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HOUSE MEMORIAL 1

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

INTRODUCED BY

Sandra D. Jeff

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATURE TO HEAR TESTIMONY ON AND ENCOURAGE
COOPERATION AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS ON OR SERVING THE NAVAJO
NATION REGARDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOLS ACROSS SCHOOL
DISTRICT BOUNDARIES FROM THE STUDENT'S HOME, TRANSPORTATION OF
STUDENTS ACROSS SCHOOL DISTRICT LINES FOR EFFICIENCY AND TO
REDUCE TRANSPORTATION TRAVEL DISTANCE FOR STUDENTS AND BUSES
AND THE BENEFITS OF MERGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

WHEREAS, in New Mexico, public education for Navajo Nation
residents is provided predominantly by the public school
system; and

WHEREAS, education is also provided to children of the
Navajo Nation by the Navajo Nation department of Diné education
and the federal bureau of Indian education; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico is a large rural state, and the Navajo
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1 Nation, an especially rural area, covers much of northwestern
2 New Mexico in San Juan, McKinley, Cibola, Rio Arriba and
3 Bernalillo counties; and

4 WHEREAS, the rural nature of the Navajo Nation and
5 northwestern New Mexico and the sparse distribution of the
6 population require that students be transported long distances
7 and for long hours; and

8 WHEREAS, the public school districts that serve the Navajo
9 Nation in some cases have placed schools in remote communities
10 away from population centers to reduce the transportation time
11 for students, promoting a better learning environment; and

12 WHEREAS, in some cases, buses from the New Mexico public
13 schools, the department of Diné education and the bureau of
14 Indian education all travel in the same area to pick up
15 students attending their schools; and

16 WHEREAS, state school districts have the authority to
17 enter into agreements with their contiguous neighbors to cross
18 school boundary lines to provide transportation to students
19 attending schools that are not located in the student's home
20 district; however, this authority is seldom used for the
21 benefit of students living close to a school district boundary;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, many states have consolidated school districts to
24 reduce costs of administration and to provide greater
25 coordination of transportation; and

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1 WHEREAS, the benefits of cooperation among school
2 districts could promote budget savings and improve the quality
3 of education for students;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that an appropriate
6 legislative committee be requested to review the issues
7 surrounding school districts on or serving the Navajo Nation
8 and specifically gather information about inter-school district
9 cooperation, transportation distances and costs and the
10 possibility of merging school districts while determining if
11 there would be resulting economic benefits; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each school district be urged
13 to consult with Navajo Nation communities that are within that
14 school district to determine how better to address the
15 inefficiencies and frustrations of transportation of students
16 in rural communities and to deliver better educational services
17 to the children of those communities; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that school districts with common
19 boundaries be encouraged to coordinate transportation to
20 achieve greater efficiencies and to reduce student time spent
21 in buses and to enter into agreements to accomplish these
22 goals; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that New Mexico public school
24 districts, Navajo Nation department of Diné education and
25 bureau of Indian education schools be urged to cooperate to the

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1 greatest extent possible to reduce redundancy in transportation
2 and to reduce student time on buses; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
4 transmitted to the director of the legislative education study
5 committee and its chair, the co-chairs of the Indian affairs
6 committee, the secretary of public education and the director
7 of the Navajo Nation department of Diné education.

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