institutes, 46 percent were hired by districts in New Mexico’s southeast region, 22 percent in the northwest region, 17 percent in the central region, 9 percent in the northeast region, and 6 percent in the southwest region.

During the summer and late-hire training institutes, LEAP teachers were introduced to foundational teaching skills, including managing the physical space of the classroom environment, identifying and implementing classroom routines and procedures, adopting and promoting a growth mindset in the classroom, establishing clear classroom rules and expectations, engaging in proactive behavior management, and promoting a culturally diverse and informed classroom environment. In addition, LEAP teachers were introduced to the components of an Individual Education Plan (IEP), learned about FBAs and BIPs, discussed special education as a service rather than a place, and learned to distinguish between accommodations and modifications.

Did the Summer and Late-Hire Institutes help LEAP teachers be better prepared?

Yes. School administrators have reported a remarkable difference in LEAP teachers’ ability to begin the school year.
MORE COMMITTED.

LEAP Teachers Persevere.

LEAP teachers are all in. They have to be. Only 5 percent of LEAP teachers have an undergraduate degree in education before stepping foot into the classroom for the first time. Unlike graduates from traditional teacher preparation programs, LEAP teachers are hired by their district with no prior experience, and are expected to perform well on day one. Each LEAP teacher must immediately utilize the skills they learned in the summer institute and continue building those skills while on the job.

That’s why the LEAP curriculum is streamlined to meet the unique needs of teachers learning on the job. Each month, LEAP teachers gain research-based and immediately applicable skills in foundational teaching, reading literacy, and special education. LEAP teachers are assessed on their ability to apply and use the skills they are taught each month in their working classroom, and are provided with mentoring, oversite and in-class observation to ensure delivery of quality instruction.

It’s not easy being a LEAP teacher. Each semester, LEAP teachers must complete 135 hours of face-to-face and blended instruction while working full-time in the classroom, creating their lesson plans, and assessing student work outside of class. Rigorous? Yes. Demanding? Yes. But LEAP teachers are unique in the teaching world. Compared to their counterparts in traditional teaching programs, LEAP teachers persevere. Despite the rigorous expectations and heavy coursework, 89 percent of teachers remained enrolled and completed the academic program requirements.

Even better? LEAP teachers remain committed. 110 of the 115 teachers who completed the academic program requirements in May 2020 were re-employed by their districts for the 2020-21 academic year. That’s a workforce retention rate of 95 percent. Wow!

MORE RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION.

Practice-based, Applicable Instruction.

What challenges do all New Mexico public school teachers face, regardless of grade level, subject area, or school demographics? Simple. Effective classroom management, students who read below grade level, and an increasing population of students who need special education services in the general education classroom.

The LEAP curriculum is designed specifically to meet these needs. Every LEAP teacher receives initial training during a week-long summer institute to learn essential classroom management skills before every stepping foot into a classroom. Every LEAP teacher is trained to be a reading teacher, focusing on learning to teach foundational reading skills to any child in any grade level, regardless of the teacher’s content area. And every LEAP teacher is trained to identify and meet the needs of special education students in the general education classroom, focusing on integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into every lesson plan to make all curriculum accessible to all learners, regardless of proficiency level.

How does LEAP do it? Rather than a traditional IHE program in which teachers complete “courses” of study, LEAP instruction is designed in learning clusters, each of which focuses on essential skills in one of the four NMTEACH domains used for teacher evaluation: planning & preparation; learning environment; teaching for learning; and professionalism. Each monthly module addressed and assessed portions of multiple domains to ensure that candidates made connections to content, met the expectations of their districts, and most importantly learned how to immediately apply new teaching strategies to classroom lessons to ensure a quality education for kids. Each module, skill, strategy, and research inquiry also addressed working with diverse populations and promoted culturally-aware teaching strategies in the classroom.
The LEAP Curriculum:
Step by Step Growth

