



New Mexico Public Education Department

300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786
ped.state.nm.us

Dr. Veronica C. García
Secretary of Education

Beverly Friedman and Danielle Montoya
Public Information Officers
505-827-6661 505-476-0393

Bev.Friedman@state.nm.us Danielle.Montoya@state.nm.us

NEWS RELEASE

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Council for State Governments-WEST Gives Innovation Award to PED-HED's IDEAL-NM Program

SANTA FE – The Council for State Governments-WEST today announced that the New Mexico's Innovative Digital Education and Learning (IDEAL-NM) program was one of eight national winners to receive the 2009 Council for State Governments (CSG) Innovation Award. Each year, CSG's four national regions selects two winners for the national award. The second winner in the western region was Wyoming's "Healthy Families Succeed" program.



Chair of the Council of State Government's Innovation Selection Committee, Senator Paula Sandoval of Colorado congratulates New Mexico Education Secretary Veronica C. Garcia for New Mexico's IDEAL-NM program being chosen as a winner of the 2009 CSG Innovation Award.

IDEAL-NM provides eLearning services to New Mexico P-12 schools, higher education institutions, and government agencies. While many states have virtual programming for high schools, and all have higher education involvement in eLearning, New Mexico is the first state in the nation to create a statewide eLearning system that encompasses all aspects of learning from traditional public and higher education environments to teacher professional development, continuing education and workforce education. The initiative reduces geographic and capacity barriers to educational opportunity while increasing the digital literacy skills students need to participate in a global economy.

The IDEAL-NM program is a collaboration of the New Mexico Higher Education and Public Education Departments, and a key element to Governor Richardson's *Graduate New Mexico, It's Everybody's Business* initiative to bring 10,000 high school dropouts back to school.

"I am proud of New Mexico's innovation in government," said Governor Richardson. "IDEAL-NM expands educational opportunities from middle school, to college and career, and on into the workforce. It's a smart investment of taxpayer dollars that also reduces travel costs and benefits the environment."

IDEAL-NM was one of six finalists for the government innovation award among 22 applicants in the western region, and 97 applications nationally. New Mexico Education Secretary Veronica C. García presented additional information on IDEAL-NM to the eight-member CSG-WEST Innovations Awards Selection Committee on Sunday, October 4. The actual award will be presented to New Mexico in November at the annual CSG national conference as one of only eight national awards.

"Students taking IDEAL-NM courses have greater than a 95% pass rate from credit recovery to advancement. It connects more students to highly qualified teachers, allows districts to expand curriculum, and allows all districts free access and use of state-developed curriculum and other technology tools," said Secretary García. IDEAL-NM has the potential to greatly impact student success in New Mexico."

"IDEAL-NM exemplifies the positive outcomes of innovative and well-considered partnerships – specifically that of higher education and public education working hand in hand to help students succeed in college and career," said New Mexico Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Vi Florez. "Together, through initiatives such as IDEAL-NM, we will continue to increase educational attainment and expand professional development opportunities for New Mexicans."

IDEAL-NM has had more than 2,000 middle and high school enrollments in 53 courses. Students taking courses have over a 95% pass rate. Thirty-one state agencies are currently participating in online training for state employees and 13 higher education institutions offer online courses through IDEAL-NM's shared technology.

CSG is the nation's only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. CSG established the Innovations Awards Program in 1986 to bring greater visibility to exemplary state programs and practices, and to facilitate the transfer of those successful experiences to other states. The program is the only comprehensive national awards program that focuses exclusively on state programs and policies.

For more information on the IDEAL-NM program go to: <http://www.ideal-nm.org/> For information on the Council for State Governments, go to: <http://www.csg.org/>

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