

PRESS RELEASE

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LEGISLATORS EXPRESS DEEP CONCERN OVER PED REFORM CREDIBILITY

Santa Fe—“Based on testimony presented to the Legislative Education Study Committee last week, it has become readily apparent that Governor Susanna Martinez’ proposed cure for better school performance may very well cause more harm than good,” said Senator Linda M. Lopez. “The methodology and process of the reform models are severely flawed, with no scientific or educational findings proving their worth. We all want better school performance, but gambling on our children’s education with an untested and untried mandate is not acceptable.”

Senator Lopez, LESC member and chairman of the State Senate Rules Committee, was joined by Senator Howie Morales, LESC member, and Representative Rick Miera, LESC member and chairman of the House Education Committee, in expressing concern with the dramatic and unrealistic changes in school grades from the new school grading system. The system has drawn considerable criticism from administrators, educators, parents and students over its incomprehensibility and steep fluctuations in a school’s scoring between the old and new system. The fluctuations were demonstrated with one school dropping from a B to an F and another rising from an F to a B within a one semester period.

“Some members of the legislature have not embraced PED’s reforms from the very beginning, and have consistently asked the Public Education Department for supporting documentation related to their proposals,” said Rep. Rick Miera.

“This legislative caution was validated last week, “ added Senator Morales, “when it was revealed that the A-F grading system promoted by this administration is lacking in clarity and substance to even the Coalition for Excellence in Science and Math Education, which is composed of some of the state’s finest scientists and mathematicians.”

Today, Senators Lopez and Morales and Rep. Miera are calling upon Governor Martinez and PED Secretary Designate Hannah Skandera to adopt the educational reform recommendations developed by the Coalition for Excellence in Science and Math Education. These include:

- Peer review of the PED Reform Manual by knowledgeable, independent educational statisticians
- Clear and completely defined methodology
- Provide all data and software to the school districts prior to grade distributions
- Simplifying the Value Added Model for ease of use by the school districts.

- Not placing multiple components into one grade. This includes not combining demographically neutral growth and proficiency residuals with non-demographically neutral proficiency scores in a meaningful way, when they are in fact two different measures with two different outcomes.

The PED grading system should also include the following traits:

1. A defensible, clearly defined, and more easily replicable mathematical process that is available for district use.
2. A transparent, defensible process – possibly mathematical – to determine the optimum grading factors' weighting.
3. The optimum weighting factors are necessary for combining the various similar, meaningful performance output factors to derive a grade.

For additional information, contact: Sen. Lopez 505-831-4148; Sen. Morales 575-590-7804; or Rep. Miera 505-843-6641.

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