



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

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## **Governor Bill Richardson Proposes \$9 Million Investment in Improvements at Highlands**

*Governor's Investment Part of "Year of the Child" Legislative Proposals*

SANTA FE -- Governor Bill Richardson today announced \$9 million in investments in bricks and mortar projects at New Mexico Highlands University. Funding for these projects will be included in the Governor's capital outlay budget recommendations to be considered during the upcoming legislative session.

"I am committed to improving New Mexico's colleges and universities during this Year of the Child," said Governor Richardson. "These projects will mean better educational opportunities for the people of New Mexico."

Governor Richardson's funding priorities include:

### **Burris Hall Renovation: \$2 million**

Burris Hall was built in 1957 and its heating system does not meet current building codes. This funding will help update this heating system.

### **Felix Martinez Building Renovation: \$2 million**

This will help fund a renovation to help this building better meet current student services needs. This building was constructed in 1983.

### **NMHU Student Center: \$5 million**

This funding keeps the Governor's promise to allocate \$5 million in state funds to help with the construction of a new student center at Highlands. Governor Richardson had promised this funding during a town hall at the university in November.

"An investment in higher education is an investment in New Mexico's future," said Dr. Beverlee J. McClure, Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education. "These projects are evidence of the growth on our campuses."

These funding proposals join Governor Richardson's recently announced Year of the Child agenda for higher education. This agenda includes:

**\$50 million investment in a College Affordability Endowment.** The endowment will immediately generate investment income that can be used for need-based scholarships at New Mexico colleges and universities. The new scholarships will enable thousands of new students to enroll in higher education institutions in New Mexico. And with just a modest return on a \$50-million dollar endowment, the state can help many New Mexicans begin – and most importantly – complete their education. Scholarships would be worth as much as \$1,000 per semester, and would fund unmet need of financially disadvantaged students.

**\$10 million for Career Technical-Vocational programs** – Last year, Governor Richardson and the Legislature invested \$10 million in Career Technical Centers/Vocational Charter High Schools at 18 different institutions. This year, with another \$10 million, these programs can be expanded and additional ones added to increase the number of students served. These Centers create career pathways for juniors and seniors in high school and help prepare them for the future, beginning now.

**\$1 million to align High Schools with Higher Education** – Governor Richardson is proposing to redefine the New Mexico High School Competency Exam by making it more relevant, especially for students who are going on to college. Governor Richardson is proposing \$1 million to develop a new test that both meets the requirements of high school graduation and better prepares students for higher education.

“With a strong financial outlook, now is the time to invest in New Mexicans,” said Governor Richardson. “We can do this in a fiscally prudent manner – by funding projects and initiatives that will benefit thousands of New Mexico students and help us build a high-wage economy.”