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Governor Bill Richardson Announces Fewer New Mexico Students Need College Remediation

Annual "Ready for College" report on college readiness released

SANTA FE –Governor Bill Richardson today announced that New Mexico is making steady progress toward improving the number of public high school graduates who go on to college and who do not need remedial courses. The progress is outlined in the just released "Ready for College" report.

"My administration has focused on improving education opportunities of all New Mexico students, no matter where they are on their educational path, and I am pleased that our efforts to prepare students for college are paying off," Governor Richardson said. "When we reduce the need for our students to take remediation courses in college, we set those students on a path to a more promising future, save the state money, and help to strengthen our economy,"

The number of New Mexico public high school graduates who attend state colleges and universities increased by 367 students in 2009. Most significant in this year's report is the decrease by 3.1 percent from 2008 to 2009 in the percentage of students who need remediation (3 percent in math; 2.7 percent in reading). The Ready for College Report, a report issued annually by the Office of Education Accountability, the Public Education Department and the Higher Education Department tracks the number of New Mexico high school graduates who go on to take remedial math and reading classes at state colleges and universities.

"These results are encouraging and show that our high school redesign efforts which include greater access to dual credit, on line coursework, and Advanced Placement classes are better preparing students for college and career," said Secretary of Education Dr. Veronica C. Garcia. "We must continue to encourage more rigor and relevance in the high school curriculum."

The state's education agencies agree that the new dual credit initiative, in which eligible high school students may receive both high school and college credit for certain courses, is likely a strong contributing factor to the improved rate. Data show that a higher percentage of students who took dual credit courses (67 percent) attended college in Fall 2009, higher than New Mexico's average high school to college going rate (approximately 50 percent).

"We know the value of a college education continues to offer students greater options, both professionally and personally," said Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Vi Florez. "The dual credit program has demonstrated that it is an effective tool for our high school students to succeed in both college and career."

"The improvements in this year's report show what can happen when public education and higher education work together for the benefit of our students," said Dr. Peter Winograd, lead author of the Ready for College reports and Education Advisor to the Governor "I credit Governor Richardson and Secretaries Garcia and

Florez for keeping a strong focus on the importance of a P-20 education system, and to the high schools and higher education institutions for their willingness to work together. I also want to recognize all of the students who worked so hard both in high school and in college.”

Over the past seven years, the Public Education Department has implemented significant initiatives such as the High School Redesign program, the dual credit option, distance learning through [IDEAL-NM](#) (Innovative Digital Education and Learning), and increases in national testing such as Advanced Placement, Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test, ACT and SAT to help students be better prepared for college-level study.

Notably, PED released the latest cohort graduation rate numbers last week that showed that the four year cohort graduation rate for New Mexico schools has increased from 60 percent in 2008 to 66 percent in 2009.

The Ready for College report is designed to provide the Governor, the Legislature, and educators with data on college readiness to improve the alignment between public high schools and state colleges and universities. It serves to illustrate areas in need of improvement and allows the State to focus on the education system as a whole, and thus to bring about policy changes to address those needs. The report includes appendices that provide details for each school/school district. Although the report does not account for students who have attended college out of state or at a tribal college, state agencies have been working with tribal education entities to allow for better data collection, which will improve decision-making abilities related to the Native population in future reports.

The report recommends continued tracking of student progress from middle school through high school and into college, implementation of the College and Career Ready Policy Institute recommendations, and development of a Ready for Careers report to track preparedness and success of those students who do not attend college.

For more information contact Laura Mulry, PIO at Higher Education Department at 505-476-8406 or Beverly Friedman, PIO at Public Education Department at 505-827-6661. To view the report in full, visit <http://education.nmdfa.state.nm.us>, www.ped.state.nm.us or www.hed.state.nm.us.

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