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NEWS RELEASE

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Education Secretary Releases Statement on Graduation Rates

(Santa Fe, NM) – New Mexico Secretary of Education Veronica C. García releases the following statement in response to a graduation rate story in this morning’s **Albuquerque Journal**.

“It is unfortunate that APS jumped the gun, discussed preliminary data, and has ignited public confusion. No public trust should be lost. The reason we have review processes in place is to ensure that we have the most accurate data possible when we finalize the numbers the first week of October. I am incredulous at the implication that somehow PED is responsible for the inaccuracy of the district’s self-reporting and subsequent corrections.”

“As is routine practice, districts self report data to the Public Education Department as a part of our statewide accountability system. Districts are given the benefit of having two opportunities per quarter to review, update, and validate their data. We have been working with APS and 88 other districts statewide for five years to ensure data quality and to report numbers publicly to hold New Mexico schools to a new level of accountability. As indicated by APS, their data quality was poor, and they submitted over 1700 corrections after their original submission. As is routine practice, we are working closely with the district to audit the data and certify the final numbers. That process will not conclude for the 89 districts statewide until the first week of October, as has been the practice for the last five years.”

“Let’s not lose focus. Bottom line, we have approximately 40,000 students that have dropped out of New Mexico’s high schools over the last four years. We need to know the final graduation rate, but we also need to identify how we are going to keep students in local high schools so they can graduate with a diploma and the skills to function in college or a career. That is the purpose of Graduate New Mexico and that should continue to be the focus.”

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