

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SM 105

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .200570.1

Short Title: Establish High-Quality Career Pathways

Sponsor(s): Senator John M. Sapien

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: March 17, 2015

Bill Summary:

SM 105 requests that the Higher Education Department (HED), the Public Education Department (PED), and the Workforce Solutions Department collaborate to establish high-quality career pathways that bridge high school curricula, postsecondary studies, and 21st Century job opportunities for all New Mexico students and report their findings and progress to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) by November 1, 2015.

The memorial also request that the three departments collaborate with relevant stakeholders on initiatives that guide secondary students through career information, exploration, and advisement and that address “early advanced credential programs for students pursuing economically viable career pathways.”

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

Substantive Issues:

According to PED:

- New Mexico has the lowest median income of all neighboring states and consistently ranks above national averages for unemployment;
- a report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO):
 - pointed to outdated vocational education programs as a significant factor in student under-preparedness and advocated for states to improve rigor and relevance in career technical education (CTE); and
 - recommended that states:
 - enlist the help of the business community in defining necessary career pathways and skills;
 - increase rigor in all vocational classes so that all students are ready for postsecondary work; and
 - prioritize career readiness by including it in school accountability systems; and
- SM 105 supports the recommendations of the CCSSO.

The analysis by HED suggests that the Educational Data System already in law could be used to evaluate whether any new career pathways developed through this inter-agency collaboration were successful in guiding students through high school, into higher education, and then into the workforce.

Background:

During the 2014 interim, the LESC heard testimony regarding career pathways from the Senior Vice President of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Among other items, the SREB representative noted:

- in New Mexico:
 - high school students have access to at least 320 CTE courses;
 - based on a survey of school year 2014-2015 seniors who were identified as taking a concentration in career technical studies, approximately 46 percent were on track to complete four or more CTE courses;
 - during school year 2013-2014, over 130,000 students were enrolled in at least one CTE course; however, these students were not enrolled in a sequence of courses in a planned pathway linking to advanced study; rather they appear to be a collection of introductory courses;
 - not enough students are completing a sequence of four CTE courses in a planned, structured career pathway;
 - small schools appear to have limited capacity to offer quality career pathways;
 - few students are taking advanced or capstone CTE courses or participating in work-based learning experiences;
 - online and dual credit CTE courses are:
 - limited;
 - introductory; and
 - not part of a structured career pathway; and
 - fewer than 400 high school students earned “credible” industry credentials or licenses in 2013; and
- the state should strive to meet the following goals in order to meet future workforce demands:
 - establish rigorous, relevant career pathways driven by workplace studies;
 - establish policy to create early advanced credential programs;
 - set college- and career-readiness standards in literacy and math;
 - close the gap between career pathway programs of study and workforce opportunities;
 - increase to 25 percent the number of young adults earning credentials by age 25;
 - increase access to high-quality, work-based learning experiences;
 - restructure low-performing high schools;
 - create a guidance system for career information exploration and advisement;
 - reform the Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (commonly known as STARS); and
 - attract, prepare, and retain high-quality CTE teachers.

Committee Referrals:

SRC/SEC

Related Bills:

HB 178a *Career Technical Education Courses & Terms*

HM 14 *Establish High-Quality Career Pathways (Identical)*

HM 21 *NM Private-Sector Education Partnerships*

SB 338 *Career Technical Student Organizations*

SB 496 *Career Tech Education Courses as Electives*