LEAP is designed to promote professional growth in each of the four NMTEACH domains against which teacher competency is currently measured in the majority of public school districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOMAIN 1: Planning and Preparation</th>
<th>DOMAIN 2: Environment for Learning</th>
<th>DOMAIN 3: Teaching for Learning</th>
<th>DOMAIN 4: Professionalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEAP ASSIGNMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAP ASSIGNMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAP ASSIGNMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAP ASSIGNMENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access standards</td>
<td>Implementing the College Career Wheel and/or CCSS Speaking &amp; Listening Standard</td>
<td>Culturally responsive disciplinary literacy strategies</td>
<td>Observation of colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Matrix</td>
<td>Student interest questionnaire</td>
<td>IEP Matrix</td>
<td>IEP Matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning menus</td>
<td>IEP Matrix</td>
<td>Systematic student feedback tool</td>
<td>Participate in LEAP program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDL of lesson plan</td>
<td>Learning menus</td>
<td>3 Consecutive lesson plans (one subject)</td>
<td>Colleague observation of LEAP teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing the College Career wheel and/or CCSS Speaking &amp; Listening Standard</td>
<td>Visual schedule</td>
<td>UDL of Lesson Plan</td>
<td>Read culturally responsible disciplinary literacy strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in LEAP program</td>
<td>Routines/Procedures</td>
<td>Analyzing and evaluating student work</td>
<td>Monthly/Quarterly newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating physical space</td>
<td>Posted rules</td>
<td>Student interest questionnaire</td>
<td>Data board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly/Quarterly Newsletter</td>
<td>Data board</td>
<td>Multi-sensory teaching</td>
<td>PLC participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher resource binder artifact</td>
<td>School information board</td>
<td>Cognitive development literature review</td>
<td>Track and communicate individual student data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student interest questionnaire</td>
<td>FBA/BIP</td>
<td>Visual schedule</td>
<td>Analyze and evaluate student work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy &amp; growth mindset</td>
<td>Monthly/Quarterly newsletter</td>
<td>Participate in LEAP program</td>
<td>Behavior case study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic language skills</td>
<td>Physical space</td>
<td>Video own lesson for feedback</td>
<td>Teacher resource binder artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research embedded formative assessment</td>
<td>Empathy &amp; growth mindset</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monthly mentor check- in/ feedback tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create instruction for online learning</td>
<td>Participate in LEAP program</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redesigning systems</td>
<td></td>
<td>Create PDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic profile</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend SWIDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete year-long reading case study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rhyne Spencer never wanted to be a teacher. He didn't particularly like school, and he wasn't a top performer as a student. Born to a fairly poor family in a relatively small farming town in central Illinois, college didn't seem like a viable option.

"None of my counselors ever talked to me about going to college, and I wasn't really aware of scholarships or grants. It wasn't something I thought was in my future," Spencer said. "I didn't really know what I saw as my future."

But what he did have was a long family history of military service. Spencer's great uncle had died in the World War II Pearl Harbor attacks, and another uncle was in the army. His father served in the U.S. Marine Corps, an older brother had joined the Air Force, while another served in the Army. His first career might have been inevitable.

"At 17, I came home one day with two Marine Corps recruiters in tow, and my father about fell out of his chair," Spencer said. "I was only 17, so I had to have my parents' signature to join."

So with his parent's blessing, Spencer joined the Marine Corps in 1996 and served eight years, including six overseas deployments. He's been to 22 different countries, served in combat three times, and he's featured on the cover of Robert Lowry's best-selling book New Dawn: The Battles for Fallujah.

In 2004, Spencer left the military to raise his daughter, and by 2006 was a single parent. He returned to Illinois, worked as a machinist and welder for Caterpillar, Inc., then again needed a new career when he was one of 50,000 workers laid off worldwide by the company in 2008. Again, teaching was not his calling.

