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SENATE MEMORIAL 83

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Linda M. Lopez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THAT THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PROVIDE SCHOOL DISTRICTS A GUIDE FOR INTERWEAVING A TOLERANCE CURRICULUM INTO THE EXISTING CONTENT STANDARDS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELFTH GRADE WITH THE AIM OF CREATING SCHOOLS ACROSS NEW MEXICO IN WHICH CHILDREN CAN LEARN IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT, SAFETY AND DIVERSITY.

WHEREAS, children learn best in an environment in which they know they are safe from bullies and others, as they can open their minds to new information when they are not under attack; and

WHEREAS, children who do not look or act like the majority of their peers often struggle to maintain an appearance of normalcy, denying that they need special attention, though they could more readily accept academic help in an atmosphere where

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1 the help itself does not cause ridicule; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico prides itself on its diversity, but,
3 even so, those who are a bit different are often under such
4 social pressure that their learning suffers; and

5 WHEREAS, a damaged learning environment can damage
6 students; damaged students often lag behind their peers in
7 academic performance; and damaged and ridiculed students often
8 have more reason to drop out of school than to stay; and

9 WHEREAS, school drop-outs suffer personal tragedy, the
10 burden of inadequate skill sets and, ultimately, the burden of
11 poverty; and

12 WHEREAS, poverty is a plague that affects every New
13 Mexican because taxpayers underwrite the children of those who
14 are unable to earn a living, because state-funded prisons feed
15 the poor who have turned to crime and because out-of-state
16 businesses reject New Mexico workers again and again for their
17 lack of academic achievement; and

18 WHEREAS, the kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade curriculum
19 that is already in place throughout New Mexico contains
20 standards and benchmarks that define the academic content that
21 every school child is responsible to know; and

22 WHEREAS, that same curriculum could be enhanced by a
23 companion curriculum that emphasizes diversity and tolerance
24 within the content standards; and

25 WHEREAS, schools could incorporate diversity exercises and

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1 lessons into their academic curricula, for instance, in math,
2 there could be a discussion of minority representation; in
3 English, a discussion of language acquisition such that English
4 language learners are respectfully included in the discussion;
5 in history, a lesson on the means of incorporating cultural
6 differences across the world and within the history of the
7 United States; and in health, a discussion of the challenges
8 faced by those with physical, developmental and mental health
9 disabilities;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
11 OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be requested
12 to provide suggestions for interweaving a tolerance and
13 diversity curriculum into the existing content standards for
14 kindergarten through twelfth grade; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
16 department be requested to prepare and disseminate to all New
17 Mexico school districts a guide for inclusion of tolerance and
18 diversity teaching; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
20 department include in its rules an expanded emphasis on
21 tolerance and diversity as part of the standard curriculum,
22 based on the guide it develops in response to this memorial;
23 and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
25 department present its report and guide to the legislative

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1 education study committee in the 2009 interim; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the secretary of public education and the
4 governor.

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