

Governor Susana Martinez Signs Legislation to Improve NM Schools

Written by Staff report
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Bills Expand K-3 Plus Program, Allow Excellent Teachers to Become Principals Much Quicker

ALBUQUERQUE — Gov. Susana Martinez signed two pieces of the legislation to help improve New Mexico's schools. The first bill (HB 479) expands access to K-3 Plus, a program for struggling students that provides additional instruction over the summer. The second bill (SB 153) streamlines the administrator licensure process, allowing certain teachers to become principals much quicker.

"Helping struggling students and schools is at the very core of our reforms, and I'm proud of the progress we have made in just a few years," Martinez said. "But while we've seen important

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improvements, we still have work to do. By expanding our successful K-3 Plus program and helping our best teachers reach leadership positions faster, we can continue to build on our momentum.”

House Bill 479, sponsored by Representative David Adkins (R-Albuquerque), will allow schools to continue utilizing the K-3 Plus after improving from a D or F. Currently, only D or F schools receive funding for the program. But once a school improves, they no longer have access to the program. This bill helps schools build upon their progress, so they don't fall behind.

Senate Bill 153, sponsored by Senator Sue Wilson Beffort (R- Sandia Park), streamlines the administrator licensure process to allow excellent teachers with a proven track record of success to become administrators after three years, instead of the current requirement of six. This not only brings New Mexico in line with neighboring states, but can help retain the state's most talented educators.

The Governor, who spoke at an Albuquerque elementary school, also highlighted several key items in her agenda that she was able to secure through the legislative process, despite the unprecedented partisan gridlock.

These included funding a second year of pilot programs that will allow New Mexico's highest performing teachers to receive additional pay, increasing starting teacher salaries by another \$2,000 per year, and providing teachers with a pre-loaded debit card to help with the purchase of classroom supplies.

The budget also provides substantial funding for the governor's early reading initiative, expands Pre-K and K-3 Plus, establishes a new mentorship program for teachers modeled after a successful program for principals, and contains new funding to combat truancy problems in areas where the need is greatest.