



Hanna Skandera  
Secretary

New Mexico  
Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786  
[www.ped.state.nm.us](http://www.ped.state.nm.us)

Robert McEntyre  
Public Information Officer  
(505) 470-2620  
[Robert.McEntyre2@state.nm.us](mailto:Robert.McEntyre2@state.nm.us)

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Three New Mexico Schools Win National 2015 Blue Ribbon Awards

**SANTA FE, NM** – Today, Governor Susana Martinez congratulated three New Mexico schools on being named 2015 Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education. The Blue Ribbon School award is one of DOE's highest honors for excellent academic achievement or academic improvement in schools. The three schools are Newcomb Elementary School in Newcomb; Melrose Elementary School in Melrose; and Mora High School in Mora. These three New Mexico schools are among only 335 schools across the United States to be named Blue Ribbon Schools in 2015. Leaders from each of the three schools will be invited to a recognition ceremony in Washington D.C. on Nov. 8 and 9.

"We're so proud of the students, teachers, and school staff who worked so hard to earn this recognition," said Governor Martinez. "Their achievements serve as a proud example of what New Mexicans can accomplish; when we set higher standards for our students, teachers, and schools, they always rise to the occasion."

Newcomb Elementary School was recognized as an Exemplary High Performing School. More than 98 percent of 304 students served at this school are Native American. Newcomb Elementary has advanced from a "C" school letter grade to an "A" in just one year. The school is located in the Central Consolidated School District.

Melrose Elementary School was recognized for Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing. The school serves 125 students in eastern New Mexico's Curry County, and advanced from a "B" school to an "A" school in the most recent school grade year. Melrose Elementary is the sole elementary school in the Melrose Municipal School District.

Mora High School was recognized for Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing. Serving 138 students in Mora County, this northern New Mexico school has maintained an "A" school grade for the past two years. Mora High School is located in the Mora Independent School District.

"These Blue Ribbon schools are a great example of students, educators, and communities reaching higher and showing great results," said New Mexico Public Education Department Secretary Hanna Skandera. "Each of these schools deserves this recognition and has demonstrated what is possible for our kids when we put their interests first. These schools are truly among the best in New Mexico and the United States, and their communities should be proud of the hard work of these educators, students, and families."

To qualify for the award, schools had to demonstrate dramatic progress in student achievement growth or show overall academic excellence. Nominated schools must have earned an “A” letter grade based on New Mexico’s A-F School Grading System. After being nominated, each school submits an application to the United States Department of Education for consideration and review. Schools nominated for student achievement growth must demonstrate significant progress in closing the achievement gap between student the highest performing students and the lowest performing students, while schools recognized for overall academic excellence must rank among the state’s highest performing schools.

Since 1982, the United States Department of Education has invited annual National Blue Ribbon School nominations from state education agencies and top education officials. A total of 420 schools nationwide may be nominated, with awards determined by the number of K-12 students and schools in each state or jurisdiction.

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