He took advantage of the G.I. bill to take classes at his local community college, then ultimately completed his Bachelor's degree in General Education. And again, teaching wasn't his calling.

"At the community college, my mentors told me the entire time that I should be a teacher," Spencer said. "I thought 'I don't want to do that! There's certifications, and a lot of hoops to jump through.'"

After leaving college, Spencer worked for a time in human resources before he and his daughter decided to move to Texas. Even then, teaching was not his calling.

"I've had plenty of people in my past tell me I should be a teacher, tell me that I would be great at it, tried to push me in that direction, and I resisted them and resisted them," Spencer said. "But when I got down here, my buddy's wife worked for the Hobbs school district and said they're looking for teachers. I thought, 'there's no way they'll let me be a teacher! That's insane.' But I applied."

When Spencer applied for a teaching position in the Hobbs school district, he discovered that he could become a teacher through one of two alternative licensure routes: the local community college's two year licensure program; or through LEAP's one year intensive program.

"I thought 'Hmmm. I can pay $5,000 to $10,000 at a community college, OR...the district's going to pay for me to do the LEAP program,'" Spencer said. "When my future employer says they are going to pay for training, I'm going to take advantage of that."

And just like that, the veteran who never wanted to be a teacher began teaching social studies to eighth graders at Houston Middle School.
School in Hobbs, New Mexico, about 30 miles away from his home in Texas.

"I'm not going to lie. It wasn't easy, jumping right in. I was nervous. If I'd had hair, I probably would have pulled most of it out. The first day, I thought I was going to puke right there in my garbage can," he said honestly. "I applied the strategies I learned through LEAP, and sometimes they would work and something they didn't. It was a lot of trial and error, but to me that's the best way to learn. You can't learn by watching someone else weld. You learn by picking up the welder and welding yourself."

But it was also the start of a beautiful partnership with his students.

"Once you have a basic understanding of classroom management and teaching strategies, and you know your content, you really don't have to have formal training as a teacher to be successful," Spencer said. "But I also had my students say 'hey, it's very obvious this is your first year, we're not stupid. And just so you know, other teachers kind of do...this.' So my kids were very interactive with me. They were appreciative that I was there for them, and they let me know that they were there for me. My kids have taught me everything."

Now Spencer has become an integral part of his school, as well as the Hobbs community. In addition to teaching, he also volunteers as a coach for football and basketball. Since he actually lives 30 miles away in West Texas, sometimes friends ask him why he teaches in New Mexico instead of Texas.

"I wanted to make a difference. Texas doesn't need me. Texas has plenty of teachers. New Mexico is lacking in teachers, they need people who care and can be engaged in the community," Spencer said.

But Spencer's contribution to his students, his school, and his community goes well beyond teaching and coaching; it's an extension of who he is and the life experience he offers. As both a world traveler and a war veteran, Spencer brings his personal knowledge and experience into his classroom, modeling each day for his students what that experience represents.

"When you train people, when you teach, you are serving them. I trained my marines, I trained my co-workers at Caterpillar, I tutored at the community college. So most of the experience I bring into the classroom is a life of service," Spencer said. He uses his experience to help his students understand the value of their education.

"I work in the middle of oil country. I have kids who say 'I don't need to go to college, my dad makes six figures.' And it's easy for me to say, hey, don't go to college. Go to a trade school. But if you think you're going to graduate from high school with Ds and Fs and start welding on oil rigs for $100K a year, you are sadly mistaken," Spencer said. "And if you want to work in a trade, that's great also. Just be prepared for your body to start breaking down when you're older. I've had knee and back surgery."

Like many LEAP educators, Spencer’s route to teaching was long and circuitous. But ultimately, his decision to enter the classroom was predicated on timing and simple economics: Spencer was looking for a job, his school district needed a teacher, and the route to licensure was simplified.

