

Middle College High School



Tribal Education Status Report

For School Year 2021-2022

Issued September 2022

Chief Educational Officer of School: Dr. Robert Hunter

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data collected and disseminated in this annual Tribal Education Status Report (TESR) examines comparative (past and recent) trends in the education of Middle College High School's Native American students. This includes the identification of any gaps in academic performance between Native students and other subpopulations. The intent of this report is to inform data-driven decision-making through the analysis of the data contained herein.

INTRODUCTION

Middle College High School has been in existence since 2002. It is a freestanding early college high school model that adheres to the following mission statement and educational objectives:

- A. **Mission Statement:** The mission of the Middle College High School (MCHS) is to provide opportunities for dual enrollment and an innovative and high-quality individualized learning environment on the campus of UNM-Gallup for students in grades 9-12. The school is designed to integrate UNM-Gallup resources so that students have expanded opportunities for postsecondary advancement.

- B. **Educational Objectives:** The aim of MCHS is to increase student involvement in postsecondary education with an emphasis on serving students of diverse backgrounds who are normally underrepresented at the local, regional, and national levels. The goals of MCHS are:
 - a. Provide high quality learning-centered education to all MCHS students
 - b. Provide effective and efficient services to all MCHS students, fostering their independence as they transition into the postsecondary environment
 - c. Increase student enrollment at UNM-Gallup
 - d. Provide an educated and skilled workforce to enhance Gallup's economic development

Each instructional staff member at the Middle College High School possesses a master's degree and at least 18 graduate credit hours in the field in which he or she is respectively teaching. All teachers are also licensed through the New Mexico Public Education Department and meet highly qualified designations to teach applicable high school content.

Middle College High School works in collaboration with local Tribal entities, including the Navajo and Zuni nations. Consultation meetings occur at least annually, where input is solicited from locally elected Tribal leaders and Tribal education committees. Information gathered from these meetings is used to improve MCHS' services to Indigenous students and families. This includes increasing exposure and access to the program, as well as listening to what works in preparing Indigenous students for success and retention in college.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section describes the laws and rules that apply to the Tribal Education Status Report in relevant part as follows:

22-23A-7. Report.

A. The Indian Education Division in collaboration with the education division of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs and other entities that serve tribal students shall submit an annual statewide tribal education status report no later than November 15 to all New Mexico tribes. The division shall submit the report whether or not entities outside state government collaborate as requested.

B. A school district with tribal lands located within its boundaries shall provide a district wide tribal education status report to all New Mexico tribes represented within the school district boundaries.

C. These status reports shall be written in a brief format and shall include information regarding public school performance, how it is measured, and how it is reported to the tribes and disseminated at the semiannual government-to-government meetings. The status report generally includes information regarding the following:

- (1) student achievement as measured by a statewide test approved by the department, with results disaggregated by ethnicity;
- (2) school safety;
- (3) graduation rates;
- (4) attendance;
- (5) parent and community involvement;
- (6) educational programs targeting tribal students;
- (7) financial reports;
- (8) current status of federal Indian education policies and procedures;
- (9) school district initiatives to decrease the number of student dropouts and increase attendance;
- (10) public school use of variable school calendars;
- (11) school district consultations with district Indian education committees, school-site parent advisory councils and tribal, municipal and Indian organizations; and
- (12) indigenous research and evaluation measures and results for effective curricula for tribal students.
- (13) Access to Native Language programs

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Objective: Commensurate with its mission, MCHS seeks to increase student involvement in postsecondary education with an emphasis on serving students of diverse backgrounds who are normally underrepresented. For the past five years, the school has exceeded its mission specific indicators as identified—and described later in this report—in its PED-approved charter contract.

Student performance on the 2021-2022 HSGAs exceeded the state average in reading, writing, and science, but not in math. For this reason, the school proposes to increase student performance on the state math assessment.

Background: MCHS is an early college high school that has earned gold star designation by the Public Education Department. The majority of the school's 140-student enrollment is Native American, at more than 73%.

Methods: As per its mission, the program of the school provides dual credit enrollment and an innovative and high-quality individualized learning environment on the campus of UNM-Gallup for students in grades 9-12.

Results: In 2021-2022, the school continued to exceed its mission goals related to postsecondary matriculation and retention. Additionally, student performance on the HSGA exceeded the state averages for reading, writing, and science, but not for math.

