

# Roll Camera... Action!

## *Film Prize Junior New Mexico 2023-2024 Research Highlights*

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its launch in 2021, Film Prize Junior New Mexico (FPJR NM) has aimed to engage middle and high school students in meaningful, hands-on learning through filmmaking. Students develop a concept, write a script, produce and edit a short film, and enter it in a statewide competition for screening and awards at the annual Film Prize Junior New Mexico Film Festival. FPJR NM reflects the growing importance of New Mexico's film industry, and seeks to increase access to film education for underserved students, potentially leading to a career pathway they may not have otherwise considered. The experience prepares students for future career opportunities in the film industry, while also nurturing skills like teamwork and communication that are transferable to future education as well as all careers.

In fall 2023, FPJR NM contracted with MC<sup>2</sup> Education, LLC (MC<sup>2</sup> Education) to conduct an evaluation of the program's implementation and its impact. MC<sup>2</sup> Education values authenticity, integrity, and partnership. We honor and uplift participant voice in our surveys, interviews, focus groups, and research findings. We are transparent in our data collection and findings in our private reports and published works. We build collaborative partnerships based on mutual respect for expertise with organizations that share our mission to make education more equitable for all. Our firm has a deep understanding of the New Mexican cultural and educational landscape given that MC<sup>2</sup> Education was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which is our company's home base and location of our headquarters.

This brief presents the goals, approach, and findings of MC<sup>2</sup> Education's evaluation of FPJR NM in the 2023-2024 school year.

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## FILM PRIZE JUNIOR NEW MEXICO

Film Prize Junior was first launched in Louisiana in the 2016-2017 school year by the Prize Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization. After the success of its flagship program in Louisiana, FPJR came to New Mexico in 2021.<sup>1</sup> New Mexico seemed a natural home for the program because of the state’s active film industry, which has attracted filmmakers since the 19th century. In 2002, tax incentives for film production were introduced in the state, making it a hot spot for filmmakers ever since.<sup>2</sup>

Modeled after the program in Louisiana, FPJR NM recruits teachers to engage their students in the full film-production process from conceptualization through screening. **Teacher producer** is the term FPJR NM uses for the adult who sponsors the program at their location. In most cases, the teacher producer is a classroom teacher who implements the program as part of a class. In other cases, the teacher producer sponsors the program as an extracurricular activity, and in these cases, teacher producers may include other school staff, community-based organization employees, and parents. FPJR NM provides the teacher producers with guidance and resources as they implement an experiential, project-based learning approach, giving hundreds of middle and high school students across the state the opportunity to create short films and compete in an annual film festival.

**Student filmmaker** is the term FPJR NM uses for students in its program. Through FPJR NM, student filmmakers participate in each stage of production:

- *Pre-production*, which includes script-writing, location-scouting, production planning;
- *Production*, which includes the shooting of their film; and
- *Post-production*, which includes editing and finalizing the film.

With the help of their teacher producers, student filmmakers can then enter their short films in the annual Film Prize Junior New Mexico Film Festival held in Albuquerque in April. The contest has an online component as well, providing visibility to all submitted films by posting them on the FPJR NM website and inviting viewers to vote for a middle school film and high school film to receive the “Audience Choice” award. Those attending the festival in person get to watch film screenings, listen to panels of guest speakers, network with film professionals and other FPJR NM participants, and attend an awards ceremony in hopes that their film receives an award.

In the end, the program isn’t only about the film - it’s about the soft skills gained along the way that set students up for future success in multiple domains.

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<sup>1</sup> Film Prize Junior New Mexico, 2022

<sup>2</sup> New Mexico Museum of Art, n.d.

## Logic Model

The theory of change logic model (Exhibit 1 below) provides a visual depiction of the FPJR NM program. MC<sup>2</sup> Education developed the logic model based on our review of documents and discussions with a project team that included FPJR leadership in Louisiana and New Mexico.

A theory of change logic model can be thought of as an if-then statement: If the program's Core Activities (middle column) are implemented well, then positive Outcomes (right column) will happen. The Inputs and Facilitators (left column) name factors that are believed to affect program success.

The right column shows that the intended shorter term **effects on students** were to develop students' soft skills, film production skills, interest in storytelling, positive connection with their education, and positive sense of self. In the longer-term, the model aimed to be a contributing factor in students' college-going and career success. Additionally, the model includes intended **effects on teachers and the New Mexico film landscape**. Specifically, the model aimed to increase teachers' perception of a supportive community, and increase connections between schools and communities.

**"The students were craving creative things to do. They don't need more worksheets, they don't need more busy work...They need project-based things, these creative learners need something that's creative where there is no exact right answer. That's why this worked really well for them."**

**- Teacher Producer**

Exhibit 1: Film Prize Junior New Mexico Logic Model



Inputs & Facilitators

Core Activities

Short & Long-term Outcomes

## EVALUATION GOALS AND DESIGN

The MC<sup>2</sup> Education evaluation set out to understand how FPJR NM was implemented in 2023-2024 across locations and contexts, the effect of FPJR NM on students, teachers, and the larger landscape, and factors that supported or hindered program effectiveness.

### Data Collection Tools

To address the research questions, MC<sup>2</sup> Education employed a mixed-methods evaluation design. We used the logic model to underpin the design: namely, it drove the creation of surveys and focus group protocols focused on evaluating program implementation and impact. We invited teacher producers to participate in a survey and a focus group. A sample of student filmmakers from a randomly selected group of schools participated in a survey and/or focus group as organized by their teacher producers. Exhibit 2 outlines the quantitative and qualitative data sources used in the evaluation.

