

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

---

### Smaller Schools Essential to Student Success

THE JOURNAL'S "Commit to Excel" article on July 31 highlighted the top-performing public schools under the state's new A-F grading system. One point that should be emphasized is the trait that all top 10 schools have in common: They are all smaller schools. No school on the list has more than 450 students, according to PED data.

These results reinforce decades of national research indicating that smaller schools on average have higher graduation rates, higher student achievement, lower levels of student alienation and violence and higher levels of satisfaction

among students, parents, principals and teachers.

It is important to remember that one of the reasons for creating New Mexico's school grading system was to identify the most successful public schools in New Mexico and replicate those features that make them successful.

That discussion should include school size.

Next year, Think New Mexico will bring back legislation to incentivize the construction of smaller schools. Smaller-schools legislation has previously passed the Senate 28-11 and been sponsored by Senate Education Chairwoman Cynthia Nava

(D-Las Cruces), Sen. Sue Wilson Beffort (R-Albuquerque) and Senate Finance Chairman John Arthur Smith (D-Deming). It is supported by a broad coalition of educators and civic groups that span the political spectrum.

Please contact your legislators and Gov. Susana Martinez and urge them to support legislation giving more of New Mexico's students the opportunity to attend smaller, more successful schools. For more information please visit [www.thinknewmexico.org](http://www.thinknewmexico.org)

FRED NATHAN  
Executive Director, Think  
New Mexico