

**PUEBLO OF ZUNI** Education & Career Development Center

Legislative Education Study Committee  
Educating New Mexico's Native American Students  
Testimony Provided By

Shelly C. Chimoni, Education Coordinator  
On Behalf of Bernadette Panteah, Director  
Zuni Education Career Development Center (ZECDC)

July 28, 2017

**Introduction:**

Honorable Madame Chair Stewart, Members of the Committee, and guests. It is great pleasure and honor to be invited to speak with you today. My name is Shelly Chimoni. I am here on behalf of Bernadette Panteah, Director of Zuni Education Career Development Center. I serve as the Education Coordinator for the Zuni Education Career Development Center. ZECDC is one a few P.L. 102-477 Programs in the NM. We have seven (7) components within ZECDC with an operating budget of approximately \$2 million. We provide direct services to the Zuni community and we collaborate with tribal programs, organizations, and our local school district.

**Summary:**

Today, I will be presenting issues and concerns related to Educating New Mexico's Native American Students that affect not only the community of Zuni but also the tribes of New Mexico. Most importantly I will be sharing these concerns and issues from a Pueblo perspective.

I will discuss the following issues and have condensed the areas into 4 areas listed by priority and will provide the committee with suggested resolutions for consideration. I believe that it is important not only to present the issues and concerns but also to be proactive and assist the Legislative Education Study Committee with suggested resolutions for this to committee to consider.

**Issues/Concerns:****Student Achievement Barriers, Gaps, and Issues**

- Teaching Methods/Professional Development

There is a need to provide training focused on teaching methodologies related to indigenous epistemology as it relates to culturally appropriate pedagogy for new native and non-native teachers who teach in communities/districts with a high Native American student population. Attached is a sample outline that our Director Panteah developed after her experience in serving on the local school board and these same students coming to our program demonstrating various barriers such as dropping out of high school, low

post test scores via the Adult Education Program and listening to parents express their frustration with teachers lacking cultural sensitivity and lacking cultural competence in the classroom. Another area of concern that that impede the academic progress of students in all grade levels Pre-K through 12; are local mandates. A thorough evaluation of how local mandates is much needed within the local level when implementation begins in the classroom additionally local mandates must be realistic and fore thought in timelines and expected deliverables is needed to ensure successful intended outcomes. Whether that is directed by NM PED or local school district leadership, accountability and monitoring is required to ensure that the due process and rights of the students and teachers are not violated.

- **Continued Support Bilingual Education and Support**  
It allows our Zuni students to connect with the community and the rigor is established to accommodate the various learning levels from simple words and eventually transition to carry a full conversation. In our community, 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade year portfolio presentations require introduction of themselves in the Zuni language. This supports our ongoing efforts of language revitalization and preservation.
- **Culturally Relevant Curriculum**  
These efforts need to be supported and implemented in every school district whether there is a high population of native students or not. Current history books have told incorrect facts about our NM tribal histories and people. We support that State PED IED initiative has funded the process to develop culturally relevant curriculum, however, there is a curriculum that was developed by the efforts of Pueblo communities that has been implemented with the various programs offered at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Pueblo Curriculum 100 Years of State and Federal Policy: Impact on Pueblo Nation curriculum project was funded by W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Leadership Institute. This curriculum was purposely designed to align with the State of NM Common Core Standards and it takes into account the Core Values of Pueblo people. This curriculum is free and could be adopted by NM PED for use for all school districts across the State.
- **NM ESSA Plan and the current PARCC**  
The results seem to lack clarity with the data the state had projected. Recently in an article in the Gallup Independent reported that "Larger Schools Struggle On PARC". Four larger cities in New Mexico struggle in upper level math, and reading tests. See attached.
- **College Preparation and Career Readiness**  
When HB 484, introduced and sponsored by Representative Derrick Lente, in last legislative session, the Zuni Tribe supported this bill. We saw this as a great opportunity for our program and local school district to partner and leverage resources to address the college preparation and career readiness efforts. While we do collaborate and coordinate our activities this bill would only strengthen these efforts, leverage resources, and collectively increase the graduation rates and eliminate any barriers for students matriculating into college or workforce.

