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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Two New Mexico Students Selected as 2009 Presidential Scholars By US Department of Education

(Santa Fe, NM) - Education Secretary Dr. Veronica C. García is pleased to announce that two New Mexico graduating seniors have been selected as 2009 Presidential Scholars in the United States Department of Education's Presidential Scholars Program.

They are among only 141 outstanding American high school seniors who will be honored in June for their accomplishments in Washington, D.C. at the National Recognition Week activities.

Andrew A. Chael, Manzano High School, and Elise C. Gurney, Albuquerque High School were selected for the prestigious honor on the basis of their demonstrated outstanding academic achievement, leadership, citizenship, and community service.

"Andrew and Elise are congratulated on their leadership and academic achievement," said Secretary García. "They are role models for all students and represent the promise of greatness in New Mexico's youth."

Four students were named as semifinalists in the 2008 Presidential Scholars Program. They are Dominique Y. Kang, La Cueva High School and Zachariah R. Lott, Garrett G. Nygren, and Katherine V. Warrick all from Albuquerque Academy.

Since 1983, each Presidential Scholar has invited his or her most inspiring and challenging teacher to travel to Washington, D.C., to receive a Teacher Recognition Award from the U.S. Department of Education and to participate in the recognition events. Invited to this year's events are two teachers from Albuquerque High School. Andrew Chael selected Patricia Gardner, English teacher, and Elise Gurney selected Samuel Davidson, Counselor.

A 29 member Commission on Presidential Scholars appointed by the President selected the scholars based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership and demonstrated commitment to high ideals.

Over 2,700 candidates qualified on the basis of ACT or SAT scores and only 550 semifinalists were selected from across the county. The program was established by Executive Order in 1964 to honor academic achievement by graduating high school seniors.

For a complete list of 2009 Scholars and more information on the 2009 Presidential Scholar Program visit the website at: [HTTP://WWW.ED.GOV/NEWS/PRESSRELEASES/2009/05/05042009A.HTML](http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/05/05042009A.HTML)

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