



HB131 requires the Hispanic Education Advisory Council, PED, and HED to hold biannual statewide meetings to release and discuss the annual Hispanic Education Status Report.

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2021.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The appropriation of \$110 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY22 shall revert to the general fund.

Both HED and PED report the appropriation is not sufficient to meet requirements of the bill and estimate an additional \$100 thousand would be required.

It is unclear if the Hispanic Education Advisory Council is still operational. The most current information about its activities date from August 2018.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

PED and HED are not able to share student data simply, which hinders the ability to track student outcomes from kindergarten through college. Several revealing trends on student outcomes, however, provide insight to Hispanic students and their increasing success in high school graduation and college enrollment.

The 2016 Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) report, *Knocking at the College Door, Projections of High School Graduates*, garnered policymakers attention by projecting a decline in the number of high school graduates over the next two decades. The WICHE report highlighted the swift racial/ethnic change of the student body in public schools, and its impact on the achievement gap. In fact, minority students are closing the achievement gap in important ways: Hispanic graduates increased by 32 percent over the past 10 years; Native American graduates, down 6 percent over the past 10 years, have increased the number of graduates by 10.7 percent in the last five years, as have African American graduates.

As a result of the gains made in high school graduation, college campuses will grow more diverse. For every 100 white high school graduates, the nation will produce 150 minority high school graduates. In New Mexico, WICHE predicts 25 percent growth in high school graduates until 2028, then a 12.5 percent decline through 2034. White graduates are projected to decline by more than 20 percent, and Hispanic graduates are projected to increase 8.4 percent through 2028 then revert to 2019 levels.

For college, however, fewer of those high school graduates are choosing New Mexico institutions for studies, according to college enrollment data collected by HED. Enrollment at New Mexico's 24 public colleges and universities has declined significantly over the past five years. Some colleges have found students are simply forgoing a postsecondary education altogether, citing concerns over cost or strong employment options. New Mexico universities offer students the third lowest tuition and fees in the nation.

Minority students in New Mexico are improving their rates of success. Over a five-year period (academic years 2013 to 2017), Hispanic students improved their graduation rates at 20 colleges

and universities, including New Mexico Tech, and Native American students improved their graduation rate at 18 institutions. The mixed performance of minority students at the research universities, when better understood, may enlighten the higher education sector on improved strategies for helping underrepresented students complete degrees.

The concern for New Mexico policymakers is that several studies show a widening postsecondary attainment gap correlates to growing economic inequality. The same study illustrates a household income’s outsized influence on student success; top performing low- and middle-income students earn bachelor’s degrees at the same rate as low-performing high-income students. In addition, low- and middle-income students are half as likely to attend college.

MFV/sb/al

