



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor Richardson Announces Actions to Redesign High School Education in New Mexico

(Santa Fe, NM) -- Governor Bill Richardson today announced his New Mexico high school redesign initiative. This plan will help ensure that New Mexico high school students are better prepared for college and careers. Governor Richardson has asked that State Public Education Secretary Veronica Garcia work with the Legislative Education Study Committee to implement this plan. The Governor spoke today at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces.

“New Mexico high school graduates must be armed to compete for excellent jobs, not just here, but nationally and internationally,” said Governor Richardson. “The redesign of our high schools is the first step to making this a reality. These actions will better preparing our students for future jobs and opportunity.”

Components of Governor Richardson’s high school redesign proposal include:

- Develop New Mexico’s High School Diploma of Excellence
- Increase drop out age from **17 to 18**
- Increase graduation requirements
- Create a statewide cyber academy
- Increase funding for career technical high schools
- Increase funding for Advanced Placement courses and teacher training
- Increase funding for Pre-AP to target students in underserved areas and better prepare them for high school
- Change funding for senior year to create incentives for districts to make senior year more meaningful
- Charge the existing Higher Education/Public Education Alignment Taskforce to create a statewide funding framework for students who are dually enrolled, as well as eliminate the 10th grade competency exam and replace it with a more meaningful assessment of high school proficiency and college readiness.

“As Governor I have worked to invest in the classroom, and move New Mexico’s schools forward,” said Governor Richardson. “We’ve made a lot of progress toward making our schools work and preparing our

children for the future. But we have more work to do – especially by preparing our students better for the world of work and post secondary education.”

More details on Governor Richardson’s proposals are included in the backgrounder listed below.

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New Mexico 2006 High School Redesign

- **Develop New Mexico’s High School Diploma of Excellence**
 - This diploma is intended to motivate and reward students that pursue a more rigorous course of study which could include but not be limited to: the America High School Diploma or The Governor’s Gold Standard Diploma (rigorous academic course of study, completion of 4 AP courses with a GPA of 3.75, or score in the top 10% of the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment for 11th grade).
 - Rigorous Secondary School Program refers to a College Preparatory Core of 4 English classes; 4 Mathematics classes (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 , Trigonometry, Calculus, Math Analysis, etc. 3 college preparatory Lab Science classes; and 3 college preparatory Social Studies classes. This is also referred to as a Default College Preparatory curriculum.

- **Change the age students can legally drop out from 17 to 18**
 - The student’s guardian must sign off and prove one of the following: the student has enrolled in a GED preparation program, is signed up to take the GED test, has enrolled in a training program or continuing education program, or has secured full time employment.
 - We’ve been told by both students and teachers that students start dropping out mentally in middle school and drop out physically in high school because they know that in a couple of years they can legally drop out.

- **Increase graduation requirements, relevance, and rigor**
 - Increase math graduation requirements to include four of mathematics. In addition each student must complete at least **one** of the following:
 - meet the four credits in math by ensuring that one math credit is above Algebra I
 - complete one AP course
 - complete one on line course
 - or complete one dual enrollment course.
 - By having several options we will diffuse the critics who say we are dooming kids to failure.

- **Change funding for senior year to create incentives for districts to make senior year more meaningful**
 - Currently students who are in school for half a day generate the same funding as students who are there for a full day.
 - This change would provide funding for .2 student membership. If the student is only there for one class period.
 - In layman’s terms schools will get funded for the actual time they are enrolled.

- **Charge the P-20 HED/PED Alignment Task Force to create a statewide framework for funding of students who are dually enrolled**
 - Charge the P-20 HED/PED alignment taskforce to create a statewide framework for funding for students who are dually enrolled.
 - Eliminate the 10th grade competency exam and replace it with a more meaningful assessment of high school proficiency and college readiness.

- **Create a statewide cyber academy**
 - This self-supporting academy would be housed in a district, REC, etc. where districts could purchase on-line courses for students when they don’t have the expertise or staff to offer needed courses.

- **Funding for Career Technical High Schools**
 - Request funding from Legislature.
 - These schools would be required to have strong connections with two year institutions.
- **3 million dollars for increasing AP courses offered and training for teachers**
- **3 million for pre-AP or the AVID (Achievement Via Individual Gear Up Determination)**
 - This program focuses on students who don't see themselves as college material.
 - Encourage them to take advanced courses and be better prepared for high school
 - The program will be directed to high school students that aren't ready for AP program for middle school students in underserved areas to help better prepare them for high school.
 - Seed money will be sought for mini-grants to encourage districts to create night schools, weekend schools, alternative schools to encourage more students to stay in school.