DEMOGRAPHICS

- 617 Teachers
- 11,626 Students
- 53.9% Free and Reduced Lunch
- 11.5% Limited English Proficient
- 14.7% Special Education

- 30.3% Hispanic
- 32.4% Native American
- 35.3% Caucasian
- 0.95% Asian/Pacific Island
- 1% African American

Farmington Municipal School District is located in the northwest corner of New Mexico. The district has three preschool locations, ten elementary schools, four middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools.

CHALLENGE

Farmington Schools had been working to address low-performing schools since the implementation of a statewide school grading system more than ten years ago. Schools were provided resources to address poor performance, but our efforts seemed inconsistent and varied by school. A Marzano Research professional development associate, Diane Paynter, had been working with one of our schools, Apache Elementary, since 2005 on best practices in the classroom. She provided them with practical strategies for putting research into practice, and the results at the school level were extremely promising. Through that initial work and the research of Marzano Research, the district identified a lack of clearly defined systems and a need to provide tools that would build understanding, provide consistency, support staff, and ultimately lead to improved student learning.
IMPLEMENTATION

In 2008, Farmington Municipal Schools contracted with Marzano Research to assist the district to create and implement a vision of school reform titled “Three Critical Commitments” (3CC’s). These commitments included:

1. Developing a system of individual student feedback at the district, school, and classroom levels.
   This commitment includes establishing learning goals, using formative assessment, and developing a grading and reporting system based on the learning goals.

2. Ensuring effective teaching in every classroom.
   This commitment includes developing a common language of instruction and common pedagogy, creating opportunities for teachers to interact using this common language, using coaching and observation to develop effective use of the language of instruction, and using an observational protocol to target instructional strategies for improvement.

3. Building background knowledge for all students.
   This commitment includes building the background knowledge for all students through the systematic development of student vocabulary.

Using a 2008 report—Getting Serious About School Reform: Three Critical Commitments by Robert J. Marzano—as its foundation, this work was the precursor to the current Marzano High Reliability Schools framework.

Paynter led multiple work sessions with district leadership, school administrators, instructional facilitators, and teachers over the course of seven years. This work included the implementation of a districtwide process for teaching academic vocabulary, the development of the Farmington Model of Instruction, and the development of a guaranteed and viable curriculum through the creation of measurement topics and proficiency scales. District instructional facilitators and teacher leader groups called Vanguards were instrumental in carrying out action research on best practices, giving feedback, establishing protocols, identifying resources, and supporting their peers. Diane Paynter provided guidance in the interpretation of the educational research and worked with all groups to build a solid foundation in best practice. Farmington Municipal Schools continues to refine the work of the 3CC’s and move toward a high level of understanding and fidelity throughout the district.
The New Mexico Public Education Department reported the most recent school grades for all districts in December 2015. The results for Farmington Schools surpassed any expectations from both the state and the district.

Elementary grades reflected nine As and one B. Six elementary schools raised their grades from a D or F to an A. All four middle schools increased by one or more grades, and the highest-poverty school received an A.

Administrators and teachers are to be commended for their efforts in utilizing established district systems, including the 3CC’s, and ensuring the implementation of our research-based practices at the school and classroom level. The Farmington School Board and district- and school-level administration recognize the value of the strategies of the 3CC’s and are ensuring its continuation through ongoing strategic planning.

*It should be noted that New Mexico school grades reflect a growth system. The 2014/2015 grades reflect the data from the first administration of the PARCC assessment. Farmington Schools, while still working toward higher student proficiency, outperformed the state averages in most areas of the PARCC. The district recognized that much of the work of the 3CC’s prepared our students for the high level of rigor that would be expected of this new exam.
## Farmington Schools Grade Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>13/14</th>
<th>14/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Grade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Grade</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Graph Description
- **X-axis**: Grade categories (A, B, C, D, F)
- **Y-axis**: Number of students
- **Legend**:
  - 13/14
  - 14/15
Receiving guidance from Diane Paynter in how to take the research and put it into practice was critical. It required building our foundation of knowledge and systems over a period of years, but we knew it was the right work. Her advice was, ‘stay the course,’ and it paid off for our district when it mattered the most. We now have the confidence to stay that course and build upon what is working.”

—Valerie Tulley, executive director of curriculum and instruction