

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF REQUIRING ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJORS TO MINOR IN THE TEACHING OF READING.

WHEREAS, improving reading proficiency in New Mexico has been a legislative priority since 2000; and

WHEREAS, studies show that children who cannot recognize their names in writing before they start kindergarten are already behind in learning to read; and

WHEREAS, reading is inextricably tied to educational success or failure, and the inability to read affects the student dropout rate and many of the social problems that go along with students dropping out of school and not achieving their potential; and

WHEREAS, studies show that children, youth and adults who cannot read are disadvantaged in competing for jobs in today's high technology work force, cannot make intelligent consumer choices and cannot participate fully as citizens; and

WHEREAS, while teacher preparation programs offer three to nine credit hours in reading for teacher certification, some of these hours may not emphasize basic reading skills or incorporate the most recent research or necessary knowledge to teach reading; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that some elementary level teacher preparation programs in other states that include the requirement of a minor in the teaching of reading are demonstrating improved student reading achievement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of public education, in collaboration with the commission on higher education, be requested to study the feasibility of instituting a minor in the teaching of reading as a requirement for granting teacher certification in elementary education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public education report to the legislative education study committee by August 2002; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the superintendent of public instruction, the commission on higher education and the director of the legislative education study committee for appropriate distribution.