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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 11

**50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2011**

INTRODUCED BY

Jimmie C. Hall

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, THE OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY, THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR,  
REGIONAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVES AND OTHERS TO STUDY  
CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES FOR SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico is very large in area with a  
relatively small population, with many communities in rural  
areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, the economic recession has placed fiscal  
constraints on all governmental entities, but particularly on  
those smaller entities in rural communities, including small  
school districts; and

WHEREAS, the legislative education study committee, during  
the 2010 interim, established a school finance work group to  
evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of New Mexico's laws

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1 and rules relating to public school finance, including the  
2 capacity and controls of school districts and charter schools  
3 statewide; and

4 WHEREAS, the school finance work group was charged with  
5 investigating the availability of qualified school business  
6 officials and independent auditors, with a focus on the needs  
7 of small rural school districts; and

8 WHEREAS, the work group determined that small rural school  
9 districts may benefit from consolidation of business and  
10 financial services, as well as regionalization of other support  
11 services; and

12 WHEREAS, New Mexico law allows the public education  
13 department, at its discretion, to establish and maintain  
14 regional centers for conducting cooperative services between  
15 public schools and school districts within and among those  
16 regions and for facilitating regulation and evaluation of  
17 school programs; and

18 WHEREAS, regional education cooperatives organized under  
19 state statute currently offer a range of programmatic and other  
20 services to small rural school districts; and

21 WHEREAS, in addition, cooperative educational services is  
22 a member-owned agency, operating under a joint powers agreement  
23 authorized by the department of finance and administration,  
24 whose membership includes charter schools and public school  
25 districts; and

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1           WHEREAS, cooperative educational services exists to  
2 provide leverage in the acquisition of required services,  
3 supplies and equipment for its members; and

4           WHEREAS, several institutions of higher education  
5 throughout the state host public education department offices  
6 and regional education cooperatives that provide regional  
7 services; and

8           WHEREAS, the public education department has decentralized  
9 the delivery of some support and technical assistance services  
10 to areas of the state that are located at a distance from Santa  
11 Fe; and

12           WHEREAS, the further decentralization of programmatic and  
13 financial support services to school districts by the public  
14 education department, as well as the consolidation of some  
15 school district business and other services, may improve cost-  
16 effectiveness by reducing travel expenses and increasing  
17 economies of scale for the department and for rural school  
18 districts; and

19           WHEREAS, the value and feasibility of decentralizing  
20 public education department services and consolidating small  
21 rural school district services might best be determined by  
22 operating pilot projects in selected regions of the state;

23           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
24 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department, the  
25 office of education accountability, the office of the state

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1 auditor, regional education cooperatives, cooperative  
2 educational services and other stakeholders examine the  
3 feasibility of:

4 A. consolidating certain business services for  
5 small school districts;

6 B. providing support services to small school  
7 districts through a regional system; and

8 C. operating one or more pilot projects to  
9 determine the effectiveness of such proposals; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and  
11 recommendations be presented to the legislative education study  
12 committee by October 31, 2011; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
14 transmitted to the secretary of public education, the secretary  
15 of finance and administration, the director of the office of  
16 education accountability in the department of finance and  
17 administration, the state auditor, directors of regional  
18 education cooperatives and the executive director of  
19 cooperative educational services.