

Secretary of Education Dr. Veronica García's Remarks
2008 AYP Announcement
August 1, 2008
Mabry Hall
2:00 pm

- Good Afternoon. Theology professor and humanitarian Deitrich Bonhoffer said “The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children.”
- By that measure, New Mexico receives high marks. You may have heard me talk about some of our reform efforts before – but today – in the context of reporting our students’ performance – those efforts are put to the test.
- We set high expectations for the students in New Mexico. We ranked 16th in the nation for the quality of our standards, assessments, and school accountability system.
- We rank 2nd in the nation for education reform leading the nation in three categories: curricular content, standards-based reform, and school choice.
- On the national assessment, NAEP, we were one -- of only -- 14 states to show improvement in both math and reading last year showing significant increases in student achievement in a number of groups -- including our Hispanic -- and low-income students.
- We invested \$6.6 million dollars in targeting our schools in need of improvement -- supporting them with:
 - Administrator Leadership Academies for restructuring schools
 - Math and Reading Interventions
 - Math and Reading Specialists
 - Site Specific Training and Intensive Coaching
 - A Systemic Reform Model
 - Support for Data Management
 - Regional Technical Support and
 - Professional development
- New Mexico education reform effort *Making Schools Work* approaches student success, accountability, and district and school support comprehensively.
- I recently announced that schools will have three weeks of additional instructional time before testing this next year and our high schools will be able to count their summer graduates toward the graduation rate.
- I believe that both of these changes will help more of our schools increase proficiency levels in the future.
- I am happy to announce today -- that over the last four years we see growth statewide in math and reading overall.
- Our student achievement scores are on an upward trend over the last four years. We are on a steadily increasing trajectory – yet somehow, we have more schools not meeting AYP.
- This speaks to the much needed changes to the NCLB Act.

- We cannot let the AYP label continue to destroy public confidence in our schools and continue to demoralize our teachers and students.
- I implore schools and communities to not get discouraged by a lower AYP rating. We must closely analyze the data, look at improvement, and stay the course.
- I also caution against state to state comparison of AYP results because states set their own proficiency cut scores and design their own tests. New Mexico sets the bar high.
- I am so proud of our superintendents, principals, teachers, and students. Your hard work is paying off.
- We have three students in New Mexico that scored 100% on the math portion of the test. They are:
 - Cindy Zou, an eighth grader from Mountain View middle school in Alamogordo
 - Koriel Lambson, an eleventh grader from Onate High School in Las Cruces
 - Nathan Aguirre, an 11th grader from Raton high school **who is here with us today**
- **Please help me in congratulating Nathan on his incredible accomplishment.**

(Achievement Gap Slides)

- I am happy to report that the continuing trend overall for New Mexican students has been a steady increase in math of 6.2% over the last four years. The trend is modestly increasing for reading posting a 3% gain over the last four years.
- Focusing on math first, achievement scores dipped overall in 4th grade. However, Economically Disadvantaged students maintained their upward trend increasing the number of students scoring proficient or above by 9% over the last four years.
- Math scores jumped for our 8th grade students marking incredible gains over the last four years. The percentage of Hispanic students scoring proficient and above increased by more than 12%, Native Americans increased by nearly 15% and Economically Disadvantaged students increased by 22% over the last four years.
- The number of students scoring proficient and above in math continued an upward trend in 11th grade. The number of Economically Disadvantaged students marked the largest increase posting a 10% gain over the last four years.
- Now, moving on to reading. In 2008, the percentage of 4th graders proficient or above in reading also dipped. However, Economically Disadvantaged students maintained the upward trend increasing by 8% over the last four years.
- The number of 8th graders scoring proficient or above in reading jumped in 2008 for all subgroups. Again, Economically Disadvantaged students posted the largest gain increasing by 21% followed by Native Americans at nearly 19%, African Americans at 17%, and ELLs at 13%.

