

1 SENATE BILL 526

2 **52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Linda M. Lopez

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10 AN ACT

11 RELATING TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; PROVIDING FOR FAMILY AND
12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

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14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

15 SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is
16 enacted to read:

17 "[NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the
18 "Family and Community Engagement Act"."

19 SECTION 2. A new section of the Public School Code is
20 enacted to read:

21 "[NEW MATERIAL] LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.--

22 A. The legislature finds that the engagement and
23 support of families and community partners in the education of
24 children is an integral part of improving academic achievement
25 and is therefore critical to student success. Properly

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1 constructed family and community engagement programs resulting
2 from collaborative decision-making processes can play an
3 important and effective role in the participation of families
4 and community partners in schools and in improving children's
5 learning.

6 B. The legislature confirms its commitment to the
7 rights of students, families, community partners and school
8 employees, to nondiscriminatory treatment, including freedom
9 from harassment and retaliation based on disability, race,
10 ethnicity, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity,
11 national origin or ancestry, religion, age, veteran status,
12 immigration status and any other protected status as defined by
13 law in all of its programs and activities.

14 C. The purpose of the Family and Community
15 Engagement Act is to ensure that family and community
16 engagement programs are properly designed and implemented and
17 to provide a focus and structure for those programs based on
18 prior experience and research while maintaining sufficient
19 local flexibility to design a program that best meets the needs
20 of the local community. The goals of these programs are to:

21 (1) utilize the histories and cultures of
22 children, families and communities as the foundation of
23 educational programs that prepare every student for academic
24 success;

25 (2) engage families from diverse cultures in a

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1 positive way in their children's education by:

2 (a) fostering safe and welcoming school
3 environments for children, families and community partners;

4 (b) building effective and consistent
5 methods of communications between schools and families;

6 (c) supporting families in developing
7 skills that enhance their children's academic efforts and their
8 development as responsible members of society; and

9 (d) helping school professionals and
10 community partners to learn to work comfortably with diverse
11 families and to view these families as valuable sources of
12 information about their children;

13 (3) inform families that they can directly
14 affect the success of their children's learning and offer
15 families various techniques and strategies to improve their
16 children's academic success or to assist their children in
17 learning at home, if they desire; and

18 (4) integrate family and community engagement
19 programs, including compliance with the provisions of the
20 Family and Community Engagement Act, into a school's master
21 plan for academic accountability."

22 SECTION 3. A new section of the Public School Code is
23 enacted to read:

24 "[NEW MATERIAL] FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM.--

25 A. Each local school board shall, in conjunction

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1 with parents, teachers, administrators and community partners,
2 establish a family and community engagement program for each
3 school in the school district. The local school board shall:

4 (1) ensure that parents, families and
5 community partners participate in the planning, design,
6 implementation and evaluation of the family and community
7 engagement program;

8 (2) provide for regular and periodic programs
9 throughout the school year that offer learning opportunities
10 for families, school personnel and community partners in areas
11 such as:

12 (a) the ability of families and
13 community partners to directly affect the success of a child's
14 learning through the support given at home, at school and by
15 the community;

16 (b) home activities, strategies and
17 materials that can be used to assist and enhance the learning
18 of children at home and at school;

19 (c) the developmental needs of children,
20 positive guidance techniques and ways for families, teachers
21 and community partners to build healthy relationships with
22 children; and

23 (d) the ability of families and schools
24 to develop consistent and effective communications concerning
25 the progress of the children in school and concerning school

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1 programs;

2 (3) prepare an annual statement identifying
3 specific objectives of the program; and

4 (4) conduct an annual review and assessment of
5 the program's progress in meeting its objectives, which shall
6 be made available to families and the community.

7 B. A family and community engagement program may
8 include any of the following:

9 (1) a plan to encourage participation by
10 families from diverse cultures;

11 (2) a program that builds on parenting
12 strengths, that helps families develop the skills that they
13 desire and that facilitates networks to support families in
14 effectively nurturing their children;

15 (3) a communication element that provides an
16 effective two-way communication process to enable school staff
17 to reach families, both individually and collectively, and to
18 ensure that families and school staff communicate back and
19 forth about their children;

20 (4) a home learning element that provides for
21 families and school staff to work together in developing
22 learning goals and that offers opportunities for learning
23 activities at home and in the community;

24 (5) a volunteer element that recruits and
25 organizes volunteer participation from families and the

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1 community at large;

2 (6) a governance and advocacy element that
3 provides a democratic governance structure that ensures that
4 families are partners in policymaking about school programs and
5 that family representatives are elected to act as advocates or
6 decision-makers for other parents and families;

7 (7) a community outreach element that
8 establishes partnerships with individuals and organizations in
9 the community; or

10 (8) a plan to encourage parents to visit
11 schools, which may include an area in each school designated as
12 a family center."

13 SECTION 4. A new section of the Public School Code is
14 enacted to read:

15 "[NEW MATERIAL] STATEWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE--CREATION.--In
16 order to institutionalize family and community engagement
17 programs across the state, the department shall establish
18 structures and positions with well-defined responsibilities and
19 accountability to promote genuine family and community
20 engagement."

21 SECTION 5. A new section of the Public School Code is
22 enacted to read:

23 "[NEW MATERIAL] SIX STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL
24 PARTNERSHIPS.--The six standards for family-school partnerships
25 are:

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1 A. welcoming all families. Families shall be
2 active participants in the life of the school and feel
3 welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff
4 and to what students are learning and doing in school;

5 B. communicating effectively. Families and schools
6 shall engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication
7 about student learning;

8 C. supporting student success. Families and school
9 staff shall continuously collaborate and support students'
10 learning and healthy development both at home and at school and
11 have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and
12 skills to do so effectively;

13 D. speaking up for every child. Families shall be
14 advocates for their own and other children to ensure that
15 students are treated fairly and have access to learning
16 opportunities that will support their success;

17 E. sharing power. Families and school staff shall
18 be equal partners in decisions that affect children and
19 families and together inform, influence and create policies,
20 practices and programs; and

21 F. collaborating with the community. Families and
22 school staff shall collaborate with community members to
23 connect students, families and staff to expand learning
24 opportunities, community services and civic participation."

25 **SECTION 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**--The effective date of the

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1 provisions of this act is July 1, 2015.

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