It has been ZECDC's experience through the partnerships we have established for internships, work experience through our WIOA Summer Youth, and working with outside organizations e.g. the Leadership Institute that gives students the opportunity to not only gain work experience but it is direct career exploration and gaining skills/abilities for that student to be successful in the classroom. These opportunities also provided insight to the students to seek careers in fields that are in demand within their local communities.

HB 484 needs to be introduced again for the upcoming legislative session that should include the direct testimonies from Native students who have experience the gaps, barriers, and shortfalls in the lack of college preparation and career readiness. Tribes need to be consulted to get the full support for this legislation.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our perspective on "Educating the Native American Student" While there are many other issues and concerns we appreciate this opportunity to share this information. If there is any issue you like to discuss in depth with our program please do not hesitate to contact our director, Bernadette Panteah. Elahkwa-Thank You!

Pueblo Public School District  
Proposed Policy

TEACHING METHODS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Newly hired and returning educators will be required to participate in orientation and annual staff professional development training to enhance knowledge base on indigenous learning styles, traditions and culture of the Pueblo school district in support of pueblo core values, mission and vision through the implementation of indigenous epistemology as it relates to culturally appropriate pedagogy methods and strategies to support, empower, guide and promote a student's potential in building skills leading the students to become successful, responsible and productive citizens.

These professional development workshop trainings are imperative in the creation of synergistic learning leading to nation building.

Required Annual Trainings (August):

- Cultural Sensitivity: is the ability to respond appropriately to cross-cultural situations from the point-of-view and awareness of the attitudes, feelings, and circumstances of others. Timeframe: 1.5 hours
- Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT): Pedagogy that provides innovative learning that is used to develop successful and effective teaching strategies that incorporate cultural referents to impact knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students. Timeframe: 4 hours

Quarterly Trainings (Every Quarter):

- Culturally Appropriate Pedagogy Best Practices: Pueblo District school educators will have the opportunity to share their best practices with colleagues to further expand on effectiveness and successful teaching strategies. Timeframe: 2-3 hours

Through active participation of required professional development trainings; educators will have the opportunity to learn about students' cultures and teach students about the behaviors valued in our school district. Educators will be able to reflect on teaching practices and adapt pedagogy to the needs of indigenous student population. Indigenizing mainstream curriculum and implementation of indigenous learning styles will provide effective teaching and classroom management.

: Appendix A

### Indigenous Learning Styles

1. Allow for ample observation and imitation rather than verbal instructions. Also allow students to take their time before attempting a new task so that chances for success are even higher on the first effort.
2. Make the group more important than the individual as often as possible in terms of both the learning process and learning goals.
3. Emphasize cooperation versus competition whenever possible.
4. Make learning holistic rather than sequential and analytic. Spend more time in dialogue talking about the big picture associations before looking at details
5. Use imagery as often as possible. Einstein wrote that, “imagination is more powerful than knowledge,” and indigenous education take advantages of this fact.
6. Make learning connect to meaningful contexts and real life.
7. Be willing to allow spontaneous learning opportunities to change pre-planned lessons.
8. De-emphasize letter grading and standardized evaluations and use authentic narrative assessments that emphasize what is actually working best and what needs more work.

(Four Arrows *Teaching Truly – A Curriculum to Indigenize Mainstream Education*  
Indigenous Learning Pathways, 70-71)



**PUEBLO OF ZUNI** *Education & Career Development Center*

**2015-2016 Entrance TABE Test Grade Equivalencies by Age Group**

16-17	18-21	22-25	26-29	30-33	34-37	38-41	42-45	46-49	50+
4.7	8.9	8.4	7.7	7.4	7.5	4.9	5.0	7.6	6.7
5.0	7.6	10.7	6.5	6.1	4.4	6.8	5.4	3.0	2.5
2.3	7.1	7.1	7.8	5.4	5.6	6.7	2.6	4.9	5.2
4.4	10.5	6.9	6.5	9.4	6.7	7.3		3.6	3.4
6.2	5.8	7.9	6.9	7.6	1.7				2.6
	5.9	4.8	2.1	10.6					
	8.2	6.7	8.3	6.4					
	5.5		7.7						
	10.2		4.8						
	2.7		8.3						
	3.2								
	6.7								
	5.6								
	6.7								
	5.8								
<b>Average Grade Equivalencies By Age Group</b>									
4.5	6.6	7.5	6.6	6.6	5.1	6.4	4.3	4.7	4.0

