

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE, IN COOPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM THAT MATCHES COLLEGE STUDENTS AS MENTORS TO THIRD GRADE STUDENTS IN READING.

WHEREAS, studies show that children who are struggling to read in third grade are four times more likely to drop out or not complete high school, compared with classmates who are proficient readers; and

WHEREAS, studies also show that only twenty-one percent of New Mexico fourth graders actually read at the fourth grade level; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that New Mexico college graduation rates are fifteen percent below national averages and certain scholarship programs have college graduation rates as low as fourteen percent in six years, leaving students with no college degrees and mounting college debt; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of a failing educational system is often reflected through a lowered tax base, rising costs of social welfare and criminal justice, lowered standards of living and high levels of anxiety regarding having enough food to eat, appropriate housing and good health; and

WHEREAS, success in learning to read by the end of grade three allows for a lifetime ability of reading to learn, rather than learning to read, and of accessing the benefits of the educational system; and

WHEREAS, an international model of mentoring and tutoring built into a program called "MATCH New Mexico" has demonstrated success in bringing together college student mentors with at-risk third graders in a one-to-one relationship; and

WHEREAS, the international model, as adapted in twenty-five countries, has shown positive benefits for both mentors and their mentees, including improved academic performance, the ability to meet graduation requirements more efficiently, a heightened motivation to study and the addition of improved social status, higher levels of self-esteem and civic involvement; and

WHEREAS, this international model of mentoring and tutoring has seen success in the Santa Fe public schools and is currently being implemented in the Albuquerque public schools, with plans for future implementation in the Taos public schools; and

WHEREAS, financial support for college students through state scholarships and stipends is reinvested in the community when college students offer this unique gift of social commitment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study committee, in cooperation with the public education department and the higher education department, be requested to establish a work group to report on the feasibility of creating an innovative program with mentoring and tutoring third grade students by college student mentors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group generate a feasibility study, including a needs assessment, implementation plan and a fiscal impact analysis with measurable outcome data applicable to the various populations of New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group be composed of equal numbers of college students who are residents of New Mexico representing community-based colleges and universities in the state, together with leaders from the public and private sectors representing science, industry, education, community organizations, foundations, government, health and welfare programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education study committee, in cooperation with the public education department, the higher education department and the work group, report the results of the study and their recommendations to the legislature and the governor before the

2016 legislative session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the director of the legislative education study committee and the respective secretaries of public education and higher education.