

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO
CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO STUDY THE USE OF STANDARDIZED TEST
SCORES FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN THOSE FOR WHICH THE TEST WAS
DESIGNED.

WHEREAS, standards-based assessments are designed to
measure the proficiency of individual students against content
standards in academic disciplines; and

WHEREAS, the use of standards-based assessment scores is
intended to provide information to teachers regarding how
their students are performing on identified standards; and

WHEREAS, individual student assessment scores are also
useful in helping parents understand the academic proficiency
of their children; and

WHEREAS, recently, New Mexico has begun implementing a
school grading system and a teacher evaluation system that
rely on an approach to measure growth using value-added
modeling; and

WHEREAS, value-added modeling uses student test scores
over several years to predict where the student will score in
a subsequent year and then attributes those gains to the
current teacher; and

WHEREAS, a number of factors have been found to have
strong influences on student learning gains, aside from the

teachers to whom their scores would be attached, and those factors include such things as previous teachers, tutors, school conditions, quality of curriculum materials, specialists, class size and schedules; and

WHEREAS, there is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians and economists that student test scores alone are not reliable and valid indicators of teacher effectiveness and should not be used in high-stakes personnel decisions; and

WHEREAS, analyses of value-added modeling results have led researchers to doubt whether the methodology can accurately identify more or less effective teachers; and

WHEREAS, value-added modeling estimates have proven to be unstable across statistical models, years and classes that teachers teach; and

WHEREAS, the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers leads to an excessive focus on reading and mathematics and the subsequent narrowing and oversimplification of the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, one possible unintended consequence of tying teacher evaluations and sanctions to test score results may be to discourage teachers from working in public schools with the neediest students; and

WHEREAS, when an assessment instrument, such as the standards-based assessment, is used for a purpose other than that for which it was designed, for example for measuring

teacher effectiveness, the results are often invalid;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study committee be requested to convene a work group to study the validity of using standards-based assessments for other purposes, principally teacher and school administrator effectiveness and school grading; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group report to the legislative education study committee by October 1, 2013; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the legislative education study committee.