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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Lt. Governor Diane Denish and NM Education Secretaries Celebrate Grand Opening of Statewide Distance Learning Program IDEAL-NM**

**SANTA FE** – Today Lt. Governor Diane Denish, Education Secretary Dr. Veronica C. García, and Higher Education Secretary Dr. Reed Dasenbrock celebrated the grand opening of New Mexico's statewide distance learning program at Bernalillo High School's Computer Clubhouse. The symbolic ribbon cutting ceremony marks statewide open enrollment for Innovative Digital Education and Learning in New Mexico or IDEAL-NM.

The initiative will give all of New Mexico's public schools, colleges, and universities the ability to develop, share, and offer online courses and tutoring, increase access to quality teaching and educational opportunities for students, workforce development, adult learners, and government employees. IDEAL-NM is intended to support the public school system and higher education institutions.

Lt. Governor Diane Denish said, "We want to encourage schools statewide to participate in grand opening and reopening events for their libraries, computer pods, community centers, and anywhere else they can get internet access. IDEAL-NM makes all of those old spaces, new places for educational opportunities."

"The first phase of IDEAL-NM focuses on our high schools but the vision is that it will eventually serve students from PreK through higher education and into continuing education. We envision IDEAL-NM expanding educational opportunities and access, improving graduation rates, and involving students more in their own educational planning," said Education Secretary Dr. Veronica C. García.

Cooperatively administered by the Public Education Department (PED) and the Higher Education Department (HED), the program initiatives aim to:

- provide eLearning services to P-12 schools, higher education institutions, and government agencies;
- reduce geographic and other barriers to educational opportunity statewide; and
- increase the computer literacy skills online learners need to participate in a global economy.

\*\*\*More\*\*\*More\*\*\*More\*\*\*

Dr. Reed Dasenbrock, Higher Education Secretary said, "Today's grand opening represents IDEAL-NM and our state moving forward. With this new technology, we can offer every student, statewide, access to a 21st century education. IDEAL-NM will better prepare our students for the future whether it be college or career."

IDEAL-NM piloted two semesters of courses statewide serving 246 students across 17 districts in 53 different courses. Students registering for the 2008 Fall semester will have their choice of

- 19 courses developed by New Mexico course developers and taught by highly qualified New Mexico teachers (NMCA is currently developing an additional 18 courses for the spring 2009 semester);
- 15 courses purchased from a course vendor (Aventa) and taught by highly qualified New Mexico teachers; and
- 19 Advanced Placement courses via national providers.

Staff at the eLearning services center is responsible for all aspects of the operation of IDEAL-NM and the cyber academy, including:

- administrative and technical help desk services for eLearning students, instructors, facilitators;
- academic services for students;
- course development;
- teacher training and professional development;
- scheduling and management of online courses; and
- continuing eLearning planning.

For more information about IDEAL-NM please contact Dr. Tim Snyder, IDEAL-NM Executive Director at 505-383-2402 or [tim.snyder@state.nm.us](mailto:tim.snyder@state.nm.us) or visit the IDEAL-NM website at <http://www.ideal-nm.org/>.

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