

SANTA FE BOYS

A PUBLICATION ABOUT THE SITUATION OF BOYS IN SANTA FE & NEW MEXICO

ISSUE NO. 13

Fall 2008

The Gender Gap Within New Mexico's Achievement Gap

Do the incontestable differences in academic performance by different racial/ethnic and income groups in New Mexico contain a gender gap? Should the state attend to these gender gaps in its effort to close the achievement gap?

College Enrollment:

The NM Higher Education Department (NMHED) has a stated goal of increasing the number of Hispanic and Native American students in public institutions of higher education to reflect their proportion in the state population—42 percent and 10 percent respectively according to the NMHED's 2005 analysis.¹ NMHED data suggest that these goals are much closer to being met by Hispanic and Native American females than males enrolled in public institutions of higher

education in 2007.² Figure 1 shows the number of students of New Mexico's main ethnic/racial groups and their enrollment by gender. Figure 2 shows the proportion of males in these colleges as a percent of the female enrollment.

Because females are closer to achieving the goal of proportionality, New Mexico education officials should consider focusing on ways to attract more Hispanic and Native American males to college. In short, the NMHED would likely do well to consider the "gender gap" within the racial/ethnic-based "achievement gap" as a way of resolving both.

Figure 1. Enrollment in NM Public Postsecondary Institutions, 2007, by Gender and Racial/Ethnic Group

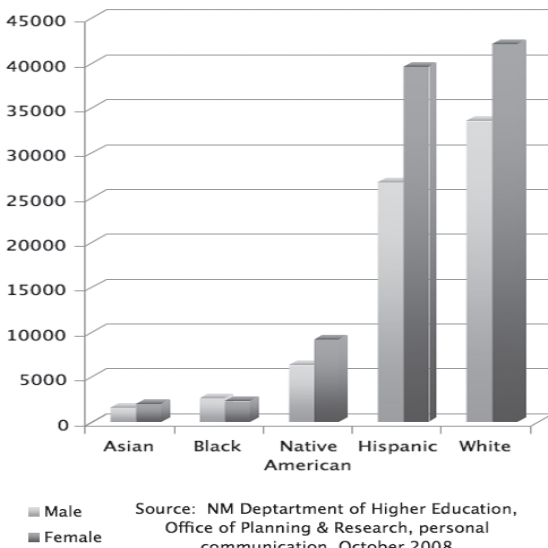
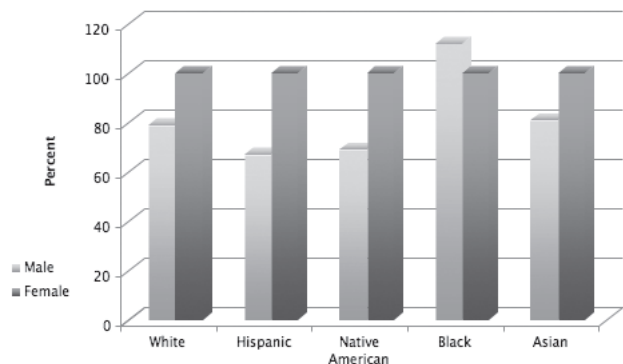


Figure 2. Male Enrollment at NM Institutions of Higher Education as a Percent of Female Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2007



Source: NM Dept of Higher Education, Office of Planning and Research, personal communication, October 2008.

High School Dropouts:

New Mexico has among the highest high school dropout rates in the nation, and the pattern reflects the **achievement gap** between certain racial/ethnic groups and also the **gender gap** that exists within each group.