Conclusion: An analysis of the specific domains of the math assessment identified that students were unprepared for the geometry-based items. As the school had not been offering geometry, the decision was made to add this course to the school's master schedule.

Action Plan: The school has added two sections of geometry to its master schedule, in an effort to address these gaps in student learning.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Objective: MCHS honors the right of all students to a safe and healthy learning environment. Students are informed that the school follows the rules and standards of behavior set forth in the UNM-G Code and Student Handbook, regardless of whether they are enrolled in UNM-G classes, and are simultaneously required to meet the MCHS conduct expectations as stated in the school's policy manual. This ensures the safety and well-being of all MCHS students.

Background: As MCHS is located at a branch college, it is an open campus. This does, however, allow for collaboration between MCHS and UNM-G staff, including with respect to school safety and security. The campus is patrolled by armed Gallup Police Department officers, who are employed by UNM-G.

Methods: The school utilizes an internal School Safety Committee, which interfaces with the UNM-G Campus Police and additionally participates in the McKinley County Emergency Management meetings. The school also keeps in meticulous practice with evacuation and shelter in place drills.

Results: Students are able to demonstrate efficient practice in emergency drills, including evacuation and shelter in place protocols.

Conclusion: Student safety remains a high priority. Safety plans are reviewed and revised regularly (no less than annually), and the school's safety committee meets monthly.

Action Plan: At present, the school is fine-tuning its off-site evacuation plan, in which committed reunification sites have been identified and a single drill of this type has been practiced. The safety committee is working out how to best implement this type of plan and notification to families in the context of its open campus.

GRADUATION RATES

Objective: The school's overall graduation rate has remained well above 90% for the past several years. The same is true of each of the school's subpopulations, except for school year 2020-21, in which the graduation rate for Native American students fell to 86% (explanation provided below). It is the school's goal to keep the graduation rates of all subpopulations above 90% each subsequent year.

Background: MCHS continues to outperform the local school district, Gallup-McKinley County Schools. The school's graduation rate for Native American students is nine-percent (9%) higher than the local district's graduation rate for Native American students, which equates to a difference between two students who did not graduate on time compared to over 200 students who did not locally graduate in 2020-21.

Methods: MCHS requires 29 credits for a diploma, compared to the district's 24.5 credits. Because of the additional requirements, the school adheres strictly to the state's Attendance for Success Act, each step of which involves documented parental communication. Because students who are not meeting regular attendance are at risk of not graduating on time, the school intervenes early and often in cases of non-attendance.

Results: While graduation rates across the state may have been inflated during pandemic school year 2020-21, in which schools were given the option to use pass/fail grading, MCHS experienced a drop in its rate due to two students who did not graduate. While the school ensured that all families were provided with personal internet connectivity (through grant funding), two students failed to meet minimal attendance standards (despite numerous interventions involving parents). One parent informed the school that she was transferring her student to the alternative high school, but it does not appear likely that this occurred. The other student repeated her senior year and graduated this past May.

Conclusion: The school is committed to weekly following up with community partners such as CYFD, once referrals are made for Families in Need of Services (FINS). While MCHS followed the Attendance for Success Act with respect to students who met the intensive support level of intervention, statewide referral numbers increased during school year 2020-21, and support from community stakeholders was even more difficult to attain.

Action Plan: Despite the shortage and difficulties of receiving assistance from community partners, the school remains committed to seeking improved support from these key stakeholders. In an effort to strengthen its work with key stakeholders, the school is considering bringing the CYFD on site to provide professional development information to school staff.

ATTENDANCE

Objective: The school continues to strive to keep its attendance rate above 90% schoolwide and across all student subpopulations and has experienced tremendous success in meeting this goal.

Background: The most recent attendance rate for school year 2020-21 exceeds 95% overall. Moreover, each subpopulation showed improvement over prior attendance years, with only one group lower than 90% (Hispanic, though this group showed improvement with respect to the prior year). As the Hispanic subpopulation accounts for six-percent (6%) of the school's enrollment, the chronic truancy of a single student caused this subpopulation to be unable to meet the 90% goal.

Methods: The school adheres strictly to the state's Attendance for Success Act, each step of which involves documented parental communication. MCHS runs weekly attendance reports, upon which each level of intervention is meticulously applied and documented, each of which involves parental contact.

