

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING A STUDY OF MEANS TO ELEVATE THE STANDING OF THE INDIAN EDUCATION DIVISION OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

WHEREAS, administering education programs for New Mexico's Indian children requires government-to-government agreements with sovereign Indian nations and direct communications with federal agencies involved with Indian education; and

WHEREAS, federal law establishes a complex of programs available only to Indian children and requirements demanded only of Indian educational programs; and

WHEREAS, the Indian education division of the public education department administers these programs and represents the interests of Indian students with the bureau of Indian affairs and other federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the dropout rate for Indian children in New Mexico schools exceeds that for other groups; and

WHEREAS, poverty in areas with a high concentration of Indian children exceeds that in other areas; and

WHEREAS, the number of failing and probationary schools on New Mexico's Indian lands exceeds the percentage of those in other areas; and

WHEREAS, meeting the performance requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act will be difficult for New

Mexico's schools with high concentrations of Indian children without focused programs and resources; and

WHEREAS, recognition of the importance of Native American languages, cultures and customs should be seen as an acknowledgment of the importance of New Mexico's own roots rather than as appreciation for a "foreign" culture or language; and

WHEREAS, the problems of teachers of Indian children in schools on New Mexico's Indian lands are in many ways distinct from those of other teachers; and

WHEREAS, the needs and priorities of Indian education, Indian students and Indian teachers deserve elevation in the public education department's organization;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department be requested to analyze means of elevating the status of the Indian education division; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of education and the deputy superintendent of Indian education be requested to prepare and issue a joint report on ways the authority, funding, scope, staffing and responsibilities of the Indian education division can be enhanced and to present the report to the legislative Indian affairs committee at its October 2005 meeting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of the report be

transmitted to the leader of each New Mexico tribe and pueblo, to schools whose Native American student population is at least five percent, to the school boards of Central consolidated schools, Gallup-McKinley county schools, Grants-Cibola county schools, Farmington municipal schools and Bloomfield schools and to the Navajo Nation Indian education department; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of the report be transmitted to the secretary of public education and the deputy superintendent of Indian education.