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SENATE BILL 582

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013

INTRODUCED BY

Linda M. Lopez and Rick Miera

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; PROVIDING FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS; CREATING THE COUNCIL ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the "Family Engagement Act"."

SECTION 2. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.--

A. The legislature finds that the engagement and support of families in the education of their children is an integral part of improving academic achievement and that

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1 properly constructed family engagement programs can play an
2 important and effective role in the participation of families
3 in their children's schools and in improving their children's
4 learning.

5 B. The legislature confirms its commitment to the
6 rights of students, families and employees, as set forth in
7 federal and state statutes, to nondiscriminatory treatment,
8 including freedom from harassment and retaliation based on
9 disability, race, ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation,
10 gender identity, national origin or ancestry, religion, age,
11 veteran status, immigration status and any other protected
12 status as defined by law in all of its programs and activities.

13 C. The purpose of the Family Engagement Act is to
14 ensure that family engagement programs are properly designed
15 and implemented and to provide a focus and structure for those
16 programs based on prior experience and research while
17 maintaining sufficient local flexibility to design a program
18 that best meets the needs of the local community. The goals of
19 these programs are to:

20 (1) engage families from diverse cultures in a
21 positive way in their children's education by:

22 (a) building effective and consistent
23 methods of school-home communications;

24 (b) supporting families in developing
25 skills that enhance their children's academic efforts and their

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1 development as responsible members of society; and

2 (c) helping professionals to learn to
3 work comfortably with diverse families and to view these
4 families as valuable sources of information about their
5 children;

6 (2) inform families that they can directly
7 affect the success of their children's learning and offer
8 families various techniques and strategies to improve their
9 children's academic success or to assist their children in
10 learning at home, if they desire; and

11 (3) integrate family engagement programs,
12 including compliance with the provisions of the Family
13 Engagement Act, into a school's master plan for academic
14 accountability."

15 SECTION 3. A new section of the Public School Code is
16 enacted to read:

17 "[NEW MATERIAL] FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL.--

18 A. The "family engagement council" is created as an
19 advisory council to the department.

20 B. The council shall consist of representatives
21 from all regions of the state, reflective of the ethnic
22 demographics of the state, with parents composing at least one-
23 half of the council membership, for staggered three-year terms
24 as follows:

25 (1) one representative of a statewide family-

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1 teacher organization;

2 (2) two family members or guardians of
3 students enrolled in a public school;

4 (3) two public school teachers;

5 (4) one public school administrator;

6 (5) one local school board member;

7 (6) one representative of the business
8 community; and

9 (7) one department employee, who shall be the
10 chair of the council.

11 C. The council shall:

12 (1) develop an instrument or process to
13 evaluate family engagement programs developed by local school
14 boards;

15 (2) make recommendations to the department
16 about family engagement programs that are effective;

17 (3) make recommendations to the department
18 about training programs for local school boards and school
19 staff;

20 (4) make recommendations to the department
21 about facilitating coordination among school officials, parents
22 and families, educators and community leaders;

23 (5) make recommendations to the department
24 about the coordination of department services and services of
25 other state agencies; and

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1 (6) serve as the champion for students in
2 building community support for schools and encouraging greater
3 community participation in the public schools.

4 D. Members of the council who are not state
5 employees shall receive no compensation except per diem and
6 mileage pursuant to the Per Diem and Mileage Act."

7 SECTION 4. A new section of the Public School Code is
8 enacted to read:

9 "[NEW MATERIAL] FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.--

10 A. Each local school board shall, in conjunction
11 with parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders,
12 establish a family engagement program for each school in the
13 school district. The local school board shall:

14 (1) ensure that parents and families
15 participate in the planning, design, implementation and
16 evaluation of the family engagement program;

17 (2) provide for regular and periodic programs
18 throughout the school year that offer learning opportunities
19 for both families and school personnel in areas such as:

20 (a) the ability of families to directly
21 affect the success of a child's learning through the support
22 given at home and at school;

23 (b) home activities, strategies and
24 materials that can be used to assist and enhance the learning
25 of children at home and at school;

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1 (c) the developmental needs of children,
2 positive guidance techniques and ways for families and teachers
3 to build healthy relationships with children; and

4 (d) the ability of families and schools
5 to develop consistent and effective communications concerning
6 the progress of the children in school and concerning school
7 programs;

8 (3) prepare an annual statement identifying
9 specific objectives of the program; and

10 (4) conduct an annual review and assessment of
11 the program's progress in meeting its objectives, which shall
12 be made available to families and the community.

13 B. A family engagement program may include the
14 following:

15 (1) a plan to encourage participation by
16 families from diverse cultures;

17 (2) a program that builds on parenting
18 strengths, that helps families develop the skills that they
19 desire and that facilitates networks to support families in
20 effectively nurturing their children;

21 (3) a communication element that provides an
22 effective two-way communication process to enable school staff
23 to reach families, both individually and collectively and to
24 ensure that families and school staff communicate back and
25 forth about their children;

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1 (4) a home learning element that provides for
2 families and school staff to work together in developing
3 learning goals and that offers opportunities for learning
4 activities at home and in the community;

5 (5) a volunteer element that recruits and
6 organizes volunteer participation from families and the
7 community at large;

8 (6) a governance and advocacy element that
9 provides a democratic governance structure that ensures that
10 families are partners in policymaking about school programs and
11 that family representatives are elected to act as advocates or
12 decision-makers for other parents and families;

13 (7) a community outreach element that
14 establishes partnerships with individuals and organizations in
15 the community; and

16 (8) a plan to encourage parents to visit
17 schools, which may include an area in each school designated as
18 a family center."

19 SECTION 5. A new section of the Public School Code is
20 enacted to read:

21 "[NEW MATERIAL] CREATE A STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE.--In
22 order to institutionalize family engagement partnerships across
23 the state, the department shall establish structures and
24 positions with well-defined responsibilities and accountability
25 to promote genuine family engagement."

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SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the provisions of this act is July 1, 2013.