

From: Webster, Melinda
Sent time: Friday, January 13, 2012 9:45:51 AM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>
Subject: RE: The New Mexican: Democrats challenge governor on social promotion

Thanks ☺

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From: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2012 8:55 AM
To: Webster, Melinda
Subject: FW: The New Mexican: Democrats challenge governor on social promotion

FYI~

From: Nadia Hagberg (Nadia@excelined.org)
Sent: Friday, January 13, 2012 8:54 AM
To: Jaryn Emhof (Jaryn@excelined.org); Clare Crowson (Clare@excelined.org); Mandy Clark (Mandy@excelined.org); Alexis Franz (Alexis@excelined.org); Mary Laura Bragg (MaryLaura@excelined.org); Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org); Christy Hovanetz (ChristyH@excelined.org); Matt Ladner (ladner55@gmail.com); Lowell Mathews (Lowell@afloridapromise.org); Patricia Levesque (Patricia@excelined.org); Deirdre Finn (dfinn@excelined.org); drericjsmith@gmail.com; Erin Price (Erin@excelined.org)
Subject: The New Mexican: Democrats challenge governor on social promotion

* *New Mexico Democrats have pre-filed bills (SB 50 / HB 53) in response to Gov. Martinez's third grade literacy proposal. The bills would leave retention decisions up to the parent regardless of student proficiency. They also provide for remediation for students who are not performing on grade level in math and reading. These bills are sponsored by the Senate Rules Chair and the House Education Committee Chair and are union backed.*

Two articles below...

Democrats challenge governor on social promotion

Bill says parental consent needed to hold children back

Robert Nott | The New Mexican

Posted: Thursday, January 12, 2012 - 1/13/12

<http://www.santafenewmexican.com/Local%20News/Dems-challenge-gov--on-social-promotion>

In what might be deemed a game of political chess, Rep. Rick Miera and Sen. Linda Lopez, Democrats from Albuquerque, announced Thursday a bill to counter Gov. Susana Martinez's legislation to end social promotion.

The Democrats' bill, which could cost about \$28 million, reaffirms state law in saying that students can only be held back with the permission of their parents. School districts would determine whether a student is prepared to move to the next grade.

Unlike Martinez's bill, it includes a math component, as well as reading.

The bill was expected to be pre-filed by the end of the day Thursday.

The governor's proposal, which failed in the last session of the Legislature, gives the state authority to determine whether to hold back third-graders who cannot demonstrate reading proficiency.

Flanked by educators and state legislators, Miera, chairman of the House Education Committee, called the governor's bill "the third-grade flunking bill" during an afternoon news conference at the Roundhouse.

As with the governor's bill, Miera said his bill will include intervention and remedial tutoring as early as kindergarten for struggling students.

In promoting her bill last year, the governor and her secretary of education-designate, Hanna Skandera, referred to studies showing that about 80 percent of fourth-graders cannot read at grade level.

But national studies show mixed results on the value of social promotion. A recent Westchester Institute for Human Services Research report, for instance, notes that students who are promoted without being able to read are inadequately prepared for college. Yet that report also argued that students who repeat one grade more than double their odds of dropping out before graduation.

Last year Arne Duncan, the country's education secretary, said, "If your students keep being allowed to leave third grade and fourth grade without being able to read, you're not doing them any favors."

Asked directly whether the Democrats' bill means that sponsors condone the practice of moving unprepared students forward in school, Miera said, "That's up to the parents."

As to whether the bill expresses legislative discontent with the governor's educational-reform plans — which also include the recent A to F grading system for schools, and a planned retooling of the teacher-evaluation system — Miera said, "The bill speaks for itself."

Thursday afternoon, the governor's spokesman, Scott Darnell, said via email, "Governor Martinez is willing to work with Democrats on key education reforms, but simply repackaging the status quo will not improve our schools and will not ensure that our kids can read and succeed."

"The central goal of the governor's plan is to identify struggling students as early as we can and get them the help they need, so that they can read well by the end of the 3rd grade and are ready to learn and achieve in future years."

The 30-day session begins Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Contact Robert Nott at 986-3021 or rnott@sfnewmexican.com.

Retention Alternative Offered

By Dan Boyd / Journal Staff Writer on Fri, Jan 13, 2012

<http://www.abqjournal.com/main/2012/01/13/news/retention-alternative-offered.html>

SANTA FE – One of Gov. Susana Martinez's top education initiatives will have some competition during New Mexico's 30-day legislative session that starts Tuesday.

Seven Democratic legislators, led by House Education Committee Chairman Rick Miera, D-Albuquerque, said Thursday that they will back an alternative approach to addressing the practice of "social promotion," in which students advance in school regardless of their academic performance.

Unlike the Martinez administration's plan, the legislation proposed by Miera and others would not require that third-graders who fail to show reading proficiency repeat the grade level.

Instead, a child's parents – or legal guardians – would ultimately decide whether the child should be held back, as is currently stipulated in state law. In addition, new funding would be targeted for tutoring and other types of remediation for students in grades K-8 who are identified as struggling in reading and math.

"Simple retention is not reform," Miera said Thursday.

The Martinez administration was unable to gain legislative approval last year for its proposal to end social promotion. For this year's legislative session, Martinez has recast the initiative by proposing to spend an additional \$17 million in state funding for early childhood education, including the hiring of reading coaches.

The Martinez-backed approach will be sponsored by a pair of high-ranking lawmakers: Senate Minority Leader Stuart Ingle, R-Portales, and Senate Finance Committee Chairman John Arthur Smith, D-Deming.

A spokesman for the first-term Republican governor criticized the competing plan.

"Gov. Martinez is willing to work with Democrats on key education reforms, but simply repackaging the status quo will not improve our schools and will not ensure that our kids can read and succeed," Martinez spokesman Scott Darnell said.

However, representatives from several key teachers' unions and education groups attended Thursday's news conference and said they will support Miera's bill.

"It actually is a piece of legislation that unites the education community instead of divides us, and I think that's extremely important," said Charles Bowyer, executive director of the National Education Association-New Mexico.

— This article appeared on page C01 of the Albuquerque Journal