**Exhibit 2: Data Sources**

Data Source	Description	Respondents
<b>Student Survey</b>	This survey was designed by MC <sup>2</sup> Education in collaboration with the FPJR leadership team and administered to student filmmakers and non-FPJR NM (comparison) students by teachers in a sample of middle and high schools. The survey was approximately 10-12 minutes in length and offered in English and Spanish. Topics included: student background, experience with the FPJR NM, completion of films, effect of the program including what they learned and their feedback on the program.	<b>260 students who participated</b> in FPJR NM programming  <b>167 students who did not participate</b> in FPJR NM programming
<b>Teacher Producer Survey</b>	This survey was designed by MC <sup>2</sup> Education in collaboration with the FPJR leadership team and distributed to teachers in a sample of middle and high schools. The survey was approximately 14-19 minutes in length and offered in English and Spanish. Topics included: information about their school, teaching background, student participation in the program, completion of films, effect of the program on themselves and their students and their feedback on the program.	<b>45 teacher producers</b> who had implemented FPJR NM programming with students



Data Source	Description	Respondents
<b>Focus Groups</b>	<p>MC<sup>2</sup> Education facilitated hour-long focus group discussions using semi-structured protocols. Each group was a role-alike group, meaning students were in a focus group with other students, teacher producers with other teacher producers, etc. All focus groups were held virtually using the Zoom platform.</p> <p>At the beginning of the focus group, the facilitator provided information about the study and how focus group data would be used in the evaluation, including a commitment to participant anonymity. The facilitator invited participants to give verbal consent to a note-taker documenting the conversation with the help of an AI-powered transcriber before proceeding.</p>	<p><b>6 students</b> from one school who participated in FPJR NM programming</p> <p><b>15 teacher producers</b> who had implemented FPJR NM programming with students; 12 in school settings, 3 in non-school settings</p>

## Sampling Approach and Response Rates

For this evaluation, we worked with FPJR NM to compile a list of 87 schools implementing FPJR NM as of February 2024 so that we could identify a sample for data collection.

We conducted outreach to request district and/or principal approval for the evaluation, resulting in a reduced list of 65 schools. The teacher producers in these schools played a key role in supporting data collection. We sent the teacher producer survey to all of them and invited all to participate in one of five scheduled teacher focus groups. For a smaller, randomly selected sample, we asked that they (1) administer the student survey to student filmmakers, (2) administer the student survey to non-FPJR NM students, and/or (3) arrange for their student filmmakers to participate in a focus group.

Overall, 63% of the 65 sampled schools participated in surveys and/or focus groups. Teachers from 54% of all sampled schools responded to the teacher producer survey, and students from 54% of the 37 student-study sampled schools responded to the student survey. Student survey respondents included 260 (61%) student filmmakers and 167 (39%) non-FPJR NM students for comparison. Additionally, 26% of the invited teacher producers participated in focus groups, and one teacher arranged a focus group with six of their students. Finally, 45% of the teachers who received the teacher survey completed it.



## Survey Respondent Characteristics

In this report, we include findings from 260 student filmmakers and 45 teacher producers who completed surveys about their experience participating in FPJR NM.

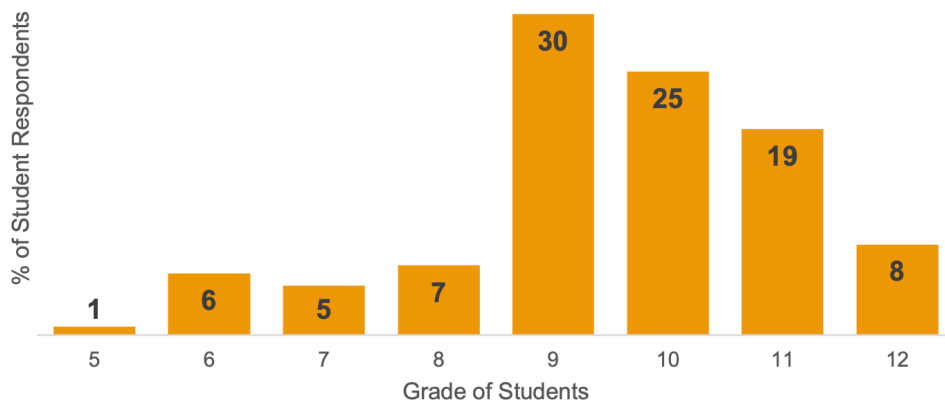
**Exhibit 3: Demographics and Characteristics of Student Filmmaker Respondents**

Demographic / Background Characteristic		% of Student Filmmakers
<b>Program Completion (n=260)</b>	Dropped out	6
	Completed program	94
<b>Self-Reported Parent Education (n=245)</b>	Attended college	57
	Did not attend college	20
	I don't know	14
<b>Gender (n=243)</b>	Female	45
	Male	42
	Nonbinary	2
	Other gender identity	1
<b>Race / Ethnicity [Select all that apply] (n=214)</b>	Native American/Indigenous	64
	Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Chicano, or Mexican	34
	White	17
	Black or African American	3
	Asian	1
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1
	Middle Eastern or North African	1
I don't know	3	
<b>Self-Reported Absences in Prior School Year (n=148)</b>	5 days or fewer	28
	6-10 days	20
	11-14 days	18
	15 or more days	34

The vast majority of student filmmakers completed the program [see Exhibit 3]. More than half of the students reported having a parent who attended college, and we heard from roughly equal proportions of male and female students. More than half of the student respondents are Native American or Indigenous; of these, 73% were Navajo Nation affiliated. Most student respondents were in 9th-12th grades, although 19% were from 5th-8th grades [see Exhibit 4].

Of the 45 teacher producers surveyed, more than half had 11 or more years of teaching experience [see Exhibit 5]. Half were in their first year of participation in FPJR NM, with another 39% in their second year. Almost a third of teacher producers had 0 years of experience in filmmaking, and 40% had 1-5 years of experience. Teacher producers were almost evenly split by gender (51% female, 42% male). Sixty-two percent of teachers selected White as part or all of their race/ethnicity, and 29% selected Hispanic/Latinx/Chicano. Only 2% selected Native/Indigenous.