"Most of the people in LEAP are older and have life experience that led to them teaching somehow. And a lot have families. So what's the most beneficial way to become a licensed teacher for people like us?" Spencer asked. "If you look at the price point [of LEAP], the amount of time you have to spend—one year versus two or longer, the lack of the added student teaching element...you're going to save a lot of money."

And Hobbs School District? Houston Middle School? Have they gotten value for money through LEAP?

"I'm recognized at my school as someone of value: that's from colleagues, my principal, my students," Spencer said. "I think I'm doing a good job, my colleagues say I'm doing a good job, my principal says I'm doing a good job, and my students say I'm doing a good job. I would say the district got value for their money."

Two roads diverged in a wood, and Spencer took the one less traveled. Will he continue?

"Yes, absolutely. Even though I wasn't willing to go through the college program earlier in my life, now that I’m teaching, I love my career. I have a passion for it that I didn't know I was going to have," he said. “Taking that crazy leap of faith—that you have to be psychotic to do this job’ leap—has turned into the most rewarding job I've probably ever had.”
LEAP
By the Numbers
2019–2020
2019 may have started as just another academic year, but it ended like no other. As LEAP launched New Mexico's first non-IHE statewide alternative licensing program, the world faced its most serious pandemic in a century. And through it all, LEAP grew and adapted.

The Year In Review

Join us as we view LEAP from the perspective of its teachers, facilitators, and stakeholders to review our greatest successes and challenges in 2019.
LEAP Program Assessment: A Continuous Feedback Model

As a first year program, LEAP faced many challenges: candidates who struggled with the rigor of the curriculum, candidates who dropped out of the program, district challenges, differing degrees of quality in teacher mentors, challenges with regional meetings, limited program resources, and limited personnel to carry out the program mission, just to name a few. And let’s not forget the SARS-CoV-2 global pandemic that brought educational institutions around the nation to a grinding halt for weeks, then forced a radical shift in instructional delivery.

But LEAP has several advantages in terms of program assessment and evaluation. First, the LEAP program is designed to be responsive to the immediate needs and feedback of its teacher candidates, facilitators, and stakeholders through a system of continuous assessment. Second, without the rigid structure of a course-based system, LEAP can be flexible in curriculum development and delivery, adapting feedback to meet the unique needs of each teacher cohort year to year.

CONTINUOUS TEACHER ASSESSMENTS

In addition to ongoing assessment of teacher progress through assignments, formative assessments of curriculum concepts, and attendance at face-to-face sessions, LEAP teachers also complete self-assessment surveys. At the end of every month, each LEAP teacher completes a self-assessment in which he or she evaluates their individual progress on a scale of 1 to 5 in each of the four philosophical pillars of the LEAP program: leadership, engagement, achievement and perseverance.

MENTOR CHECK-INS AND OBSERVATION DATA

A key component of continuous teacher assessment rests in the LEAP mentorship model. Each LEAP teacher is assigned a mentor teacher in his/her school to directly observe, assist and help LEAP teachers navigate daily challenges. These mentors observe lessons, provide feedback and guidance, assist with resource acquisition, and generally serve as the LEAP teacher’s "go-to" person throughout the year. Mentors check in with LEAP facilitators to discuss the LEAP teacher’s progress, providing periodic reports and formal evaluations. In addition, each school or district provides an end-of-year candidate and program evaluation, providing LEAP administrators with valuable data to inform instruction and guide future program changes.

CONTINUOUS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Teachers are a critical component in ongoing program assessment. Each month, teachers evaluate the efficacy and applicability of the curricula presented in the regional face-to-face meetings. LEAP facilitators use these evaluations to direct program changes and respond to the criticisms of its teacher-clients. This feedback loop helps LEAP maintain a flexible, adaptable, teacher-driven service model which creates a sense of shared mission and community for all stakeholders.
LEAP Achievements

98% of LEAP candidates still enrolled second semester completed the required coursework.

