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NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of Education Reopens Written Public Input on Pledge of Allegiance Rule

Santa Fe, NM – Secretary of Education Veronica C. García today announced that the written public comment period for the Pledge of Allegiance rule change is now reopened. Written public comments will be accepted through Monday, July 27 at 5 p.m.

The Public Education Department proposes to add one sentence to the rule to align the rule with prevailing federal court decisions across the country, including an important decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The change would say, “any person not wishing to participate in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance shall, without consequence or retaliation, be exempt from reciting it and need not participate.”

A link to the proposed one-sentence rule change can be viewed online at:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/press/2009/rules/6.10.2.pdf>.

“The Pledge of Allegiance is an important American tradition that acknowledges the sacrifices of the men and women throughout our nation’s history,” Secretary García said. “However, some students may choose not to recite the Pledge of Allegiance because of their religion or beliefs. These students must also be respected. The ability to discuss this issue openly and respect all views is what makes our country great. This rule change is part of a two year effort to update various rules including the Standards for Excellence. The change updates an outdated regulation and will also provide clear guidance to schools on an issue that has clearly been settled by the courts.”

Written comments can be sent to Mary Deets, Office of General Counsel, Public Education Department, 300 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe, NM, 87501. Comments may be sent by e-mail to MaryH.Deets@state.nm.us or by fax to (505) 827-6681.

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