

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO DEANS AND DIRECTORS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION TO CREATE A WORK GROUP TO STUDY READING CURRICULA IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, literacy is fundamental to achieving success in education, economic endeavors and civic life; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, New Mexico was fifth lowest among all states in the nation in fourth-grade reading, with only twenty-four percent of fourth-grade public school students proficient or advanced in reading on the national assessment of educational progress; and

WHEREAS, the performance of New Mexico fourth-grade students in reading on that assessment was no better in 2007 than it was in 1992; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, New Mexico was third lowest among all states in the nation in eighth-grade reading, with only eighteen percent of eighth-grade public school students proficient or advanced in reading on the national assessment of educational progress; and

WHEREAS, the performance of New Mexico eighth-grade students in reading on that assessment was poorer in 2007 than in 1998; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that the single most significant school-related factor in student achievement is

teacher quality; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico teacher preparation programs have traditionally prepared a major share of the new teachers for New Mexico classrooms; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, the national reading panel conducted a comprehensive survey of scientifically valid educational research on reading instruction for children and identified five essential components, which are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, legislation was enacted in New Mexico requiring the public education department to withhold program approval from a college of education or teacher education program that fails to offer a course on teaching reading that is based on current scientifically based reading research; that aligns with department-adopted reading standards; that includes strategies and assessment measures to ensure that beginning teachers are proficient in teaching reading; and that was designed after seeking input from experts in the education field; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the national council on teacher quality published an evaluation of reading preparation in eight New Mexico undergraduate elementary teacher preparation programs that found that most programs in New Mexico do not prepare candidates to teach the science of reading and that

the programs use a variety of reading textbooks, most of which do not address the science of reading; and

WHEREAS, it is of paramount importance to every resident of New Mexico to have confidence that every graduate of a teacher preparation program in the state has received the best possible instruction in the teaching of reading and is well-prepared to teach students to be proficient readers, able to manage rigorous content in later grades;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico deans and directors of colleges of education be requested to form a work group to examine the curricula and assigned text materials of all required reading courses in programs that prepare teachers for state licensure and to determine if those courses meet the statutory requirement that they be based on current scientifically based research; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group include not only three deans or directors of undergraduate teacher preparation programs and alternative teacher licensure programs and three members of the legislative education study committee, but also such other representatives as those six members designate; and that the work group establish the methodology for the study, including the qualifications of reading experts to review the curricula and materials, the process by which the reviews will be conducted, the scope of

work of the reading experts and the standards to be used to evaluate the curricula and materials, and the timetable for completion of the study; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group report the results of its study, with findings and recommendations, to the appropriate interim legislative committee and the governor by November 1, 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the New Mexico deans and directors of colleges of education and the executive director of the legislative education study committee.