Results: As a result of the above, the school continues to meet all annual attendance targets, as documented in the plan sent to the NM Public Education Department each school year.

Conclusion: The level of parental communication, interventions, and student support services offered by the school for students targeted with attendance concerns is effective.

Action Plan: Documentation of all staff interventions is promptly recorded in the school's Student Information System. Monitoring of all student attendance occurs weekly, during which the various levels of intervention are applied as per the school's Attendance for Success Act policies.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Objective: The school is committed, and has been working, to increase parent and community involvement. While Middle College has traditionally experienced a great deal of support from families, it has taken time and effort to build these avenues. The school is investigating additional methods of parental involvement, as identified below.

Background: Due in part to pandemic, Middle College improved its delivery of parent/student surveys for key data collection, including annual budget priorities. Family orientation meetings have also been standard (even during pandemic, when some were done via Zoom). The school is now also returning to open houses and family cookouts, where input is both shared and gathered.

Methods: As above, Middle College is presently scheduling open houses and cookouts, in an effort to bring additional modalities of interacting with families and collecting input related to educational and budgetary priorities.

Results: Prior input from families directed school priorities related to internet connectivity and academic support, as well as identifying a need to establish school transportation, which has been an ongoing challenge for the past five years.

Conclusion: Parental input has helped to steer the school's priorities over the past few years, improving and expanding services available to students. The issue of lack of transportation remains a longstanding obstacle.

Action Plan: The school continues to seek transportation assistance through various partners, including the NM Public Education Dept, in an effort to resolve the equity issues that are inherent in not being able to provide transportation to students.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TARGETING TRIBAL STUDENTS

Objective: In alignment with the school’s mission to increase student involvement in postsecondary education with an emphasis on serving students of diverse backgrounds who are normally underrepresented, MCHS utilizes multiple metrics to determine college matriculation and retention rates.

Background: In support of the school’s mission, Middle College made a concerted effort to increase its access to Native students. As outlined in the methods and results below, significant success continues to be achieved, in that the school has increased its percentage of Native student enrollment over the course of the past eight years, from 19% to more than 73%.

Methods: In the school’s effort to increase access to underrepresented students, outreach to local chapter houses has been made and regular consultation with the Department of Dine’ Education has become standard. In addition, the school has increased cultural relevance in its curricula, most notably through the adoption of new instructional materials and strategic professional development given to all faculty.

Results: The school has experienced a significant increase in its Native enrollment, while steadily exceeding its charter mission goals related to college matriculation and retention. Since implementing a postsecondary metric with the graduating class of 2017, Middle College has documented a rate of post-graduation college success that meets or exceeds 80% of all graduates.

Conclusion: MCHS concludes that its priorities are largely being met. In order to further expand its services to a greater number of Native students, it is necessary to resolve the issues of inequity that result from the lack of charter school transportation. The school continues to press this matter with various support agencies, in an effort to work around the obstacles that are presented by the local district, who discontinued the provision of bussing to charter schools under its current administration.

Action Plan: In addition to advocating for an equitable transportation solution, the school continues to expand its curricula with the inclusion of culturally responsive instructional materials, some of which are being used to gradually replace earlier core adopted materials. Funds are made available for faculty to order preview and classroom copies of titles that are under consideration.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Objective: It is the goal of Middle College High School to support full financial transparency and to ensure no material findings on annual audit reports.

Background: The school's financials are publicly posted on the school's website each quarter. Moreover, the school has received no significant audit findings in the past five years.

Methods: Through a system of internal controls and adherence to all applicable procurement and conflict of interest protocols, the school maintains an accurate and dependable system of accounting.

Conclusion: Monies are spent for their intended purposes. Dollars allocated to instructional line items constitute the bulk of spending and are adequate to meet instructional needs. Funds are timely spent and accounted for.

Action Plan: The funding of new priorities includes the construction of a new, permanent facility. Ongoing priorities include the continuation of a meal service that adheres to the National School Lunch Program standards, as well as the press for obtaining student equity via access to school transportation that is currently unavailable to the charter school.

*CURRENT STATUS OF FEDERAL INDIAN EDUCATION
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

Objective: Middle College annually updates its Indian Policies and Procedures commensurate with stakeholder input. IPPs are current, and fully approved by the US Department of Education’s Impact Aid Office.