As a Zuni High School, Class of 2009 graduate, I believe the coursework I was offered and instructed on in high school was very beneficial in regards to preparing me for college. I do believe the math, science, and social studies courses I took at the time gave me a foundation as I enrolled and completed the undergrad courses that were of that content. With that said, I do feel I was not as prepared for the rigor of the English courses I would have to endure at the college level. This is due to my experience in the English Language Arts course I was enrolled in during my junior and senior year of high school.

It is my belief that this ELA course did nothing to prepare me for the English courses I would take in college. I say this because the teacher teaching this course at the time was not innovative nor was there any sense of rigor or cultural pedagogy implemented in her teaching. I do not recall ever having to read a book in this teacher's class nor was I exposed to the various types of writing that I would soon learn of as a freshman in college. What I do recall is spending most of my senior year in the computer lab working on an educational program, PLATO. Although this program helped build reading comprehension, I do not see this as a positive way to instill a love for learning in students. How was this educational program supposed to prepare seniors in high school for college?

On a positive note, the freshmen and sophomore ELA teachers at the time, did instill some knowledge in me that I did use a foundation in college. My experience with that junior and senior ELA teacher was what prompted me to earn a degree in Secondary Education with a focus in Language Arts. Therefore, I am thankful to those teachers who did prepare me for the collegiate level.



Val R. Panteah Sr.  
Governor

Birdena Sanchez  
Lt. Governor

Wilfred Eriacho Sr.  
Head Councilman

Virginia R. Chavez  
Councilwoman

## PUEBLO OF ZUNI

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Officially known as the Zuni Tribe of the Zuni Indian Reservation

March 2, 2017

Derrick J. Lente, Representative  
New Mexico State Capital House of Representatives  
490 Old Santa Fe Trail  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Representative Lente,

The Pueblo of Zuni Education Career Development Center Education Program officially provides this letter of support for HB 484 School Indian Student Needs Assessment.

Through the applications that the ZECDC Education Program has seen from graduating seniors, it is clear that those who are in pursuit of a college education, not only lack the adequate preparation for post-secondary education course work, but also have not been provided early college awareness regarding their options after high school. Consequently, our first year Zuni college students enroll in remedial courses in Math, Reading, and English that further prolong their journey in attaining a degree.

HB 484 addresses the needed strategy not only for the local school districts to address the gaps that currently exist in our education system, but also fosters collaboration efforts with all tribal education programs/departments to work together to ensure that Native American students graduate high school and are college or career ready. The collaboration encourages the leveraging of resources by collectively developing a tool and establishing a process for the assessment to be conducted. With HB 484, this also encourages a dialogue for consistency in tracking the student and will hold both the tribe and local school district accountable in ensuring student success to increase high school graduation rates.

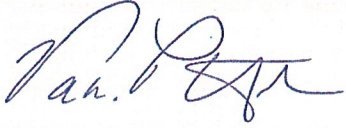
We are in support of HB 484 and look forward to its passage. We look forward to establishing a formal process of collaboration and support in our local school districts where our Zuni students are enrolled. This bill supports our efforts in tracking our students for college readiness and will increase the high



school graduation rates, in addition to increasing the number of students seeking a post-secondary education, career, or vocational trade.

Good luck on the remainder of the legislative session. If you should have any questions regarding the support for HB 484 please feel free to contact Ms. Bernadette Panteah, Director of the Zuni Education Career Development Center at (505) 782-5998.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Val Panteah, Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Val Panteah, Sr.  
Governor

cc: Stephanie Garcia Richard, Chair NM State Legislature House Education Committee  
Superintendent Daniel Benavidez, Zuni Public School District