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SENATE MEMORIAL 95

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

Sue Wilson Beffort

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHERS, TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING CO-CURRICULAR AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE COST OF SUCH PROGRAMS.

WHEREAS, co-curricular and after-school programs make a real difference for children, families and communities; and

WHEREAS, despite the value of co-curricular and after-school programs, the public education department reported that out of approximately one hundred thirty middle schools, only thirty-two middle schools are funded for after-school programs; and

WHEREAS, co-curricular programs are designed to provide projects to engage and excite middle school students who might be prone to dropping out; and

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1 WHEREAS, co-curricular activities are particularly good at
2 providing opportunities for students to work as teams, to
3 exercise leadership and to take the initiative themselves; and

4 WHEREAS, vocational co-curricular programs such as
5 mechanics, wood shop and home economics offer meaningful
6 projects that maintain and support useful life skills; and

7 WHEREAS, co-curricular programs that focus on academic
8 classes in the morning and hands-on projects such as
9 woodworking or horticulture in the afternoon are another option
10 for engaging middle school students; and

11 WHEREAS, co-curricular programs offer innovative projects
12 and restructure traditional learning and may provide a more
13 rounded education; and

14 WHEREAS, more than fifteen million children nationwide are
15 unsupervised after the school day ends, and older youths are
16 more likely to spend time unsupervised in the hours after
17 school, with more than twelve million students in grades six
18 through twelve responsible for taking care of themselves after
19 school, according to a MetLife foundation study; and

20 WHEREAS, America after 3 PM New Mexico reports that
21 thirty-two percent of New Mexico children are in an after-
22 school program; and

23 WHEREAS, in New Mexico, the top three providers of after-
24 school programs are the public schools, boys and girls clubs
25 and the young men's christian association; and

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1 WHEREAS, sixty-seven percent of after-school programs in
2 New Mexico are located in a public school building; and

3 WHEREAS, on average, New Mexico families who pay for their
4 child's after-school program spend seventy-nine dollars
5 (\$79.00) per week; and

6 WHEREAS, seventy thousand eight hundred forty-one children
7 in New Mexico participate in an after-school program, yet
8 ninety thousand six hundred fifty-nine children would be
9 enrolled in a program if one were available to them; and

10 WHEREAS, a strong network of after-school programs exists
11 for young children in New Mexico, providing educational
12 opportunities as well as satisfying child care needs while
13 parents are at work; and

14 WHEREAS, it becomes more difficult to provide after-school
15 programs once youths enter middle school, as young adolescents
16 are more autonomous, busier, more vocal about specific needs
17 and less enthusiastic about activities designed for a general
18 audience; and

19 WHEREAS, the public education department reports that
20 youths are more at risk after school and that juvenile crime
21 triples between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.; and

22 WHEREAS, using after-school hours in a constructive and
23 productive manner can help the success of students by keeping
24 them engaged and preventing them from dropping out; and

25 WHEREAS, New Mexico has limited after-school opportunities

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1 for middle school students; and

2 WHEREAS, despite the clear rewards to after-school
3 programs for middle school students, there are barriers to
4 participation, such as lack of funding and transportation; and

5 WHEREAS, funding for after-school programs for middle
6 school students does not exist in most communities in New
7 Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, a study of financial resources based on per-pupil
9 funding for New Mexico middle school students would provide
10 valuable information in the consideration of funding options;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, lack of transportation to and from after-school
13 facilities is one of the most daunting barriers, with forty-
14 nine percent of parents in the MetLife foundation study citing
15 lack of transportation as the main reason their children did
16 not participate in after-school programs;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
18 OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study committee,
19 in cooperation with the legislative finance committee, the
20 public education department and the New Mexico afterschool
21 alliance, be requested to study the lack of co-curricular and
22 after-school programs for middle school students; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include information
24 about co-curricular programs and how these programs offer
25 additional alternatives to engage middle school students; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include information
2 regarding statewide programs that already exist when making
3 recommendations for new programming; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study look at giving
5 school districts the option of deciding which co-curricular and
6 after-school programs for middle school students would be the
7 most advantageous to develop; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that solutions to the difficulty of
9 transporting middle school students to and from after-school
10 activities be provided; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study determine the
12 feasibility of funding co-curricular and after-school programs
13 for middle school students using a per-pupil formula; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education
15 study committee report its findings and recommendations to the
16 appropriate interim committee no later than December 1, 2015;
17 and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
19 transmitted to the legislative education study committee, the
20 legislative finance committee, the secretary of public
21 education and the director of the New Mexico afterschool
22 alliance.