Inside This Issue

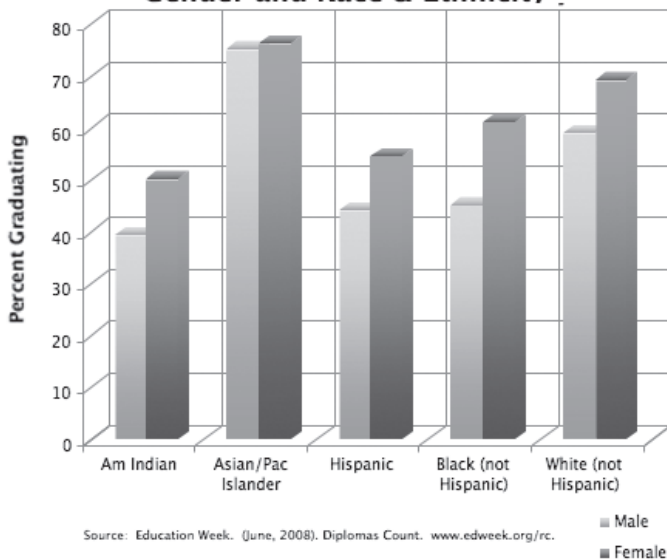
Should We Neglect Boys Because Men Earn More? 3
 An Interview with SFPS Superintendent 4
 Boys and Emotional Difficulties 5

Useful Websites 5
 Interview with Peg Tyre 6
 The Ways Boys Disengage from School 7
 NM Men's Conference for Boys and Young Men 8

The data come from the respected national education magazine, *Education Week*. For the past three years, this publication has tried to draw attention to the inadequacy of most state reporting on dropouts by providing its own analyses on a state-by-state basis.³ Figure 3 summarizes the data for New Mexico for the 2008 *Education Week* report on the graduation profile for the class of 2005.

(i.e. students from higher income families) outperform those who are eligible (i.e. students from lower income families). These achievement gap results are significant for all three NAEP tests given in 2007—math, reading and writing. In short, between the groupings by race/ethnicity and income there are significant differences.

Figure 3. Education Week's New Mexico High School Graduation Profile for the Class of 2005. Percent Graduating by Gender and Race & Ethnicity



The results also demonstrate the existence of a statistically significant gender gap in reading and writing, but not in math, within the groupings. This gender gap exists within most of the racial/ethnic groups and within the income groups.

Math. In math the differences within eligible and non-eligible groupings between males and females, are insignificant. The same is true within the Hispanic and white groupings. Only the American Indian grouping in New Mexico shows that females perform significantly better than males in math.

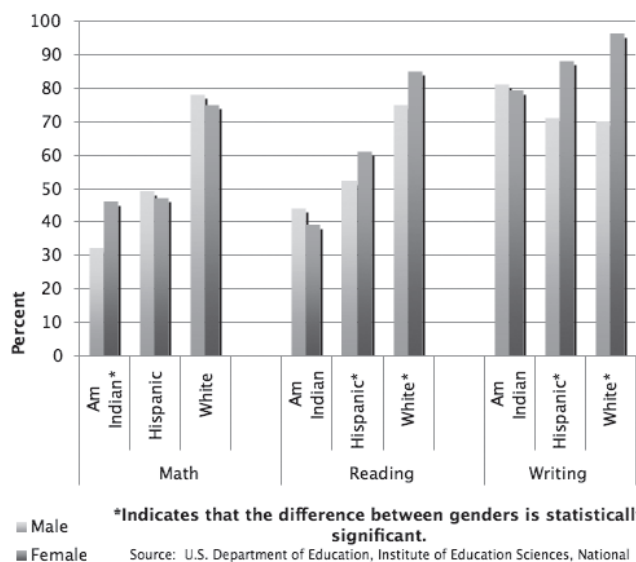
Reading. In reading we can see significant gender differences within the income groups and also within the racial/ethnic groupings

Standardized testing:

Figures 4 and 5 below show the results for New Mexico of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests given in 2007. The NAEP, often called the "Nation's Report Card," is given annually to a representative sample of students in each state by the US Department of Education. It provides a standardized, objective measure of student achievement for demographic groups within a state. The 2007 results are currently available for New Mexico for grades 4 and 8. The comparisons below are for the 8th grade.⁴

Results: The results demonstrate the long-established achievement gap: white students outperform both of the other two main racial/ethnic groups in the state; in addition, students who are not eligible for school lunch program

Figure 4. NAEP 8th Grade Test Performance for New Mexico, 2007. Percent of Students Performing at or Above Basic Level, by Subject, Gender, & Racial/Ethnic Group.



