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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 9

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2001

INTRODUCED BY

Mimi Stewart

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

AN ACT

REQUESTING THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ADOPT A SPECIFIC DEFINITION OF DYSLEXIA, IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA AND ESTABLISH CERTIFICATION CRITERIA FOR SPECIALISTS SO THAT THEY MAY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO ASSIST STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA.

WHEREAS, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act recognizes that individuals with dyslexia must be provided with educational services that address their disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the state department of public education has not defined dyslexia or instituted educational diagnostic evaluations and has not recommended educational services to address this specific disability; and

WHEREAS, scientists and leaders from the national

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1 institute of child health and human development, the
2 international dyslexia association and the national center for
3 learning disabilities have developed the following working
4 definition: Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning
5 disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of
6 constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single
7 word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological
8 processing. These difficulties in single word decoding are
9 often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and
10 academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized
11 developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is
12 manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of
13 language, often including, in addition to problems with
14 reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in
15 writing and spelling; and

16 WHEREAS, a wide body of research indicates that up to
17 fifteen percent of the general population lives with the
18 disabling limitations of dyslexia and that dyslexia can affect
19 individuals in varying degrees, requiring a continuum of
20 services to include specialized teaching in the general
21 classroom, small group and one-to-one therapy; and

22 WHEREAS, there are specialized methods of instruction that
23 effectively treat individuals with dyslexia and that require
24 specialized training of teachers and therapists; and

25 WHEREAS, there are nationally recognized organizations
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1 such as the international multi-sensory structured language
2 education council, the academic language therapy association
3 and the international dyslexia association that have identified
4 the skills needed by teachers and therapists, have developed
5 certification requirements for specialists in this field and
6 accredit professional training programs that prepare these
7 individuals;

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
9 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state board of education be
10 requested to adopt a specific definition of dyslexia and
11 establish effective interventions and specialized public school
12 education programs for students that address this specific
13 language disability; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state board of education
15 begin to establish certification criteria for specialists to
16 carry out public school education programs to assist students
17 with dyslexia; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of public
19 education report the state board of education's findings and
20 recommendations to the legislative education study committee by
21 November 2001; and

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
23 transmitted to the president of the state board of education
24 and the superintendent of public instruction.

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