



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Santa Fe

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor, State of New Mexico
State Capitol, Room 400
480 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Governor:

We have prefiled House Bill 74 and am writing to request a special message so the bill can be included in the public policy debate during the upcoming 30-day legislative session. The bill designates local school boards and governing bodies of state-chartered charter schools as the entity authorized to determine the length of school year and the number of days school will be offered each week throughout the school year.

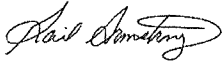
After a robust conversation about instructional time during the 2023 legislative session, most legislators and public school stakeholders were left with the impression that instructional time had been settled in favor of instructional hours with the enactment of House Bill 130, leaving the issue of scheduling those hours up to each school district to determine what was best for their community. PED's attempt, however, to mandate a minimum number of instructional days and mandate instruction be offered across five-day weeks most of the year goes far beyond the requirements of House Bill 130, which you supported, and will negatively impact many of our school districts.

Very few of the public comments shared with PED at Mabry Hall on November 18, 2023, as well as those contained in the more than 2,700 pages of written comment sent to the department, supported the draft rule. Families, students, teachers, school leaders, board members, and community members were overwhelmingly opposed to the draft rule. Teachers are threatening to leave their profession and leave isolated rural school districts that effectively use a four-day week as a recruitment tool. Many students will have several hours of to-and-from transportation time added to their schedule each week. Students in rural communities will likely experience more absences just to do routine things, like attend doctor and dentist appointments, because of the distance they have to travel for these basic necessities. Students will lose out on many work-based learning opportunities afforded to them on Fridays in their agrarian communities. And, maybe most important of all, many families will lose critical time with their children if they are required to attend school another day each week.

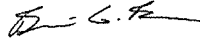
We are encouraged that PED has not yet approved the draft rule, but remain concerned that your budget recommendation is still insisting on the policy. While we share and recognize PED's concerns about the achievement of New Mexico's students, we believe we can work together to identify better alternatives to a one-size-fits-all approach to learning time.

Thank you for your consideration of our request for a special message for House Bill 74.

Sincerely,



Gail Armstrong
State Representative HD 49



Brian Baca
State Representative HD 8