SANTA FE BOYS

A publication for adults about the situation of boys in Santa Fe & New Mexico

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for both whites and Hispanics. Females outperform males. American Indian males outperform females in reading, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Writing. In writing, there are significant gender differences within the two income groups; females perform significantly better than males. In writing, Hispanic and white females outperform their male counterparts by statistically significant amounts. American Indian females also outperform their male counterparts, but the difference is not statistically significant. **SFB**

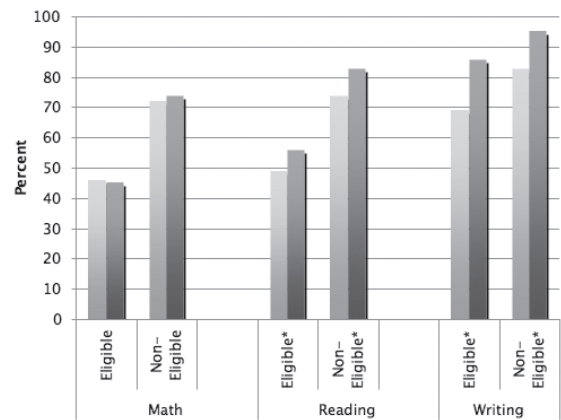
1. New Mexico Higher Education Department, Native American and Hispanic Students: Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention and Graduation Trends, Institutional Performance Measures and Targets, Institutional Action Plans. December 6, 2005, p. 5.

2. New Mexico Higher Education Department, Office of Planning and Research, Personal Communication October 2008.

3. Education Week. Diplomas Count. June, 2008. www.edweek.org.

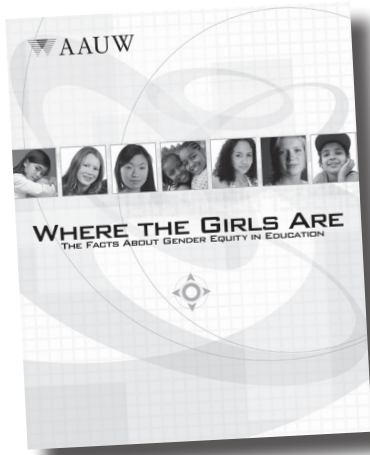
4. US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). 2007 Math, Reading, and Writing.

Figure 5. NAEP 8th Grade Test Performance for New Mexico, 2007. Percent of Students Performing at or Above Basic Level, by Subject, Gender, & Eligibility for National School Lunch Program



* Indicates that the difference between genders is statistically significant.
 Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). 2007.

Should We Neglect Boys Because Men Earn More?



In its recent report (*Where The Girls Are: Facts About Gender Equity in Education*) the American Association of University Women (AAUW) contends that the “most compelling evidence against the existence of a boys’ crisis is that men continue to out earn women in the workplace” (2008, p. 9).

In its denial of the poor educational achievement of boys, is the AAUW arguing that we adopt a policy of neglect toward boys—ignore their

needs and frustration in school—until women’s salaries are equal to men’s?

Is this a policy choice that is being made without being debated publicly and made explicit? If so, thanks go to the AAUW for outing a policy choice that perhaps has been in the closet.

Another question that this possible out-of-the-closet attitude of the AAUW raises has to do with the validity of the wage difference claim itself. The census data-based conclusions of big earning differences between men and women seem to be seriously misleading; many factors are not taken into account. For example, time out of the labor force to bear and care for children and its effect on women’s salaries, does not figure in. The question arises: Do we want to put the burden of this on the heads of young boys?