- Overall, the number of students scoring proficient and above in 11th grade reading increased over last year. Economically Disadvantaged students are the only group to post increases over a four-year trend. Nearly every subgroup is back on an upward swing in 2008.
- In just one year, the number of Native American students proficient or above in reading increased by 10%.
- Despite incredible gains for ELL, Hispanic, Native American, and Economically Disadvantaged students, the achievement gap in both math and reading continues to widen for all sub-groups in all grades statewide.
- In part, this is because, as our minority students perform better, our Caucasian students also continue to perform better. As we approach our goal of 100% proficiency for all students, the natural outcome will be the closing of the gap.

(End slides)

- **Our student achievement goals or AMO's considered for AYP jumped an average of 12% in both math and reading for our students in 2008. Last year they increased by an average of 4% so 2008 marks a sizeable jump in benchmark for New Mexico in terms of AYP status.**
- **Still, New Mexico had a total of 13 schools that came off of designation by making AYP two years in a row. That means that the following schools increased the number of students scoring proficient and above in both math and reading by an average of at least 16% in two years. Please help me in congratulating:**
 - **Reginald Chavez Elementary in Albuquerque**
 - **Ventana Ranch Elementary in Albuquerque**
 - **Eubank Elementary in Albuquerque**
 - **Tierra Amarilla Middle School in Chama**
 - **Jemez Valley Elementary in Jemez Valley**
 - **Mesilla Park Elementary in Las Cruces**
 - **Mountain View Elementary in Moriarty**
 - **Peñasco Elementary in Peñasco**
 - **Sierra Middle School in Roswell**
 - **Pecos Elementary in Roswell**
 - **Mountain View Middle School in Roswell**
 - **G.W. Stout Elementary in Silver City**
 - **And Tucumcari Middle School in Tucumcari**
- **Additionally, two schools under consideration to be NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools, recognized by the US Department of Education as nationally exceptional schools, made AYP in 2008 and will be honored by US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings in Washington DC this fall. Those two exceptional schools are:**

- **Georgia O'Keefe Elementary in Albuquerque**
- **And Velarde Elementary in Española**

- Please join me in congratulating these schools for their achievement and improvement.
- I also want to congratulate every student, teacher, parent, principal, superintendent, and Board of Education member of schools that made AYP in 2008. We will be looking to you for best practices.
- **In 2008, approximately 32% of our schools made AYP.** That's a decrease of **only 10%** from 2007 considering the jump in AMO's was an average of 12% for both math and reading.
- **68 schools missed meeting AYP by only one of up to 37 indicators and a total of 211 schools missed AYP by between only one and three indicators – that means that 40% of the schools missing AYP missed by only 1, 2, or 3 indicators.**
- I would like to remind our parents, students, teachers, administrators, community members, and state leaders that AYP is only one tool and is a very narrow and sometimes unfair measure of success and progress.
- For example, as I mentioned before, there are 37 ways to miss AYP. A school that has missed by three indicators for three years and a school that misses by 30 indicators for three years are labeled and progress through the corrective action system the same.
- **Calculations are also unforgiving meaning that if a school misses by only one student or a tenth of a percent toward the achievement target, they will not meet AYP.**
- This is why it is critical that parents, community members, and state and business leaders look at the achievement data for each individual school, ask about improvement strategies, and ask for data on progress, focus on the results of short-cycle assessments to track student performance throughout the year, and focus on individual student proficiency.
- AYP does not measure the growth of students over time. It fails to track student progress from one grade to the next.
- In 2008, the PED submitted a growth model proposal. Unfortunately, under proposal guidelines, New Mexico had a difficult time making the growth-based model fair for our small schools and our proposal was not accepted.
- The accountability system is also unfair in its expectations and support of our English Language Learners, special education students, and low-income students that have additional barriers to learning.
- While AYP is an unfair measure and label for schools because it does not measure growth, using the same snap shot score at the classroom level to judge the effectiveness of a teacher would also be grossly unfair.
- This is a day to celebrate the efforts of our Governor, the legislature, our administrators, teachers, students, and communities. We are moving forward but still have a long way to go.
- Let's continue to rally around our schools.