



Title: **Texico receives high praise from think tank**
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Texico receives high praise from think tank

□ Report speaks highly of districts which maximize spending in classroom.

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CLOVIS — A recent report by the nonpartisan think tank Think New Mexico speaks highly of a number of local school districts and their ability to maximize spending in the classroom.

The theory behind Think New Mexico's Oct. 8 report "Improving Our Schools by Reallocating Dollars from Administration to the Classroom" is districts that spend money more efficiently by focusing inside the classroom rather than on administration costs produce higher graduation rates and test scores.

The report pointed to Texico as being a model for the rest of the state because of

the district's rank as the 18th most efficient district despite ranking 48th in enrollment.

Think New Mexico Director Fred Nathan said what's notable about Texico is that despite its low enrollment, the district outperformed larger districts, which can take advantage of economies of size.

Nathan also singled out other local school districts that have been making efficient use of spending inside the classroom.

"You've got a lot of districts in and around Texico that did very well — Dora, Elida, Tatum, it really speaks well

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for eastern New Mexico,” Nathan said.

The larger local school districts also ranked among the top 20 most efficient spending districts in the state, according to Think New Mexico.

Clovis ranks seventh with 76 percent of the budget going to instruction while Portales ranks 17th with 74 percent.

Portales Municipals Schools Superintendent Johnnie Cain said ensuring money goes into the classroom was already a priority for the district prior to seeing the report.

Cain said Portales tries to keep down administrative costs by employing only a superintendent and assistant superintendent, whereas other districts would have more assistants driving up costs.

Cain said the district’s own budget calculations show about 81 percent of the budget goes toward instruction.

“I think we’re falling within what they’re reporting and doing a better job than what they recommend,” Cain said.

In Clovis, Superintendent Jody Balch said there is a focus on keeping spending in the classroom, but he did not

think the district should necessarily try to emulate Texico.

“We pride ourselves on being as lean as we can be and we have leaned in the past years,” Balch said. “What somebody else does and works for them with a couple hundred students certainly doesn’t work for a place that has thousands of students, typically.”

Balch said one way Clovis tries to keep costs down and focus on classroom spending is by examining every position opening that comes up and deciding if it needs to be filled.

“So every time we have a position we look at it, scrutinize, do we need to fill the position or not, and in the last couple years, lots of times we have not filled a position or we’ve re-established what that position is and added more duties possibly to it. Nothing really is ever an automatic rehire when somebody leaves,” Balch said.

Balch said 90 percent of the district’s budget goes toward employees’ salary and benefits, leaving 10 percent to run and operate the schools.

Balch said Clovis has also replaced all of its fluorescent lighting with LED bulbs, which has led to a savings in utilities costs.