95% LEAP has achieved a 95 percent teacher retention rate at the conclusion of the program — 110 of the 115 candidates who finished the course work in May are still teaching at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year. LEAP teacher retention helps to reduce teacher churn by ensuring that LEAP teachers working in high-poverty, high minority, rural areas remain in their positions.

89% of LEAP candidates who started the program in July or August remained enrolled at its conclusion in May.

40 LEAP teachers are actively pursuing their Master's degree at University of the Southwest and can transfer up to 12 credit hours from LEAP at a reduced tuition rate as part of LEAP’s partnership with USW.

43% of all candidates have passed the required licensing exams and received certificates of completion.

C-19 A blended instructional model allowed teachers to complete online coursework on an individual schedule, while building professional connections and receiving direct instruction through face-to-face instruction at monthly meetings. The blended model also facilitated a rapid shift to total online instruction during the COVID-19 public health restrictions, which eliminated face-to-face meetings.

The use of regional cohorts has created life long professional connections for LEAP teachers—a key element in teacher retention.

Through a partnership with the University of the Southwest, all LEAP teachers have the opportunity to complete a Master’s degree in education at a reduced cost.

Established long-lasting partnerships through close collaboration with school districts, charters, and educational entities. These partnerships can help LEAP meet local needs more effectively.
LEAP Challenges

53% Although 53 percent of LEAP teachers represent racial minorities, the candidate pool remains disproportionate to state racial characteristics. Strategic, targeted statewide recruitment efforts are needed to attract more Native American and Hispanic candidates to LEAP.

4 regions Administrative coordination of face-to-face sections was difficult with only three regional headquarters. Some teachers traveled long distances, and facilitators traveled across the state to complete classroom observations. In 2020–21, LEAP has expanded and created four regions to better meet the needs of statewide candidates and a growing population of candidates.

C–19 School closures and the shift to online instruction due to the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the COVID-19 pandemic created unforeseen program challenges, including cancelation of face-to-face instruction, curriculum and coursework changes, the need to provide additional candidate support for program completion, and changes in licensure exam procedures.
Every school district has them. They are the hard-to-staff schools populated by the district’s toughest challenges—high poverty, high diversity, low proficiency, high degree of special education needs. The “job opportunity” section of each district’s website is always full of postings for these schools; few teachers go to work there, and the few who take the job rarely stay for long.

Except Evelyn Sedillo. Mrs. Sedillo has been working in some of Albuquerque Public School District’s toughest schools for nearly eight years now, and she loves it. But it isn’t her willingness to work at schools like Ernie Pyle and Tony Hillerman that makes her unique. It isn’t even that for many years she had to work as a long term substitute, doing the job of a full time teacher without any of the benefits.

What makes Evelyn Sedillo unique is that she’s been one of APS’s most dedicated teachers in the district’s hardest schools for almost a decade, and she still hasn’t passed all of her licensing exams. Why not? Because Evelyn is just like the students to whom she is so dedicated—she’s a special education teacher who is herself a special education student. She just didn’t know it.

“I struggled in school. I’m in my 50s, and back when I went to school they didn’t do anything like Special Education. Back then, they didn’t know what was wrong with me,” said Sedillo, who grew up in Albuquerque and eventually graduated from El Dorado High School. “My mom always had to hire tutors, particularly with math, which was my area of struggle.” After high school graduation, Sedillo worked in the grocery indus-

try for 32 years, but always wanted more.

“I wanted to work with kids,” she said. “My middle daughter also struggled with school. She is grown now, but when she was in school they would do “pull outs” to help her. But even then I didn’t know what they were doing—I had no clue. My daughter would say to me ‘Mom, I was special ed and you didn’t know.’ And I didn’t. That’s what convinced me to go into teaching—I didn’t want my youngest daughter to struggle. But I never thought about teaching Special Education.”

