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NEWS RELEASE

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New Flexibility and Accountability Measures Highlight Education Stimulus Funding

(Santa Fe, NM) – New Mexico Education Secretary Veronica C. Garcia and members of the Governor's staff joined a conference call this morning following the release of the most recent guidance from the United States Department of Education regarding use of the stabilization dollars.

“In addition to helping restore budget cuts, these dollars will continue to move education reform forward in New Mexico and the country at large,” Secretary García said. “The requirement for greater transparency, data collection, and accountability will definitely have a positive impact on education in our state.”

One of the major changes in federal guidance is the requirement to have a state plan to collect student performance as tied to teacher and principal evaluations.

“This new recommendation will require New Mexico to reach a new level of accountability,” said Secretary García. “There will be increased flexibility, but also increased requirements for accountability, not only for students, but for teachers and principals as well.”

In his comments, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan encouraged all states to apply for growth models when calculating their Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Growth models are designed to measure change in achievement that shows student improvement over a two or three year period. The current model used by New Mexico to calculate AYP is based on measuring the number of students at the proficient level in only one year.

“New Mexico will apply for greater flexibility in calculating AYP by using a growth model,” Secretary García said.

Graduation rates are another area covered in the federal guidance.

“I am encouraged to see that Secretary Duncan is also looking at allowing states to count high school students who graduate after the traditional four years, as an ‘on time graduate’,” Secretary García said.

“I am also pleased to see that there will be stricter performance requirements for supplemental education service providers.”

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Secretary Garcia will be sharing this new ARRA information today to both superintendents and charter school leaders as part of the NMPED and the New Mexico Association of School Business Officials at their spring budget workshop at the Hotel Albuquerque.

The Secretary is also establishing advisory groups from around the state. These groups will provide input for the various funding grants.

New Mexico is poised to receive well over \$500 million over the next two years for various grants including funding for special education, impact aid construction, Title I - education for disadvantaged children, education technology, vocational rehabilitation, and stabilization dollars.

Approximately \$165 million from the stabilization funds will be distributed to school districts through the state's funding formula. Districts will receive allocation in July. These funds will be used to provide fiscal relief to prevent tax increases and cutbacks to critical education services and can be used as general fund dollars for the operation of districts and schools.

New Mexico will receive over \$94 million for special education that will be distributed through current school district applications. An additional allocation of \$2.9 million will be allocated for IDEA Part C, family infant and toddler program. These funds will assist in meeting the excess costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities.

New Mexico will receive over \$100 million for Title I programs. These programs include resources for supplemental education funding, especially in high-poverty areas and for programs that provide extra academic support to raise achievement of students at risk.

Approximately \$5.2 million in funds will be available for education technology, \$4 million for impact aid construction, \$4 million in Vocational Rehabilitation funding, and \$247,000 in funds for independent living centers.

New Mexico will also be able to apply for competitive grants to enhance teacher quality and the statewide longitudinal data system.

Guidance documents and complete information on the ARRA funds are available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/index.html>

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