**Exhibit 4: Grades of Student Survey Respondents (n=260)**



**Exhibit 5: Experience of Teacher Producers**

Experience Characteristic		% of Teacher Producers	Experience Characteristic		% of Teacher Producers
<b>Years Teaching (n=45)</b>	1-5	24	<b>Years Participating in Film Prize Junior (n=41)</b>	1	51
	6-10	11		2	39
	11	56		3	10
	Not a teacher	9			
<b>Years at Current School/Organization (n=45)</b>	0	7	<b>Years of Film or Filmmaking Experience (n=45)</b>	0	29
	1-5	49		1-5	40
	6-10	22		6-10	11
	11	22		11	20

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### *Quantitative Data Analysis*

We analyzed quantitative data from the student survey and a teacher producer survey, focusing on descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations. We also ran cross-tabulations (cross-tabs) to explore relationships between key variables of interest, such as characteristics of program implementation and participants' perceptions of program effectiveness. For example, cross-tabs allowed us to examine whether students' perceived skill development was higher or lower when a teacher producer had a background in film.

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

We employed inductive thematic analysis to examine focus groups and responses to open-ended survey items. This means we used an intentional process to allow themes in our data to 'rise to the surface' independently without imposing a formal analytic system for identifying themes. Two evaluation team members were present for each focus group, a facilitator and a notetaker. After each one, they co-developed a summary describing common themes and outlying perspectives that emerged during the discussion, made note of quotes<sup>3</sup> as evidence of those themes, and produced an internal memo that organized their summary by research question. In addition, our evaluation team categorized open-ended item responses by common themes and prepared an internal memo summarizing what respondents said on each theme and at what frequency.

### *Interpretation*

Analyzed data by itself has no meaning until humans interpret it. To make sense of our data analysis, a team of four experienced evaluators worked independently and then collaboratively to triangulate emergent findings across data sources and research questions. Each of the four team members did a careful review of quantitative data and qualitative internal memos relevant to one of the research questions. They integrated findings emerging from the surveys with findings emerging from focus groups. We then collaborated during a half-day interpretation workshop to share our emergent findings, discuss different perspectives on the meaning and salience of the findings, and identify additional analysis needs. What resulted are the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

**"I think a lot of our young people are burned out on learning, especially after COVID and being stuck to a screen. And I think that Film Prize is just amazing because it gives them a chance to think outside of the box."**

**- Teacher Producer**

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<sup>3</sup> Quotes included in this report are based on notes and not necessarily verbatim.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION

At first blush, telling the story of program participation seems straightforward: How many student filmmakers and teacher producers participated? How many schools and organizations did they represent? We found, however, that there was variation in understanding of what it meant to participate in the program. For example, some thought of the program as a full-service experience that guided teacher producers and student filmmakers through project-based learning and instruction over several months, culminating in the April film festival. Others, including several focus group participants who taught a media, film, or related class, seemed to understand FPJR NM principally as a film contest students could enter.

This variation reflects flexibility inherent in the program’s model, making it possible for teacher producers to decide how much to use the materials and other resources FPJR NM made available throughout the school year. It also complicates the story of program participation. Who “counts” as a program participant? Is it any student whose teacher had contact with FPJR NM staff during the school year, even if that contact was minimal? Is it only students who ultimately submitted films to the festival? Given the variation in how participation was defined, coupled with inconsistencies in the participation lists provided by FPJR NM staff, we decided to look at participation at a *school level* instead of a student filmmaker or teacher producer level.

**Exhibit 6: Program Participation and Retention**

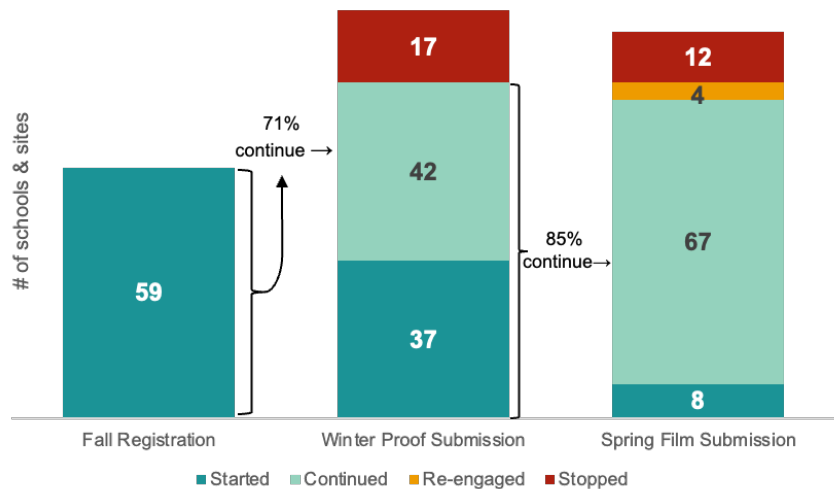


Exhibit 6 summarizes our analysis of program participation. We designed the analysis to include three points at which teacher producers submitted information to FPJR NM:

