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NEWS RELEASE

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New Mexico a National Leader in Graduation Rate Growth

SANTA FE – New Mexico's schools are leading a strong national trend toward graduation rate growth among nearly every demographic group, according to data released last week by the US Department of Education comparing state graduation rates between 2011 and 2013.

"America's students have achieved another record-setting milestone," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said. "We can take pride as a nation in knowing that we're seeing promising gains, including for students of color. This is a vital step toward readiness for success in college and careers for every student in this country, and these improvements are thanks to the hard work of teachers, principals, students and families."

New Mexico's growth in graduation rates over the period was 7%, over three times the national average of 2%. Only two states, Alabama and Nevada, saw higher growth during the same timeframe.

The overall growth in New Mexico's graduation rate was strongly driven by increases among Hispanic students who saw growth of 8.6%, more than twice the national average of 4.2%, and American Indian students who saw an increase of 8.3% compared to 4.7% nationally. Black students saw growth of 8.6% compared to 3.7% nationally.

Other student groups in New Mexico which saw graduation rate increases over twice the national average were economically disadvantaged students who saw growth by 8.2% compared to 3.3% nationally, English Language Learners who saw an increase of 9.5% compared to 4.1% nationally, and students with disabilities who saw an increase of 13.1% compared to 2.9% nationally.

"I am proud of the students, teachers and administrators who worked hard to make these gains possible," said New Mexico's Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera. "While we are encouraged by this progress, three out of every ten students that enroll still do not graduate from high school. We must continue to work together and champion programs and policies that make a difference for our kids."

"Since day one, this administration has focused on increasing educational opportunities and outcomes for New Mexico's students," said Governor Susana Martinez. "The growth in our graduation rate is encouraging but we must continue to embrace reform and work toward long-term, substantial improvements in our education system. How we've done things in the past is no longer good enough. We have to have higher expectations for our high schools and provide targeted resources to the schools in our state facing the highest rates of habitual truancy."

The proposed FY16 budget which passed the Legislature last week includes nearly \$3,000,000 to continue programs under the New Mexico Graduates Now! Initiative (which include investments in Advanced Placement, college or career preparedness initiatives, a dropout prevention data system, and other reforms), as well as a total of \$12,500,000 to provide direct support to districts, schools, and students in need of additional support and intervention. Included in these packages is funding to support district pilots for truancy and dropout prevention, and for social workers in select middle schools

New Mexico's statewide graduation rate for the class of 2014 is 69.3%, an increase over what was previously reported earlier this year. Every year, the Public Education Department offers an appeals window for a set period of time after graduation rates are initially released in order for districts and charter schools to make updates or corrections to their submitted data. This year, the window closed on March 4.

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Sources:

US Department of Education release on national graduation rate increases:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-high-school-graduation-rate-hits-new-record-high>

US Department of Education state by state data:

http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/tables/ACGR_2010-11_to_2012-13.asp

US Department of Education state by state subgroup data:

[Table 1](#). Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, and the District of Columbia: School year 2010–11

[Table 2](#). Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographics for the United States, the 50 states, and the District of Columbia: School year 2012–13