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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO STUDY AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS AND TO DETERMINE HOW TO PROVIDE BEST PRACTICE SERVICES TO ALL CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders are neurobiological disorders that interfere with the normal development of communication, behavior, learning and social interaction skills; and

WHEREAS, the United States centers for disease control and prevention reports that autism spectrum disorders are the second most common type of developmental disability and are seen in all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the autism society of America reports that autism spectrum disorders are the fastest growing developmental disability, with an annual cost of ninety billion dollars (\$90,000,000,000); and

WHEREAS, experts attest that the cost of lifelong care for an individual with an autism spectrum disorder may be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis, intervention and education; and

WHEREAS, early autism spectrum disorder diagnosis and intervention is instrumental in determining success; and

1 WHEREAS, the national research council report on
2 *Educating Children with Autism* recommends, as a best
3 practice, teaching individuals with autism a minimum of
4 twenty-five hours per week through active engagement begun as
5 early as possible; and

6 WHEREAS, children with autism need specialized teaching
7 methods; and

8 WHEREAS, the usual teaching methods that work with other
9 students, including students with other disabilities, are not
10 necessarily successful with students with autism; and

11 WHEREAS, specialized training is needed for school
12 personnel working with children with autism; and

13 WHEREAS, children with autism are all different and
14 require an individualized approach with a menu of programs
15 available;

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department
18 conduct a study to determine how to provide best practice
19 services to all children with autism in the public schools
20 through the use of highly qualified New Mexico autism
21 specialists in the development and implementation of the
22 individualized education plans of all students with an autism
23 spectrum disorder statewide; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
25 department develop a written plan for showing steps on how

1 the public education department will work actively,
2 collaboratively and cooperatively with other state agencies,
3 groups and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the
4 department of health, the human services department, the
5 children, youth and families department, the autism task
6 force, the New Mexico developmental disabilities planning
7 council, the behavioral health planning council of New
8 Mexico, the New Mexico autism society, the New Mexico state
9 university southern New Mexico autism project and the autism
10 programs at the university of New Mexico center for
11 development and disability in order to develop and implement
12 appropriate systems of care for all students with autism
13 spectrum disorder; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education
15 department report its findings, including the written plan,
16 to the legislative education study committee by September 30,
17 2010; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the secretaries of health, human services and
20 children, youth and families and to representatives from the
21 autism task force, the New Mexico developmental disabilities
22 planning council, the behavioral health planning council of
23 New Mexico, the New Mexico autism society, the autism
24 programs at the university of New Mexico center for
25 development and disability, and the department of special

1 education and communication disorders at New Mexico state

2 university. _____

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