



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Lieutenant Governor*

**Diane D. Denish**  
*Lieutenant Governor*

Dear School Administrator:

On January 6, 1912, New Mexico became the 47th state in the union. In April of 2008 Governor Bill Richardson signed an executive order creating the New Mexico Centennial of Statehood Task Force. Its purpose is to give New Mexico residents and visitors access to a deeper understanding of our state's rich and diverse history and culture.

My goal is to commemorate our state's 100th anniversary by engaging our 9<sup>th</sup> graders – the Class of 2012. This class will be called Centennial Graduates. I invite every 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to take part in this initiative. Over the next four years, our 2012 graduates will have the opportunity to take part in many statewide centennial projects as we prepare to commemorate our state's centennial anniversary. As part of the celebration, I will be leading initiatives that highlight the importance of educating our youth for success, deepening connections to culture and community, and understanding New Mexico's past, present, and future.

With your support, I also plan to initiate a scholarship program that demonstrates a student's academic achievement, academic achievement, community service, citizenship, and career pathways. It is important for you to know that the Centennial Graduates Initiative will not add additional work to our teachers and administrators. The intention is to create excitement about the high school experience and graduation, and to increase engagement by bringing attention to existing programs and incentives. I encourage freshmen to participate in a rigorous program of study that aligns to the High School Redesign requirements.

Over the next few months, I will be working with our partners from the Coalition of School Administrators, the New Mexico School Boards Association, the Public Education and Higher Education Departments. We will align existing initiatives and help you promote all of the exciting opportunities available to your students.

Promotion of the 2012 Centennial Graduates Initiative began in September with freshman classes statewide. I have received positive reactions from students, parents, staff, and administration at the fourteen high schools we visited including schools in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Deming, Lordsburg, Silver City, Taos, Raton, and T or C.

Please contact my Director of Special Projects, Carlos Acosta at (505) 476-2256, to arrange a visit to a high school in your district or for more information about the Centennial Graduates Initiative.

I look forward to working with you as we celebrate and commemorate the unique culture, history, and people that have made, and will continue to make, New Mexico the Land of Enchantment.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diane D. Denish".

Diane D. Denish  
Lieutenant Governor