



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



For Immediate Release
April 24, 2008

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Governor Bill Richardson Unveils New Education Initiatives

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson and Education Secretary Veronica Garcia today announced six new statewide education initiatives during a visit to Sandia High School in Albuquerque.

“When I took office, I pledged to be New Mexico’s Educational Governor-giving our students, teachers and schools the opportunities and tools for success.” Governor Richardson said. “We’re seeing tremendous payoffs on our investments, and these new initiatives are a creative way for us to continue improving graduation rates, classroom instruction and student and community involvement.”

The six new initiatives follow:

1. Education is the KEY to a New Mexico’s Driver’s License

- Beginning next year, 8th grade students will need to demonstrate nearing proficiency or proficiency and beyond on the 8th grade New Mexico Standards and 9th graders will have to have 90% attendance to be eligible for a New Mexico Driver’s License.
- Failure to attain either benchmark will result in a 6 month delay in eligibility.
- Failure to reach both benchmarks will result in a one year delay.
- Students who dropout before the driver’s license eligibility age of 16 will also have to wait a year to receive their driver’s licenses based on the New Mexico law that states the legal dropout age is 18.

2. Elective Credit for Environmental Protection Community Projects

- High School students could earn up to one credit, half a credit per semester, by engaging in environmental conservation service learning projects like community recycling, water conservation, xeriscaping, and research.

3. Electronic Teacher Encyclopedia of Exemplary Math and Science Lessons

- The Public Education Department (PED) will create and maintain a data bank that teachers can access demonstrating how to teach key math and science concepts. Exemplary teachers will be selected to be videotaped teaching demonstration lessons. The result will be low-cost renewable professional development.

4. In-Residence-International Benchmarking Initiative

- New Mexico will bring international math and science education experts from Asia/Pacific Rim to be resident advisors to the PED for one year. Paying these residents a salary will be far more cost effective than sending staff to foreign countries. The initiative will allow hands-on expertise and support to the PED to bring the best and most up to date effective teaching practices to New Mexico.

5. PED “Parents College”

- The PED will provide seminars to parents, on weekends or evenings, on practical hands-on strategies for helping their children succeed at age appropriate levels. The training sessions will be videotaped and put on the PED website for sustained parental support. The sessions will be made easily accessible to principals and parents statewide as a renewable training resource.

6. Exemplary Educators Network

- The network will bring together New Mexico’s award winning educators to inform education policy development and best practices. The proposed Board will consist of twelve members that serve a two-year staggered term. Members must have received a State Award or Recognition or be National Board Certified Teachers in good standing.

Governor Richardson’s initiatives will secure a brighter future for the New Mexico community, motivate student achievement and commitment to education, and create more resources for best teaching practices and parent involvement,” Secretary Garcia said. “I am very optimistic about long-term results.”