Then in her 40’s, Sedillo decided to tackle the arduous work of attending college. Although she still didn’t know what made reading and writing so difficult for her, with the help of tutors, she graduated from the University of Phoenix with a 3.5 GPA and a degree in K-8 Elementary Education.

But she couldn’t pass the basic skills tests to get her teaching license. Without passing the licensing exams, Sedillo could not work as a certified teacher. So she became a long-term substitute teacher—one of the many who fill the toughest jobs in the toughest schools where certified teachers choose not to apply.

“I got a job at Ernie Pyle as a long-term substitute teacher, and they kept me there for three years,” Sedillo said. “It’s a tough school, but I loved every single minute of it. The kids could really relate to me since I was also a tough kid growing up. To this day, I still talk to those kids—they’re grown up now. I’ve even gone to some of their weddings.”

While at Ernie Pyle, the school’s instructional coach talked Sedillo...
into applying for an interim Special Education license so that she could work as a licensed teacher, and she tried to complete the OPAL program through her community college. But by the time she followed her principal to Tony Hillerman Middle School, her interim license had expired, she had been unable to complete the OPAL requirements, and she was again working as a long term substitute in special education in one of APS’s most challenging schools.

Seven years passed since her graduation from the university before she was introduced to Kim Lanoy-Sandoval and the LEAP teacher training program.

"In 2019, an educational assistant at my school introduced me to Kim and to LEAP, and that was a game changer," Sedillo said. "It was a whole new world. I’d tried the University of Phoenix. I’d tried CNM. And I’m not trying to dog either of those programs, but all I really heard [in class] was ‘blah blah blah’. When I first joined LEAP, I was amazed. I’ve finally learned why I’m supposed to do things, and I finally understand the benefit of doing them. For example, I used to post an [learning] objective on the board, but I never really understood why I was supposed to do that. Just knowing that simple reason why matters. Now I know why we do lesson plans, and why we need to include diversity in our lessons."

At the end of LEAP’s one-year intensive program, Sedillo braced herself to take the dreaded licensing exams again. But this time, she had an advantage.

"I am dyslexic. I finally figured that out thanks to Kim and LEAP."

but I never really understood why I was supposed to do that. Just knowing that simple reason why matters. Now I know why we do lesson plans, and why we need to include diversity in our lessons."

"I am dyslexic. I finally figured that out, thanks to Kim," Sedillo said. "At LEAP, you are not a number. You are not a chart. You are a person. That’s what LEAP gives you. Kim knew me. She said ‘Evelyn, there’s something wrong. You’re one of my best teachers and you’re not passing the tests.’ And she had me tested. How grateful can one be? She helped me get testing accommodations for the exams, and I have passed three of my tests now. I never thought I would be able to pass a test. I have two more to go, but I passed the special education test the first time I took it. I couldn’t pass these tests in all these years before I joined LEAP. Who is going to take time out to figure out what’s wrong with their students? The LEAP ladies do. Kim had faith in me.” And Sedillo passes that faith on to her students. “The kids love it. They say ‘Mrs. Sedillo, you’re just like us.’ And I tell them, yes I am, and we’re going to work through this together,” she said.

"Miss Armijo, my principal, also had faith in me. She saw how I could work with students at Ernie Pyle in the South Valley; she saw a lot of good in me—and thank goodness, because I wouldn’t be a teacher now otherwise. Both she and Kim saw that I was good at what I do."

Today, Evelyn perseveres to pass the last of her licensing exams so that she can, at long last, finally earn the teaching certification she has been working toward for so many years, all the while serving students just like herself. And her personal study in perseverance is what she continues to pass on to her students every day in the classroom.

"We struggle together," she said of her students. "And together we’ll get through it."

"We struggle together. And together we'll get through it."
LEAP Teachers Self-Assessment: Pillars of Growth

Each month, LEAP teachers measure their progress in each of the four LEAP pillars of professional growth:

CANDIDATE SELF-EVALUATION OF THE 4 PILLARS OF LEAP
(INdividual scoring on a scale of 1-5)

LEADERSHIP
The art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal.

