

A JOINT MEMORIAL
REQUESTING A STUDY OF THE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS AND SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS.

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WHEREAS, it is recognized that the role of educational assistants in the public school classroom is an important aspect of a child's education; and

WHEREAS, educational assistants are considered paraprofessionals who must possess the training and expertise required to perform their jobs in a quality manner; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all educational assistants have at least a high school diploma, and that those educational assistants serving in schools that receive Title 1 funds meet one of the following qualifications:

- A. have completed at least two years of post-secondary study;
- B. have obtained an associate's or higher degree; or
- C. have met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing and mathematics; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all educational assistants hired after the enactment of that act must meet at least one of the requirements previously noted, and that existing educational assistants meet one of the above requirements no later than four years after the date of enactment; and

WHEREAS, approximately five thousand six hundred educational assistants provided instructional services in New Mexico's public schools during the 2000-2001

school year; and

WHEREAS, educational assistants, under the direct supervision of a teacher, tutor and assist children in classroom instruction; record grades; set up equipment; help prepare materials for instruction; and supervise students in the classroom, cafeteria and on the playground; and

WHEREAS, a survey of New Mexico school districts revealed that over one-half of the state's educational assistants have instructional duties in programs supported by Title 1 funds; and

WHEREAS, despite the responsibilities placed upon them, New Mexico's educational assistants' average annual salary is so low, at twelve thousand five hundred fifty dollars (\$12,550), that many qualify for public assistance; and

WHEREAS, an estimated ninety-five percent of New Mexico's educational assistants who provide Title 1 or special education services in classrooms do not meet the qualifications set forth in the federal act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of public education, in cooperation with the commission on higher education, be requested to study the training and certification of educational assistants and substitute teachers and identify needs and resources related to improving their knowledge, skills and status, in light of the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public education and the commission on higher education submit findings and recommendations to the legislative education study committee no later than November 1, 2003; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the

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commission on higher education, the state department of public education and the legislative education study committee for appropriate distribution.

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