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**Officials celebrate launch of school broadband network**  
*High-speed internet will link students in public schools statewide*

**ALBUQUERQUE**—Today, State Public Education Secretary Dr. Arsenio Romero, Lt. Gov. Howie Morales and APS Superintendent Dr. Gabriella Blakey joined the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion, Lumen Technologies and other service providers in a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the state’s landmark launch last month of the Statewide Education Network (SEN).

Nearly 50 schools are already plugged into the broadband network, which will eventually link public schools across the state. The ceremony took place at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Academy in Albuquerque, the first of several charter schools in Albuquerque to join the network.

“This network will give students across New Mexico the technological tools to share information and programs, providing new possibilities to engage students and teachers and to improve the quality of learning,” said **Drew Lovelace, Acting Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE)**.

More than 26,000 students are now connected to the network. It will allow them to share classes, resources, libraries and access many educational websites.

More than 200 public schools across the state are considering linking to the network.

SEN will enable rural and tribal schools to engage with other schools and communities through the high-speed school-centric internet.

“A very important role of technology in our state is the teaching, learning and preservation of our precious cultural heritage,” said **Public Education Secretary Dr. Arsenio Romero**. “These new tools and techniques will help schools maximize educational outcomes and help our students graduate career and college ready.”

There has been an incredible transformation in the role that technology plays in the instructional process over the past 10 years, Romero said.

“SEN will allow the delivery of a technology-rich curriculum that, in turn, will open the doors to a world of business and carrier opportunities,” said **Ovidiu Viorica, Statewide Education Network Broadband and Technology Manager**.

Lumen Technologies provided an internet backbone of nearly 900 miles of high-speed fiber to K-12 schools across the state. Viorica says SEN is excited to be working with Lumen and other national and local providers.

“Our work with the New Mexico Statewide Education Network is part of Lumen’s commitment to unleash the power of our massive fiber network to bridge the digital divide, foster digital inclusivity and create new opportunities for all Americans to thrive in today’s interconnected world,” said **Lumen Vice President Michelle Watson**.

The network is optional for schools, but OBAE notes it would take the internet administrative burden away from school districts, allowing them to focus on instruction. There is no cost for schools to join the network.

SEN, which plans to connect all public schools by 2027, will supervise daily operations and cybersecurity of the network.

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*The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE’s mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state’s rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.*