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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 40

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2002

INTRODUCED BY

Rick Miera

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND OTHERS TO DEVELOP QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULA.

WHEREAS, obesity is an increasing epidemic among children nationally, as well as in New Mexico, and major contributors to this health threat are a decrease in physical activity and an increase in poor diets comprised mainly of high-calorie and high-fat foods; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the centers for disease control and prevention reported that almost forty percent of youth received less than two hours of physical education a week, and, between 1991 and 1997, the percentage of children who participated in daily physical education classes dropped from forty-two percent to twenty-seven percent; and

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1 WHEREAS, obese children are often excluded from social
2 groups, suffer from low self-esteem and are at greater risk
3 for developing anxiety disorders and depression in adulthood;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, obesity is preventable, and regular physical
6 activity reduces the risk of developing or prematurely dying
7 from some of the leading causes of illness and death in the
8 United States, such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood
9 pressure, stroke, cancer and arthritis; and

10 WHEREAS, children learn skills in primary and secondary
11 school that they retain for life, and research suggests that
12 if children are exposed to teaching techniques and curricula
13 that encourage physical fitness and positive dietary habits,
14 they are more likely to embrace an active lifestyle, perform
15 better academically and enjoy greater self-esteem and mental
16 health; and

17 WHEREAS, in the fall of 1997, the New Mexico state board
18 of education adopted standards and benchmarks in physical
19 education for all schools; and

20 WHEREAS, the fall 2000 report to the president of the
21 United States entitled "Promoting Better Health for Young
22 People Through Physical Activity and Sport" outlines daily
23 physical education as a strategy to increase physical activity
24 among youth;

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

. 140181. 1

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of public
2 education be requested to work with the department of health
3 and other interested organizations to develop strategies to
4 enable teachers to implement quality physical education
5 curricula and teaching techniques that will encourage students
6 at all grade levels to learn healthy lifestyles and the skills
7 necessary for lifelong participation in physical activity and
8 fitness; and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state department of
10 public education distribute a report of those strategies to
11 public school superintendents; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the superintendent of public instruction and
14 the secretary of health.