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HOUSE MEMORIAL 11

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

Luis M. Terrazas and James G. Townsend and Tanya Mirabal Moya  
and Brian G. Baca and Jenifer Jones

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A WORK  
GROUP TO STUDY WAYS TO ASSIST SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTER  
SCHOOLS WITH STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM IN PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS, FOCUSING ON APPROACHES AT A COMMUNITY AND FAMILY LEVEL  
FOR IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE AND ROOT CAUSES OF  
ABSENTEEISM WHEN PRACTICABLE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS;  
REQUESTING THAT THE WORK GROUP PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND FINDINGS  
TO THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE BY DECEMBER 1,  
2024.

WHEREAS, New Mexico's public schools are experiencing an  
increased rate of student absenteeism, resulting in a growing  
number of students identified as chronically absent; and

WHEREAS, a November 16, 2023 legislative education study  
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1 committee report indicates that New Mexico has seen its chronic  
2 absenteeism rates soar in the last few school years, with data  
3 from the public education department showing an alarming forty  
4 percent chronic absenteeism rate for the 2022-2023 school year;  
5 that means one hundred thirty-four thousand two hundred fifty-  
6 nine students in New Mexico are chronically absent and missing  
7 three weeks out of an average one-hundred-eighty-day school  
8 calendar; and

9 WHEREAS, the same report identified some of the known  
10 barriers to school attendance, including students facing  
11 housing insecurity, students with disabilities, English  
12 language learner students and economically disadvantaged  
13 students; however, work remains necessary to flesh out local-  
14 level barriers to school attendance, including root causes on a  
15 more personalized basis and the implementation of best  
16 practices to eliminate or minimize the negative impacts of  
17 identified barriers and root causes; and

18 WHEREAS, in 2019, New Mexico enacted the Attendance for  
19 Success Act and, through that act, important strides have been  
20 made in school-specific student absence data collecting and  
21 reporting, and that act has helped schools develop tools to  
22 identify students with excessive absences as early as possible  
23 and provide early intervention support, including attendance  
24 improvement plans and parental notifications designed to  
25 provide collaboration among the school, the student and the

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1 family; and

2 WHEREAS, the report issued by the legislative education  
3 study committee further points out that although the state has  
4 transitioned to a more prevention-oriented approach to student  
5 absenteeism that prioritizes family engagement and support,  
6 what may be missing are additional meaningful, localized and  
7 community-driven approaches tailored to individual communities  
8 and families and designed to address nuanced, differentiated  
9 and often personal root causes;

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
11 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public  
12 education department be requested to convene a work group to  
13 meet during the 2024 interim to:

14 A. study the results of literature searches on best  
15 practices and innovative local-level approaches to identifying  
16 barriers to student attendance and root causes of student  
17 chronic absenteeism in public schools;

18 B. gather and analyze statewide absence-related  
19 data as collected and reported pursuant to the Attendance for  
20 Success Act;

21 C. gather and analyze data and comments from  
22 education stakeholders, including school personnel, students,  
23 parents and other family members and local community and civic  
24 organizations in various communities statewide; and

25 D. based upon the research, data collected and

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1 analyzed and input from education stakeholders, identify and  
2 recommend strategies to reduce absenteeism. The strategies  
3 should focus on helping school districts and charter schools  
4 develop and implement at a local level a range of approaches  
5 for identifying, sometimes on a case-by-case basis, student  
6 barriers to attendance and root causes of chronic absenteeism,  
7 as well as suitable corrective or mitigating measures; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the public education  
9 department be requested to determine the number and composition  
10 of the work group members so as to best represent the various  
11 areas of the state and the diverse cultures, unique needs and  
12 challenges faced by school districts, charter schools and a  
13 range of education stakeholders; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group present the  
15 results of the study and the work group's findings and  
16 recommendations to the legislative education study committee no  
17 later than December 1, 2024. The work group's report should  
18 include:

19 A. a summary of best practices for identifying  
20 barriers to attendance and root causes of chronic absenteeism  
21 found through the work group's research;

22 B. recommendations for a uniform and consistent  
23 approach for the implementation of strategies to address  
24 absenteeism at a local school and community level;

25 C. recommendations and suggested tools to assist

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1 schools in identifying root causes of student absenteeism on a  
2 local school level and, when practicable, on a case-by-case  
3 basis;

4 D. recommendations on ways to enhance the abilities  
5 of schools acting together with students, parents, family  
6 members and local communities to address barriers to school  
7 attendance, including root causes, in an approach that reduces  
8 chronic absenteeism in a meaningful way; and

9 E. any other findings or recommendations of the  
10 work group; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
12 transmitted to the legislative education study committee and  
13 the public education department for appropriate distribution.