

LFC Requester: \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO**

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***(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)***

**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

**Date Prepared:** 2/5/2026 *Check all that apply:*  
**Bill Number:** HM0033 Original  Correction   
Amendment  Substitute

**Sponsor:** Linda Serrato **Agency Name and Code Number:** New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology 962  
**Person Writing fsdfs** Analysis: The VPAF Office  
**Short Title:** STUDY PARENTING STUDENTS IN NM HIGHER ED **Phone:** 575-835-5606 **Email:** VPAF@nmt.edu

**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY27	FY28	FY29		

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate revenue decreases)

**ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>	<b>FY29</b>	<b>3 Year Total Cost</b>	<b>Recurring or Nonrecurring</b>	<b>Fund Affected</b>
Implementation Costs	\$3.0			\$3.0	Recurring	General Fund
Administrative Costs	\$8.1	\$8.1	\$8.1	\$24.3	Recurring	General Fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11.1</b>	<b>\$8.1</b>	<b>\$8.1</b>	<b>\$27.3</b>	<b>Recurring</b>	<b>General Fund</b>

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

**SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis:

- Requesting the Higher Education Department to convene a task force to study, develop recommendations for and draft legislation for collecting data on parenting students in the New Mexico higher education system.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

This memorial establishes a task force to collect and study data on parenting students. If enacted, the institute may need to implement an ongoing data-collection process to routinely assess parenting status throughout students' enrollment. This requirement will necessitate additional resources to monitor, compile, and report the information.

The one-time and recurring fiscal impacts include:

- One-time fiscal impact will be for implementation, testing, and integration into the university's database and reporting systems. Specifically,
  - modification of admissions, student information systems, and reporting pipelines to add and store parenting-student indicators;
  - testing and validation of new data elements; and
  - integration with Higher Education Department reporting processes.

This involves several offices (e.g., Admission, IT, Graduate Studies, Institutional Research) that with approximately 20 hours of work. Most of the work would be outsourced via existing contracts with vendors, therefore assumed rate of \$150/hr. Periodic one-time funding may be needed to assist with ensuring reporting systems continue to work seamlessly when software is upgraded.

- The recurring fiscal impact is difficult to predict as it is unclear the level of reporting that will be requested (e.g., final reporting structure, frequency). The memorial directs that parenting-student status may be collected regularly throughout a student's enrollment, potentially as part of existing end-of-term or degree reporting processes. Recurring requests may involve a review of the data quality, reconciliation of data, training (e.g.,

university personnel such as admissions, advising, student services and institutional research staff, prospective students and their families), maintenance of consistent question wording and survey placement compilation and aggregation of data, its analysis, as well as the reporting and visualization of the data and preparation of reports for the Higher Education Department and potential legislative inquiries. Consequently, it is estimated this will involve at least three weeks of personnel time in the offices of Graduate Studies, Admission, and Institutional Research. The estimated fiscal impact is \$8.1k per year and \$24.3k over three years, based on an assumption of 8% of an FTE with an annual salary of \$72k and 40% benefits.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

While the collection of data on parenting students may provide valuable insight and inform future policy and program development, there are several concerns regarding implementation:

- Minimal staffing exists within the Institutional Research and IT areas, which already support extensive federal, state, and institutional reporting obligations.
- Parenting-student status is inherently dependent on self-reported information, and the usefulness of the data may be limited if:
  - response rates are low, or
  - students are reluctant to disclose parenting status due to privacy concerns or fear of stigma.
- The purpose of the data collection and how the data will be used would need to be clearly communicated to students to mitigate concerns and avoid mistrust.
- The availability of a new statewide data element is likely to result in:
  - additional institutional reporting requests, and
  - potential public records (IPRA) requests.

The memorial also requires participation of institutional representatives on the statewide task force, which may create additional workload demands for already limited staff.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- The memorial requires development of a statewide definition of “parenting student.” While a draft definition is proposed in the memorial, further clarification and operationalization will be necessary for consistent data collection.
- The memorial does not specify how institutions should handle:
  - students with shared custody,
  - temporary caregiving arrangements, or
  - changes in parenting status during enrollment.
- The memorial anticipates regular data collection over the span of a student’s enrollment, but does not specify the frequency, timing, or reporting windows.
- Higher Education Department guidance or rulemaking would likely be required to ensure:
  - consistent question wording,
  - uniform data definitions, and
  - comparable reporting formats across institutions.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

- Institutional Research offices are already responsible for numerous federal, state, and ad-hoc reporting requirements. The addition of a new statewide data element and reporting process would add to an already constrained workload.
- The fiscal estimates above likely understate the administrative challenge for a small institution, as:
  - hiring part-time or short-term analysts is difficult in a rural labor market, and

- reliance on outsourced reporting support may increase costs and raise concerns related to data security and privacy.
- Implementation would require coordination across multiple offices, including Admissions, Registrar, Graduate Studies, Student Services, IT, and Institutional Research, which may slow adoption timelines and complicate change management.

While the memorial may represent an important policy initiative aimed at better understanding and supporting parenting students, its downstream implementation would create new fiscal, administrative, and operational obligations specifically for small public universities with limited staffing and technical capacity.

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

#### **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

The memorial's focus on parenting students is important; however, it does not fully capture the broader reality of students who serve as caregivers. While caregiving may include parenting, it also encompasses students who are caring for a relative's child, an aging parent, a spouse, a sibling, or another dependent family member.

Expanding the definition in statute or in institutional reporting processes to include all caregiving circumstances would likely be overwhelming and difficult for colleges and universities to implement and manage consistently. In practice, institutions already have established processes, such as compassionate or emergency withdrawals and related academic accommodations, to support students whose education is interrupted (stop-out/dropout) by significant caregiving responsibilities.

A more manageable alternative may be for the Higher Education Department to conduct a statewide survey every two to three years to assess caregiving responsibilities among students, rather than requiring institutions to build and maintain ongoing operational data-collection systems for this broader population.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

This type of initiative could potentially be completed through HED-led surveys administered at regular intervals over multiple years, with each institution required to participate. Participation by institutions would be limited to distributing the survey to their enrolled students. This approach would capture students who may have begun their educational experience without children or caregiving responsibilities, but whose circumstances changed during their enrollment. This method would expand on institutions providing only the number students whose dropout or stop-out status was based on caregiving.

A centrally administered, statewide survey would also allow HED to ensure consistent definitions, question wording, and data collection methods across institutions, improving comparability of results while reducing the administrative and technical burden placed on individual campuses. Importantly, this model would avoid the need for colleges and universities, particularly small institutions with limited institutional research and information technology capacity, to modify student information systems, admissions applications, or recurring reporting files.

In addition, a periodic survey model would allow HED to broaden the scope beyond parenting students, if desired, to include students with other significant caregiving responsibilities (such as caring for a parent, spouse, sibling, or other dependent), without requiring institutions to operationalize and maintain complex and evolving data elements within their core systems.

From an implementation standpoint, this approach would also mitigate common data quality challenges associated with ongoing, self-reported demographic or life-circumstance fields, such as inconsistent response rates, duplicated data collection points, and conflicting responses across systems. A well-designed statewide survey could include standardized language explaining the purpose of the data collection, how the information will be used, and how privacy will be protected; helping to build trust and improve response rates.

Finally, conducting the survey at defined intervals (for example, every two to three years) would still provide the state with meaningful trend data to inform policy development, program investments, and student support strategies, while offering a more scalable, sustainable, and administratively feasible alternative for colleges and universities, particularly small and rural institutions, than continuous institution-level data collection and reporting requirements.

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

## **AMENDMENTS**