

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO REVISE THE ACADEMIC CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS IN READING AND TO PROVIDE A MODEL FOR READING INSTRUCTION; REQUESTING SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO SYSTEMATIZE READING PROGRAMS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

WHEREAS, reading is the basic building block of academic success, and early reading failure may result in a devastating downward spiral that leads to low self-esteem, underachievement and dropping out of school; and

WHEREAS, the ability to read well and a love of reading significantly enhances development of the whole person by whetting one's intellectual curiosity, improving one's chances at higher degrees and career advancement and providing many hours of recreational pleasure; and

WHEREAS, while there are no easy answers or quick solutions for optimizing reading achievement in kindergarten through third grade, research shows the importance of screening all children for weaknesses in reading development; diagnosing reading problems as early as kindergarten; and delivering intensive, data-driven treatments so that almost every child is able to reach reading levels in the average range for his grade; and

WHEREAS, an extensive knowledge base now exists to show

teachers and parents the skills students must learn in order to read well, and these skills provide the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches that can help prevent the predictable consequences of early reading failure; and

WHEREAS, the public education department's last academic content and performance standards for reading were adopted June 2000 and have not kept up with the scientifically based research on what works in this most critical area of learning;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it request that the public education department revise its academic content and performance standards for reading, based on the latest scientifically based research on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department provide a reading instruction model for kindergarten through third grade that includes:

- A. measurable goals for each grade level;
- B. regular and frequent assessment and monitoring in kindergarten through third grade, with appropriate interventions;
- C. research-based reading curricula that involve direct, explicit and systematic instruction;
- D. protected time for reading instruction;

E. instruction in small groups at each child's skill level;

F. leadership roles for school principals; and

G. training for all teachers and educational assistants in using the curricula and assessment measures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that school districts systematize reading programs and instructional materials across classes and schools, but that within a school district's systematized reading program it provide opportunity to test innovative approaches to reading instruction, based on scientific research; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department require school districts to provide extra instruction in reading for at-risk readers, as well as provide small daily reading groups for all students, throughout the primary grades; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the public education department.