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# NEWS RELEASE

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## NM Public Education Department Announces 5<sup>th</sup> Year of Providing Reading Books to Every First Grade Student in New Mexico

**SANTA FE, NM** – Today, New Mexico Public Education Department Cabinet Secretary Hanna Skandera announced that for the fifth year in a row, every New Mexico first grade student will receive their own reading book. In total, nearly 28,000 books will be distributed to every first grade student in New Mexico to encourage them to read with their families when away from school and help parents to become more involved with their child's education.

"Every first grade student will have a book of their very own to help develop reading skills outside of the classroom, and I hope that parents and families take advantage of this opportunity to read with their students at home," Secretary Skandera said. "Reading is the foundation for learning, and it's important that students build these skills early on so that they are better prepared to succeed in later grades."

Since this initiative began in 2012, over 140,000 books have been distributed to first graders throughout the state. Books are provided in English, Spanish, and the Navajo language. Titles for 2016 include: *Ten for Me*, *Newton and Me*, *Maya's Blanket/La Manta de Maya*, and *The Hogan that Great-Grandfather Built*. This year's selections are all written by award-winning authors or have been recognized with major children's book awards.

Earlier this summer, books were delivered directly to New Mexico public school districts and charter schools, who will distribute the books as the new school year kicks off.

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