



Case Study

# New Mexico Corrections Department



Providing individuals who are incarcerated access to quality preparation for high school equivalency diplomas is a top priority for the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD). With 73% of all U.S. jobs requiring a high school equivalency or diploma,<sup>1</sup> NMCD recognizes the importance of using technology to expand educational access.

## Challenge

Amidst staffing challenges, NMCD faced the enormous task of not only guiding individuals who are incarcerated through class time, but also ensuring they completed 12 hours of review time mandatory for the high school equivalency exam. Moreover, the institution’s paper-based curriculum and one-size fits-all approach to instruction led to inefficiencies as teachers often slowed down instruction to meet the needs of less advanced learners.

As a result, NMCD found itself significantly behind in meeting its goal of 165 HiSET or GED graduations by the end of June, 2023. In January of 2023, only 21 learners who were incarcerated had passed the HiSET exam. With just 5 months left to meet its goal, NMCD quickly sought an evidence-based educational technology solution to fast-track access to high-quality preparation and ultimate HiSET exam success.

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014)

## Challenge

- 165** Number of HiSET graduations needed to meet goal
- 21** Number of HiSET graduations as of January, 2023
- 700%** Increase required to meet goal
- 5** Number of remaining months to meet goal

## Solution

In January of 2023, NMCD partnered with Orijin to turn things around. Orijin quickly provided professional development to 40+ NMCD educators throughout the state on Orijin’s HiSET Academy program.

Under the leadership of Shane Epperly, NMCD’s Learning and Development Manager, NMCD implemented a hybrid classroom model led by an in-person instructor, and supported by the Orijin-powered tablets and learning platform.

Cohorts of learners cycled in and out of the classroom to use Orijin to complete the required HiSET review time. The computer adaptive program enabled them to learn at their desired pace, and according to their skill-level. In classrooms with a learner to teacher ratio of 10:1, Orijin freed up valuable time for teachers so they could spend more one-on-one time with learners who required additional support.

## Results

Partnering with Orijin yielded astounding results: in FY 2023, 538 learners utilized Orijin's tablets and learning platform, logging 7,811 hours of engaged learning, with an average weekly attendance of 11-12 hours per learner. Within a span of just 5 months, a total of 198 learners passed the high school equivalency exam, which was 18% above the jurisdictional goal. The number of graduates in FY 2023 was more than double the amount in FY 2022, which was 87, as reported by the New Mexico Higher Education Department.

In addition, educators and administrators have noted a positive change in the demeanor of learners, as they have embraced Orijin for its innovative technology. Already in FY 2024, 442 learners have accessed Orijin, tallying 11,621 hours of education.

## Results

**198** Number of HiSET graduations  
**842%** Increase of HiSET graduations in just 5 months  
**100%+** Increase compared to FY 2022  
**+18%** Above jurisdictional goal

## Expanded Learning



**538**

Learners used Orijin tablets



**7,811**

Hours of learning on Orijin in FY 2023



**117**

Number of classes per week across facilities



**40+**

Number of NMCD staff trained



**“Orijin helped us surpass our goals by expanding our staff’s bandwidth, and scaling up access to evidence-based education and training. Unlike one-size-fits-all offerings, Orijin tailors their solution to meet our goals, and those of our learners.”**

**Byron K. Brown**  
Reentry Division Director

## Exponential Growth

This chart illustrates significant enrollment growth in Orijin's HiSET Academy program from January 2023 through June 2023, which led to NMCD exceeding its goals.

Students by Month

