



POLICY: Graduation Rate Policy

Approved by Governing Council: August 14, 2024

Introduction

Siembra Leadership High School (Siembra) is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive educational environment that recognizes the unique experiences and challenges faced by our student population. As a Supplemental Accountability Model (SAM) school, Siembra serves students who are at risk of educational failure and prioritizes their needs through a resilience-based and trauma-informed approach. This policy outlines our graduation rate calculation and the rationale behind it, emphasizing our dedication to holistic student success.

Core Values

Siembra's practices are grounded in four core values that promote the growth and success of all students:

1. **Opportunity:** Rolling admissions provide young people with access to high-quality education throughout the school year.
2. **Creativity and Imagination:** Project-based learning encourages students to bring their ideas and experiences to drive their academic success.
3. **Ability to Fail:** Access to mental health professionals and a Success Coach ensures each student has a caring adult advocate.
4. **Making a Difference:** Collaboration with community members helps students expand their networks and make meaningful contributions to their community.

Eligibility for Supplemental Accountability Measure Status (SAM)

To qualify as a SAM school, Siembra must meet the following criteria:

1. Serve a student population where 10% or more of the students are 19 years of age or older, or where 20% or more of the non-gifted students qualify for special educational services.
2. Have the primary mission to address the needs of students at risk of educational failure, indicated by poor grades, truancy, disruptive behavior, eligibility for special education services, or other factors associated with temporary or permanent withdrawal from school.

Graduation Rate Calculation

Siembra's graduation rate calculation is designed to reflect the diverse and non-traditional experiences of our students. Instead of using common calculations such as the "adjusted cohort graduation rate" or the "averaged freshman graduation rate," Siembra calculates graduation rates based on a student's entry into our program. This method honors the lived experiences of our students and promotes their engagement in their academic success.





Calculation Method

- **Cohort Assignment:** Graduation cohort assignments are made at the time the student enters Siembra, based on the student's grade at entry.
- **Tracking Progress:** Siembra tracks each student's academic journey from their entrance into the program, including the number of credits acquired at that time and the number of years spent in the program.
- **Career and College Readiness:** Success is demonstrated by meeting benchmark scores on career readiness assessments approved by the PED.

Data Collection

To capture a comprehensive picture of each student's academic journey, Siembra collects the following data for each graduating class:

- Year of entrance into high school
- Year of entrance into Siembra
- Number of credits upon entrance into Siembra
- Time spent at Siembra
- Number of years reclassified
- Total number of credits acquired

Rationale

We respectfully disagree with the traditional four-year graduation rate calculations, which align with legislative goals but can negatively impact students' mental health. Imposing such a one-size-fits-all graduation rate on Siembra's students would detract from our mission and vision to support typically underserved students. Siembra firmly believes that graduating after re-entering high school is a celebration of student achievement. In New Mexico, which has historically faced educational challenges, Siembra adopts a learner-centered approach that values both qualitative and quantitative measures of success. By tracking detailed graduation data, Siembra provides a true and accurate picture of the academic achievements and resilience of our students.

Conclusion

Siembra Leadership High School's graduation rate policy reflects our commitment to honoring the unique journeys of our students. By adopting a resilience-based and trauma-informed approach, we ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed and thrive. Our comprehensive data collection and accountability model celebrate the achievements of our students, providing a holistic view of their academic and personal growth. This policy will serve as an example in the state of New Mexico on how to properly honor young people and will be





highlighted when presenting and disseminating information nationally and publicly about Siembra's innovative educational practices.