Here as before we have the AAUW to thank for its research. In 2007 they released another study (*Behind the Pay Gap*) which does take some of these differences between men and women in the workplace into account using multivariate statistical techniques. Not surprisingly, it shows much less difference in earnings between men and women when other factors are considered. In the context of denying boys’ educational difficulties, the AAUW says near the end of the report, “After controlling for factors known to affect earnings, such as education and training and demographic and personal choices including parenthood, a portion of these pay gaps remains unexplained” (2008, p. 64). Is an unexplained difference enough to base an unconscious and/or undeclared policy of neglect on?

These issues need to be debated openly and intelligently by officials, parents, and others concerned with children in New Mexico. **SFB**



An Interview with the SFPS Superintendent Bobbie Gutierrez



Bobbi Gutierrez assumed the post of Superintendent of Santa Fe Public Schools on July 1 after 23 years as an administrator, principal and teacher. A native of Lubbock, Texas, she has two adult sons who went through the SFPS system and is married to Eddie Gutierrez, a former teacher and guidance counselor. The interview took place in July 2008. Some of the points made by the new superintendent are shared below.

On how boys are treated in the schools:

I've learned so much [about boys] not only from the literature that you have brought to us through *Santa Fe Boys* and also from reading Dr. Sax's work (*Why Gender Matters*), but I now have 4 grandchildren. I watch my grandsons who are close in age to my granddaughter. The differences are remarkable even though they have been exposed to all the same things. I think we need to pay attention to these differences. I think that from what I read and learn, we penalize boys for their behavior and interests. We stymie boys.

On the need for teacher training to understand boys' learning patterns better:

I think we need to have some very specific professional development about engaging and working with boys and girls. I would love for us to offer more teacher training in this, but so many mandates from the state and federal levels makes it hard to find the time.

On father absence:

I think it is very crucial for boys and young men to have a relationship with a father, an uncle, or another older male. So many of our boys do not have fathers regularly present in the home, and I just think that is key to their growth and their development. It doesn't have to be a dad but a significant male in their lives.

On the need for more male teachers:

Recruitment of more teachers is always an issue because we are in Santa Fe with a high cost of living. I don't know how recruiting men can be done. Education has been so female dominated especially at the elementary level and still seems to be. I think it is important to encourage young men to go into education.

It would be interesting to talk to male teachers and find out what drew them to the profession, what their concerns were, what might we do with recruitment. I would love to call them together [to discuss these things].

On single-gender classrooms in SFPS:

I think it's important that we try single-gender classrooms and collect the data to see if we get better results. I am almost 99% certain that we would. Denise Johnston is my associate superintendent now and she is trying to put together a group of teachers and principals that would be interested in doing a pilot. We want to visit the teachers in Pojoaque that have had success with this. I think we have to do a good job of educating our parents if we choose to do that. I don't think you can just say if we do it, we can do so without giving parents information so they can understand it. I know it has been a little bit slow in getting off the ground. Change is hard. But we're interested in doing it and excited to try.

On the priority given to the issue of boys' alienation from school in the superintendent's overall job demands:

It's a high priority because children are our assets, and I think the asset that we most often miss is their untapped potential, and I think we don't tap into that with boys. I think it's harder to tap into that with boys than with girls. But maybe not. I think we should really look into our curriculum with what we are teaching and what interests them and allow some of them, especially at early ages, to explore that. Let a boy check out a book in the library about dinosaurs or army tanks instead of something else if that is his interest.

On teaching boys:

