

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501-2786

RUTH WILLIAMS
Public Outreach Director
505-476-0393
rwilliams@sde.state.nm.us

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: January 27, 2004

National Overture of Education and the Arts in New Mexico Launches Initiative to Improve Academic Performance

(Santa Fe)--The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) and the Institute for Education and the Arts announce the National Overture of Education and the Arts in New Mexico. Matching local classroom priorities and needs with New Mexico's rich arts and cultural resources, the Overture will demonstrate and use the creative arts to improve academic performance in all subject areas in K-12 schools.

The National Overture of Education and the Arts in New Mexico is a statewide initiative organized by the Institute in cooperation with state and local educators, arts organizations, civic and business leaders and public officials. "The National Overture in New Mexico will help us take a substantial step forward in bringing more arts experience into all our schools, and will do so in a way that directly supports fundamental academic needs," said Secretary of Education Dr. Veronica C. Garcia.

The National Overture in New Mexico, which will place a particular emphasis on using the arts to help teach science and math, will kick off in February and March with a series of opening events, including Community Showcase performances by and for students, and in April will hold a broad series of demonstrations, panels and public discussions for teachers, artists, parents and the public. A multi-year follow-up program will then be initiated to ensure that this teaching technique is available and used on a widespread, routine and sustainable basis.

Ronald Stowe, president of the Institute for Education and the Arts, noted that "New Mexico has an ideal combination of rich arts and cultural heritage, of outstanding intellectual resources, particularly in the math and science areas, and a strong public desire to develop the highest quality education for its students."

Communities participating in the initial National Overture program include Los Alamos, Espanola, Santa Clara Pueblo, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Albuquerque and Las Cruces. In addition, the University of New Mexico will convene a series of discussions to examine the potential role of the arts in education and opportunities to train future teachers to use these techniques.

The Institute for Education and the Arts is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., established in 2002 as an education initiative in association with the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress. In its Community Partnership program, the Institute works closely with educators and others in communities around the country to demonstrate and build support for innovative use of the arts in K-12 education. For further information contact: www.edartsinstitute.org

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