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CITY OF SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-70

INTRODUCED BY:

Councilor Signe I. Lindell

Councilor Jamie Cassutt

Councilor Michael J. Garcia

Councilor JoAnne Vigil Coppler

Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth

Councilor Renee Villarreal

Councilor Chris Rivera

A RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING EFFORTS BY STATE AND LOCAL EDUCATORS TO ALLEVIATE THE STAFFING CRISIS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

WHEREAS, a report by Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center (“SOAR”) titled “Difficult to Staff K-12 Teacher Positions in New Mexico” (the “Report”), presented to the Legislative Finance Committee (“LFC”) hearing in September, 2021, found teacher vacancies in New Mexico’s public, K-12 schools have increased from 644 in 2019 to 1,048 in 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Report found high teacher vacancies are occurring in elementary (279), special education (291), math (84), science (77) and English Language Arts (56); and

WHEREAS, the Report also found that health/PE, music, social studies, and Spanish are also subjects with high teacher vacancies; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the Report found high vacancies are also being experienced in districts with high Native American populations; and

WHEREAS, vacancies for educational assistants grew from 258 in 2019 to 456 in 2021,

1 counselor vacancies increased from 37 to 59, and speech language pathologist vacancies grew from
2 42 to 52 in the same period according to the Report; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Dr. Rachel Boren, director of SOAR, called New Mexico’s teacher vacancies
4 a “staggering number” in a hearing before LFC, as reported in a September 21, 2021, article in the
5 Albuquerque Journal, which noted that New Mexico has between 21,000 and 22,000 teachers; and

6 **WHEREAS**, as reported in an Albuquerque Journal article, Danny Espinoza, a research
7 and policy associate at the Learning Policy Institute, told the LFC, “Teachers, for example, appear
8 to get better over the course of their careers...making retention an important strategy for helping
9 students. But New Mexico teachers leave the profession at a much higher rate than the national
10 average”; and

11 **WHEREAS**, the Albuquerque Journal reported that Mr. Espinoza told lawmakers that
12 “teacher qualifications and experience are an important predictor of student achievement”; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the newspaper further reported that Mr. Espinoza said “the state has jumped
14 up the national rankings in teacher pay in recent years...but it still trails neighboring Colorado and
15 Texas. Average teacher salaries in New Mexico range from about \$43,000 to \$61,000”; and

16 **WHEREAS**, in a policy brief in June 2021 titled “New Mexico’s K-12 Schools: Funding
17 the Education System Our Students Deserve”, New Mexico VOICES for Children (“NM Voices”)
18 reported “New Mexico teachers earn a weekly wage that is almost 30 percent lower than what other
19 comparable college-educated workers earn”; and

20 **WHEREAS**, the NM Voices policy brief recommends a continued increase in State
21 investment in students, schools and teachers, with particular focus on investments designed to
22 promote tribal, bilingual, and multicultural education, as well as pathways for teachers and school
23 staff who reflect New Mexico’s student population; and

24 **WHEREAS**, in an August 6th, 2021, letter to legislative leaders, Santa Fe Public Schools
25 (“SFPS”) Superintendent Hilario “Larry” Chavez said, “I urge you to please keep education

1 funding and employee raises intact. We must continue our forward momentum in providing
2 competitive salaries for school employees”.

3 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE**
4 **CITY OF SANTA FE** that the Governing Body requests that the following steps are taken:

5 1. The New Mexico Legislature dramatically increase educators’ salaries. Current
6 levels are significantly lower than they should be, especially when considering the education and
7 licensure requirements for the profession, its value and importance to society, the high cost of living
8 including housing, and the accelerating need to attract qualified individuals to the profession.

9 2. The City Manager shall partner with the County Manager and make active efforts
10 to aggressively invest in and remedy the urgent need for housing that educators can afford.

11 3. The Santa Fe Public School Board, NEA-Santa Fe, Santa Fe Public Schools
12 (“SFPS”), and community housing partners including the Santa Fe Housing Action Coalition form
13 a task force to develop and recommend creative solutions to address affordable housing for SFPS
14 employees in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

15 4. The Superintendent investigate providing and improving child care options for
16 SFPS staff, volunteers, and community supporters and other needs identified by staff members and
17 other needs that staff members identified in partnership with NEA-Santa Fe.

18 5. SFPS invest in staffing and system upgrades for its Human Resources
19 Department to expedite employment applications.

20 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Governing Body supports efforts to improve
21 working conditions and salaries for public school employees.

22 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Clerk is directed to send this Resolution to
23 the Governor of New Mexico, the Santa Fe Legislative Delegation, Santa Fe County Board of
24 County Commissioners, the Santa Fe Public School Board, and the Santa Fe Housing Action
25 Coalition.

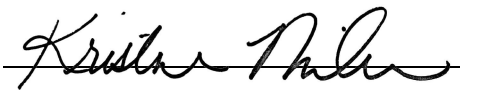
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PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 8th day of December, 2021.



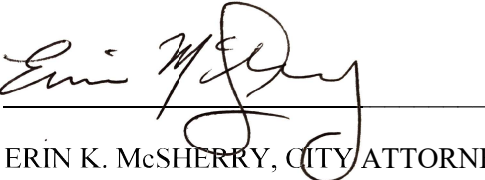
ALAN WEBBER, MAYOR

ATTEST:



KRISTINE MIHELIC, CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



ERIN K. McSHERRY, CITY ATTORNEY