HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 87

47TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2005

INTRODUCED BY

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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

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1   WHEREAS, while there are no easy answers or quick

2 solutions for optimizing reading achievement in kindergarten

3 through third grade, research shows the importance of screening

4 all children for weaknesses in reading development; diagnosing

5 reading problems as early as kindergarten; and delivering

6 intensive, data-driven treatments so that almost every child is

7 able to reach reading levels in the average range for his

8 grade; and

9   WHEREAS, an extensive knowledge base now exists to show

10 teachers and parents the skills students must learn in order to

11 read well, and these skills provide the basis for sound

12 curriculum decisions and instructional approaches that can help

13 prevent the predictable consequences of early reading failure;

14 and

15   WHEREAS, the public education department's last academic

16 content and performance standards for reading were adopted June

17 2000 and have not kept up with the scientifically based

18 research on what works in this most critical area of learning;

19   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it request that the public education

21 department revise its academic content and performance

22 standards for reading, based on the latest scientifically based

23 research on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary

24 and text comprehension; and

25   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department provide a

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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

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transmitted to the public education department.

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