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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 1

50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012

INTRODUCED BY

Jimmie C. Hall

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE STATE
AUDITOR TO NAME A WORK GROUP TO STUDY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATION REFORMS THAT ALLOW SUPERINTENDENTS TO FOCUS ON
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTAL AND
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, New Mexico has eighty-nine school districts, with
fifty of those having fewer than one thousand enrolled
students; and

WHEREAS, the growing administrative requirements mandated
by the federal and state governments place an especially
onerous burden on small school districts, but many others are
also overwhelmed by the administrative demands made on school
districts and superintendents; and

WHEREAS, many school districts lack the funding or fiscal

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1 infrastructure to comply in an effective and efficient manner
2 with the many administrative requirements, including business
3 and fiscal management, recordkeeping and reporting, imposed by
4 state law and public education department rules; and

5 WHEREAS, school districts in some areas of the state often
6 struggle to find employees who have the necessary training and
7 experience to be able to comply with the complicated laws and
8 rules that govern school finance and business, as well as
9 detailed requirements for extensive recordkeeping and
10 reporting; and

11 WHEREAS, the plethora of noneducational requirements of
12 managing a school district, including routine human resource
13 matters, routine procurement, business and fiscal recordkeeping
14 and reporting for state and federal funding, school
15 transportation, food service operations and facilities
16 management and maintenance, hamper the ability of
17 superintendents to focus on strategies to improve student
18 achievement, reduce truancy and dropout rates, increase
19 graduation rates, motivate student-centered teaching and
20 instructional support and increase parental and community
21 involvement in the schools and public education; and

22 WHEREAS, as a school district's highest educational
23 leader, each superintendent should be focused on improving
24 student achievement and high school graduation rates for the
25 district, on ensuring that students are prepared to enter post-

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1 secondary education or careers and on ensuring that teachers,
2 principals and other staff are likewise focused on student
3 success instead of having attention diverted to business,
4 finance and recordkeeping matters; and

5 WHEREAS, the state is best served by having school
6 superintendents and school employees focused on academic and
7 other district improvements that lead to student success, as
8 well as being the necessary catalysts for bringing the
9 attention of parents, business leaders and the entire community
10 to bear on the needs of the state's public school children; and

11 WHEREAS, the legislative education study committee, during
12 the 2010 interim, established a school finance work group to
13 evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of laws and rules
14 governing public school finance in the state; and

15 WHEREAS, the work group determined that business,
16 financial services and other noneducation-related services
17 could more effectively and efficiently be performed by regional
18 education cooperatives, which would allow superintendents and
19 school personnel to concentrate on the educational demands of
20 the modern public school system; and

21 WHEREAS, regional education cooperatives were created
22 primarily to provide education-related services to their member
23 school districts and to facilitate regulation and evaluation of
24 school programs within and among their regions, but they also
25 have the ability to provide cooperative purchasing and fiscal

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1 management opportunities to their members; and

2 WHEREAS, in addition to regional education cooperatives,
3 currently, all school districts belong to a joint powers
4 agreement organization composed of school districts, public
5 post-secondary educational institutions and other members,
6 whose purpose is to provide economies-of-scale leverage in the
7 procurement of services, supplies and equipment for school
8 districts and other members;

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
10 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department and
11 the state auditor be requested to convene a work group to study
12 the feasibility of better focusing school district
13 superintendent duties on academics and other educational
14 programming that improves student achievement, lowers the
15 truancy and dropout rates and improves high school graduation
16 rates; on staff development, particularly for teachers,
17 principals and instructional support providers; and on
18 enhancing parental involvement with their children's education
19 and community involvement in public schools; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group consider the
21 efficacy of having regional education cooperatives or other
22 joint powers agreement organizations provide such services as
23 business and fiscal recordkeeping and reporting, facilities
24 management, school transportation, food service operations and
25 other functions that do not directly support the educational

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1 program; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group analyze the
3 staffing needs required to provide these services at the
4 regional level; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group design a pilot
6 project consisting of several school districts in one or more
7 regional education cooperatives or other joint powers agreement
8 organizations that would determine the efficacy of regional
9 business management and accounting services and submit the
10 pilot project for legislative consideration; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in addition to the secretary
12 of public education and the state auditor, or their designees,
13 the work group include the regional education cooperatives,
14 superintendents, teachers, school district business staff and
15 other stakeholders; and

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group report its
17 findings and recommendations, including its recommendations for
18 a pilot project, to the legislative education study committee
19 and the legislative finance committee by November 1, 2012; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
21 transmitted to the secretary of public education, who shall
22 provide for distribution to local superintendents; the state
23 auditor; the regional education cooperatives; other appropriate
24 joint powers agreement organizations; and the directors of the
25 legislative education study committee and the legislative

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finance committee.

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