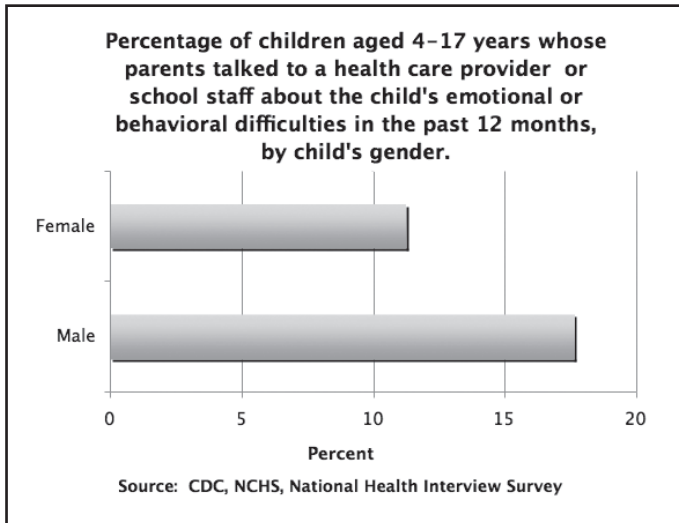
Recently, with my little grandson in Oklahoma City, we went to a bookstore and he picked out books about dinosaurs. I will buy every book in that store about dinosaurs as long as he will read them.

The two best experiences I have ever had in education were with boys. One was many years ago when I was pregnant with my younger son and we lived in south Texas. I was teaching summer school—9th grade boys who were in my class because they failed social studies. I was not a social studies teacher; I was a reading teacher, but they did not have the academic language to comprehend social studies. So my job was to give them strategies for learning how to read that content and break it down. The principal said, "I don't know if I want to put you in there. You're expecting and these are all tough boys." But they were the most wonderful group of boys I ever worked with. They treated me like a queen. They had a lot of respect for my condition. All of them said they never learned so much; nobody ever taught them how to do this.

My other experience was at Capshaw many years ago when I got into trouble with the principal for letting them read comic books and *Mad Magazine*. We did vocabulary and content, but my principal informed me that I could not do that. But I kind of did it anyway. So you have to look at what engages boys, and let them become engaged and do what they like. And then you can introduce other forms of literature. **SFB**

Eighteen Percent of Boys Suffer Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties

A recently released study by the federal government's National Center for Health Statistics found that 18 percent of parents of boys talked to a health care provider or school staff about their son's emotional or behavioral difficulties (compared to 11 percent for girls) in the previous 12 month period.¹



The National Health Information Survey involved questions to the parents of over 17,000 children aged 4-17 years. According to the study's statistics, the difference between girls and boys is highly statistically significant.

Why is it that so many boys are having mental problems? Is it school, family, community, all three or much more? Are we putting boys in a cultural straight jacket that simply doesn't fit them? A few

issues ago SFB summarized the main findings of Leonard Sax's *Boys Adrift*.² This seems a good time to recall his list of the five causes he described for what is ailing many boys.

In *Boys Adrift*, Sax considers the growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and underachieving young men. Why are so many boys giving up on school, work, outside interests?

- **Teaching Methods**--Profound changes in the way children are educated have had the unintended consequence of turning many boys off school.
- **Video Games**—The "addiction" to games displaces interest in school, family, friends, and social life.
- **Medications for ADHD**—The diagnosis, much more likely for boys than girls, is hardly science-based and there is evidence that use of the medications decreases personal motivation.
- **Endocrine disruptors**—These are chemicals that get into our bodies from plastics, fertilizers and hormones injected into animals whose meat we eat. There is mounting evidence that they affect both the physical and psychological development of children, especially boys, negatively.
- **The loss of the masculine ideal** (the chapter is titled, "The Revenge of the Forsaken Gods")—Boys need to be led to manhood through male role models, not by devaluation and disintegration of the masculine ideal. [SFB](#)

1. Simpson, G.A., Cohen R.A., Pasto, P.N., Reuben, C.A. (2008). *Use of mental health services in the past 12 months by children aged 4-17 years: United States, 2005-2006*. NCHS data brief, no. 8. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db08.htm>.

2. Sax, L. (2007). *Boys adrift: The five factors driving the growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and underachieving young men*. New York: Basic Books.

Useful Websites for Learning More About Boys and Related Issues

Boys and Schools. www.boysandschools.com.

The Boys and Schools program is dedicated to improving the lives and futures of boys. Their outreach efforts focus on raising public awareness regarding issues related to boys' health and achievement. They offer tools and resources that can help make a change in boys' lives. The Boys and Schools program is a project of the Men's Health Network and is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of men and boys.

