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# NEWS RELEASE

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## U.S. Department of Education Approves NM's Plan to Provide Every Child Access to Effective Teachers

**SANTA FE, NM** – Today, the U.S. Department of Education approved New Mexico's plan to ensure that every child has access to effective teachers, clearing the way for a quality education for more New Mexico students. The plan will help ensure that low-income and minority students have access to great educators. New Mexico's plan was specifically praised for incorporating data from its teacher evaluation system.

"Every student deserves the opportunity to have a quality education from a great teacher – regardless of where they live or their circumstances in life," said New Mexico Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera. "A great, effective teacher is the true difference maker in educating our children. We have to make sure that great teachers can serve students in all schools across New Mexico and give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential."

New Mexico's plan for eliminating the equity gap focuses on four key areas: recruiting and retaining effective teachers; teacher preparation; ensuring teachers provide culturally relevant instruction; and teacher mentorship and professional development. PED began development of the plan upon the release of a New Mexico equity profile by the USDOE in the fall of 2014.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan commented in a press release announcing the approval, "All parents understand that strong teaching is fundamental to strong opportunities for their children. We as a country should treat that opportunity as a right that every family has—regardless of race, ethnicity or national origin, zip code, wealth, or first language."

In May of 2015, PED hosted three stakeholder engagement meetings in Albuquerque, Roswell, and Santa Fe to discuss the findings of the equity profile and determine solutions. PED additionally invited stakeholders to provide written feedback and recommendations for consideration. PED's review found that students in poverty and minority students are less likely to have an effective teacher in their classroom. Similarly, students in poverty and minority students are more likely to have an inexperienced teacher in their classroom. PED will annually report progress in equity gap elimination to the public.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I requires that all states develop a plan for providing equal access to effective educators. Last year, the Department of Education asked that states submit new, comprehensive plans as part of the Excellent Educators for All Initiative. The USDOE reviews plans to

ensure they meet the requirements set in ESEA. New Mexico's Educator Equity Plan and other information can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/resources.html>.

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