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NEWS RELEASE

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New Mexico Receives \$4.17 Million to Assist Additional Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools

SANTA FE - U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan today announced that New Mexico will receive \$4.17 million to turn around its persistently lowest achieving schools through the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program.

"I am committed to identifying monies to aid struggling schools and this is a great start," said New Mexico Education Secretary Hanna Skandera. "NMPED is poised to provide technical support and assistance to these schools."

The funds are part of \$546 million available to states for the SIG program in fiscal year 2010. In fiscal year 2009, states received a total of \$3.5 billion for the SIG program.

Last May the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) used their allotment of \$11.3 million dollars to fund nine schools in the Round One cycle. Those nine schools are completing their first year and are required to demonstrate increased student achievement and continuing professional development for their teachers and administrators.

The \$4.17 million dollars of Round Two new money will provide funding for more schools to be added to the New Mexico SIG program. An additional nine schools were eligible to apply for the new funding, but only four schools elected to apply. The application process is on-going, and NMPED will make final determinations on which schools will be funded in the next two to three weeks.

This grant funding is aligned with Governor Susana Martinez's goal of identifying low achievement and then, intervening to assist the schools. New Mexico's legislature recently passed a bill to assign letter grades to schools to acknowledge excellence and identify where improvement is needed.

New Mexico's application for these new funds, which includes its list of persistently lowest-achieving schools, as defined by the state, can be found here:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary2010/index.html>.

For more information about the NMPED's SIG program and to see last year's application and review comments go to: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/psb/dl10/sig/index.html>

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