



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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News advisory

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Governor Bill Richardson announces plan to pay for full-day Kindergarten classrooms

ALBUQUERQUE - Governor Bill Richardson today announced a plan to pay for classrooms to house full-day kindergarten programs. The plan means every New Mexico school should be able to offer full-day kindergarten classes starting next Fall.

Governor Richardson delivered the following remarks during a news conference in Albuquerque today:

When I ran for Governor, I made a commitment to full-day kindergarten. Today, I'm proud to announce that every New Mexico five-year-old will have access to full-day kindergarten - this year. I'm a big believer in providing a head start for all New Mexico children - before they start the first-grade.

That's why I've worked with legislators like Representative Rick Miera, Senator Richard Romero, Speaker Ben Lujan and Senator Cynthia Nava to complete the phase-in of full-day kindergarten in every New Mexico school. We did that this year - funding the final year so that all schools can pay for kindergarten teachers for full-day programs.

I'm pleased to report today that we found a way to help school districts pay for about 117 additional classrooms that are needed statewide to accommodate full-day kindergarten.

With our help, every 5-year-old in New Mexico will have access - this coming school year - to full-day kindergarten.

New Mexico will now be one of just a handful of states that offers free access to full-day kindergarten. That's a list we're proud to be on.

As you may know, we included 5-million dollars in the general-obligation bond package for voters to consider next Fall. But school districts need the money sooner - so they can get those classrooms ready by August.

The Public School Capital Outlay Council, which includes my Chief of Staff, my Finance Secretary and my Education Secretary, will provide the money to school districts to ensure that they have the classrooms for full-day kindergarten next Fall. The Council has the authority to provide the money for portable classrooms, and its members will meet March 30th to finalize this plan.

If voters approve the G.O. bond issue later this year, school districts will repay the Capital Outlay Council from their G.O.-bond proceeds.

This is a win-win situation for school districts, and it shows that the state is eager to work with school districts to find solutions -- to do what's best for New Mexico students.