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NEWS RELEASE

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New Mexico's 4th and 8th Grade Science Scores Lower than National Average

(Santa Fe, NM) – Today, New Mexico received fourth and eighth grade scores for the new Science 2009 Report Card, also known as the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). Nationally, the results show that less than one-half of students are demonstrating solid academic performance and competency in science. New Mexico's science scores remain lower than the national average.

"Sadly, New Mexico's scores on the Nation's Report Card remain among the lowest in the nation," said New Mexico Education Secretary Hanna Skandera. "For our students to compete nationally and internationally, they need to have a strong foundation in science, reading and math. As Governor Martinez stated in her State of the State address last week, this Administration is committed to advancing bold education reform to improve the quality of our schools. We will work closely with parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, community leaders and school boards to raise student achievement and accelerate our progress."

The test results are broken into four different scoring categories, proficient, basic and below basic. New Mexico results show:

- The percentage of New Mexico fourth grade students who performed at or above proficient was 24 percent, and 63 percent of New Mexico students scored at or above basic. Nationally, 32 percent of fourth graders scored at or above proficiency, and 68 percent at or above basic.
- Twenty-one percent of New Mexico's eighth grade students scored at or above proficient and 55 percent performed at or above basic. Nationally, 28 percent of eighth graders scored at or above proficient and 71 percent scored at or above basic.

Governor Martinez has made improving education in New Mexico a top priority and is committed to ensuring every student has access to quality schools and teachers. Her "Kids First, New Mexico Wins" plan is comprised of four key initiatives to increase accountability and transparency, set our students up for success by ending social promotion, target our resources where they are needed the most and identify and reward our most effective educators and leaders.

Forty-six states and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools participated in the assessment. In New Mexico, 2,846 fourth grade students in 161 schools and 2,520 eighth grade students in 104 schools participated in the tests last winter. There are approximately 330,000 students in 827 schools in the state.

The Science 2009 assessment, a new science framework, measures students' knowledge in physical science, life science and Earth and space sciences. It was based on a new and more challenging framework incorporating current science advances, innovations in assessment approaches and growth in national and international science assessments. It emphasizes applied science, recognizing that science skills form the foundation of jobs in many essential and growing fields.

For more information on this report and New Mexico results, go to <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata> or go to <http://www.ped.state.nm.us> and click on NAEP in the A to Z Directory.

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