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**Governor Bill Richardson Announces \$1.2 Million Grant to
Increase Accountability in Schools**

Santa Fe - Governor Bill Richardson announced a \$1.2 million grant from the Wallace Foundation to improve school accountability efforts, and help track how major education initiatives are being implemented in New Mexico schools.

“We’re holding schools accountable and demanding higher standards for students,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “It’s imperative that we train teachers and principals to identify shortcomings in the classroom.”

The money, which could increase to \$3.6 million over three years, will be used to train teachers, principals and administrators to use accountability data, such as test scores, so that it benefits students in the classroom.

“Having good information and knowing how to use it to improve student achievement is central to education reform in New Mexico,” said Dr. Peter Winograd, Director of the Office of Education Accountability. “If we want our children to succeed, we need to support our district, school and classroom leaders as they work to meet the demands of accountability.”

Dr. Veronica Garcia, Secretary of the Public Education Department said, “Strong leadership and accountability are essential to moving our reform agenda forward. We are fortunate to have this additional support.”

By focusing on accountability, the grant will help ensure that public education dollars are spent wisely. James Jimenez, Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Finance and

Administration, which houses the Office of Education Accountability said, “One of the primary goals of the Department is to ensure that every dollar for public education is spent wisely and effectively. This grant will help leaders at the Public Education Department and in districts to monitor their programs to ensure that money for public education is well spent.”

“Leadership is the most important factor after teaching in whether schools succeed in raising student achievement,” said M. Christine DeVita, president of The Wallace Foundation. “The partnership between Wallace and the 21 states we are funding will, we believe, yield innovative approaches to new policies and practices to improve student achievement. By joining forces, we can help spread improvements and get results more broadly and quickly.”

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is committed to joining Wallace in support of this initiative, with details to be determined within the next month.

“We’re pleased to join with Wallace in its effort to improve leader training, and create the conditions for leadership in all schools to ensure all young people graduate from high school,” Tom Vander Ark, executive director of education at the Gates Foundation. “As we have seen in our efforts to improve secondary education, leadership is a critical ingredient in helping schools prepare all students for college, work and citizenship.”

New Mexico is one of only six new states - Arizona, Louisiana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio and Texas - awarded a SAELP grant.

Launched in 2000, the SAELP initiative aims to improve policies and regulations that contribute to and connect current leadership policies and practices at the state, district, school and classroom levels toward the goals of improving student achievement, and to support and share knowledge that will be of widespread use.

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