

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
53rd Legislature, 1st Session, 2017

Bill Number CS/SB219/aSEC/aHLELC **Sponsor** SEC

Tracking Number .207160.1 **Committee Referrals** SEC/SPAC;HLELC/HEC

Short Title Define & Require School Ethnic Studies

Analyst Terrazas **Original Date** 2/20/17
Last Updated 3/13/17

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of HLELC Amendment

The House Local Government, Elections, Land Grants and Cultural Affairs Committee amendment to SB219 (SB219/SECS/aSEC) establishes the bill's effective date as July 1, 2020.

Synopsis of Original Bill and SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee Substitute for SB219 and as amended by the Senate Education Committee (CS/SB219/aSEC) requires "ethnic studies" to be offered as an elective for grades 9 through 12.

CS/SB219/aSEC defines "ethnic studies" as "the interdisciplinary study of multiple perspectives through the examination of social, ethnic, cultural, gender, and historical experiences to build critical thinking skills."

FISCAL IMPACT

CS/SB219/aSEC/aHLELC does not contain an appropriation.

School districts may need to purchase instructional material for ethnic studies instruction. It may be necessary to hire teachers and to provide professional development in ethnic studies.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

A study by Stanford Graduate School of Education (GSE) found that a high school ethnic studies course improved the attendance and academic performance of students who were at risk of dropping out. Attendance jumped by 21 percentage points, grade-point average by 1.4 points, and credits earned by 23. Students in ethnic-studies courses covering discrimination, stereotypes, and social-justice movements earned 23 more credits toward graduation. The four-year pilot ethnics studies program showed the effects were positive across male, female, Asian, and Hispanic groups of students, with the largest gains found among boys and Hispanic students and

in the subjects of math and science. A similar study on Tucson Unified School District's Mexican American Studies (MAS) program, before it was eliminated in 2012, showed MAS participation was significantly and positively related to passing Arizona state standardized tests and high school graduation. These studies suggest culturally relevant pedagogy can have real benefits for students.

The National Education Association (NEA) agrees ethnic studies are valuable to boosting student performance, with the caveat that significant results can only be achieved when ethnic studies curricula is well-designed and well-taught. The NEA states that to see significant improvements, ethnic studies teachers must be able to relate well with their students, believe in students' academic abilities, and know ethnic studies content and perspectives well. Results are more significant if teachers are members of the same ethnic background of most of their students. NEA also adds both students of color and white students have benefited academically and socially from ethnic studies.

The Public Education Department (PED) indicates the definition of ethnic studies in CS/SB219/aSEC/aHLELC is “duplicative” to the New Mexico Social Studies Standards and the standards content meet the intent of CS/SB219/aSEC/aHLELC.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

School districts and schools would need to update manuals including course and graduation requirements. School districts may need to hire teachers to teach ethnic studies and purchase additional instructional materials aligned with department-established content standards for ethnic studies courses.

PED states it will be required to create and approve content and performance standards in ethnic studies.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Much of the research on “ethnic studies” includes “race” as a topic that is examined. The sponsor may want to consider including “race” in the definition.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Nothing in statute prevents schools from offering ethnic studies as an elective.

ALTERNATIVES

Pedagogical professional development could be required to embed ethnic studies within existing requirements.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to SB31 Remove Certain Graduation Requirements. A bill that eliminates the high school graduation requirement for students to take an advanced placement (AP), honors, dual credit, or distance learning course.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- PED

DT/rab