Background: Beginning with school year 2020-21, the school applied for and received federal Impact Aid funding from the US Department of Education. Funds are used to provide relevant programming and services to students, over seventy-three percent (73%) of whom are Native American.

Methods: Eligibility is determined annually on (or about) the 40th count day of state reporting. Surveys are distributed and collected with parent signature each year.

Results: Through careful surveying and accurate recordkeeping, Middle College has seen a measured increase in the number of families who generate Impact Aid funds.

Conclusion: The school will continue utilizing its current process for the collection of data, including its solicitation of family and stakeholder input.

Action Plan: As added assurance, the school will continue to include updates at its governance council meetings. Reports provided by the school’s equity council will continue to be present on monthly meeting agendas.

*SCHOOL DISTRICT INITIATIVES TO DECREASE THE NUMBER
OF STUDENT DROPUTS AND INCREASE ATTENDANCE*

Objective: The school strives to keep students in school and fully engaged with relevant curricula and offerings, and intervene as early as possible to assure that all students are progressing toward an on-time completion of high school.

Background: Students at Middle College continue to experience comparatively higher graduation and attendance rates than their peers attending geographic cohort schools. The school does not have a recent record of students who would be categorized as dropouts.

Methods: Middle College holds weekly staff meetings in which students in need of either attendance and/or academic interventions are identified. Progress is discussed weekly in order to identify individual student needs. At all but the initial identification stage, parents are notified of concerns. In specific cases, they may receive notification even at the initial stage. This has enabled the school to establish an early warning system that greatly benefits students and families.

Results: Attendance rates remain high and have risen over the course of the past few years. The graduation rate also surpasses local cohort averages, and is expected to rise to pre-pandemic levels and remain higher than ninety-percent (90%).

Conclusion: The school's structural procedures, such as the practice of weekly monitoring and involving parents/guardians early and often in the process, demonstrate that its interventions are largely effective.

Action Plan: Faculty are increasingly accountable for documenting interventions and contacts with parents/guardians in the school's Student Intervention System. Faculty have also identified the need for a structured tutoring course that is being piloted this year as part of all new students' (and selected returning students') schedules. The efficacy of this intervention will be reviewed against data from prior years.

*PUBLIC SCHOOL USE OF VARIABLE SCHOOL
CALENDARS*

Objective: The mission of the Middle College High School is to provide dual enrollment and an innovative and high-quality individualized learning environment. As the school adheres to a schedule somewhat resembling that of a college environment, college readiness and success are enhanced.

Background: Students earn applicable college credits through participation in dual enrollment and follow a college type class meeting schedule. Students entering the school in 9th grade are afforded limited opportunity to pursue college coursework, but are gradually transitioned into additional postsecondary credits as the progress. The school tracks college credit completion per cohort group.

Methods: All students benefit from individual advisement and scheduling. Moreover, the school participates in an Extended Learning Time Program (ELTP) in which focus is given to credit recovery opportunities. In recent years, MCHS leadership has also begun meeting with UNM-Gallup's division chairs in a collaborative effort to identify additional courses and sections of needed courses.

Results: In result of the above, Middle College continues to exceed its charter mission goals, particularly with respect to college matriculation and retention rates. These goals are renegotiated with NM Public Education Commission every five years.

Conclusion: The mission of the Middle College High School is well defined and constructed. Students demonstrate a significant degree of success in transitioning to college after graduation (maintaining an 80% or higher success rate annually).

Action Plan: The school will continually identify courses and sections of courses that increase the availability of various postsecondary options. To the extent possible, this will be done in collaboration with the school's postsecondary partner, UNM-Gallup.

*SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSULTATIONS WITH DISTRICT INDIAN
EDUCATION COMMITTEES, SCHOOL-SITE PARENT ADVISORY
COUNCILS AND TRIBAL, MUNICIPAL AND INDIAN
ORGANIZATIONS*

Objective: Middle College will continue to meet regularly with Tribal stakeholders, such as the Department of Dine’ Education and parents of Tribally enrolled students, to solicit input in furtherance of its mission.

