Scientifically Connected Communities, SC2 has had a wonderfully busy, enlightening and productive year. SC2 facilitates professional development opportunities for local teachers by bringing content specialists ranging from NASA educators to wildlife experts into direct contact with teachers in order to support their development and provide them with additional resources for the classroom. SC2 assists teachers by providing content knowledge and support through the numerous activities we facilitate in the classroom, during fieldtrips and for special occasions such as science fairs, and field days. SC2 also provides materials, lesson plans, and experiments to teachers and are available for checkout. In addition to SC2’s involvement in local school districts and teacher development, we continue to be involvement in organizations within the Las Cruces community, NMSU campus, and regional school districts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Professional development events facilitated by SC2, such as the 2nd Annual Southwest NM Regional STEM Conference; scientific inquiry workshops held in August, October, November and May; and other workshops that focus on content like the Kepler Mission Workshop held in April, promote scientific inquiry in the classroom, assist in developing content knowledge, and creates strong STEM curriculum across grade level and content area.

*Partial funding for this project provided through Alliance Legislative monies.

**Tri-Unity: February 26-27, 2010**
This year’s conference focused on Culturally Responsive Childhood Learning and Literacy. This collaboration between NMSU College of Education, SPED/CD Department, Aprendamos Intervention Team and Direct Therapy Services provided an opportunity for the 350 participants who attended to earn Continuing Education Units as a Speech Language Pathologist, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Day Care Provider and Educator.

**J. Paul Taylor Symposium: March 18, 2010**
This year’s conference focused on Service Learning and it was a great opportunity for collaboration and networking to occur. Over 150 participants attended this year’s symposium. The Alliance assisted with coordinating in collaboration with the College of Arts and Sciences, the Las Cruces Public Schools and community agencies.

**Alliance Response to Intervention Training: April 29-30, 2010**
The Alliance Collaborated with NM Public Education Department, The National Center on Response To Intervention from Kansas University and the Regional Education Laboratory SW in San Antonio, Texas. Professional Development for administrators and educators was provided to help the participants move from theory to practice with the Response To Intervention Process. Over 125 participants attended and were provided with the NM Student Assistance Team Manual and quick guide as a tool to use in their respective school districts.

**Borderlands Early Literacy Day (BELD): April 17, 2010**
The third annual BELD conference included a keynote address from the renowned author, Gary Soto. The focus of this year’s conference was early childhood language and literacy. Over 125 participants attended and earned professional development training as educators and childcare providers. The Alliance collaborated with NMSU Early Childhood Department, La Vida Institute and Myrna’s Childrens Village.