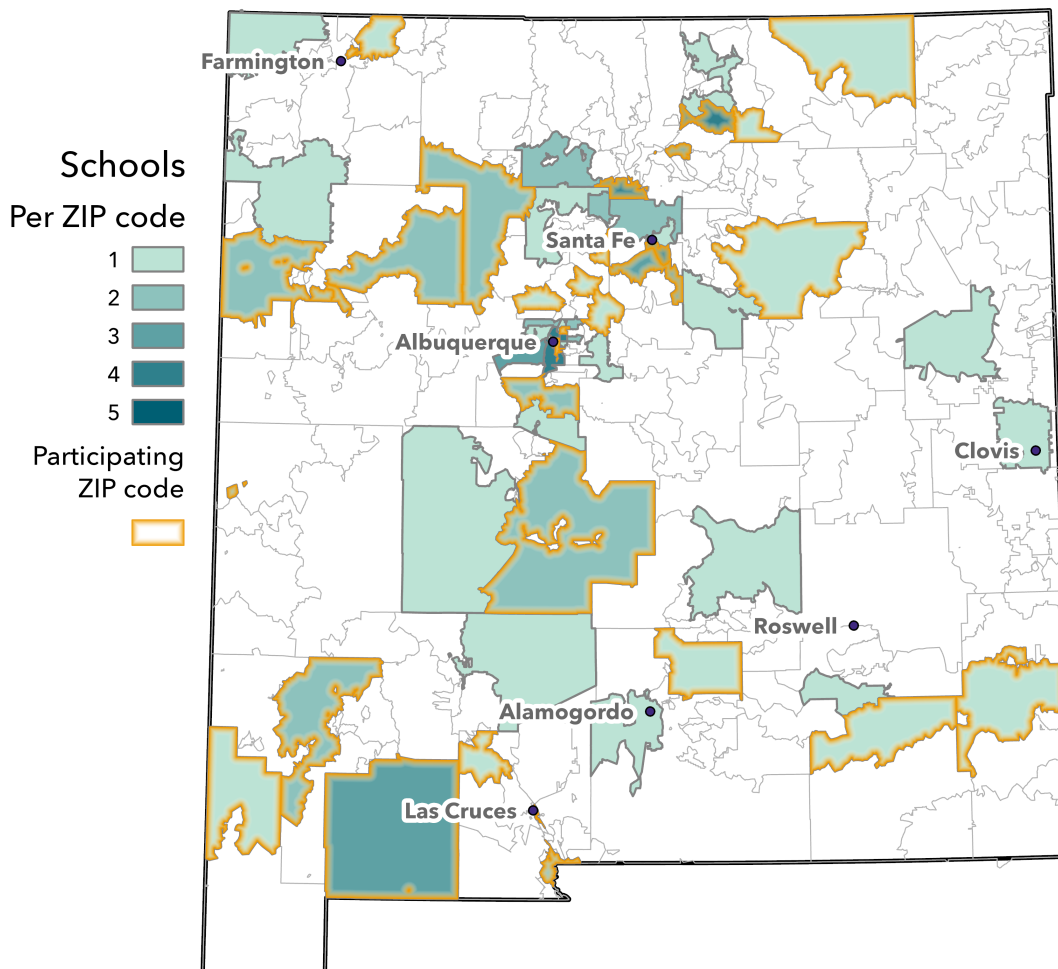
- **Fall Registration:** In the fall of 2023, FPJR NM received registrations from teacher producers interested in having their students produce films for submission to the festival the following spring. These initial registrants were from 59 schools and sites.
- **Winter Proof Submission:** FPJR NM received film proofs from 79 schools and sites, including 42 (71%) of the registered schools plus 37 more that had not previously registered.
- **Spring Film Submission:** As the festival approached, 79 schools and sites submitted films for consideration. This group included 67 (85%) of those who had submitted film proofs, four

schools that had registered but not submitted proofs, and eight that were new, having neither registered nor submitted film proofs.

In summary, 108 schools and sites engaged with at least one of the three submission points over the course of the 2023-2024 school year. Data suggest that at each point, some schools dropped out and other schools jumped on board, resulting in a shifting participant list over time.

Exhibit 7 shows the geographic distribution of the 108 schools that participated in FPJR NM in 2023-2024. In addition, zip codes from which schools participated in the MC² evaluation are indicated with a yellow outline, demonstrating the breadth of our evaluation across the varied contexts of FPJR NM.

**Exhibit 7: Map of All FPJR NM Schools and All Respondent Schools**

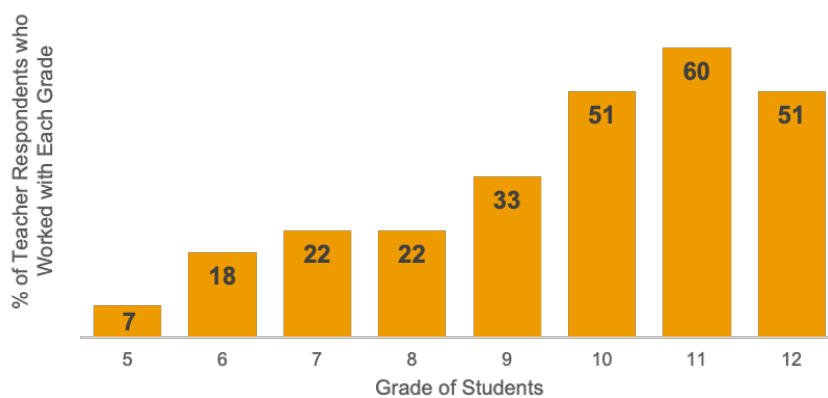


## KEY FINDINGS

**#1: Program implementation varied from school to school and classroom to classroom. The differences were largely driven by the teacher producer’s decisions about how they “used” FPJR NM in their context.**

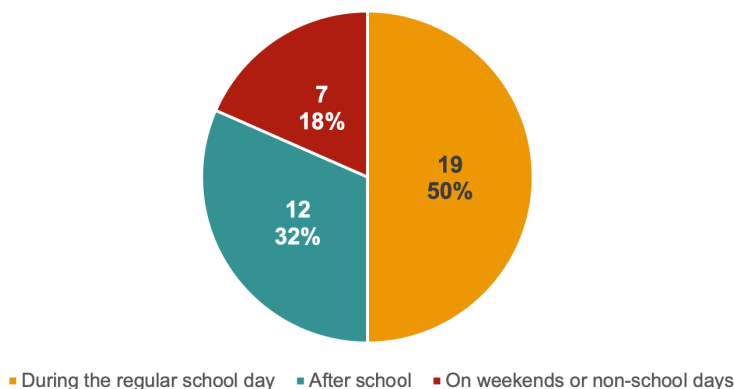
Implementation varied in meeting time, class type, and teacher producer experience among other factors. In most cases, student filmmakers did not appear to have a very clear understanding of the components of the program, and many could not identify themselves as FPJR NM participants. This presented challenges for our evaluation and might matter to FPJR if ensuring students know they are part of this program is organizationally important.

**Exhibit 8: Grades Teachers (n=45) Work with in Film Prize Junior**



When teacher producers (n=45) selected the grades they worked with for FPJR NM, more than half reported they worked with 10th-12th graders, with many fewer working with 5th-9th grade students [see Exhibit 8]. Note that percentages add to more than 100 due to the select all that apply question type.

