

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2023

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House GOP calls for community-focus over gov interference in local schools

SANTA FE – State House Republicans today issued a letter to the NM Public Education Department (PED) opposing the new directive from the Lujan Grisham administration that would prevent local school districts from implementing 4-day school weeks. This top-down demand fails to recognize that 4-day school weeks are successful in promoting student achievements, as well as popular among parents, teachers, and rural communities. The NM PED is continuing to micromanage public schools by forcing “a one size fits all” approach that weakens community leadership of local school districts and is harmful to students.

“The Governor has New Mexico students lagging behind in every metric and instead of working with community advocates to improve student outcomes, her Education Department is again spearheading a blanket approach which has bred the failures we see in the current system,” said House Republican Leader Ryan Lane (Aztec). “New Mexicans are proud of their communities and very much involved in building successful localized education, which makes this top-down directive so worrying. We have seen the utter destruction that has been wrought on our children’s education by allowing Santa Fe to dictate education practices. We will wholeheartedly stand with the many New Mexican families who want Santa Fe politicians to get their hands off our children’s futures.”

The letter from the House Republican Caucus highlights the understanding that more must be done to foster a better performing education system while highlighting the crucial need for more family and community involvement to improve outcomes.

A public hearing on this proposed administrative rule is scheduled for Monday, December 18, 2023, from 1:30 – 2:30 pm in Mabry Hall located in the Jerry Apodaca Building in Santa Fe. Public comment will be accepted on this rule through December 18, 2023 via PED’s website.

The letter is attached to this release.



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Santa Fe

December 7, 2023

Dr. Arsenio Romero
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Subject: Opposition to Mandate of 180 Days of School Instruction

Dear Secretary Romero:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to any effort by the Public Education Department (PED) to mandate through an administrative rule 180 days of instruction in all New Mexico public schools. Further, we respectfully request that you consider the research and arguments provided below to decide against pursuing such an administrative rule. While we fully understand and appreciate the importance of education and the desire to improve student outcomes, we believe this mandate may overlook crucial aspects of this issue that will negatively impact a student's success.

First, it is widely acknowledged by researchers and education experts that the family is the greatest indicator of student success. Numerous studies consistently demonstrate that parental involvement and support play a vital role in a child's academic performance. Implementing more mandated days and hours will not necessarily lead to improved outcomes if we fail to address comprehensively the existing chronic absenteeism problem. Studies show a direct correlation between absenteeism rates and lower academic achievement. Therefore, it is imperative that we focus on tackling chronic absenteeism and employ strategies to improve student attendance before considering additional mandates. In other words, we should prioritize efforts to engage families in their child's education, thus fostering an environment that is conducive to learning both at school and at home.

Moreover, we would like to draw your attention to the unique challenges faced by small districts with limited funding, specifically those in rural communities. These districts often rely heavily on agriculture, which demands extra labor during specific seasons. By implementing four-day school weeks in these rural areas, we can effectively support our agricultural producers, many of whom are educators as well, while avoiding additional burdens on financially stressed small districts. This innovative approach has been successfully adopted in numerous rural communities, leading to increased teacher retention, reduced transportation costs, and improved overall efficiency.

In conclusion, while we acknowledge the importance of providing quality education to every student, we would like to express our opposition to any mandate of 180 days of school instruction. Instead, we urge you to consider the crucial role of the family in student success, prioritize addressing chronic absenteeism, and provide enhanced opportunities for local districts to improve student outcomes based

on their unique situations. By doing so, we can achieve better outcomes for our students while mitigating the challenges faced by small districts.

Thank you for considering our perspective, and we kindly request that you take these points into account during your deliberations. We are confident that by adopting a holistic approach to education, we can ensure the success and well-being of our students.

Respectfully yours,



T. Ryan Lane
Republican Leader District 3



Greg Nibert
Republican Whip District 59



Gail Armstrong
Republican Caucus Chair District 49



John Block
State Representative District 51




Mark Duncan
State Representative District 2



Randall T. Pettigrew
State Representative District 61



Luis M. Terrazas
State Representative District 39



Larry R. Scott
State Representative District 62



James G. Townsend
State Representative District 54



Jenifer Jones
State Representative District 32



Candy Spence Ezzell
State Representative District 58




Alan T. Martinez
State Representative District 23



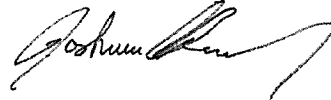
Martin Zamora
State Representative District 63



Rod Montoya
State Representative District 1



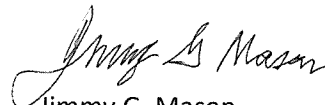
Brian G. Baca
State Representative District 8



Josh N. Hernandez
State Representative District 60



William R. Rehm
State Representative District 31



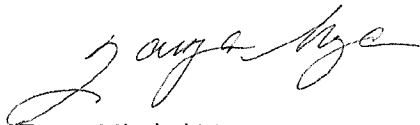
Jimmy G. Mason
State Representative District 66



Andrea Reeb
State Representative District 64



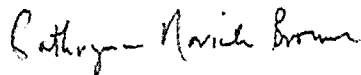
Harlan Vincent
State Representative District 56



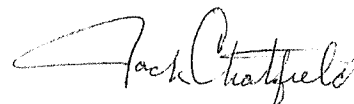
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State Representative District 67



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