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SENATE MEMORIAL 32

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

INTRODUCED BY

Linda M. Lopez

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD AND THE SUPERINTENDENT OF ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF THE ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN COMMUNITY REGARDING AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS ATTENDING THE ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, about half of the five thousand Native American students in Albuquerque public schools are performing at average or better in the school district of eighty-five thousand students; however, approximately two thousand five hundred of them are performing at worse than average in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, there is a long history of low performance of Native American students in Albuquerque public schools and little effort has been made by the Albuquerque school district

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1 to address the dropout rate, attendance problems, low test
2 scores and other problems encountered by the Native American
3 students; and

4 WHEREAS, urban Native American students, parents of
5 students and community members continue to experience the
6 prevailing sense of disenfranchisement from the Albuquerque
7 public schools system; and

8 WHEREAS, according to a 1998-99 Albuquerque public
9 schools report, Native American students dropped out of the
10 Albuquerque public schools at a rate of nineteen and seven-
11 tenths percent that school year and, according to a similar
12 report by Albuquerque public schools for the period 1993-94 to
13 1997-98, only thirty-two and four-tenths percent of Native
14 American students who started the freshmen class in 1993
15 graduated from Albuquerque public schools in 1998, while
16 forty-one and eight-tenths percent dropped out; and

17 WHEREAS, according to the 2001 Albuquerque public
18 school's Native American eighty-day report card, out of three
19 thousand nine hundred sixty-five Native American students in
20 the first through ninth grades, one thousand five hundred
21 thirty-seven, or thirty-nine percent, are on the alert report,
22 which means that these students are failing, and all twenty-
23 six Native American freshmen students at Rio Grande high
24 school, or one hundred percent, were failing, getting Ds and
25 Fs, in their class work; and

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1 WHEREAS, according to the same eighty-day report card,
2 many Native American students exhibit attendance problems,
3 missing ten or more days of school; for example, at Garfield
4 middle school, eighty-eight percent of the twenty-nine Native
5 American students missed ten or more days of school; and

6 WHEREAS, according to the eighty-day report card, a high
7 number of Native American students in the Albuquerque public
8 schools are shown to be performing below a 2.0 grade average
9 and, as an example, the Coronado cluster, made up of
10 Albuquerque high school, Rio Grande high school and West Mesa
11 high school, on the average, has a range of forty-six to
12 fifty-four percent of Native American students who have a
13 grade point average of below 2.0; and

14 WHEREAS, Native American students show an extremely low
15 average on terra nova scores, in comparison with the general
16 student body in the Albuquerque public school system; and

17 WHEREAS, other education-related issues concerning Native
18 American students attending Albuquerque public schools are:

19 A. the lack of sufficient Native American
20 education-related funding at all levels of the Albuquerque
21 public schools;

22 B. the limited number of Native American teachers
23 and professionals employed by the Albuquerque public schools;

24 C. the Native American students with special needs
25 that are not being addressed; and

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1 D. the Indian education component of the
2 Albuquerque public schools being mired in the bureaucracy of
3 Albuquerque public schools and lacking sufficient authority to
4 act on Indian education matters; and

5 WHEREAS, many of these same issues have existed for as
6 long as Native American students have been attending
7 Albuquerque public schools, and it is long past the time for
8 Albuquerque public schools to properly address these issues
9 and concerns;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
11 OF NEW MEXICO that the state department of public education,
12 the Albuquerque public school board and the Albuquerque school
13 superintendent be requested to:

14 A. reduce the Native American student annual
15 dropout rate over the next five years, from nineteen and
16 seven-tenths percent in the 1998-1999 school year to less than
17 ten percent;

18 B. increase or emphasize Native American
19 curriculum, such as American Indian history, in all
20 Albuquerque public schools and provide more support for Native
21 American bilingual and multicultural education;

22 C. increase the number of Native American
23 teachers, administrators and staff employed by the Albuquerque
24 public schools;

25 D. supplement the reliance on federal funds with

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1 more Albuquerque public schools and state funding,
2 specifically for American Indian education programs;

3 E. encourage and obtain more Native American
4 parental and community involvement in all aspects of the
5 Albuquerque public schools system by scheduling public
6 meetings and orientation sessions with the Native American
7 community;

8 F. increase support for teacher and other
9 professional development related to Indian education and
10 encourage more research in Indian education-related issues;

11 G. increase support for relevant and meaningful
12 literacy programs for Native American students, especially at
13 the early grade levels, including creation of Native American
14 early childhood learning centers;

15 H. increase support services for Native American
16 students, especially for those who are at risk of dropping out
17 of school;

18 I. elevate the Indian education component of the
19 Albuquerque public schools structure to an assistant
20 superintendent status, to have better Indian education-related
21 policy impact on the Albuquerque public schools and to
22 increase meaningful participation in the establishment of
23 school policy and to provide direction for all Indian
24 education programs; and

25 J. put an end to "social" promotion for Native

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1 American students who fall behind and seek alternatives to
2 this practice, such as greater participation of Native
3 American students in summer school or after-school programs;
4 and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Albuquerque public school
6 board and superintendent be requested to hold a general public
7 meeting with the Albuquerque Native American community
8 immediately, to obtain input from the community and to receive
9 recommendations on how to deal with Indian education issues
10 and concerns; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the superintendent of the Albuquerque public
13 schools, the chairman of the Albuquerque public school board,
14 the superintendent of public instruction and the Albuquerque
15 commission on Indian affairs.

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