

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 34

2 **51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO CONVENE
12 A WORK GROUP TO STUDY THE A-F SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM.

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14 WHEREAS, the A-F school grading system appears to be
15 extremely complex, and many school districts, legislators,
16 educators and parents have stated publicly that they do not
17 understand the system; and

18 WHEREAS, the system is so convoluted that some schools
19 received bonus points for activities, such as sports, that they
20 do not provide and other schools received better grades than
21 schools that had outperformed them in mathematics and language
22 arts; and

23 WHEREAS, the public education department has not released
24 to the public all the methodology and formulas used to
25 determine grades, so school districts, and even several high-

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1 level mathematicians, have not been able to replicate the
2 results; and

3 WHEREAS, a common complaint about the system is that it is
4 too volatile, as demonstrated by the initial and final grades
5 provided in 2012, and this volatility leads to confusion and
6 low morale in many schools; and

7 WHEREAS, the A-F school grading system relies on a
8 value-added model for predicting student achievement that has
9 not been proven to be reliable; and

10 WHEREAS, the school grading system does not appear to
11 account for several factors that affect student achievement,
12 such as poverty, family educational background, access to
13 education resources, rural versus urban locations and other
14 factors beyond the school and classroom; and

15 WHEREAS, the school grade relies almost entirely on
16 student performance on the state's standards-based assessment,
17 a single test given in early spring each year; and

18 WHEREAS, schools that have received a grade of "D" or "F"
19 are required to participate in state-mandated interventions
20 without an evaluation of the impact of those interventions; and

21 WHEREAS, the A-F school grade includes performance in
22 multiple categories but does not help schools understand what
23 they can do to improve their grade;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study

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1 committee be requested to convene a work group to study the New
2 Mexico A-F grading system, including answering questions such
3 as:

4 A. how the value-added model is used to predict
5 students' scores;

6 B. how stable the confidence intervals are for
7 making the predictions;

8 C. how decisions are made on what constitutes each
9 grade;

10 D. what interventions for "D" and "F" schools are
11 provided and how well they are working;

12 E. how the grading system accounts for poverty and
13 other demographic differences in student populations;

14 F. to what extent standardized test scores are good
15 measures of a school's effectiveness; and

16 G. how the A-F grading system helps schools improve
17 their performance; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education
19 study committee include in the work group representatives of
20 teachers, local school superintendents, charter schools, the
21 Native American and Hispanic communities, school assessment
22 administrators, statistical experts and other experts and
23 interested persons; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group report its
25 findings and recommendations to the legislative education study

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1 committee by October 1, 2013; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be
3 transmitted to the director of the legislative education study
4 committee.

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