

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

A JOINT MEMORIAL

TO DEVELOP WAYS AND MEANS TO IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE EYE
EXAMINATION HEALTH CERTIFICATE FOR CHILDREN ENTERING
KINDERGARTEN OR FIRST GRADE.

WHEREAS, eighty percent of a child's learning occurs
through the visual system; and

WHEREAS, according to the American optometric
association, sixteen percent of all children suffer from
inadequate visual skills and up to ninety-four percent of
children with reading problems have reduced visual skills;
and

WHEREAS, up to one in four children have some form of
vision problem that may prevent them from succeeding in
school; and

WHEREAS, these vision problems may interfere with a
child's ability to learn, contribute to disciplinary problems
in school and be mistaken or misdiagnosed as a learning
disability; and

WHEREAS, although vision is critical to learning, most
children are not aware that they have a vision problem; and

WHEREAS, most parents think the vision screening tests
now required in New Mexico schools are complete eye
examinations; and

WHEREAS, the current required vision screening tests in

1 New Mexico schools miss a third of major vision problems; and

2 WHEREAS, most school dropouts have never had an eye
3 examination; and

4 WHEREAS, in Kentucky, which requires kindergarten-age
5 children to have a comprehensive eye examination before
6 entering public school, a study found that one in seven
7 children needed vision correction; and

8 WHEREAS, there are approximately one hundred seventy-
9 three thousand students in New Mexico between the ages of
10 five and eighteen and about twenty-seven thousand of them are
11 kindergartners; and

12 WHEREAS, all children on medicaid are entitled to an
13 annual eye examination, and many private insurance policies
14 cover full annual eye examinations for children; and

15 WHEREAS, despite availability of coverage for eye
16 examinations, there is limited access to optometrists and
17 ophthalmologists in rural New Mexico;

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
19 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health, in
20 cooperation with the public education department, be
21 requested to develop ways and means to implement a
22 comprehensive eye examination health certificate for all
23 children entering kindergarten or first grade; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, for the purposes of this
25 study, a "comprehensive eye examination" means a complete

1 examination of the eye and human vision system, including an
2 evaluation of visual acuity at various distances, alignment
3 and ocular mobility, binocular fusion abnormalities, actual
4 refractive error, color vision abnormalities, intraocular
5 pressure, as medically appropriate, and overall ocular
6 health; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study examine current
8 requirements for eye examinations in public schools in New
9 Mexico and compare the scope of these examinations to the
10 standard of a comprehensive eye examination as defined in
11 this resolution; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study consider the
13 availability of optometrists and ophthalmologists in New
14 Mexico to conduct comprehensive eye examinations; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study ascertain the
16 potential cost for and benefits of a comprehensive eye
17 examination for children; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings of this study
19 be presented to the interim legislative health and human
20 services committee at its October 2005 meeting; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
22 transmitted to the secretary of health and the secretary of
23 public education.