**Exhibit 9: Film Prize Junior Meetings & Work Time (n=45)**



Half of teacher producers (n=38) said that their meetings and work time for FPJR NM generally took place during the regular school day [see Exhibit 9], and all of those teachers reported that work happened during a class rather than at lunch. However, qualitative data suggest that many teachers needed to arrange extra meetings with their students outside of school or on the weekends in order to complete their films. Multiple teachers reported receiving school

permission to pull their students out of school for a full day in order to get filming done.

Of the teachers who reported working on FPJR NM during the regular school day, 62% used a film-specific class for FPJR NM work, 31% used a career technical education (CTE) class, and 8% used a non-film visual arts class.

Focus group data show that teacher producers incorporated FPJR NM in other settings too, including after-school film clubs, gifted programs, English language arts classes, dual credit courses, and home school settings. Some teacher producers collaborated with other teachers and students in their schools (often drama classes or clubs) to find actors or crew members for their films.

Teacher producers had a variety of subject expertise. Most were classroom teachers, but some were librarians, parents, school leaders, part-time teachers, or teachers for non-traditional classes like Leadership, Digital Media, Social-Emotional Learning, or Social Justice. Many of the teacher producers who attended focus groups have film or media experience and cited it as being very helpful during FPJR NM.

**“I can’t imagine being someone who doesn’t have a media background doing this - it’s a lot. If someone wasn’t a teacher with a media background, I would encourage them to learn and understand the processes of filmmaking more or ask for a volunteer to help them.”**

**- Teacher Producer**

One said, for example, “Having the background in the film industry has helped me hone in my skills and help students develop their own. Having that background has been very valuable.” Others have more general visual arts experience and said FPJR NM helped them develop as film teachers, like one teacher producer who said, “My background is primarily in photography and digital arts. I have dabbled in film making, but nothing on a professional level. This absolutely made a difference for me.”

Overall, the variation in how the FPJR NM program was adopted, implemented, and integrated into schools may be partly by design. FPJR NM as an organization offers flexibility to districts, schools, and teacher producers in how they use the program. However, focus group and qualitative survey data indicate that some of the variation may also be due to a rapid rollout following the receipt of an Out of School Time (OST) grant from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED) to support implementation in a subgroup of schools across the state.



## #2: Survey and focus group data provide evidence that FPJR NM is making a difference for student filmmakers and teacher producers.

Some teacher producers also shared perceptions that the program is influencing the New Mexico film landscape.

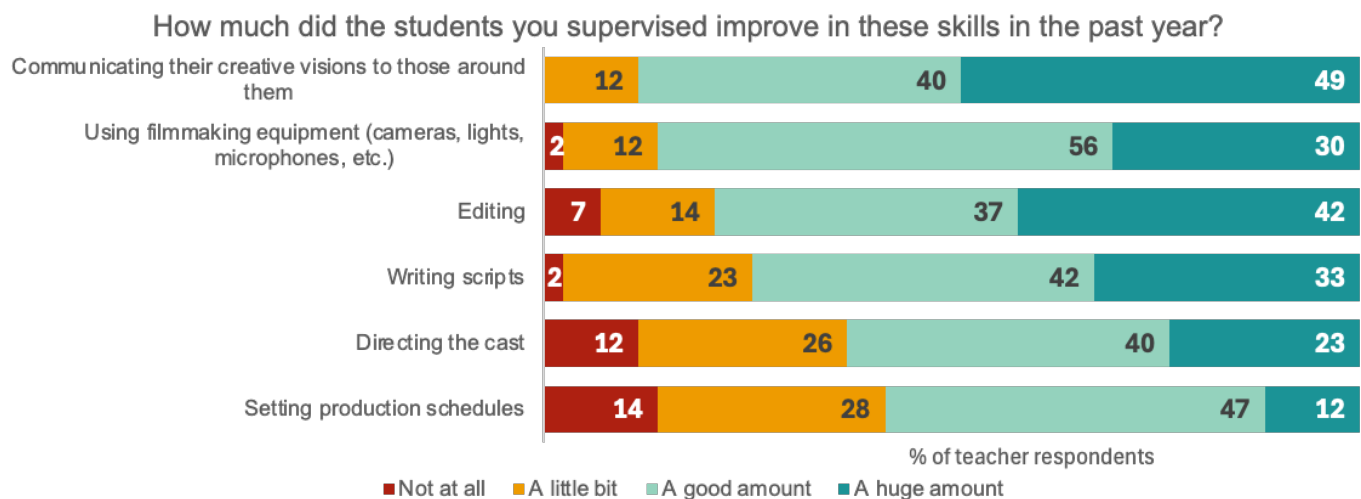
The surveys asked teacher producers and student filmmakers for their opinions on whether participating in FPJR NM helped students grow the knowledge, skills, and mindsets that are described as outcomes in the logic model [see Exhibit 1]. The majority of teachers agreed that students improved in nearly all of the articulated outcomes, while students' self-report was more mixed. In addition, data suggest FPJR NM had other positive effects on students that are *not* included in the current logic model. Key findings are detailed here.

*Teacher producers and student filmmakers reported student improvement in both industry skills and "soft" skills.* Teacher survey results are summarized in Exhibits 10 and 11, which show that the majority of teacher producers think FPJR NM helped student filmmakers improve a good or huge amount in industry skills like using filmmaking equipment and in foundational "soft" skills that are valued by employers across industries, like listening to others' points of view and using creativity to come up with something new. Student filmmaker survey responses echoed the teachers', although students tended to self-report a good or huge amount of improvement less often than their teacher producers [see Exhibit 12].

"Before I did the film I was kind of bad at listening to other people's ideas and it helped me see, 'Oh yeah, that's a good idea, maybe we can do that.'"