Background: MCHS is in its third year of consultation with the Department of Dine’ Education. Prior to that, the school initiated consultation with the Navajo Nation Tribal Council’s Health, Education, and Human Services Committee. Over the course of the past three years, MCHS has also added Native American representation to its governance council through amendment to its bylaws.

Methods: Through the use of parent surveys, Tribal consultation meetings, schoolwide orientations, and open houses, meaningful input is solicited, shared with the school’s governance council, and implemented.

Results: The process described above enables the school to grow, increasing access and services to students. From this process, the school was able to meet identified needs, such as procuring a student meal service and mobile hotspot connectivity for families in need of such service. A stakeholder-identified need that is as yet still unmet is the need for school transportation, the resolution of which has been an ongoing issue for the past five years.

Conclusion: Consistent consultation and solicitation of input improves services to students and families. And while transportation is still unsolved, it remains a priority area in which the school continues to meet with key partners in what it hopes to be an eventual solution to this inequitable situation.

Action Plan: The school has recently started utilizing social media and is investigating new ways to share practices and accomplishments through such media.

*INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND EVALUATION MEASURES AND
RESULTS FOR EFFECTIVE CURRICULA FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS*

Objective: The school continually strives to provide culturally responsive curricula to students.

Background: MCHS purchases preview copies of Indigenous-authored texts, which grows its library and, in many cases, helps to identify texts that are used to replace some of the school's existing core materials. Teachers are encouraged to identify these texts, which are purchased by the school, for their consideration and use.

Methods: To support the growth of culturally relevant instructional materials and pedagogy, much professional development is intentionally centered around these topics. Recently, faculty participated in professional development across the course of three days that focused on scholarly articles based on Tribal Critical Theory.

Results: The identification of materials and instructional strategies that are aimed at promoting the school's student body have had a profound effect on the way in which MCHS works with students. The gradual identification and replacement of instructional materials offers ample opportunity to continue building on this.

Conclusion: Students are better able to recognize themselves in the materials that are increasingly in use, which enables them to better relate to the school's subject matter.

Action Plan: The school endeavors to continue its ongoing identification of Indigenous texts to supplement and/or replace some of its presently used content.

Access to Native Language Programs

Objective: Middle College provides access to high quality, dual credit-bearing Native language courses, in partnership with its host institution, UNM-Gallup.

Background: Courses are taught each semester in Navajo 1110 (college level Navajo I), and occasionally Navajo 1120 (Navajo II). Discussions with UNM have taken place in which the school has also requested consideration of Zuni language courses.

Methods: Students are provided individualized advising, through which MCHS counseling staff promote Native language offerings, which are well attended by MCHS students.

Results: By taking Native language courses that meet both high school and college credit simultaneously, students are meeting graduation requirements as well as the core credit requirements of most undergraduate degrees.

Conclusion: Access to high caliber Native language programs serves students well. MCHS continues to operate in partnership with UNM-Gallup to ensure that students this access is maximized.

Action Plan: As mentioned above, Middle College continues to meet with the university's division chairs, during which the school proposes key scheduling needs, such as the consistent scheduling of higher levels of Navajo language courses and the consideration of offering Zuni language courses.

CONCLUSION

As per the mission specific indicators of Middle College High School's approved charter contract with the New Mexico Public Education Department, the school continues to exceed its stated goals of successfully transitioning students into higher education settings, in terms of both matriculation and retention of students into higher education.

For school year 2020-21, MCHS experienced a drop in its American Indian graduation rate, from 97.9% to 85.7%. While the rate is nine-percent (9%) higher than the local school district's graduation rate for this same time period, the school recognizes that it must continue to exhaust all resources when addressing students' graduation needs. This includes strengthening relationships with community support agencies that can assist students and families in overcoming chronic absenteeism (which was a particularly daunting task during the pandemic school year).

Moreover, while the school noted academic performance rates that exceeded the state's averages in reading, writing, and science during the most recent state assessment period, it fell substantially short of the state's average in mathematics performance. For this reason, Middle College is implementing coursework to address the causes of this gap, namely the inclusion of a geometry class, which is one of the areas of focus of the state's high school assessment and which the school has not offered in the past several years.

Middle College High School will continue to involve students, families, and key stakeholders in informing the school's priorities. Consultation with Tribal partners will also remain consistent as the school endeavors to provide the best possible college preparatory program to its constituents.