



From ROI to LOI in Albuquerque Public Schools

The Core Challenge

Facing steep budget reductions, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) needed to reorient its central-office spending and preserve student-facing resources. Outdated processes and systems had allowed duplicative programs, legacy contracts, and uneven staffing to persist—even as classroom budgets tightened. Key positions went unfilled in some departments while others were over-staffed; multiple budget lines sat under-utilized or entirely dormant. With millions of dollars at stake, APS turned to EduSolve to conduct a rigorous ROI review and then embed a "Learn on Investment" (LOI) mindset across the district.

Phase 1: Rigorous ROI Examination

EduSolve's first task was a forensic audit of every major budget category: Finance, Federal & State Programs, Teaching & Learning, Student Services by comparing annual spend to demonstrable student impact.

Identifying Duplications and Gaps

- Discovered overlapping contracts for external consultants in finance and special education.
- Flagged several pilot programs in Teaching & Learning that had never scaled beyond the initial roll-out.
- Mapped program budgets against enrollment data to reveal under-utilization in departments serving high-need schools.

Right-Sizing Roles and Streamlining Contracts

- Benchmarked staffing ratios against comparable districts; recommended redeploying excess positions into critical school-based roles.
- Phased out or consolidated legacy software licenses and service agreements: freeing up over \$1.2 million in annual savings.
- Closed obsolete budget lines dating back more than five years, recovering an additional \$800 thousand.



Phase 1: Rigorous ROI Examination

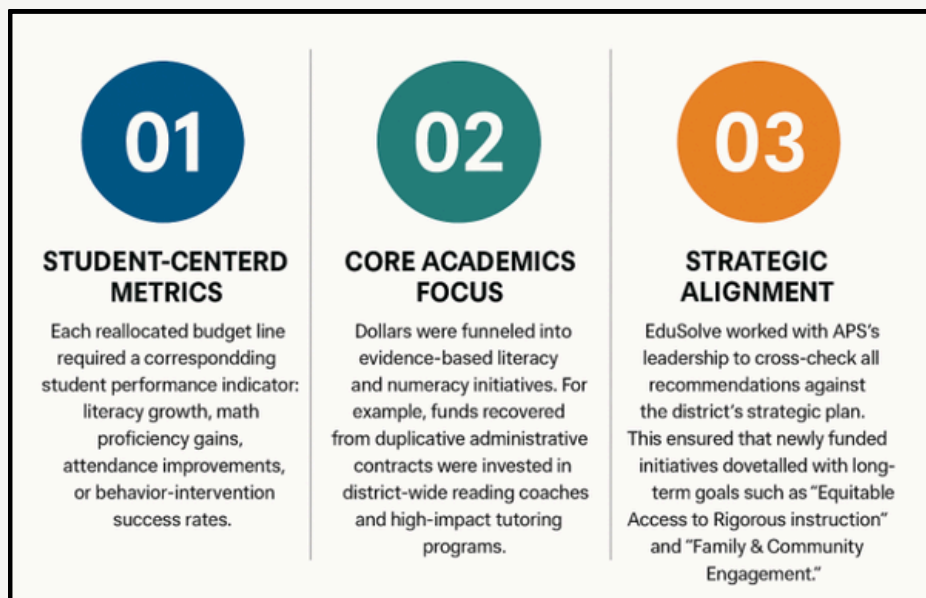
Securing Hard Savings

- Through targeted consolidations, APS achieved \$2 million in central-office cost savings within the first 12 months.
- Reallocated these funds directly to schools serving the highest-need student populations, bolstering classroom staffing and instructional materials.

Phase 2: Embedding an LOI Framework

With ROI targets met, EduSolve shifted to LOI—ensuring that every dollar continued to be evaluated through the lens of student learning and strategic priorities.

- Student-Centered Metrics
- Each reallocated budget line required a corresponding student performance indicator: literacy growth, math proficiency gains, attendance improvements, or behavior-intervention success rates.
- Core Academics Focus
- Dollars were funneled into evidence-based literacy and numeracy initiatives. For example, funds recovered from duplicative administrative contracts were invested in district-wide reading coaches and high-impact tutoring programs.
- Strategic Alignment
- EduSolve worked with APS's leadership to cross-check all recommendations against the district's strategic plan. This ensured that newly funded initiatives dovetailed with long-term goals such as "Equitable Access to Rigorous Instruction" and "Family & Community Engagement."



Leadership Perspective

Dr. Gabriella Duran-Blakey, APS's superintendent captured the transformation best:

"For many years, APS was insulated from the world outside the district or public education. We rarely got input from outside advisers; we almost never asked others to review how we were doing from a management, business or even educational perspective. No longer. This past school year was rife with input from the outside. Our Finance, Special Education, Federal and State Programs, Teaching and Learning and Student Services departments all received evaluations or input from experts in the field.

Letting that light in has helped us refine, revise – and occasionally, re-envision – what we're doing. A great example is Special Education, which serves 26% of our students. Another is Finance, where we are about to embark on introducing a new financial and human resources software program from Oracle. It's a big deal. Our old system, about 25 years old, is archaic and will no longer be supported by the vendor. To implement this system, we are getting help from top consultants who will help train our staff members so we can provide the best service to our employees – and prospective employees.

Finally, when the school year began, we created a Federal and State Programs office. Its mission was to align the dollars we receive from federal and state government to dovetail with our daily work at schools. Like all change, this one was difficult at times. But this office has helped us move key funding to schools most in need and also assess whether some programs were duplicative or archaic. It was a great start toward taking an objective approach to how we deal with important funding."

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

1

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

APS redeployed \$2 million to frontline schools within one year.

2

CULTURAL SHIFT

Departments embraced external review and continuous improvement.

3

SUSTAINED IMPACT

The Federal and State Programs office now operates under an LOI mission, regularly revisiting investments against student data.

By moving beyond a narrow ROI focus and adopting LOI, APS has realigned its resources to advance student learning, sustain innovation, and build resilience against future budget pressures.