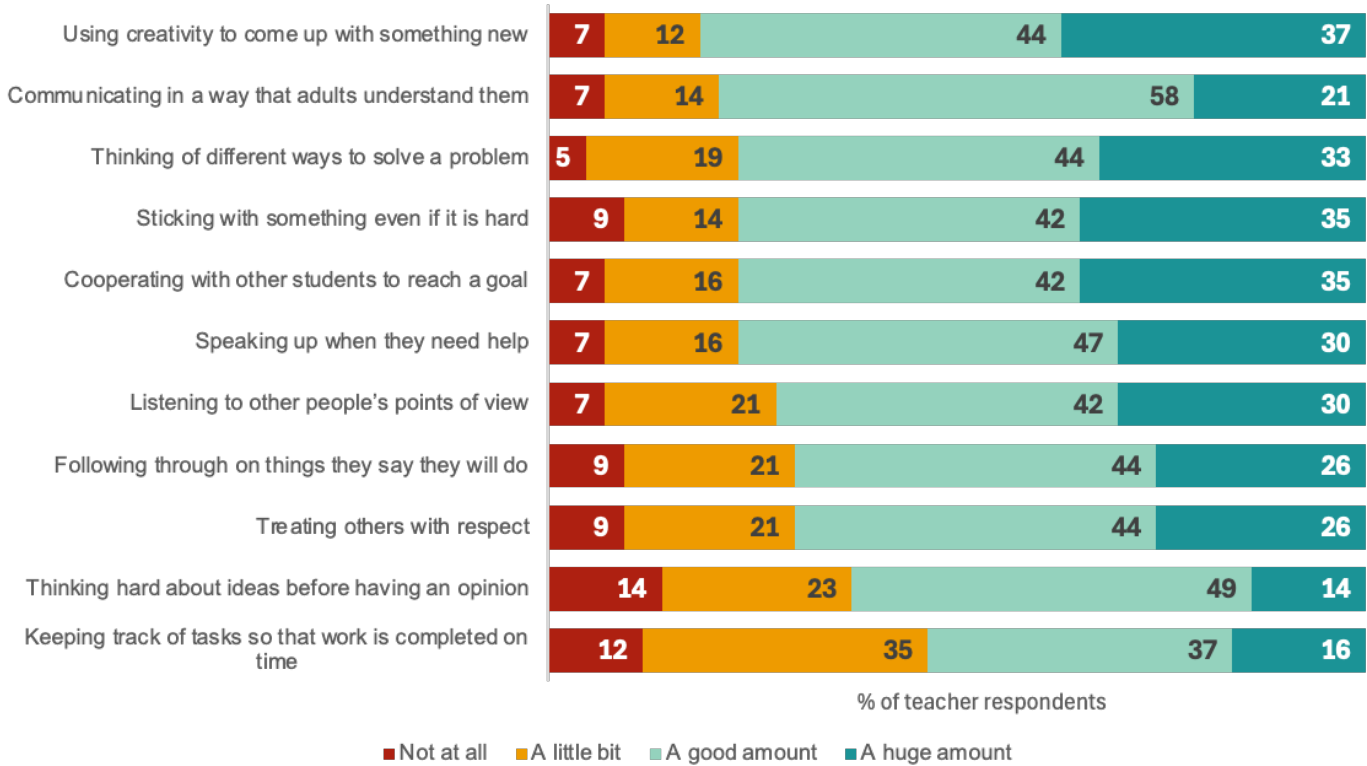
- Student Filmmaker

**Exhibit 10: Teacher Perceptions on Student Growth in Film Skills (n=43)**



**Exhibit 11: Teacher Perceptions on Student Growth in Soft Skills (n=43)**

How much did the students you supervised improve in these skills in the past year?



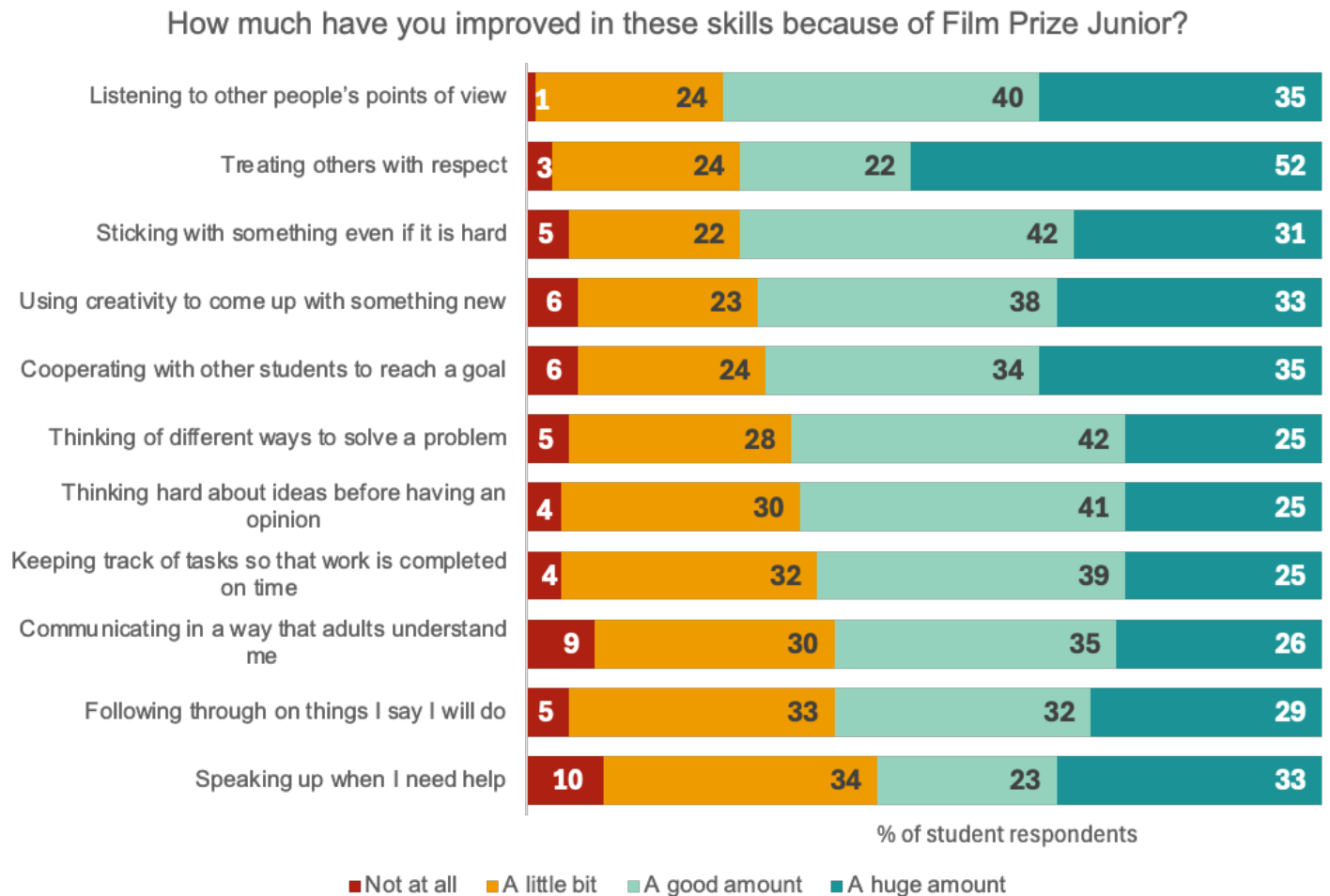
**"I think it was positively amazing. It was very fun and I hope we're going to do it next year."**  
**- Student Filmmaker**

