

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; PROVIDING FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS; CREATING THE COUNCIL ON FAMILY INVOLVEMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the "Family Involvement Act"."

Section 2. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.--

A. The legislature finds that the involvement and support of families in the education of their children is an integral part of improving academic achievement and that properly constructed family involvement programs can play an important and effective role in the participation of families in their children's schools and in improving their children's learning.

B. The purpose of the Family Involvement Act is to ensure that family involvement programs are properly designed and implemented and to provide a focus and structure for those programs based on prior experience and research while maintaining sufficient local flexibility to design a

program that best meets the needs of the local community.

The goals of these programs are to:

(1) engage families from diverse cultures positively in their children's education by:

(a) building effective and consistent methods of school-home communications;

(b) supporting families in developing skills that enhance their children's academic efforts and their development as responsible members of society; and

(c) helping professionals learn to work comfortably with diverse families and to view these families as valuable sources of information about their children;

(2) inform families that they can directly affect the success of their children's learning, offer families various techniques and strategies to improve their children's academic success or assist their children in learning at home, if they desire; and

(3) integrate family involvement programs, including compliance with the provisions of the Family Involvement Act, into a school's master plan for academic accountability."

Section 3. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"FAMILY INVOLVEMENT COUNCIL.--

A. The "family involvement council" is created as an advisory council to the department of education.

B. The council shall consist of nine members appointed by the state superintendent for staggered three-year terms as follows:

(1) one representative of a statewide parent-teacher organization;

(2) two parents or guardians of pupils enrolled in a public school;

(3) two public school teachers;

(4) one public school administrator;

(5) one local school board member;

(6) one representative of the business community; and

(7) one department of education employee, who shall be the chairman of the council.

C. The council shall:

(1) develop an instrument or process to evaluate family involvement programs developed by local school boards;

(2) make recommendations to the department of education about family involvement programs that are effective;

(3) make recommendations to the department of education about training programs for local school boards

and school staff;

(4) make recommendations to the department of education about facilitating coordination among school officials, parents and families, educators and community leaders; and

(5) make recommendations to the department of education about the coordination of department of education services and services of other state agencies.

D. Members of the council who are not state employees may receive no compensation except per diem and travel expenses pursuant to the Per Diem and Mileage Act."

Section 4. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM.--

A. Each local school board shall, in conjunction with parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders, establish a family involvement program for each school in the school district. The local school board shall:

(1) ensure that parents and families participate in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of the family involvement program; and

(2) provide for regular and periodic programs throughout the school year that offer learning opportunities for both families and school personnel in areas such as:

(a) the ability of families to directly affect the success of a child's learning through the support given at home and at school;

(b) home activities, strategies and materials that can be used to assist and enhance the learning of children at home and at school;

(c) the developmental needs of children, positive guidance techniques and ways for parents and teachers to build healthy relationships with children; and

(d) the ability of families and schools to develop consistent and effective communications concerning the progress of the children in school and concerning school programs;

(3) prepare an annual statement identifying specific objectives of the program; and

(4) conduct an annual review and assessment of the program's progress in meeting its objectives, which shall be made available to parents.

B. A family involvement program may include the following:

(1) a plan to encourage participation by families from diverse cultures;

(2) a program that builds on parenting strengths, helps families develop skills they desire and

facilitates networks to support families in effectively nurturing their children;

(3) a communication element that provides effective two-way communication practices to reach families, both individually and collectively, to ensure that families and school staff communicate back and forth about their children;

(4) a home learning element that provides for families and staff to work together in developing learning goals and offers opportunities for learning activities at home and in the community;

(5) a volunteer element that recruits and organizes volunteer participation from families and the community at large;

(6) a governance and advocacy element that provides a democratic governance structure that ensures that parents are partners in policymaking about school programs and that family representatives are elected to act as advocates or decisionmakers for other parents and families;

(7) a community outreach element that establishes partnerships with individuals and organizations in the community;

(8) a plan to encourage parents to visit schools, which may include an area in each school designated as a family center; and

