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HOUSE MEMORIAL 9

53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017

INTRODUCED BY

Debra M. Sariñana

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY
OPTIONS TO ENSURE THAT MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE READY TO
ADVANCE TO HIGH SCHOOL OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, ARE RETAINED,
AND OPTIONS TO REDUCE TEACHER TURNOVER.

WHEREAS, according to a report by the public education
department in 2015, student achievement in eighth grade has a
greater impact on college and career readiness than performance
in any other grade in high school; and

WHEREAS, the middle school grades, including sixth,
seventh and eighth, mark a critical time to engage students in
a rigorous academic curriculum in preparation for high school
and, eventually, post-secondary education and careers; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2015 public education department
report, New Mexico middle schools are struggling with student

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1 performance, programming and funding; and

2 WHEREAS, middle schools are often not equipped to meet the
3 social and emotional needs of young adolescents; and

4 WHEREAS, the state is lacking academic programming and
5 financial resources for middle school students, according to
6 the public education department study; and

7 WHEREAS, middle school teachers are often generalists with
8 a kindergarten through eighth grade license, do not possess an
9 endorsement in a core subject matter and lack training in the
10 development of young adolescents; and

11 WHEREAS, some middle school students graduate to the ninth
12 grade without acquiring the academic, social and emotional
13 skills needed for a successful transition to high school; and

14 WHEREAS, ninth grade teachers must then address the
15 educational needs of those students who are promoted from the
16 eighth grade and are lagging behind their peers in the ninth
17 grade; and

18 WHEREAS, many ninth grade teachers are frustrated with
19 assisting students who were promoted from middle school without
20 the required educational readiness needed to progress; and

21 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second-highest teacher
22 turnover rate in the country, according to a recent study
23 conducted by the learning policy institute; and

24 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study options to ensure
25 middle school student readiness to advance to high school or,

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1 in the alternative, to consider retaining students; and

2 WHEREAS, it would be beneficial to study ways to reduce
3 teacher turnover in New Mexico;

4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative
6 education study committee be requested to convene a study group
7 in conjunction with the public education department and the
8 legislative finance committee to study options to ensure middle
9 school student readiness to advance to high school or, in the
10 alternative, to retain students who do not fulfill the
11 requirements to advance; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study group be requested
13 to study ways to reduce teacher turnover in New Mexico; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education
15 study committee be requested to produce a report on its
16 findings, conclusions and recommendations; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report be presented to the
18 legislative finance committee by October 1, 2017; and

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
20 transmitted to the chair of the legislative education study
21 committee, the secretary of public education and the chair of
22 the legislative finance committee.