There are many useful features to this website including blogs on boys' issues and forums on news articles, school, health and medical issues, and parenting.

MenTeach. www.menteach.org.

MenTeach is a non-profit clearinghouse for both men and women seeking information and resources about men teaching. According to the website:

"If you are a man thinking about teaching or currently teaching, you've found a place to connect with others who share your vision for children and society. If you are a researcher, university or college student or faculty member, a legislator or from the media, you'll find information to answer your questions.

"MenTeach is about children's success. We want a diverse workforce, both men and women teachers, educating and caring for our children."

Interview with Peg Tyre, Author of *The Trouble With Boys*

This interview is reprinted by permission of Peg Tyre from the website, www.pegtyre.com.

Q. Who should read this book?

A. I wrote it for parents who are concerned about their sons' performance in school and for teachers who are wondering how to get boys engaged in learning. I'm hoping that policy makers read it as well.

Q. What is your book about?

A. We have a problem in this country—on the whole, boys are not thriving in school. They are getting kicked out of preschool at five times the rates of girls, getting left back more in kindergarten, they are reading less well and less often. They are being diagnosed with learning disorders more and given attention-enhancing drugs at four times the rates of girls. More than fifty-seven percent of our traditional-aged undergraduates are female. About two and half million more girls than boys now attend college.

Q. What's causing boys to underachieve?

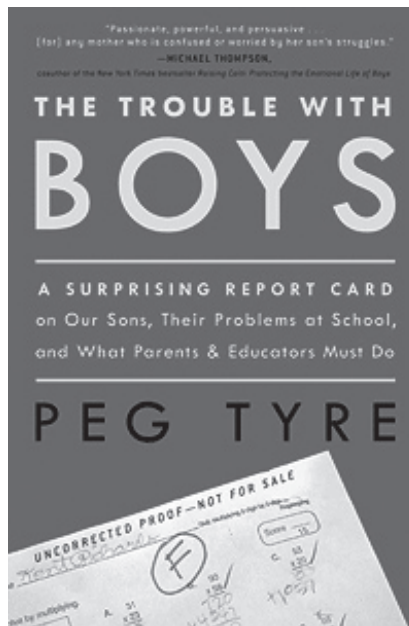
A. There have been changes in our schools—and in our society—that have made school less friendly to boys. Some of them are obvious—many schools have cut back recess—which is having a terrible effect on a lot of kids and many of them are boys. Some of them are subtle. It turns out, there are studies that show that the way teachers teach reading can disadvantage boys. There are also some big cultural shifts going on that are throwing the underachievement of boys into stark relief. It used to be that if a boy did poorly in school, he'd take a job in manufacturing or in construction, where he could earn a good enough salary to support himself and maybe a family. Those sectors are eroding quickly. A college degree has become a prerequisite to the middle class—and many boys just aren't making it.

Q. Is every boy underachieving?

A. Everywhere you look, there is a thin margin of top performing boys. But in every demographic, in every community, the bottom of the class is disproportionately male. My book describes that phenomenon, looks at where it comes from, and looks at what some schools are doing to address it.

Q. Is there anything we can do about it?

A. Definitely. The first thing we need to do is begin to talk about the problem. When it comes to taking action, we need to move carefully but we need to move. Poor boys and boys of color are really struggling right now. And they are going to need some dramatic help to get them back on track. When it comes to middle class boys, we can help them by changing some things about the classroom—allow for more physical movement, more recess, more hands-on activity, boy-friendly reading instruction. Boy-friendly books. Writing teachers who understand and celebrate the way boys write and think. We need



teachers and administrators that encourage boys to stay engaged in learning.

Q. Why should we care?

A. At all but the very highest income levels, our country is bifurcating into two groups: educated women and less educated men. That division will have massive implications for the way our children live their lives—their opportunities, their career choices, what they do, who they marry, how they raise their children, if they can afford to retire. As parents and educators, I think we need to decide—is this what we want?

