HOUSE MEMORIAL 54

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025

INTRODUCED BY

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A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE, IN
COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, THE
HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, TO RESEARCH AND STUDY, DURING THE
2025 LEGISLATIVE INTERIM, PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY AND THE
POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCHOOL SAFETY
ENTITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY
TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WHEREAS, according to a February 3, 2020 blog posted by
the national academy for state health policy, state leaders are
leveraging the momentum of support for safer schools by
implementing policy changes to make school environments safer
and more supportive; and

WHEREAS, in a 2024 report by the institute of education

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sciences, during the 2021-22 school year, about eight hundred

fifty-seven thousand violent incidents were recorded by United

States public schools and sixty-seven percent of schools

reported having at least one violent incident; and

WHEREAS, in August 2023, in response to concerns of

students, parents and school employees, the Portales and Clovis

municipal school districts boosted security measures,

including installing the Rave Panic phone application on

teachers' and administrators' phones, allowing the user to

dispatch law enforcement with the push of a button, and an

artificial intelligence security camera system called ZeroEyes

for gun detection and other measures for use in case of

emergencies; and

WHEREAS, similarly, the New Mexico public school insurance

authority contracted with STOPit Solutions to provide certain

public and charter schools covered by the authority with access

to the company's anonymous reporting software at no additional

cost. The platform allows students and staff to anonymously

report safety, misconduct or other concerns through a mobile

app, web interface or hotline; thirty-six school districts and

eleven charter and community schools have been on-boarded,

providing more than one thousand students access to the

services; and

WHEREAS, in a recent study report, *The Middle Matters:*

HM4 Middle School Study, released October 16, 2024 by the

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legislative education study committee, in which the committee studied the quality of New Mexico middle school education, it was noted that students overwhelmingly reported school safety as their major concern; in fact, school safety became the one consensus item across the entire group of students for its importance to them, with students expressing fears about "something bad happening"; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the legislative education study committee published *Fostering Comprehensive School Safety*, which reports that efforts to assess the security needs of schools in New Mexico have revealed an ongoing and critical demand for security funding and identified a need for high-tech solutions like smart cameras or facial recognition software, while many schools report a pressing need for simpler, foundational items like security fencing and reliable radio communication devices; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico legislature passed House Bill 505 in the 2023 legislative session, allocating thirty-five million dollars ($35,000,000) from the public school capital outlay fund to support security infrastructure in public schools, and schools have used the funds for a range of security items, including access control systems, consultation services, fencing, security lighting and even gunshot detection technology; and

WHEREAS, although the allocation offered significant

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1   assistance to schools, the need for additional funding remains,

2   as the 2023 allocation has been completely distributed, and

3   based on recommendations from the staff who administered the

4   allocated funds, an allocation of fifty million dollars

5   ($50,000,000) would meet ongoing demand for flexible security

6   funding; further, based on an analysis and interactions with

7   school leaders, legislative education study committee staff

8   anticipate a need for sustained support into the foreseeable

9   future; and

10 WHEREAS, funding for varying security measures at separate

11 and distinct schools alone may not be the tool needed to ensure

12 safety in New Mexico's public schools statewide; and

13 WHEREAS, some states have taken a broader statewide

14 approach to addressing school safety; for example, the Indiana

15 executive council on cybersecurity, along with the Indiana

16 department of education and federal partners, developed an

17 updated toolkit designed for superintendents, administrators,

18 teachers, staff members, school board members, parents and

19 concerned citizens that provides ways to protect schools,

20 teachers, families, students and others; and

21 WHEREAS, according to the October 5, 2022 report *50-State*

22 *Comparison*, published by the education commission of the states

23 regarding K-12 schools, at least thirty-two states have

24 established a school safety entity, including centers, boards

25 or offices, and at least forty-four states require a school

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1   safety plan in statute and regulations, with thirty of those

2   states requiring law enforcement to be involved in the creation

3   of a school safety plan; and

4   WHEREAS, in 2023, Colorado established, similar to the

5   state of Indiana, an office of school safety within Colorado's

6   department of public safety composed of three units: the

7   school safety resource center, the crisis unit and the grants

8   unit; and

9   WHEREAS, in lieu of funds spent for piecemeal improvements

10   to New Mexico school safety, perhaps a more comprehensive

11   approach could be employed in a standardized manner to more

12   efficiently expend funds, prevent overlap and build statewide

13   consistency in school safety measures; and

14   WHEREAS, as such, a deeper dive into the subject matter,

15   with a focus on a statewide positive impact, could reveal a

16   benefit for New Mexico schools from a centralized, cohesive

17   and standardized approach to school safety emanating from a

18   specific entity tasked with developing and establishing the

19   state's plan and distribution of resources for school safety;

20   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF

21   REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative

22   education study committee, in collaboration with the department

23   of public safety, the homeland security and emergency

24   management department and the public education department, be

25   requested to research and study school safety through a lens of

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1   establishing a designated entity, including a department,

2   division or bureau, to develop, establish and maintain a

3   statewide public school safety plan, including the creation by

4   the entity of a website dedicated to providing information

5   about the entity's role and the resources available and

6   developed by the entity, the details of the public school

7   safety plan and any other matter deemed appropriate and

8   necessary to carry out the entity's mission and to report the

9   results of the research and study to the governor and the New

10   Mexico legislative council; and

11   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be

12   transmitted to the governor, the legislative education study

13   committee, the secretary of public safety, the secretary of

14   homeland security and emergency management, the secretary of

15   public education and the New Mexico legislative council.

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