

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 24

2 **52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THAT THE HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND THE PUBLIC
12 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT JOINTLY CREATE A PRIMARY SCHOOL MENTAL
13 HEALTH TASK FORCE TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
14 EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND MENTAL
15 DISORDER TREATMENT SERVICES TO SCHOOL-AGE PERSONS IN SCHOOLS.

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17 WHEREAS, schools in New Mexico are experiencing increased
18 instances of students exhibiting symptoms of mental disorders,
19 including increased depression and anxiety, increased substance
20 abuse and tragically high rates of suicide; and

21 WHEREAS, a 2011 study showed that more than twenty-nine
22 percent of New Mexico youths reported feeling persistent
23 sadness or hopelessness; and

24 WHEREAS, suicide is almost always the result of untreated
25 or undertreated mental disorders; and

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1 WHEREAS, suicide is the third-leading cause of death among
2 youth and young adults between the ages of fifteen and twenty-
3 four; and

4 WHEREAS, New Mexico schools are struggling with the
5 effects of the lack of sufficient and effective methods for
6 addressing students' mental health needs, including disruptions
7 in the educational process, violence in the classroom, truancy
8 and increased dropout rates; and

9 WHEREAS, "[m]ental disorders are chronic health conditions
10 that can continue through the lifespan" and "[w]ithout early
11 diagnosis and treatment, children with mental disorders can
12 have problems at home, in school, and in forming friendships",
13 according to the federal centers for disease control and
14 prevention; and

15 WHEREAS, "[m]ental health is an integral and essential
16 component of health" and "there is no health without mental
17 health", according to the world health organization; and

18 WHEREAS, the passage of the federal Patient Protection and
19 Affordable Care Act and New Mexico's expansion and
20 restructuring of medicaid through the New Mexico centennial
21 care program may afford new opportunities to identify
22 strategies, more effective payment structures and innovative
23 approaches to addressing and treating students' mental health
24 needs in schools; and

25 WHEREAS, New Mexico's juvenile justice system is weighed

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1 down by the lack of early identification and support services
2 for school-age persons living with mental disorders; and

3 WHEREAS, in 2010, five hundred seventy-six youths were
4 incarcerated in New Mexico's juvenile justice system; and

5 WHEREAS, it is estimated that seventy percent of youths in
6 juvenile justice systems across the nation live with mental
7 disorders, including twenty percent who have severe mental
8 illness;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
10 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the human services department and the
11 public education department be requested to jointly create a
12 primary school mental health task force to examine best
13 practices throughout the nation, identify methods for
14 addressing major challenges and make recommendations for the
15 effective provision of school-based mental health support and
16 mental disorder treatment services to students; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretaries of human
18 services and public education be requested to appoint to the
19 primary school mental health task force the following members:

20 A. at least five members from different regions of
21 the state who represent school districts and at least one
22 member who represents charter schools and who are knowledgeable
23 about providing mental health support and mental disorder
24 treatment services in schools;

25 B. at least one member representing the human

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1 services department;

2 C. at least one member representing the public
3 education department;

4 D. at least one member representing the children,
5 youth and families department;

6 E. at least one member representing the university
7 of New Mexico psychiatric center or the university of New
8 Mexico children's psychiatric center;

9 F. at least one member representing the city of
10 Albuquerque task force on behavioral health;

11 G. at least one member representing licensed mental
12 health care providers who serve school-age persons; and

13 H. at least one member representing mental health
14 care treatment facilities; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the primary school mental
16 health task force meet during the 2015 interim and report its
17 findings and recommendations for legislation to the interim
18 legislative health and human services committee and the
19 legislative education study committee by November 31, 2015; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
21 transmitted to the secretaries of public education, human
22 services and children, youth and families, the superintendents
23 of the state's school districts and the governing body of each
24 charter school.