These findings were supported by comments made during focus groups. For example, one teacher producer described students "learning to communicate, take suggestions, work with others, and plan out time.... I could see the frustration on some of their faces, and they were learning to work through it. Also having them learn to thank and recognize the ones who were helping them out... learning to be patient with others."

*Teacher producers reported that participating in FPJR NM increased students' interest in storytelling and filmmaking, but not everyone agreed that affecting career choices should be a goal of the program.* On the survey, a majority of teacher producers agreed or strongly agreed that after participating in FPJR NM, their student filmmakers had more interest in "filmmaking as a hobby" (93%), "filmmaking as a career" (72%), and "storytelling" (84%). In focus groups, several teacher producers who taught film and media classes appeared energized by the idea that filmmaking could be embedded in high schools through a Career and Technical Education pathway and that FPJR NM could be recognized as a Career Technical Student Organization. Some teacher producers explicitly named their intention of giving

**"It encourages the kids to think bigger than whatever small circle they currently live in."**  
**- Teacher Producer**

**Exhibit 12: Students’ Self-Report on their Growth in Soft Skills (n=93)**



students exposure to the industry, including hearing from film professionals who could describe different career opportunities. For example, one described the impact on students this way: “At the beginning, one was interested in a career in film. Now there are students who are interested in becoming content creators, video game designers, editors, animators, writers.”

In focus groups and open-ended survey items, teacher producers also described FPJR NM as a transformational experience for some students. One said, “Working with youth and filmmaking is like a blooming flower, a blooming garden, and a blooming jungle. Each discovery is profound for them.” Multiple focus group participants described their students feeling a sense of pride and gaining confidence. A few pointed out this filled an important need because of challenges students have faced, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. “So many of them lost entire families during COVID,” said one teacher producer. “If they’re not into sports or a little more unique, this is a way to express themselves.” Another said, “It boosts their confidence, and after what we’ve been through the past few years, they need this.”

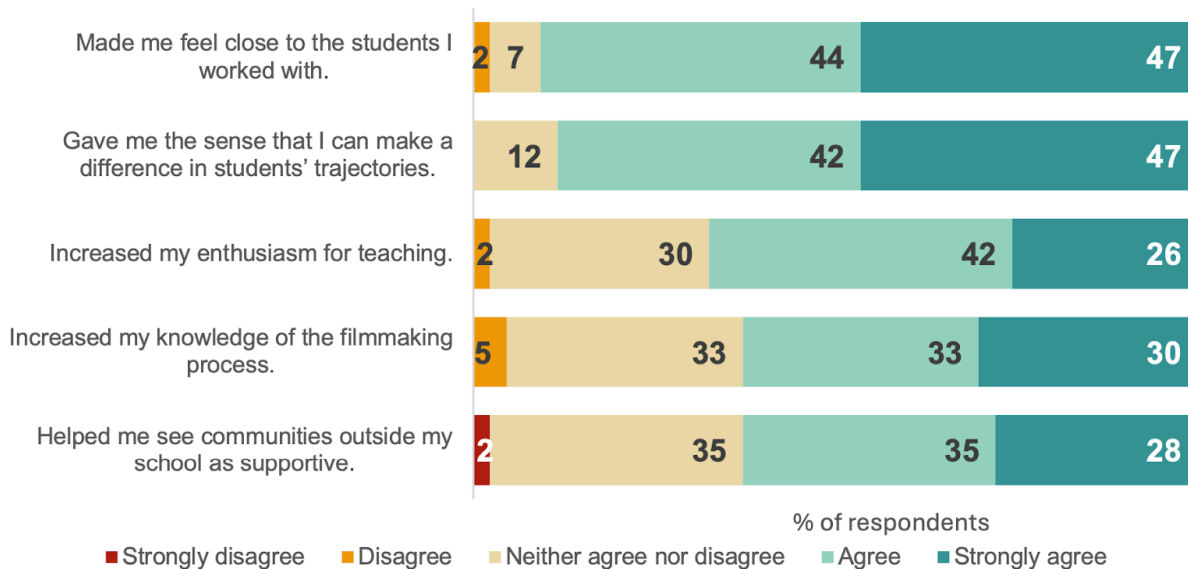
### Effect on Teacher Producers

Respondents to the teacher producer survey were asked how much they agree with statements about how implementing the program made a difference for them in terms of their knowledge, enthusiasm, and relationships with students and community [see Exhibit 13].

