



Dr. Veronica C. García
Secretary of Education

New Mexico
Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786
www.ped.state.nm.us

Beverly Friedman and Danielle Montoya
Public Information Officers
505-827-6661 505-476-0393

Bev.Friedman@state.nm.us Danielle.Montoya@state.nm.us

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: February 18, 2010

New Mexico One of 8 States to Participate in Early High School Graduation Program

Santa Fe, NM — New Mexico is one of eight states that will participate in the Board Examination Systems Program that will allow high school sophomores to voluntarily test out of their last two years of high school, to prepare students for college coursework, and to get a degree, announced Education Secretary Veronica C. García today.

The program, organized by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), Washington based non-profit, will work with states to provide college preparatory curricula for high schools so that students can take rigorous world class board examinations to exit high school and possibly enroll early in college. Students will be encouraged to remain in high school to continue taking college prep courses their junior and senior years if they wish to enter Ivy league-type colleges and universities. The program will also provide that fewer students will need remediation when they do enroll in higher education and will cut down on college drop-outs.

“Making world class instructional systems available to high schools in New Mexico will complement challenging coursework already provided to our students,” said Secretary García. “Providing an opportunity for many high school sophomores and juniors to accelerate their education and reducing college remedial work, are exciting opportunities. I look forward to this partnership.”

The Public Education Department will begin meeting with education partners, superintendents, and teachers next week to discuss more of the specifics of the program. The pilot program will begin with students taking coursework in the 2011-2012 school year in school districts and/or school who volunteer for this program.

The NCEE program was one of the initiatives in New Mexico's Rate to the Top application submitted earlier this month.

Other states who volunteered to participate in the NCEE program include Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is providing funding for states and school districts to plan for this program

Board Examination Systems are currently used in high performing nations such as Australia, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Scotland, Singapore, parts of Canada and Germany.

For more information on the program, go to <http://www.skillscommission.org/boardexaminationproject.htm>

###