Q. What made you tackle this subject?

A. A while back, I wrote a cover story for *Newsweek* about the underachievement of boys in school. My reporting showed how boys were demonstrably falling behind in the educational realm. When the story came out, it set off a deluge of responses. Feminist academics insisted it was girls not boys, who needed our attention. But parents, hundreds of them, wrote to thank me for addressing the central drama of their lives—the underachievement of their boys in school. Teachers contacted me and asked me to write more. I was intrigued.

of responses. Feminist academics insisted it was girls not boys, who needed our attention. But parents, hundreds of them, wrote to thank me for addressing the central drama of their lives—the underachievement of their boys in school. Teachers contacted me and asked me to write more. I was intrigued.

Q. If this is such a big problem, how come it hasn't been talked about more?

A. There are people in public life who talk about gender and school as if it's a see saw. If boys are up, then girls are down. If girls are up, then boys are down. But that's a false model. The lives of our children, boy and girls, are intertwined. There are a lot of concerned parents, educators and policy makers who, while they don't want to take away from the astonishing gains our young women are making, are starting to realize that we can no longer ignore what's happening to boys

Q. Would you tell us a little about your background?

A. I am a grateful recipient of the gains achieved by the feminist movement. I am also the mother of sons. I approached this subject as a veteran investigative reporter, not an ideologue. I went where the facts took me.

Q. What will it take for things to change?

A. Parents and teachers are starting to get it. And they're starting to reach out to find solutions to the problem. But we're not going to get anywhere until we have national leadership on this issue. We need politicians who will trust that the American people are sophisticated enough to have a nuanced discussion about gender and education. Who will politely ignore those radical elements that try to shut down the discussion by insisting that when we talk about gender and education we should focus solely on the struggles of girls. I think we're moving closer to that moment. I hope my book can help get us there.

The Ways That Boys Disengage from New Mexico Public Schools

Special education

Sixty-six percent of students in Special Education (excluding gifted students) in New Mexico public schools in 2005-06 were males (N=33,645).¹

School discipline

In 2000, for every 100 girls suspended from NM public elementary and secondary schools, 247 boys were suspended (total number: 21,935 students). For every 100 girls expelled from public elementary and secondary schools 416 boys were expelled (total number: 470).²

Gender of NM Public School Teachers

Eleven percent of elementary school teachers in 2005-06 were men (N=1,330). Thirty-one percent of middle school teachers (N=1,515) and forty-four percent of high school teachers (N=2,743) were men.³

Retained in Grade

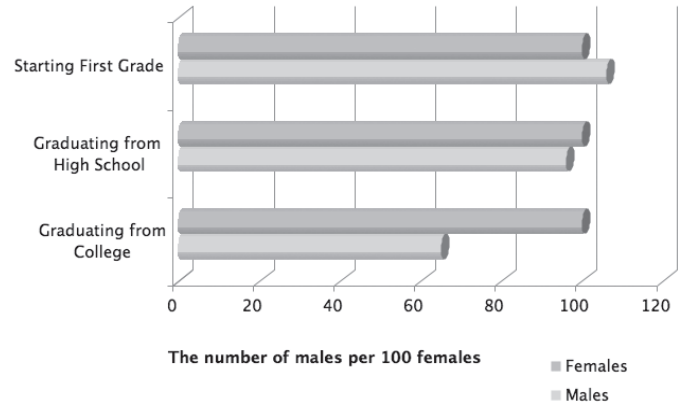
Sixty percent of students retained in all grades in 2005-06 were boys (N=4,296).³

Boys & Young Men Leave Education

As the table below shows, NM first grade enrollment still reflects the fact that more male children are born than females; there are 106 boys for every 100 girls. By high school graduation, there are 96 boys for every 100 girls. By college graduation in New Mexico, there are 65 men for 100 women.⁴

1. New Mexico Public Education Department, personal written communication from the Custodian of Records dated September 11, 2006.

