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| The overall vision of Secretary José Z. Garcia for higher education, shared by Governor Martinez, is to promote the creation in New Mexico of a globally competitive workforce for the future. The Higher Education Department's task is to ensure that the institutions of higher learning in New Mexico act in concert as a single coherent and efficient system that can respond effectively to the state’s changing workforce needs. |

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| http://www.hed.state.nm.us/uploads/images/sec.JPG | Dr. José Z. Garcia was appointed Secretary of Higher Education in December 2010 by then-Governor-elect Susana Martinez. In his first year in office he worked with a broad spectrum of legislative, executive, and college and university officials to write a new funding formula for higher education. Rewarding institutions for their outcomes rather than costs, the formula specifically encourages institutions to close the achievement gap; to grant more certificates and degrees in general; and graduate more students in science, technology, engineering, health, and mathematics fields. The legislature’s distribution of funds to institutions of higher learning during the 2012 legislative session, and signed by the governor, mirrored recommendations generated by the formula. |

Keeping Pace, March 2012 (Evergreen Education group)

New Mexico

New Mexico has a state virtual school, IDEAL-NM (Innovative Digital Education and Learning New Mexico), and a few district programs, but no other online schools operating statewide. Albuquerque Public School’s eCADEMY is the largest district program with 3,819 students in 2010-11, serving both supplemental and full-time enrollments.

**Full-time schools**

The Farmington Municipal Schools Board has approved the state's first virtual charter to open in fall 2012.

**State virtual school**

IDEAL-NM was created by the 2007 Statewide Cyber Academy Act (SB209). IDEAL-NM had 3,816 course enrollments in 2010-11, an 85% increase over 2009-10 enrollments after experiencing a 36% increase the previous year. Of IDEAL-NM’s total course enrollment in 2010-09, 1,360 (36%) were from the Graduate New Mexico initiative, established in 2009 to address the nearly 50% dropout rate in the state. With a newly elected state administration in 2011, Graduate New Mexico has been eliminated, along with funding for IDEAL-NM to place on-site staff in 10 regional service centers to provide greater student outreach and support for partner school districts.

IDEAL-NM provides a statewide learning management system (LMS) by which online K-12, higher education, and state agency training courses are delivered, referred to as P-20+. School year 2011-12 is the fourth year of the statewide LMS initiative. School districts may use the LMS to create their own courses, or use content developed by IDEAL-NM to teach their own online and/ or blended courses. As of August 2011, 62 of New Mexico’s 85 school districts (73%) use the LMS to create branded web portals to access all of the courses offered by IDEAL-NM at no cost, as well as shared community resources and professional development services. In addition, a statewide eLearning Service Center supports the LMS for all the education and training entities. IDEAL-NM also provides an eLearning portal that acts as a clearinghouse for online courses and programs offered by New Mexico higher education institutions, K-12, and state agencies.

**District programs**

School districts offering online programs include Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Hobbs, Taos, and Roy, as well as the Gilbert L. Sena Charter High School. Sena Charter High School switched from a commercial online provider to the IDEAL-NM portal, LMS, and courses. Albuquerque Public Schools’ eCADEMY is an alternative school with a comprehensive blended learning program serving K-12 students using IDEAL-NM, the National Repository for Online Courses (NROC), and self-developed content

**Online learning policy history**

SB209/HB201 (2007) created the statewide Cyber Academy provided through IDEAL-NM; the Distance Learning Rule of the New Mexico Administrative Code sets distance learning guidelines The Distance Learning Rule, New Mexico Administrative Code Title 6, Chapter 30, Part 8, establishes requirements for distance learning programs taken for credit by students enrolled in a school district or charter school, and sets forth implementation of statewide elearning courses via IDEAL-NM. It specifies that school districts cannot restrict student access to online courses. The distance learning rules allow for creation of full-time, multi-district online schools. In 2009-10 several provisions of the 2007 High School Redesign bill (SB0561) became effective with implications for IDEAL-NM and other online learning providers.

Distance learning rules approved in 2008 set requirements for IDEAL-NM; the rules also allow public schools (including charters) to provide online learning courses to students in any district as long as there are written agreements in place between host and resident districts. Districts must develop processes that allow students access to online courses. The local school where the student is enrolled approves and registers students for online courses and pays course fees. The distance learning rules allow for creation of full-time, multi-district online schools.

SB427 (2011) provides students in failing schools the option to choose online alternatives, with funding for those courses coming from the underperforming districts. “The parent of a student enrolled in a public school rated F for two of the last four years has the right to transfer the student in the same grade to any public school in the state not rated F or the right to have the student continue schooling by means of distance learning offered through the statewide or a local cyber academy. The school district or charter school in which the student is enrolled is responsible for the cost of distance learning.” The law defines criteria for rating schools, including adequate yearly progress (AYP), student growth, graduation rates, and other academic factors. Ratings are to be assigned by the State Department of Education beginning with the 2011-12 school year. Although AYP is only one criteria for the school rating, 634 of the state’s 827 schools (77%) did not met AYP in 2010, and 68% failed to meet AYP the previous year, indicating a significant number of New Mexico students may have greater choice. However, online choices for students in grades K-5 will remain limited even for those in failing schools since IDEAL-NM and district online programs offer online courses only for grades 6-12. There currently are no online providers for K-5 courses, and no full-time virtual charter programs have been approved as of fall 2011.

In 2009-10 several provisions of the 2007 High School Redesign bill (SB0561) came into effect with implications for IDEAL-NM and other online learning providers:

* At least one of the 24 units required for graduation must be an Advanced Placement, honors, dual enrollment or distance learning course.
* Algebra must be made available to all 8th graders (either online or classroom), and all districts must offer two years of a foreign language other than English.
* All schools must now offer a health course.

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