

A MEMORIAL

ENCOURAGING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ENGAGE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, during the first session of the fiftieth legislature, the legislature passed, and Governor Susana Martinez subsequently signed into law, Senate Bill 78, which requires each local school board to implement a bullying prevention program by August 2012; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2007 New Mexico youth risk and resiliency survey, nine percent of New Mexico high school students reported skipping school within the past thirty days because they felt unsafe at school or while traveling to or from school; and

WHEREAS, American medical association research findings indicate that bullying has a negative social and public health impact on children and youths; and

WHEREAS, a bully may exhibit anti-social or delinquent behaviors, such as vandalism, shoplifting, truancy and frequent drug use; and

WHEREAS, bullies may continue these anti-social or delinquent behaviors into young adulthood; and

WHEREAS, a bully is more apt to drink liquor, smoke tobacco and perform poorly in school; and

WHEREAS, one in four boys who has been a bully has a criminal record by age thirty; and

WHEREAS, a bullied person may experience short-term problems, such as depression and thoughts of suicide, anxiety, loneliness and difficulties with school work, and long-term problems, including low self-esteem and depression; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, younger students were found to be more likely than older students to report being bullied; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, fourteen percent of students reported being victims of bullying; and

WHEREAS, in a United States department of education study, of those students who reported lower grades, the victims of bullying were more likely to report receiving lower grades than their non-bullied counterparts; and

WHEREAS, victims of and witnesses to bullying often do not inform adults because of intimidation by the bullies; and

WHEREAS, bullying behavior is identified as a problem that creates a climate of fear and intimidation that affects children and youths in multiple environments within the community, including youth clubs, sports and public and private educational settings; and

WHEREAS, bullying remains a public problem in New Mexico requiring a public response and engagement by a variety of

stakeholders, including state and school officials, parents, students and community members;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that all school districts in New Mexico be encouraged to actively engage parents and community members in the development and evaluation of bullying prevention programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that school districts make a concerted effort to engage parents of students that have been bullied, as well as community members and organizations with experience, expertise or knowledge in working with and serving bullied students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the public education department for circulation to the superintendent of each public school district in New Mexico.