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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Rio Rancho Teacher Named New Mexico Teacher of the Year

**(Santa Fe, NM)** – Public Education Secretary Veronica C. Garcia announced today that Blythe Turner of Rio Rancho Elementary School has been named the 2008-09 New Mexico Teacher of the Year.

Blythe has been a bilingual education teacher for six years and is the Native American liaison in Rio Rancho Public Schools. She will represent New Mexico at the National Teacher of the Year honor.

“The New Mexico Public Education Department is proud to have a wonderful, caring professional as our representative in the national competition,” said Secretary Garcia. “She beat out a strong field of candidates.”

“I pride myself on my efforts to increase my knowledge and, in turn, increase my power as an educator,” said Blythe. “I aspire to bestow upon my students a drive to become a life long learner and to share their knowledge with others. All students should be proud of who they are and where they come from, and have the opportunity to share their heritage and individuality with others.”

Barbara Bruce, principal at Rio Rancho Elementary, said that Blythe has a strong multicultural perspective, sets high expectations for her students, and is highly respected by her colleagues for her expertise.

“She possesses a vast level of knowledge in sheltered instruction and language acquisition, and is committed to involving her students in goal setting and data study,” said Bruce.

The New Mexico Teacher of the Year Program recognizes Excellence in Teaching, and Ms. Blythe will be recognized by Secretary García and the New Mexico Public Education Commission (PEC) at their December 11, 2008 meeting in Santa Fe.

Thirteen school districts nominated teachers for this recognition. The finalists were Laurie Levine-Rowen from Creative Education Prep Institute #1 in Albuquerque, Fancy Karnes from Rio Grande Elementary in Belen, Beatrice A. Girón from Roosevelt Elementary School in Bernalillo, Michael Dean Thompson from Bloomfield High School, Renie Smith from Clovis High School in Clovis, Helen C. Salazar from Hernandez Elementary in Espanola, Karen Nougues from Chaparral High School in Gadsden Independent Schools, Victoria Flynn from Rio Grande Elementary in Hatch Valley, Beatrice Ornelas Acosta from Oñate High School in Las Cruces, Scott B. Johnson from Barranca Mesa Elementary in Los Alamos, Gina Kasky from Ann Parish Elementary in Los Lunas, and Patricia A. Romero from Ortiz Middle School in Santa Fe.

The National Teacher of the Year Program is administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The National Teacher of the Year is chosen from the state Teachers of the Year by a national selection committee representing the major national education organizations. For more information, visit [http://www.ccsso.org/projects/National\\_Teacher\\_of\\_the\\_Year/](http://www.ccsso.org/projects/National_Teacher_of_the_Year/)

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