- August - 3.2
- September - 3.3
- October - 3.5
- November - 3.6
- December - 3.8
- January - 3.7
- February - N/A
- March - 3.8
- April - 3.5
- May - 3.6

ENGAGEMENT
Occurs when students make a psychological investment in learning; promotes a sense of shared ownership and identity.

- August - 3.2
- September - 3.4
- October - 3.4
- November - 3.6
- December - 3.8
- January - 3.7
- February - N/A
- March - 3.6
- April - 3.1
- May - 3.2

ACHIEVEMENT
When students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will prepare them for personal and academic success.

- August - 3.0
- September - 3.2
- October - 3.4
- November - 3.5
- December - 3.6
- January - 3.7
- February - N/A
- March - 3.6
- April - 3.2
- May - 3.2

PERSEVERANCE
The determination and self-efficacy of accomplishing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

- August - 4.0
- September - 3.8
- October - 3.9
- November - 4.0
- December - 4.2
- January - 4.0
- February - N/A
- March - 4.2
- April - 4.2
- May - 4.3
## Monthly Teacher Evaluations of Face-To-Face Direct Instruction Sessions

### Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The session provided me with information that is immediately applicable to teaching a diverse population of students.</td>
<td>110 (95%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>94 (93%)</td>
<td>8 (5%)</td>
<td>94 (93%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>97 (95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The session built on my knowledge of teaching and learning in a new way.</td>
<td>110 (95%)</td>
<td>5 (4%)</td>
<td>95 (93%)</td>
<td>7 (7%)</td>
<td>92 (98%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>97 (99%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The session modeled and showcased effective strategies that will help me increase student achievement.</td>
<td>109 (95%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>93 (91%)</td>
<td>9 (9%)</td>
<td>99 (95%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>95 (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/handouts were useful and I can put the information into practice immediately.</td>
<td>107 (93%)</td>
<td>8 (7%)</td>
<td>89 (87%)</td>
<td>13 (13%)</td>
<td>92 (97%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>95 (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session allowed for collaboration and questions.</td>
<td>109 (95%)</td>
<td>6 (5%)</td>
<td>97 (95%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>93 (98%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>98 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Response Analysis: Valued Components (represents >3 comments on same topic)

- Everything on behavior.
- Building objectives PD.
- Engaging in activities with fellow LEAP teachers.
- UDL Portions.
- Engagement Strategies.
- National partners/experts addressing reading instruction.

### Response Analysis: Ideas for Improvement (represents >3 comments on same topic)

- Better explanation/tools to apply content immediately.
- Ensure all presenters are engaging, limit the amount of work.
- Provide applicable examples for every grade level. Shorten the weekends.
- Interactive note-books; PLC explaining assignments.
- None

### NOTE:

In compliance with the Governor’s COVID-19 public health directive regarding the cessation of in-person instruction in public schools and the temporary closure of public facilities and businesses in New Mexico, LEAP ceased face-to-face instruction sessions. No data was collected in March, April and May.
At LEAP, we are committed to developing quality educators while demonstrating compassion and holding high expectations for culturally responsive teaching and learning. LEAP uses evidence-based strategies to train, coach, and inspire teachers to engage students in ways that make them feel important, cared for, and valued."

-- LEAP Mission Statement

Who Is LEAP?

Behind every great idea stands a team of people dedicated to its cause and consequence. Ask any LEAP teacher what makes LEAP so different from other licensure programs, and they will give you the same answer: the people who lead it. It is thanks to the hard work, dedication and personal commitment of the LEAP leadership team that New Mexico’s first non-IHE program has been so successful.
Ali Nava is a regional facilitator and coach for LEAP. Ali taught 1st and 2nd grade at Lew Wallace Elementary school in the Albuquerque Public School system for over 10 years. With a MA and BA in Early Childhood Multicultural Education from UNM, Ali’s passion is helping teachers create performance-based assessments tied to Project-Based Learning (PBL), differentiated instruction, and the modernization of station teaching and facilitation. Some of Ali’s professional accomplishments include National Board Certification, Level Three-A Instructional Leader B-3 Early Childhood License with Endorsement in TESOL, Modern and Classical Languages and Bilingual Education, and Pepsi/APS Education Foundation Teacher of the Month for May 2013.

