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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 1

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

INTRODUCED BY

Bill McCamley

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION AND THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO ORGANIZE A UNIFIED SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS CHAMPIONSHIP FOR ALL NEW MEXICO MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, students who graduate from high school and college in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, popularly known as STEM subjects, have the best chance of finding meaningful and well-paying careers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, there are many good jobs available throughout New Mexico for STEM graduates; and

WHEREAS, in New Mexico, for every person with a STEM degree there are 2.1 job openings; for everyone else, there are 3.2 people for every job opening; and

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1 WHEREAS, one difficulty in teaching STEM subjects in
2 primary and secondary schools is that students lose interest
3 because STEM becomes too "nerdy", usually around the sixth
4 grade, for students who want to be one of the "cool kids"; and

5 WHEREAS, solutions to this problem can be created by:

6 A. providing positive social feedback to students
7 interested in STEM;

8 B. giving those students an environment in which
9 they are supported by both teachers and peers;

10 C. offering meaningful competition to help students
11 develop STEM goals; and

12 D. allowing for creative expression and growth in
13 STEM subjects; and

14 WHEREAS, these solutions can easily provide STEM students
15 with the social gains provided by athletics, and, over a
16 lifetime, perhaps a much greater monetary reward; and

17 WHEREAS, a 2014 study from the university of Kansas shows
18 that students participating in athletics are more likely to
19 participate in high school because athletics provide structured
20 competition, are a source of pride and positive social feedback
21 and are fun; and

22 WHEREAS, an article in *Education Policy Analysis Archives*
23 shows that students who participate in science and math clubs
24 have higher grade point averages in related classes, and
25 students who participate in science and math clubs are three

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1 times more likely to choose STEM majors in college; and

2 WHEREAS, the New Mexico activities association supports
3 the New Mexico science olympiad, the New Mexico science and
4 engineering fair and the technology student association, but
5 press coverage and community participation is nowhere near that
6 of sports; and

7 WHEREAS, STEM activities do not have large booster clubs
8 that raise money for their school's academic "athletes" to help
9 those competitors go to national and international competitions
10 or to be the cheering section at competitions and throughout
11 the community, ensuring that events and competing students get
12 business and individual sponsors and in-depth press coverage
13 that equals that of football or basketball; and

14 WHEREAS, most athletic coaches are paid employees of the
15 school district, but there is no such arrangement for STEM
16 coaches; and

17 WHEREAS, no funding means no guarantee of a coach or even
18 a STEM-related program in a school; and

19 WHEREAS, New Mexico could be the first state in the nation
20 to crown a state STEM champion;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
22 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the New Mexico activities association
23 work with the public education department to:

24 A. create a statewide STEM championship program and
25 develop extracurricular and co-curricular clubs and activities

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1 related to STEM; and

2 B. provide funding at every public school for a
3 STEM coach; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the association, the
5 department, school districts and charter schools work with
6 schools and businesses and field experts to provide quality
7 control for STEM extracurricular and co-curricular programs;
8 and

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the association and the
10 department report their progress on this request to the
11 legislative education study committee by December 1, 2015; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the director of the New Mexico activities
14 association, the secretary of public education and the chair of
15 the legislative education study committee.

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