



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Contact: Billy Sparks
505.476.2299

Deputy Education Secretary Dr. Kurt Steinhaus Assigned to Pre-K Initiative

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson announced today that the Deputy Secretary of the Public Education Department, Dr. Kurt Steinhaus, will be assigned to coordinate the establishment of a Pre-K program for New Mexico. The Legislature appropriated five million dollars that will allow the enrollment of 1,400 New Mexico 4 year-olds into a pre-k program. The Department of Children Youth and Families and the Department of Education will implement the program. "Every dollar we invest in our children in Pre-K today will save us seven dollars in the years to come. I want results and I want all our children to have access to this program. Dr. Steinhaus will make sure this stays a top priority and will work with the Department of Children, Youth and Families to make sure our kids have the best program possible. This is the first step," Governor Richardson said.

"Dr. Steinhaus is an experienced educator and strong leader who has a unique knowledge and understanding of the goals, needs, and challenges of establishing a successful Pre-K program for New Mexico," Governor Richardson said.

About half of the 26,000 four-year-olds in New Mexico do not have access to Pre-K today. Governor Richardson will continue to push for a comprehensive statewide program. Forty-three states currently fund some type of early learning program. The Governor's Pre-K program is a voluntary, community-based pre-kindergarten initiative *designed to prepare children in New Mexico for school*. Some of the key advantages to a statewide Pre-K initiative are as follows:

1. It supports economic and workforce development in communities because studies show that children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs are:
 - 40% less likely to need special education or be held back a grade
 - More likely to graduate from high school, go to college and be employed
2. It is voluntary: the program will provide more choices for children, parents and grandparents;
3. It will recruit and Train High quality teachers, the program will provide teachers with the proper training to ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn;
4. It will maintain high learning standards with developmentally appropriate activities that will better prepare our children for success in our schools.

Secretary of Education, Dr. Veronica C. Garcia said, “The Governor is dedicated to making sure New Mexico adopts a Pre-K program that for all our children. Dr. Steinhaus is a proven educator who will be our liaison to the program.”

Secretary of Children Youth and Families, Dr. Mary-Dale Bolson said, "Pre-K is the place to build a solid foundation for our children’s educational future. As Secretary of CYFD, I look forward to working with Dr. Steinhaus and the Department of Education to make sure our children have the best available program.”