

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 38

2 **50TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2012**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Lynda M. Lovejoy

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE TO STUDY  
12 THE PROVISIONS OF LAW GOVERNING THE RURAL ISOLATION UNITS  
13 PROVIDED THROUGH THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA.

14  
15 WHEREAS, the Gallup-McKinley county school district is one  
16 of the largest of New Mexico's school districts, sprawling  
17 across the Navajo Nation one hundred fifty miles long and  
18 ninety miles wide; and

19 WHEREAS, the school district is only the fifth-largest  
20 school district in terms of students, and eighty-five percent  
21 of its twelve thousand students are Native American; and

22 WHEREAS, since 1976, the Gallup-McKinley county school  
23 district has received rural isolation units in the size  
24 adjustment unit calculation of the public school funding  
25 formula, also known as the "sparsity factor"; and

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1           WHEREAS, the sparsity factor provides additional program  
2 units for the school district based on the number of approved  
3 regular senior high schools that are not eligible for small  
4 school size adjustment; and

5           WHEREAS, this factor of the original equalization formula  
6 was designed to fairly fund school districts that had a  
7 significant number of rural high schools separated by vast  
8 distances, in effect providing funding to the Gallup-McKinley  
9 county school district administering what had previously been  
10 several separate, small school districts; and

11           WHEREAS, the most recent example of the nature of the  
12 rurality of that school district is Tse Yi Gai high school,  
13 which is located one hundred three miles from school district  
14 administrative offices in Gallup and forty-four miles from  
15 Crownpoint high school, where Tse Yi Gai students formerly  
16 attended; and

17           WHEREAS, gradual declines in population in rural McKinley  
18 county, coupled with the attempt to establish schools to serve  
19 isolated populations, has resulted in the school district  
20 missing the rural isolation adjustment by only twenty-two  
21 students; and

22           WHEREAS, the number of approved senior high schools in the  
23 school district not eligible for senior high school size units  
24 decreased from four to three in the 2010-2011 school year, and  
25 the school district lost one million eight hundred twenty-nine

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1 thousand one hundred sixteen dollars (\$1,829,116) in rural  
2 isolation units for that year, which drastic loss of revenue,  
3 on top of the unit value reduction shared by all school  
4 districts, will likely mean severe budget cuts in school year  
5 2012 that will go deep into classrooms and frustrate efforts to  
6 improve student achievement;

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
8 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the legislative education study  
9 committee be requested to study the law and the funding formula  
10 calculations for small school size adjustment and rural  
11 isolation units and the need for a hold-harmless provision to  
12 minimize such drastic fluctuations in funding for the  
13 Gallup-McKinley county school district; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislative education  
15 study committee report its findings and recommendations to the  
16 appropriate interim legislative committee by December 1, 2012;  
17 and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
19 transmitted to the director of the legislative education study  
20 committee, the public education department and the  
21 Gallup-McKinley county school district.