



# New Mexico Public Education Department

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Secretary García Congratulates 3 New Mexico Schools Chosen As 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools

SANTA FE – New Mexico Secretary of Education Veronica C. García today congratulated Bluewater Elementary in Grants, Harrison H. Schmitt Elementary in Silver City, and Valley View Elementary in Roswell for being named 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools by the United States Department of Education.

US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the names of 314 schools as 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools earlier today in Maryland. The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement and helped close gaps in achievement among minority and disadvantaged students. The schools – 264 public and 50 private – will be honored at an awards ceremony on November 3 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC.

“These three New Mexico schools are recognized as Blue Ribbon schools because they have demonstrated dramatic improvements for all students in their school by increasing reading and mathematics proficiency,” said Secretary García. “These schools can provide excellent best-practice examples for instruction to other schools. I congratulate the students, parents, teachers and school administrations in achieving this national recognition.”

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private schools based on one of two criteria: 1) Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests; and 2) Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that demonstrate dramatic improvement of student performance to high levels on state tests. Each school completed an extensive application that was reviewed by a United State Department of Education Committee, and was required to meet Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP, in reading (language arts) and mathematics for the 2008-2009 school year.

All three New Mexico schools met the criteria for the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Bluewater – 63 percent; Harrison H. Schmitt – 66 percent; and Valley View – 100 percent. The three schools also increased student performance in reading and mathematics over the last four years. Bluewater Elementary had a 23 point increase in student reading and a 19 point change in mathematics. Harrison H. Schmitt Elementary increased 11 points in reading and 29 point increase in mathematics. Valley View Elementary had a 12 point increase in reading and a 24 point increase in mathematics.

A complete list of 2009 *No Child Left Behind--Blue Ribbon Schools* is available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html>.

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