

1 A MEMORIAL

2 REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
3 CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
4 CONTINUING AND IMPROVING THE 520 NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE AND  
5 CULTURAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

6  
7 WHEREAS, the state recognizes the importance of  
8 maintaining and promoting Native American languages and  
9 cultures as integral components of education and community  
10 identity; and

11 WHEREAS, systemic inequities, coupled with cultural and  
12 linguistic barriers, contribute to the loss of cultural  
13 identity among Native American students; and

14 WHEREAS, research indicates that learning one's  
15 ancestral language fosters cognitive development, strengthens  
16 academic performance and enhances overall well-being by  
17 reinforcing cultural identity and community connections; and

18 WHEREAS, Section 22-10A-13 NMSA 1978 established the  
19 Native American language and culture certificates, allowing  
20 the public education department to issue certificates to  
21 individuals proficient in a Native American language and  
22 culture of a New Mexico Indian nation, tribe or pueblo based  
23 on criteria established through a memorandum of agreement  
24 between the tribal governments and the public education  
25 department; and

1           WHEREAS, this certification recognizes tribal  
2 sovereignty and the importance of traditional knowledge and  
3 values the linguistic proficiency 520 Native American  
4 language and culture teachers gain outside of conventional  
5 academic pathways; and

6           WHEREAS, from 2003 to 2014, sixteen Indian nations,  
7 tribes and pueblos have entered into a memorandum of  
8 agreement with the public education department granting  
9 authority to certify their representatives as 520 Native  
10 American language and culture teachers, ensuring that tribal  
11 sovereignty and expertise guide the certification process;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, in 2022, the legislature amended  
14 Section 22-10A-13 NMSA 1978 to establish salary parity  
15 between 520-certified Native American language and culture  
16 instructors and level 1 licensed teachers, acknowledging the  
17 significance of their instructional roles and ensuring  
18 equitable compensation; and

19           WHEREAS, the public education department's  
20 Indian education division awarded one million three hundred  
21 twenty-five thousand dollars (\$1,325,000) in fiscal year 2025  
22 to support 520 Native American language and culture  
23 certificates; and

24           WHEREAS, according to the public education department's  
25 2023-2024 tribal education status report, there were

1 one hundred thirty-three active 520-certified Native American  
2 language and culture instructors, and ninety-nine students  
3 earned state seals of bilingualism-biliteracy awards for  
4 indigenous languages; and

5 WHEREAS, challenges remain regarding the organizational  
6 structure, certification process, salary implementation,  
7 pathways for advancement and integration into the broader  
8 bilingual and multicultural education system, and a  
9 comprehensive review of the 520 certification framework is  
10 necessary;

11 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
12 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that this legislative body hereby  
13 acknowledge the significance of 520-certified Native American  
14 language and culture instructors and request the legislative  
15 education study committee to convene a working group to study  
16 and make recommendations concerning the 520 Native American  
17 language and culture certificates, including the  
18 organizational structure and accountability, advancement and  
19 professional development, data collection and transparency  
20 and a long-term strategy for system improvement; and

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be  
22 requested to include representatives from the Indian  
23 education division and the licensure bureau of the public  
24 education department, school districts and charter schools  
25 specializing in Native American language and culture

1 education, organizations focused on 520 certification or  
2 bilingual teacher certification, including those providing  
3 professional development and training, bilingual and  
4 multicultural education programs, higher education  
5 institutions, technical assistance centers and 520-certified  
6 educators; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be  
8 requested to present its findings and recommendations to the  
9 legislative education study committee, the legislature and  
10 the Indian education division of the public education  
11 department no later than December 31, 2025; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
13 transmitted to the secretary of public education, the  
14 assistant secretary of Indian education of the public  
15 education department, the director of the legislative  
16 education study committee and the respective governing bodies  
17 of each New Mexico Indian nation, tribe and pueblo. \_\_\_\_\_