

State of New Mexico
Office of the Governor

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**GOVERNOR SUSANA MARTINEZ SIGNS LEGISLATION TO
INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN NEW MEXICO SCHOOLS**

ALBUQUERQUE – Governor Susana Martinez today signed four key bills to increase transparency in New Mexico’s education system. At an event at Sandia High School, the Governor was joined by Public Education Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera, Albuquerque Public Schools Superintendent Winston Brooks and numerous legislators and school administrators as she signed Senate Bill 327, House Bill 113, House Bill 252, and Senate Bill 446. Each law is designed to strengthen accountability to taxpayers by providing a clearer picture of how money is being spent in New Mexico’s school districts and charter schools. Following the bill signings, Governor Martinez attended the APS Selfless Seniors Class of 2011 recognition event, honoring 27 high school seniors from across Albuquerque for their outstanding records of community service.

“Every parent deserves to know exactly how we are spending tax dollars to boost student achievement and progress in classrooms across the state,” said Governor Martinez. “Unfortunately, we have seen far too much money being spent to fund a bloated bureaucracy and administrative waste. During these challenging economic times, we must ensure these important financial decisions are driven solely by what is in the best interests of our students. Putting school budgets on New Mexico’s Sunshine Portal and taking additional steps to make education spending more transparent will allow parents and taxpayers to hold state and local leaders accountable for results.”

Today, Governor Martinez signed into law the following bills:

- **Senate Bill 327**, sponsored by Senator Sander Rue, requires all 89 school districts and 81 charter schools to account for their spending monthly through the Sunshine Portal – the official transparency and accountability website for New Mexico state government: www.SunshinePortalNM.com. Now, every parent, educator and citizen will be able to easily access information on school spending, such as annual budgets, employee salaries, property inventories and expenditures by category. Open government breeds greater fiscal discipline, greater constituent

engagement and the opportunity to continue our public discourse about the best way to spend the hard-earned monies of our overburdened taxpayers.

- **House Bill 113**, sponsored by Representative Jimmie Hall on behalf of the Public School Capitol Outlay Oversight Taskforce and the Legislative Education Study Committee, establishes accountability measures for funding provided to charter schools for new infrastructure or capital improvements. Providing assistance to help charter schools establish strong systems of accountability will ensure they remain quality education options for students across our state while at the same time protecting our taxpayers' dollars.
- **House Bill 252**, sponsored by Representative Rhonda King and Senator John Sapien, strengthens transparency and financial reporting for school districts and charter schools. It also requires the Public Education Department to establish guidelines governing procurement and administrative expenses such as travel. More clarity and greater fiscal discipline when it comes to Administration costs will ensure a greater percentage of education dollars end up in classrooms, directly benefiting our students and teachers.
- **Senate Bill 446**, also sponsored by Senator John Sapien and Representative Rhonda King, strengthens accountability for both charter schools and charter school authorizers. This important legislation was championed by the charter school community, both here in New Mexico and nationally, and adopts recognized best practices. Authorizers will be required to increase oversight of schools to ensure both academic and financial performance goals are met.

“Fundamentally, the challenges facing our education system are not a result of how much we have or haven't spent. A recent report by *Education Week* ranks New Mexico 26th in the nation when it comes to per pupil spending, but 47th in K-12 achievement. This troubling statistic confirms that we can and must use our resources more wisely to yield a better return on the investment we are making in our students and our schools,” concluded Governor Martinez. “I'm grateful to Sen. Sander Rue, Sen. John Sapien, Rep. Jimmie Hall, and Rep. Rhonda King for working to improve New Mexico's schools through these important transparency measures. I'm confident that these efforts are critical to turning our education system around and enabling us to provide a world-class education for all of New Mexico's students.”

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