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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2020

Bill Number	<u>HB136</u>	Sponsor	<u>Lente/Johnson/Allison/Roybal Caballero</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.216473.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HAFC</u>
Short Title	<u>American Indian Student College Readiness PGM</u>		
Analyst	<u>Kennedy</u>	Original Date	<u>2/5/2020</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 136 (HB136) would direct the Higher Education Department (HED), in conjunction with public institutions of higher education (IHEs) and tribal colleges, to establish an American Indian college readiness program. HB136 requires the program to be open to American Indian high school sophomores and juniors and inform participants about the college admissions process, the transition from high school to college, strategies for higher education success, college academic requirements and expectations, and American Indian student resources at New Mexico IHEs. HB136 would also require that the program include two-week summer residential programs at one or more New Mexico college.

HB136 would appropriate \$650 thousand to HED to establish and implement the American Indian college readiness program.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$650 thousand from the general fund to HED for expenditure in FY21 and FY22. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY22 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The 1st Judicial District Court found in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit the state has not upheld its constitutional obligation to ensure at-risk students, including Native American students, have the opportunity to obtain an education that prepares them for college and career. Historically, Native American students in New Mexico have lagged behind other student groups in several indicators of academic achievement. The statewide graduation rate in 2018 was 74 percent, but only 66 percent of Native American students graduated on time. In 2018, Native American students accounted for 9 percent of all students at New Mexico IHEs. Although many Native American college students successfully complete two-year degrees and other certifications,

Native American students are significantly underrepresented among students attaining four-year degrees and more advanced awards.

The Indian Education Act requires school districts and charter schools to identify the supports Native American students need to be prepared for postsecondary education and workforce entry. The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 includes a \$6 million appropriation to the Indian education fund but does not make a specific appropriation to HED for an American Indian student college readiness program.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB136 would require HED to promulgate rules defining the application process and other program requirements for the American Indian college readiness program, as determined by HED and its higher education partners.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Research shows college readiness programs have a positive effect on postsecondary outcomes. A study of the federal GEAR UP program in Iowa found that participation in the program promoted college enrollment rates among high school graduates. Another study showed high school students who undergo intensive college counseling are more likely to enroll in recommended colleges and more likely to persist through at least the second year of college, with especially pronounced effects for low-income students. In 2017, College Fund launched a national program, Native Pathways to College, to improve the college readiness of Native American students. The program has served over 1,500 high school and tribal college transfer students and has funded four tribal colleges and universities to implement year-round college readiness programs.

Attending college and obtaining some form of postsecondary training will be increasingly important to help students remain competitive in a rapidly changing labor market. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics notes automation is expected to replace many low skill jobs in the near future, funneling workforce needs toward occupations requiring some level of college education. Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce reports 65 percent of job openings through 2020 will require at least some college education, if not an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. U.S. Census Bureau data from New Mexico demonstrates increased educational attainment is highly correlated with higher median annual income.

**New Mexico Median Annual Income
by Education Level**

Adults 25 Years Old and Older, 2017

	Male	Female
Less than High School	\$ 23,068	\$ 13,232
High School Graduate	\$ 31,080	\$ 21,346
Some College or Associate's Degree	\$ 38,876	\$ 25,511
Bachelor's Degree	\$ 50,801	\$ 40,490
Graduate or Professional Degree	\$ 75,782	\$ 51,660

Source: Census Bureau

According to the most recent data reported by HED, just over 11,000 Native American students were enrolled in New Mexico IHEs in fall 2018, accounting for 9 percent of total enrollment. During the 2017-2018 academic year, Native American students earned 2,309 awards, 7.5 percent of the total number of awards granted that year.

Analysis from HED notes the department may seek alternative funding sources, such as federal or private grants, and may determine it has existing funds available to help support the American Indian college readiness program.

Analysis from the University of New Mexico states the university has provided college readiness programs for the last 20 years, including residential college readiness programs, and has the experience necessary to effectively implement the American Indian college readiness program. UNM's analysis estimates a two-week summer residential program would cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per student.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Higher Education Department (HED)
- University of New Mexico (UNM)

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