



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON ANNOUNCES INNOVATIVE HIGH-TECH LEARNING INITIATIVE

Gov's Program Will Provide Laptop Computers To 7th Graders

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ALBUQUERQUE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced his innovative new program, the Governors Laptop Learning Initiative, that will provide laptop computers to New Mexico 7th graders and their teachers. More than 700 students and 80 teachers will receive laptop computers in the first phase of the initiative, with the goal of providing computers to every 7th grader in the state.

“Technology and innovation are key elements of New Mexico’s future, and this program will help engage our youth and encourage them to make positive decisions about their schoolwork and ultimately, their lives,” said Governor Richardson. “This initiative gives students and teachers critical tools and support to help create positive change and develop high expectations. The computers will not only contribute to exciting changes in the classroom, they can also be taken home so families participate in the learning experience as well.”

Six schools, including 4 rural schools, have been chosen to start the program- **Albuquerque:** Southwest Secondary Learning Center charter school; **Chama:** Chama Middle School and Tierra Amarilla Middle School; **Gallup:** Tohatchi Middle School; **Hobbs:** Highland Junior High School; and **Las Cruces:** Picacho Middle School.

The sites were selected by staff from the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) and approved by Governor Richardson based on each school’s strong potential for success, quick and easy teacher access to up-to-date information and student need for technology.

Governor Richardson is calling for additional funding from the 2004 Legislature to allow more middle school students to participate in the initiative. “The decline of student achievement at the middle school level is well documented. Technology and innovation play key roles in our ability to enhance learning opportunities for these students and their teachers,” said Governor Richardson.

A Request for Proposals (RFP), directed to schools, will be issued on February 19, 2004 to identify more students for the initiative. The cost for each laptop is \$1,128, including grade- and curriculum-specific software. Dell Computers is providing the laptops for the initiative.

The Governor’s program is based on the successful Maine Learning Technology Initiative. Findings in Maine show that the initiative has dramatically increased technology use and competency in classrooms. Students in Maine report that they use their laptops to research information, complete assignments, create projects and communicate with teachers and other students. With increased usage has come an increase in the amount of work they are doing, both in and out of school. Parents report that their children are more focused and interested in school.

Each of the six exploration sites will be evaluated on how the computer access affects three core areas: 1) teachers and teaching, 2) students and learning and 3) school and community perceptions. These criteria are also the focus of the Maine study, so New Mexico will be able to compare results.

Responses to the RFP for additional students are due to the NMPED in March for review by the New Mexico Council on Technology in Education. Interested schools should contact Ruth Williams at the Public Education Department at (505) 476-0393.

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