Kim Lanoy-Sandoval is a proud native New Mexican working with Cooperative Educational Services as their Program Administrator for LEAP. For over 19 years, she has been researching, studying, and receiving national certifications to empower educators with strength-based tools and strategies. She is passionate about changing educational landscapes to be the great connector in which students and educators are valued first. Kim has a BA in Psychology, MA in Special Education, licensed in School Administration, and is working on her doctorate in Educational Leadership at Gonzaga University. Currently, she collaborates with statewide organizations to recruit, train, and retain highly effective and diverse teachers within their critical first years of teaching.

Jessica Powell
Reading Instructor & Dyslexia Therapist

Jessica is an educator with more than 20 years of experience at the elementary and secondary levels working in both public and special purpose schools. She serves as an instructor of the Dyslexia Therapy Master’s Degree Program at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. She is a Certified Academic Language Therapist and Qualified Instructor through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) and a Structured Literacy Dyslexia Specialist through the International Dyslexia Association and The Center for Effective Reading Instruction. Currently, Jessica works as a coach and reading instructor for the LEAP program while providing professional development on Structured Literacy and reading differences throughout the state of New Mexico.

Donna Johns
LEAP Regional Facilitator

Donna taught in New Mexico public schools for 21 years in both elementary and secondary classrooms, serving as a mentor for new teachers in her district. She holds Level 3 licensure in PreK-12 Special Education, Secondary Social Studies, and School Administration. She has a Bachelor’s Degree in Education/Social Studies and Special Education as well as a Master’s Degree in Pedagogy and Learning and School Administration. Donna and her husband James have two daughters, Hannah and Kennedy.

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” —Marcel Proust
LEAP Advisory Board (2019)

Dr. Anne Tafoya  
APS, former Associate Superintendent of Special Education

Bobbie Gutierrez  
Espanola, Superintendent

Dr. Cynthia Nava  
Teach for America, Executive Director

Chris Fox  
APS, Wilson Language Dyslexia Therapist

Elena Salazar  
Cooperative Education Services, SITE Coordinator

Dr. Jose Carrillo  
Cobre Schools, Assoc. Superintendent

Francis Vigil  
BIE-ADD-Bureau Operated Schools, Education Specialist

Dr. Kim Mizell  
Bloomfield Municipal School District, Superintendent

Dr. Cindy Sims  
Estancia, Superintendent

Evelyn Sedillo  
Albuq. Public Schools, Special Education Teacher

Deborah Dominguez-Clark  
NMPED, Director of Special Education

Linda Sink  
Santa Fe Public Schools, Deputy Superintendent

Loretta Garcia  
CES, TAP Coordinator

Loui Gonzales  
Siembra Leadership High School, Director of Curriculum and Assessment

Maria Jaramillo  
Central Region Cooperative, Executive Director

Missy Wauneka  
Teach for America, Managing Director and Regional Operations

Dr. Renee Garcia  
Truth or Consequences Schools, Director of Federal Programs

Ronda Davis  
APS, National Board-Certified Teacher and Math Support

Stacy Diller  
Clayton Public Schools, Superintendent

Therese Rodriguez, Carlsbad Municipal Schools, Human Resources Director

Vanessa Angel  
Santa Fe Public Schools, Coordinator of New Teacher Mentoring

Dr. Virginia Padilla-Vigil  
University of the Southwest, Education Department Chair

Will Hawkins, Hobbs Municipal School District, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources