

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website ([www.nmlegis.gov](http://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**  
**54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019**

**Bill Number** SB576                      **Sponsor** Kernan  
**Tracking Number** .213784.1GLG      **Committee Referrals** SEC/SFC  
**Short Title** Broaden Area Vocational School Locations  
**Analyst** Force    **Original Date** 2/18/19  
**Last Updated** \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 576 (SB576) would permit local school boards, either individually or in collaboration with one another, to develop a plan for the establishment of an area vocational high school, which is to be submitted to the Public Education Department (PED) for approval. PED may approve plans that provide for sufficient funding for the operation of the school, which may include an election for a special levy of not more than \$1 for each \$1,000 of net taxable value. To be approved, the plan must also provide for a broad vocational and technical education program serving enough students to be financially viable, and comply with the state plan for vocational education.

The bill removes requirements that the potential vocational high school be located on the premises of a postsecondary institution.

SB576 was requested by the governor.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

SB576 does not contain an appropriation.

Local school boards have the power to call an election to impose a special levy of \$1 for each \$1,000 of net value, which may be in addition to levies authorized by the College District Tax Act.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to Advance CTE, New Mexico has no public high schools that solely or primarily offer career technical education (CTE) courses. However, 18 early college high schools currently operate in New Mexico, although these schools generally offer a combination of CTE and academic coursework rather than focusing exclusively on vocational or CTE education. SB576 would permit local school boards individually or collectively to develop a plan for a vocational high school without requiring input from a postsecondary institution. However, removing postsecondary institutions from the process may also limit potential locations for the vocational

high schools, as the bill would strike language requiring collaboration and facility sharing by locating these schools on postsecondary campuses.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures' report, *No Time to Lose*, a strong system of vocational or CTE is one of the four foundational elements of high-performing educational systems, with many high-performing countries employing it as a strategy to enhance national and local economies and offer better post-education work options to a larger portion of their populations. In these countries, CTE is not viewed as an option for students who may be weaker academically, but rather as a separate, more practicum-oriented approach to education, focusing on development of skills of immediate value in the job market. Alignment with market needs is emphasized, leading to postsecondary employment that may eventually lead to, rather than preclude, university-level education, as accomplished CTE students may seek professional certification or additional training later.

Research also shows CTE is valuable for re-engaging students who become disengaged and less interested in school, and indicates CTE students have lower dropout rates, higher graduation rates, higher employment rates, and greater earnings than demographically similar, non-CTE peers. A 2016 study from Fordham University found greater exposure to CTE is associated with better student outcomes, with benefits increasing with the number of CTE courses taken. For example, according to the Association for Career and Technical Education, in 2015, the most recent year for which data are available, New Mexico had nearly 60 thousand high school students participating in CTE programs, of which 89 percent of participating seniors graduated. By contrast, in that year, only 69 percent of New Mexico students statewide graduated, representing the lowest graduation rate in the country.

Currently, the Career and College Readiness Bureau of PED has made available to schools a number of programs of study that are designed to help educate students and parents about available education and career services to help students prepare for the workforce or continued education towards industry credentials or appropriate degrees. These programs are in culinary arts, hotel lodging management, energy and power, innovations in science and technology, biomedical science, engineering, and computer engineering. PED indicates these nationally developed CTE course sequences were selected based on the Department of Workforce Solutions' priority employment sectors and the National Career Clusters Framework. Each of these programs of study include coursework to satisfy state- and local-level graduation requirements, career pathway and elective requirements, and general electives.

Judge Singleton indicated in her Decision and Order in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit that the state has failed its obligation to prepare New Mexico students for college and career, especially at-risk students – economically disadvantaged students, Native American students, students in special education classes, and English learners – who comprise 70 percent of the student population in the state. The establishment of additional vocational high schools may increase student engagement, achievement, growth, and graduation rates for students who might otherwise become disinterested in their educational career, particularly among those students considered most at risk.

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The Higher Education Department (HED) suggests the language in the bill is unclear as to whether the bill refers to PED or HED as the agency responsible for approval of submitted vocational high school plans. However, the bill strikes all language referring to PED's and HED's predecessors in

interest, the State Board of Education and the Commission on Higher Education, respectively, replacing them with references to “the department,” defined as PED in the Public School Code general provisions, indicating that PED is the entity responsible for approving submitted plans.

### **RELATED BILLS**

HB44, Career-Technical Teacher Development, requires professional development for career and technical teachers and educational assistants be delivered in the same manner as is done for teachers of other subjects for which PED has promulgated standards and benchmarks.

HB91, Career Technical Education Pilot Project, establishes a seven-year pilot project for CTE to fund high-quality programs and monitor their effect on student outcomes.

HB183, Apprenticeship Programs for Graduation, would require PED to establish procedures by which students would be awarded credit for graduation requirements through completion of work-based training and apprenticeship-related instruction under a registered apprenticeship program.

HB184, Apprenticeship Program Income Tax Credits, allows certain taxpayers who are not dependents of another individual, and who are participating employers in a Workforce Solutions registered apprenticeship are eligible for a \$1,000 or \$2,000 income tax credit, depending on whether the apprentice received a high school diploma or equivalency credential within four years prior to the apprenticeship.

HB299, Career & Technical Student Organizations, appropriates \$650 thousand to Regional Education Cooperative Six to support middle school, high school, and postsecondary students in six state-chartered CTE student organizations.

SB353, Career & Tech Student Organizations, is identical to HB299.

### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC files
- Higher Education Department (HED)

**RKF/mc/mhg**