

# **Governor Bill Richardson Appoints Search Committee to Find First Secretary of Education, Begins Process to Transform Department of Education**

For Immediate Release

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ALBUQUERQUE- Governor Bill Richardson today appointed 31 New Mexicans to serve on a committee to find the best candidates for the newly created cabinet-level Secretary of Education position.

Governor Richardson also named Dr. Alan Morgan, a former State Superintendent of Schools with experience as an educator and administrator, to serve as interim Secretary of Education until the permanent secretary is found.

In addition, the Governor initiated the process for transition at the Department of Education, the first step in creating the structure for New Mexico's education system of the future.

Governor Richardson's prepared remarks:

"It is an exciting, and historic new day for New Mexico. Voters said a resounding 'yes' to changing our education system, and the true winners will be our children... and our future.

We start the process today, right now. There are four immediate steps I'm taking, to begin to implement our mandate for change, while ensuring a smooth transition to our new system that allows schools to seamlessly continue operation.

First- I am appointing Dr. Alan Morgan to be the Interim Secretary of Education. Dr. Morgan has been a tireless champion for New Mexico's children, and for quality education. He's a former State Superintendent, and has years of experience as an educator and administrator. Dr. Morgan will lead our transition team, working closely with the State Board of Education on the transfer of authority that will become official when the election is certified by the Secretary of State. He'll get the process started during the search for a permanent Secretary of Education. Alan, thank you for taking on this critical role.

Second- We have uncovered serious problems with the State Department of Education's financial systems that must be immediately addressed. Based on an analysis by James Jimenez, Secretary of Finance, we've learned:

- the State Department of Education's most recent audit has been mis-stated, and must be fixed. Auditors are in the process of re-stating the audit report.
- The S-D-E financial systems are among the worst in state government.

- Without supplemental funding, the S-D-E is anticipating a 700-thousand dollar shortfall, and possible furloughs by the end of the fiscal year.

I have ordered the formation of a finance workgroup to immediately attack these problems. The workgroup includes representatives from D-F-A, the State Auditor, an L-F-C Budget Analyst, and school district personnel. The members of this workgroup will be named shortly.

Third- I have appointed a blue-ribbon selection committee to find our first Secretary of Education. These 31 New Mexicans are experienced, dedicated, and focused on finding the best possible candidates for New Mexico. This committee will be co-chaired by Dan Lopez, of Socorro, President of New Mexico Tech, and Leslie Boggs, President of the New Mexico Parent-Teacher Association. It includes a broad coalition of New Mexicans, including representatives from rural communities, the business community, educators, administrators, legislators, charter schools- a true representation of the stakeholders in our educational system.

They'll develop their own system to identify the best candidates for the position, and bring their recommendations to me by the end of October.

New Mexico's Secretary of Education must be a proven leader who holds, or is eligible for, state licensure in teaching or administration, with significant administrative, fiscal, and managerial skills. I'd like this person to be a New Mexican- familiar with our education system and funding formulas. Our Secretary of Education must embrace our cultural and ethnic diversity, and understand and respect the strengths, and opportunities offered by that diversity. And this person must share our vision for building an educational system to best prepare our children for the future- to help us build the high-wage, prosperous New Mexico economy we all are working toward.

Finally- Within a week I will announce the creation of a committee that will draft what we'll call the **Governor's Progress Agenda- or G-P-A**. This committee will set the course for our new Secretary of Education, and the Department of Education. In December, this group will hold an education summit in Albuquerque to build consensus for our new education structure, based on my agenda for reform. Committee members will travel around the state, holding "mini-summits" in rural areas to make sure all of New Mexico is included in the process. They'll survey and meet with school administrators and board members from around the state to see what's working, and what isn't. The committee will prepare an agenda for reform, and recommended legislation that may be needed, and present it to me, and the new Secretary of Education.

There's no time to lose. We have the mandate, now it's up to us to get it done."