



PRESS RELEASE

February 9, 2014

Santa Fe, NM—New Mexico State Representatives Javier Martínez (Albuquerque) and Tomás Salazar (Las Vegas), and NM Senator Bill Soules (Las Cruces) have filed the “New Mexico ELL Teacher Preparation Act” (HB 373 and Senate Bill 470). The act seeks to improve the educational outcomes of English language learners (ELLs) in NM by increasing the number of teacher education students completing endorsements in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or bilingual education, as well as providing additional training to teachers already in the field. Currently 47% of elementary teachers and 79% of secondary teachers have English language learners in their classrooms but do not possess a bilingual or TESOL endorsement. That equals just under 8,000 teachers who lack the formal training and endorsement to teach students learning in their second language. The NM ELL Teacher Preparation Act would allocate \$750,000 to support the following strategies:

1. Build infrastructure in the state’s public colleges of education to expand TESOL/bilingual course offerings.
2. Require teacher preparation programs seeking grant funds under this bill to set measureable goals to increase the number of graduates from their programs possessing a TESOL or bilingual endorsement.
3. Require the HED and PED to monitor the on-going need for teachers with TESOL and bilingual endorsements in order to inform goal setting by teacher preparation programs.
4. Create partnerships between local education agencies, non-profit organizations, and public colleges/universities to improve pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers and teacher leaders in order to better serve ELL students.
5. Create a fellowship program that provides financial support to current and prospective teachers to attain their TESOL or bilingual endorsements in exchange for agreeing to teach ELLs in New Mexico.

According to Eastern NM University professor emeritus, Dr. Julia Rosa Emslie, “This bill will extend the opportunity for students in teacher preparation programs in the state of New Mexico to obtain their licensure in bilingual and TESOL education.”

Recent census results show that 36% of New Mexico households report utilizing a language other than English. Nearly one in five public school students are currently classified as English language learners, and they suffer from a 30 point achievement gap in Reading and 23 point gap in Mathematics as compared to other students in the state. Representative Martínez explains that, “although New Mexico has maintained very progressive policies when it comes to the education of bilingual students, policies that date back to our State Constitution of 1912, this continues to be an underserved population in our public schools. The purpose of this bill is to strategically target funds to better meet their needs and increase their educational opportunity.”

For more information on HB 373 - SB 470 contact Edward Tabet-Cubero, Associate Director of Dual Language Education of New Mexico, at 505 243-0648 or edward@dlenm.org.