



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR BILL RICHARDSON



For Immediate Release
May 1, 2008

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Governor Bill Richardson Recognized for Pre-K Funding by National Organization

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today was recognized by Pre-K Now, a national advocacy group, for being one of only a few Governors who proposed Pre-K budget increases for the 2008-2009 school year.

“Pre-K is an essential part of my commitment to give every New Mexico child the opportunities to succeed,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “We need to continue building on the successes we’ve seen with our voluntary pre-k program—more children entering elementary school with better vocabulary, and improved early math and reading skills.”

Governor Richardson is in some exclusive company according to Pre-K Now’s new report, “Leadership Matters.” Only 16 Governors made increases to pre-k funding in their budget proposals during the 2008 Legislative session. This was a drop from 29 Governors who requested increases last year.

“Despite the current budget squeeze, Governor Richardson has the foresight to recognize that funding pre-k now will benefit our children and economy far into the future,” said Libby Doggett, Executive Director of Pre-K Now.

New Mexico’s Pre-K program is in its third year of operation. Currently there are 58 programs serving approximately 3,568 four year old children in 43 communities across the state with a budget of \$14 million.

“High school is too late to begin to close the achievement gap with remediation and course recovery,” said Secretary of Education Veronica C. García. “Our kindergarten through grade 3 programs are showing great results, but our students are still having to play catch up. We need full implementation of Pre-K if are we to close the achievement gap on the front end of our education system.”

The Governor requested, and the 2008 Legislature approved, \$ 19.3 million for Pre-K programs for the 2008-2009 school. The allocation will provide for an increase of approximately 1,314 children, and likely translate into an additional 65 classrooms.

Pre-K Now’s “Leadership Matters” report can be found at <http://www.preknow.org/>

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