

Resolution Supporting Leaving No New Mexico Child Inside

WHEREAS, children today are spending more time watching television and playing video games than in school, and even less time experiencing and enjoying the outdoors, resulting in “nature deficit disorder”; and

WHEREAS, childhood obesity, attention deficit disorder and diabetes are growing problems in New Mexico and promoting physical activity and a lifelong interest in the outdoors will contribute to the cognitive, physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional well being of our children; and

WHEREAS, many New Mexico youth –especially minorities and children from low-income communities– do not have easy access to nature and live in a structured society in which almost every moment of their day is scheduled and accounted for, adding to the stress levels and severely impacting our young; and

WHEREAS, outdoor education and recreation create opportunities for youth to develop personal connections with the natural and cultural landscape of their communities, and develop their own unique roles within that landscape; and

WHEREAS, communities throughout New Mexico are utilizing outdoor education and recreation as a vehicle for ensuring excellence in education, making education relevant to learners, developing a workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the future, and improving the quality of life for communities; and

WHEREAS, outdoor education and recreation increases awareness about the environment and its systems while developing critical-thinking and decision-making skills that will result in a citizenry empowered to meet their future responsibilities regarding the environment; and

WHEREAS, teachers and students are continually pressured to improve academic test scores –based on standards and benchmarks– and studies have shown that outdoor, interactive education can increase student standardized test scores and grade point averages, reduce discipline problems, improve attendance rates, build citizenry skills and resource stewardship ethics, improve conflict resolution and problem-solving skills, and increase teacher job satisfaction; and

WHEREAS, reconnecting our youth with nature is a community investment for all New Mexicans; and

WHEREAS, with New Mexico’s unmatched beauty and natural lands, the state can and should lead the nation in outdoor education, outdoor recreation, and experiential adventure-based learning programs; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that [entity] recognizes the importance of outdoor education and recreation and affirms the important role of outdoor experiences in preparing the next generation for stewardship of local communities as well as global ecosystems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that [entity] affirms that local communities should be empowered and provided the necessary resources to engage their youth in outdoor education and recreation experiences; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that [entity] is committed to engage New Mexico decision-makers to provide funding to help outdoor education and recreation programs become financially sustainable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that [entity] hereby joins the Leave No Child INSIDE statewide coalition and will communicate its support for outdoor education and recreation to its staff and membership; to organizations and networks with which [entity] is affiliated; and to the news media.