Ratios of Males to Females at Various Stages of Public Education in New Mexico, 2006



2. http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d04/tables/dt04_144.asp (retrieved September 7, 2006).

3. New Mexico Public Education Department, personal written communication from the Custodian of Records dated September 11, 2006.

4. Data for first and twelfth grade public schools in New Mexico was provided for 2006 by the NM Public Education Department. Graduation rates from NM Public Institutions of higher education is for BA degrees awarded in the 2005-06 academic year as reported in New Mexico Higher Education Department, *The Condition of Higher Education in New Mexico, 2005-2006*. (Retrieved from <http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatemus/docs/649408-12-21-2006-13-46-59.pdf> on March 3, 2008).

Hearts & Hands: Creating Community in Troubled Times with the Needs of Young Males in Mind



Nationally acclaimed author, Luis Rodriguez, will kick off the NM Men's Conference on Boys and Young Men on November 18, 2008 at the Hilton Albuquerque. Rodriguez will draw from his experiences as a gang member and drug addict in his teens discussing the elements that helped transform him to become an artist/writer, community activist, intellectual contributor, and

indigenous spiritualist. He will talk about what he calls the five "empties" that most young men experience, and how, if left unaddressed, these can draw a young man into a life of violence, addictions, jail, and suicide. His presentation will examine issues of gangs, including why they exist, their power, the "whole community" approach to initiation, fatherhood and his own relationships with three sons and a daughter, the "five fingers of mentoring" and the need for a new imagination for the mentoring relationship, and much more.

Luis J. Rodriguez is an award-winning Chicano poet, writer and activist. In response to his young son joining a gang, Rodriguez told his story in the bestseller *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days*

in L.A. This memoir explores the motivation of gang life and cautions against the death and destruction that inevitably claim its participants. *Always Running* earned a Carl Sandburg Literary Award and was designated a *New York Times* Notable Book; it has also been named by the American Library Association as one of the nation's 100 most censored books.

Rodriguez has also helped start a number of prominent organizations—such as Chicago's Guild Complex, one of the largest literary arts organizations in the Midwest; Rock a Mole (rhymes with guacamole) Productions which produces music and art festivals, CDs and film; and Youth Struggling for Survival, a Chicago-based non-profit community group working with gang and non-gang youth. In addition, he is one of the founders of the small poetry publishing house, Tia Chucha Press, as well as Tia Chucha's Café & Centro Cultural—a bookstore, coffee shop, art gallery, performance space, and workshop center in Los Angeles. An accomplished poet, Luis Rodriguez is the author of several collections of poetry, his latest being *My Nature is Hunger: New and Selected Poems 1989-2004* (Curbstone Press). His poetry has won a Poetry Center Book Award and a PEN/Josephine Miles Literary Award among others. Luis Rodriguez is also the author of *Hearts and Hands: Creating Community in Violent Times*.



NM Men's Conference on Boys & Young Men **Tuesday, November 18, 2008** **Hilton Albuquerque**

The New Mexico Men's Conference on Boys & Young Men is organized by men and **OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS** of the community with an interest in the welfare

of young males in New Mexico. Please join us for this one-day conference to raise the level of awareness in the state about the status of boys and the unique needs boys have in education, health, family and community.

Who should attend?

Health specialists, educators, those involved with juvenile justice and social welfare issues, **AND** anyone concerned about the future of young males in our state.

The conference will feature:

Luis J. Rodriguez | Keynote Speaker

Award-winning chicano writer and author of the international best-seller *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.*

Sessions will focus on statewide issues relating to:

- fatherhood and male involvement with boys
- boys' education
- initiation into adulthood
- the complex health issues facing boys
- crime and juvenile justice concerns
- steps to further public awareness about boys
- the challenges facing gay, bi, curious and transgender boys in New Mexico
- the impact of family violence on boys and young men

Conference registration:

\$25 per individual

Scholarships will be available.

To register visit the website:

www.nmboys.org

Miss an issue? Go to www.santafeboys.org