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NEWS RELEASE

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PED Releases Graduation Rate for Class of 2014-2015

SANTA FE, NM – Today, the New Mexico Public Education Department released a graduation rate of 68.6% for the New Mexico Class of 2014-2015. This represents a slight dip compared to the previous graduating class of 2013-2014, but remains more than 5 points higher since the beginning of this administration.

Fifty-three percent of the state's 89 school districts saw rising graduation rates compared to the previous year. Districts such as Bernalillo, Bloomfield, Clovis, and Espanola saw their rates increase by five percent or more, while Belen saw an increase of 14.5% compared to last year.

Students with disabilities saw a jump of nearly 2% from 57.4% to 59.3%. American Indian students also graduated at a higher rate, increasing to 62.9% from 61.7%. Low-income students saw an increase of 0.5% to 63.5%.

"While our graduation rate remains higher than when we first took office, we still have to get more of our kids across the graduation finish line," said New Mexico Secretary of Education Hanna Skandera. "We're investing more in education than ever before, including investments to keep kids in school and on track to graduate, but building the best foundation for success early on is an important part. That's why we have to stop recklessly passing our young children onto the next grade even when they cannot read."

At the beginning of this school year, Governor Martinez announced an initiative to keep more kids in school by investing \$3.8 million to hire nearly 60 dropout coaches and social workers in schools across New Mexico. The positions will be placed in middle and high schools in 21 districts and charter schools across New Mexico to keep kids in school, reduce truancy, and help more students graduate. The funding for each position was conducted earlier in 2015 through a grant process with the Public Education Department. Districts and charter schools receiving the grant funding demonstrated both the highest needs in reducing truancy, as well as a clear plan for using the new staff.

PED has also worked with 17 schools over the past two school years to pilot an Early Warning System, a program that monitors students' academic, disciplinary, and attendance history throughout elementary, middle, and high school to see where a student may need special attention. The program raises red flags if a student has failed any classes during middle and high school, and other data gathered keeps schools informed if students are on track to graduate and meeting the benchmarks required for graduation. This information is designed to give schools the insight to intervene with students early on to address any

potential issues before a drop-out occurs. The system is slated to be rolled-out to all schools and districts later this year.

Last December, the Governor called on the legislature to pass a bill that would prohibit habitually truant students from obtaining or keeping a driver's license or permit. In the most recent legislative session, the bill passed in the House of Representatives and a similar bill died in a Senate committee.

Full graduation rate data by district and school for the class of 2014-2015 can be found online here: http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/Graduation_data.html.

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