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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE AND THE  
LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE RECENT  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE A-B-C-D-F SCHOOLS RATING SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, in 2011, the legislature passed, and the  
governor signed, Senate Bill 427, the A-B-C-D-F Schools  
Rating Act (Laws 2011, Chapter 10); and

WHEREAS, the legislation created a new state public  
school accountability system that operates side by side with  
existing school and school district accountability systems  
based on adequate yearly progress, which was established  
pursuant to the federal Elementary and Secondary Education  
Act of 2001, also known as the No Child Left Behind Act; and

WHEREAS, the schools rating system requires all public  
schools to be graded with a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F  
annually by the public education department, pursuant to  
department rules; and

WHEREAS, the public education department adopted rules  
for the schools rating system in December 2012; and

WHEREAS, preliminary grades were issued for New Mexico  
schools in January 2012; and

WHEREAS, education stakeholders report that the specific  
and technical details of the schools rating system are  
unclear and lack transparency; and

1           WHEREAS, concerns have been expressed to the department  
2 regarding attempts in the rating system to adjust school  
3 grades based on student demographics;

4           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
5 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study  
6 committee and the legislative finance committee, with the  
7 assistance of the public education department, be requested  
8 to form a work group of education stakeholders to review the  
9 recent implementation of the A-B-C-D-F schools rating system;  
10 and

11           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested  
12 to examine:

13           A. the technical details of the formula used to  
14 calculate school grades, including, but not limited to, the  
15 working matrices used to grade schools, the methodology used  
16 to determine statistical peer groups, all data and tools used  
17 to determine school grades and the technical step-by-step  
18 instructions used by department staff for assigning school  
19 grades;

20           B. what information and data are available to  
21 school districts and charter schools regarding each  
22 district's or school's respective grade, and what further  
23 information should be available to provide for a more  
24 transparent schools rating system;

25           C. the extent to which department rules implement

1 the provisions of Senate Bill 427;

2 D. whether department rules depart from the  
3 provisions of Senate Bill 427;

4 E. whether the grade calculations can be  
5 simplified so that school officials, teachers, parents and  
6 policymakers can readily understand the elements of a  
7 calculated school grade;

8 F. alternate value-added models and their  
9 implications for measuring school growth; and

10 G. how the formula used to calculate school grades  
11 takes into account factors such as charter status, urban or  
12 rural location and student socioeconomic status; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be requested  
14 to report its findings and recommendations to the legislative  
15 education study committee and the legislative finance  
16 committee by October 31, 2012; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
18 transmitted to the directors of the legislative education  
19 study committee and the legislative finance committee and to  
20 the secretary-designate of public education. \_\_\_\_\_