**#3: A significant majority of teacher producers agreed or strongly agreed that the program helped them feel closer to their students (91%) and gave them the sense that they can make a difference in their students' trajectories (88%).**

In focus groups, some described the sense of meaning they got from the experience: "I've never ever had a student come up to me and say thank you for anything. And [when attending the film festival] one of the first things was one of the kids said 'Thank you for this.'" Others talked about how the structure and goals of the FPJR NM timeline helped them plan their teaching.

**Exhibit 13: Teacher Perceptions of FPJR NM's Effect on Them**



### Effect on New Mexico Film Landscape

Perceptions among teacher producers that FPJR NM is having system-level impacts emerged in focus group discussions about the program. These comments were less common than those about the program's effect on students.

**#4: Several participants spoke enthusiastically about how FPJR NM is helping build the state’s film industry by increasing its visibility and growing a network of partnerships between educators, studios, and film professionals.**

One teacher producer said, “Let’s keep this program going for the next fifty years and beyond. This is a wonderful program for our students and for the film industry. We’re building the future for the film industry - that’s what Film Prize Junior is all about.” Another said the program did a good job “recruiting local people from outside the schools that have some experience with making short films. They’re looking to be a part of supporting the schools. The program itself is growing - more people who help support and more schools that are interested are growing as well.”

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## FILM FESTIVAL: A CLOSER LOOK

The culminating event of the FPJR NM program is a film festival and awards ceremony, held annually in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Over the course of a weekend, student films that are submitted on time and meet FPJR NM’s guidelines are screened across multiple theaters. FPJR staff host panel discussions with film industry professionals and award prizes to winning films across multiple categories.

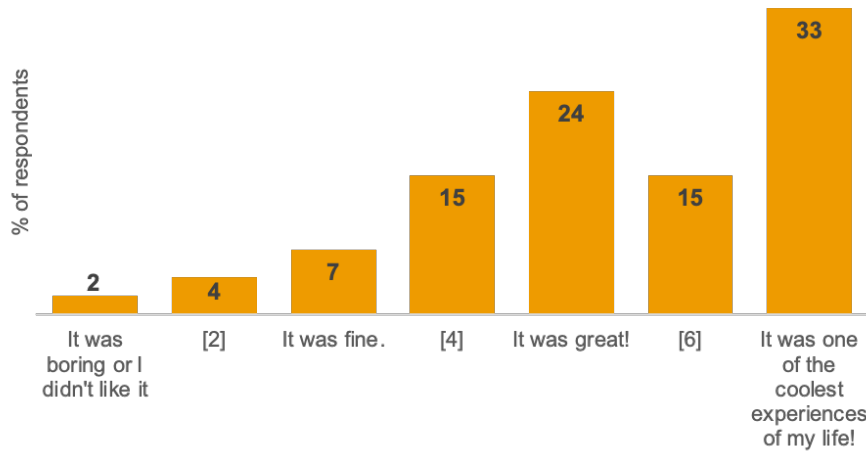
While the festival was not the focus of any of the research questions that shaped MC<sup>2</sup> Education’s evaluation, it came up frequently in the data and is an important component of the program. Overall, the festival received very positive reviews from attending students.

Forty-six percent of surveyed student filmmakers attended the 2024 festival. Those who attended were asked on the student survey to rate their experience at the festival on a 7-point scale [see Exhibit 14].

**#5: One third of the students who attended the Film Festival rated it as ‘One of the coolest experiences of my life!’. Almost three quarters rated it as ‘It was great!’ or higher.**

In open-ended survey responses, some student filmmakers noted that the festival was “very inspirational” and that being able to see their finished product on a big screen and watch everybody else’s films were parts of FPJR NM that they valued highly. FPJR NM staff coordinators shared that the presence of tribal elders at the festival is important and allows students to become more involved in their communities. From the point of view of multiple teacher producers, the festival was the key

**Exhibit 24: Student Experience at Film Festival (n=48)**



benefit of taking part in FPJR NM because they could (and in some cases would have) made films with their students whether or not they were involved in FPJR NM. One noted that “having the festival is great for our students and gives them the avenue to showcase their talent and their skills”, while another noted that when he attended the film

festival with his students, one of the first things students did was to thank him for bringing them.

**“They start off really skeptical, because stuff like this doesn’t happen here. So you have to do a lot of work to win them over... we could actually make a film, and it could show at a statewide festival.”**

**- Teacher Producer**

In focus groups, multiple teacher producers described inequities in who was able to attend the festival, with the biggest barriers being distance and cost. They said, for example, “Money is always an obstacle. One thing that I know I’m going to do is start fundraising earlier because I think that the festival is so important.... The distance is definitely a barrier. I’m in northern New Mexico. This is our second year in Film Prize and neither year we have been able to attend.” Another said, “The program has a lot of accessibility issues. I’m in northern New Mexico, and the festival is three days in Albuquerque; the hotel is 200 dollars a night.”

Finally, it is obvious but worth stating that in order to benefit from the festival, one needs to attend. Further evaluation is necessary to understand if the festival itself is key in supporting student impact. Regardless, attending the event is clearly a self-reported positive and notable event in many students’ lives. Exploring equity of access and ways to ensure all FPJR NM students have the opportunity to attend would at minimum bolster equity of access, and potentially also strengthen student impacts.

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## SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The Film Prize Junior New Mexico program led to sizable average self-reported and teacher-reported improvements in film and soft skills for student filmmakers, as well as in students' sense of self and future possibilities. Teacher producers in the program also reported positive outcomes in their relationships with their students and their professions as a result of taking part in the program. These evaluation findings should be cause for excitement amongst the Film Prize Junior team, particularly coupled with the very strong student attendee ratings of the film festival experience itself.

The MC<sup>2</sup> team is grateful for the collaborative, warm, and truly enjoyable and gratifying relationship we have developed with the Film Prize Junior Team this year while we kicked off and implemented a rapid evaluation. We appreciate the deep conversations, the openness to hard feedback, and especially the unwavering and passionate commitment of Film Prize Junior's to developing an effective model for New Mexico's students. We look forward to working together to deepen the evaluation as we embark on a second year and to continuing the iterative process of integrating evaluation results to test and ultimately improve the program.



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