

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 15

54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019

INTRODUCED BY

Natalie Figueroa and Bill Tallman

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK
FORCE TO STUDY SCHOOL BUS SAFETY ISSUES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS
STUDENTS.

WHEREAS, the safety of public school students is of the
utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, there are many dangers for students, particularly
special needs students, in everyday circumstances, such as
riding a school bus; and

WHEREAS, students with special needs may have physical,
mental or behavioral conditions that may require adult
supervision or intervention; and

WHEREAS, school bus drivers and bus attendants function as
direct service providers with hands-on responsibility to
operate special equipment, manage student behavior, administer

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

underscored material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 health care insofar as they are qualified and serve as seating
2 specialists in positioning and securing adaptive and assistive
3 devices and occupants; and

4 WHEREAS, there is no uniform approach to meeting the
5 transportation needs of students with special needs across New
6 Mexico's school districts and charter schools; and

7 WHEREAS, from written emergency evacuation plans and live
8 drills for all students riding on school buses to having buses
9 with special equipment such as wheelchair locks, appropriate
10 oxygen storage, special seating and occupant restraints and
11 emergency medical kits, there are several safety measures that
12 must be considered when transporting special needs students;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, many school bus operators face challenges when
15 transporting special needs students, including being the sole
16 adult on the bus, a lack of meaningful professional development
17 regarding transporting special needs students or the concern
18 that a single operator does not represent an adequately staffed
19 school bus;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
21 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be
22 requested to convene a task force to study the safe
23 transportation of special needs students with representation
24 from both urban and rural areas of the state; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include school

.214328.2

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 bus drivers and school bus attendants, at least one school-
2 based medical professional with experience serving special
3 needs students, at least one educational assistant who works
4 with special needs students, at least one special education
5 teacher, a person from the state transportation division of the
6 public education department, a person from the special
7 education bureau of the public education department, one or
8 more parents of special needs students and one representative
9 of an applicable school employees' association; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force investigate:

11 A. the number of specially equipped buses and bus
12 routes for special needs students by school district;

13 B. how many special needs students are being
14 transported with and without special transportation
15 requirements provided for in their individualized education
16 programs;

17 C. the policies and emergency evacuation plans in
18 each school district and charter school about transporting
19 special needs students and how often evacuation plans are
20 practiced in a school year;

21 D. what problems have arisen in the past with
22 transporting special needs students, an evaluation of how well
23 the problems were solved and whether they resulted in new
24 policies; and

25 E. what other states similar to New Mexico do to

.214328.2

underscoring material = new
~~[bracketed material] = delete~~

1 safely transport special needs students; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force consider
3 multiple solutions and options for the safe transportation of
4 special needs students, including more training for school bus
5 drivers combined with the use of district- or charter-employed
6 bus attendants to ensure the safety of special needs students;
7 and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when considering school bus
9 attendants, the task force be requested also to consider what
10 kind of training bus attendants should have, both generally and
11 more specifically related to the particular special needs of
12 the students a bus attendant is responsible for; whether and
13 how the transportation funding formula should be changed to
14 provide for additional safety recommendations; and whether
15 there are regional opportunities to provide necessary services
16 more economically; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
18 findings and recommendations to the public education department
19 by September 30, 2019, and the department report the task
20 force's work and the department's responses to the task force's
21 findings and recommendations to the legislative education study
22 committee by November 1, 2019; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
24 transmitted to the public education department and the
25 governor.

.214328.2