**Advanced Placement Summer Institute (APSI): June 7-11, 2010**
The Alliance collaborated with NM Public Education Department and New Mexico Highlands University on the Fourth Annual APSI. Approximately 145 participants attended from across New Mexico, Texas, California and Montana; additionally, our consultants were traveling from across the U.S. Professional development training was offered in the areas of: AP Calculus, AP English Language and Composition, AP English Literature and Composition, AP Environmental Science, AP Statistics, AP Studio Art and Pre-AP English with Vertical Teaming.
The project was for the university modifications in instructional level resulted in increased student performance. This project demonstrates how continuous monitoring of student reading/writing performance with corresponding indicated that, while they were still behind the mean scores for their grade level, they were showing greater overall gains than to two grades above the initial scores in August. In addition, a breakdown on the scores of the English Language Learners, with 90% of the parents reporting speaking a language other than English at home. These second language issues were at the center of the Tier 1 development. Based on the initial planning discussions, it became clear that there would be a need for re-teaching some students in Tier 1. The idea was to create a time in the schedule that would be very fluid, and may change in student composition on a daily basis. That way, if the teacher felt that a particular concept was not grasped by a particular student on any given day, she/ he could request that to have that student assigned to for this extra period. The principal created a block in the schedule for teachers to conduct that re-teaching. During the same block, students who had mastered the concept being re-taught participated in enrichment activities related to the concepts that were addressed. This extra block was labeled Tier 1.5, because it remained in the control of the classroom teacher’s hands and was very fluid, in that every day there might be different students with different teachers. In order for this model to function, the teachers needed to work more collaboratively than is common. The entire Tier 1 re-organization was planned and implemented by the teachers. The principal began by having staff development dates in the summer, where the teachers developed a detailed plan for addressing key state standards for the content areas in each grade. The discussions that occurred in these staff development sessions formed the framework for the level of collaboration that occurred during the year. Recognizing that the lack of opportunity to communicate is a major roadblock to collaboration, the principal created opportunities for communication to occur. She addressed this issue by scheduling the teachers planning hour by grade level. The grade level teachers met daily during their planning hour to address concerns about students and to coordinate schedules. In addition, content area teachers met once a week. The principal provided the leadership by emphasizing what needed to occur, but the teachers were the ones who were actively engaged in the daily monitoring of student performance and modification of instruction to meet individual student needs. It involved on-going assessment and classroom-based intervention on a weekly, and in some cases, daily, basis. The plan also called for a Tier 2 intervention to be the Title 1 reading program. The plan was for the university professor to assist in problem solving and resource provision to the Title 1 teacher. Because the Title 1 teacher was extremely proficient, the NMSU collaborator was for a few students who had reading disabilities who were identified in the Title 1 reading program. Students in the Tier 2 intervention were assigned to the intervention by each quarter and some were exited after the first quarter. In Tier 2, all students’ reading/writing skills were evaluated in-depth on the five pillars of reading and instruction was addressed individually based on the assessments. Based on the systematic and individualized program provided to students in Tier 2, a few students with reading disabilities were accurately identified and recommended for Tier 3, the special education program. It was possible for a student to be in all tiers. While final analysis of the project will not be possible until the results of the state-mandated assessments are available in the fall, the preliminary results of the program are promising. When students were assessed in the third quarter, the mean score for grades seven and eight was one year above the mean scores in August. The sixth grade reported a mean reading score to two grades above the initial scores in August. In addition, a breakdown on the scores of the English Language Learners indicated that, while they were still behind the mean scores for their grade level, they were showing greater overall gains than the rest of the students in the school. This project demonstrates how continuous monitoring of student reading/writing performance with corresponding modifications in instructional level resulted in increased student performance. *Funding for this project provided through Alliance Legislative monies. **Reference** Merrell, K.W., Carrizales, D., Feuerborn, L., Gueldner, B.A., & Tran, O.K. (2004). Strong Kids: A social and emotional learning curriculum for students in grades 3-8. Retrieved from http://orp.uoregon.edu. For more information on the Strong Kids Project please contact us at: Ivelisse Torres Fernandez, Ph.D. (575) 646-4093 itfernan@nmsu.edu.
MISSION:
The mission of the Alliance for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning is to collaboratively contribute to the success of children throughout New Mexico and to the educators who serve them.

VISION:
The vision of the Alliance is to serve as a catalyst for improved education for teachers as well as children and families, particularly for those in rural and border areas in New Mexico and to collaborate with appropriate partners to meet the diverse needs of our children.

GOALS:
• To be the principal academic entity providing comprehensive training and educational consulting services to New Mexico schools, particularly rural schools.
• To be the catalyst and inspiration for all schools to meet and exceed the expectations consistent with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, evolving New Mexico Statutory requirements, strategic planning and the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS).

OBJECTIVES:
• To provide teachers, administrators, parents, and children access to materials that will improve academic progress and success.
• To collaborate with the Public Education Department (PED) and Regional Educational Cooperative Centers (REC) to provide training and consulting services to schools, particularly rural schools.
• To work with identified schools to assist them in achieving alignment between the Educational Plan for Student Success, Instruction, and Student Outcomes.
• To provide additional resources for identified areas (e.g. reading, science, math, special education, and bilingual education).
• To conduct formative and summative evaluation of collaborative initiatives implemented to address the goals of the Alliance and to statistically evaluate best practices for improving the education of children in schools.
• To disseminate information and research about best practices in meeting the challenges of schools.
• To advise and assist school districts and schools in the development of family involvement policies and procedures that facilitate and sustain family involvement that is consistent with the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, evolving New Mexico Statutory requirements, strategic planning and the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS).