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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Governor Susana Martinez Recognizes New Mexico Teacher of the Year

**Las Cruces, NM** — Today, Governor Susana Martinez joined students and staff at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces to recognize and congratulate David Morales as the 2016 New Mexico Teacher of the Year. Morales is a social studies and ENLACE program teacher at Mayfield High School in Las Cruces Public Schools, and was named 2015 Las Cruces Teacher of the Year in April 2015.

"Mr. Morales knows firsthand what a difference a good teacher can make in the life of a student, not just academically, but as an adult who is on your side," said Governor Martinez. "Every day, he represents the best of New Mexico's talented and dedicated teachers. I'm so proud Mr. Morales is sharing his talent and passion with our students in New Mexico."

Morales is in his 11<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Mayfield High School, where he teaches courses focused on New Mexico history, United States history, ENLACE, the English Language Learner Summer Academy, and Credit Recovery Night School. He has served as a facilitator with the Institute for Family Engagement, and is the assistant coach for the Mayfield Lady Trojan Varsity Soccer team. He has demonstrated great success with students through the ENLACE program, which focuses on graduating more Hispanic and Latino students and getting them to college. In the past year alone, 97 percent of students in Morales's ENLACE program graduated from high school and 91 percent enrolled in a higher education program. The ENLACE program provides students with support and guidance, as well as additional learning opportunities in school and in the community.

Morales was among 16 semi-finalists considered for the recognition of Teacher of the Year. All candidates were required to submit a resume, essay, three letters of recommendation, and demonstrate professional and community engagement. A committee of state and local education leaders reviewed the semifinalists' applications. The committee submitted the top four highest-scoring applications to a final selection committee that included the 2015 New Mexico Teacher of the Year Debra Minyard of Pojoaque, former Executive of the New Mexico Leadership Institute Dr. Linda Paul, and Deputy Secretary of Education Leighann Lenti.

In April of 2016, Morales will travel to Washington, D.C., to be recognized alongside other state Teachers of the Year. During this time, the National Teacher of the Year will be announced by President Obama and

the Council of Chief State School Officers. The National Teacher of the Year is chosen from among the State Teachers of the Year by a selection committee representing major national education organizations.

“Teachers like David Morales are the difference-makers in New Mexico’s schools,” said Hanna Skandera, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Public Education Department. “He is an inspiration to his students and community.”

The New Mexico Teacher of the Year Program has recognized outstanding teachers across the state since 1963. All New Mexico school districts and charter schools are invited each year to nominate an outstanding teacher for this award. Each year’s honoree represents New Mexico in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

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