## SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 31

## 44TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2000

INTRODUCED BY

Cynthia Nava

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

## A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO STUDY ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF RESTRUCTURING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND REDESIGNING CLASS SCHEDULES TO PROVIDE SMALLER LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS MORE SUITED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

WHEREAS, there has been a proliferation of violent activity on school campuses in the last several years, culminating in fatalities among our nation's youth; and

WHEREAS, violent activity in New Mexico public schools has continued to grow particularly during the middle and junior high years, including a student-initiated fatality in a middle school during the 1999-2000 school year; and

WHEREAS, school-site violent activity is more prevalent in large urban schools than in smaller rural ones; and

WHEREAS, smaller schools lead to more innovative instructional practices, improved student achievement,

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improved attendance and reduced student violence and disruptive behavior as well as a greater sense of ownership and pride in a school by its students; and

WHEREAS, research indicates a general sense of isolation and alienation among children during the middle school years when children are maturing into young adults; and

WHEREAS, educators across the country are countering student anonymity with smaller public schools that have been restructured into smaller learning communities that focus on more personalized instruction; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that middle school and junior high students need to continue the close student-teacher relationships developed in elementary schools, relationships that are less likely to develop when students have multiple classrooms and teachers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of public education and local school boards study alternative methods of restructuring public schools and redesigning class schedules of elementary, middle and junior high and high schools in order to facilitate a safer and more inviting environment that is conducive to learning; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public education report its findings to the legislative education study committee no later than November 1, 2000; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be distributed to the superintendent of public instruction, the

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executive director of the New Mexico school boards association and the director of the legislative education study committee for appropriate distribution.

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