

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO STUDY THE ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION FUND FORMULA.

WHEREAS, the state board of education states that "Literacy is a national
priority and must become the priority for all New Mexico citizens, parents and
educators, and literacy impacts every person's future success and his or her ability to
function academically, in the world of work and as an effective citizen"; and

WHEREAS, the board further states that "this policy will guide the work of the
state superintendent, the state department of public education, local school boards, all
educators and communities in the improvement of literacy skills for all students"; and

WHEREAS, low levels of English literacy in the United States and in New Mexico
are linked to poverty, and the national research council indicates that children of
caregivers or parents with low literacy skills do not have the same educational
opportunities as children of highly literate parents; and

WHEREAS, twenty-seven percent of New Mexico families with children less than
five years of age live at or below the poverty level, and New Mexico has the highest
rate of children living in poverty in the fifty states; and

WHEREAS, the state department of public education is part of the array of
services for literacy from preschool through adulthood, involving prevention of literacy
problems as well as intervention for those New Mexicans requiring literacy services;
and

WHEREAS, the state department of public education is under a joint powers
agreement with the human services department to administer one million dollars

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(\$1,000,000) for a statewide adult basic education program for temporary assistance for needy families program recipients with learning problems; and

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WHEREAS, the state department of public education, in consultation with representatives of adult basic education sites, established by regulation in 1995 an equitable formula for the distribution of resources in the adult basic education fund; and

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WHEREAS, in establishing the formula, the department considered the types of programs conducted, the cost of service delivery and the socio-economic profiles of the adults receiving services, and the department submitted the proposed formula to the commission on higher education for approval prior to adoption; and

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WHEREAS, the state department of public education distributes resources through this formula; and

WHEREAS, the department and adult basic education providers wish to reexamine and update this formula in light of the over two hundred thirty thousand individuals in New Mexico who are eligible for adult literacy, secondary degrees and English as a second language services; and

WHEREAS, the department and adult basic education providers question the efficacy, equitability and efficiency of the present formula; and

WHEREAS, four million eight hundred thousand dollars (\$4,800,000) was appropriated in fiscal year 2003 from general funds and served thirty thousand two hundred nineteen full- and part-time students; and

WHEREAS, the state department of public education is the regulatory agency for the federal adult basic education resources and the state general funds distributed through the funding formula;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state board of education be requested to create a task force to examine the present formula and determine its adequacy and, if necessary, establish a new formula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force should include:

A. adult basic education providers; and

B. representatives from: student organizations, including general equivalency diploma candidates; English language learners and literacy learners; the commission on higher education; business entities; the departments of finance and administration, labor, economic development and human services; literacy experts; regional workforce investment boards; the New Mexico association of community colleges; New Mexico works providers; the New Mexico office of Indian affairs; and the state department of public education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and conclusions be presented to the legislative education study committee by November 2003; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the members of the state board of education.

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