

Dual Language Education of New Mexico

Press Release

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Santa Fe, NM – New Mexico’s linguistically diverse student population scored a victory today with the passage of HB 330 “State Seal for Bilingual and Biliterate Graduates,” sponsored by House Majority Leader Rick Miera (D-Bernalillo-11). After passing the house 67 - 0, the bill overwhelmingly passed the Senate today with a vote of 41 – 0, and now heads to Governor Susana Martinez for final approval. The act calls for New Mexico to establish the criteria for a “state seal of bilingualism-biliteracy...that certifies that the recipient is proficient for meaningful use in college, career or to meet a local community language need in a world language other than English.” This includes students who, in addition to English, demonstrate proficiency in one of New Mexico’s indigenous languages (where there is tribal support), Spanish, or any other world language.

NM is respected as a national leader in dual language education, and Dual Language Education of New Mexico views HB 330 as an investment in our state’s rich linguistic resources. With the passage of HB 330, NM now joins California, New York, Texas, and Illinois as states certifying the diplomas of students who meet rigorous standards in English and another language with an official seal of bilingualism/biliteracy. According to Regis Pecos, Chief of Staff for the House Majority Office, “This is a beautiful testament of our collective will to make our languages the center of our vision for education. It is the most precious gift of one generation to the next.”

Dual Language Education of New Mexico Executive Director, David Rogers, affirms, “Majority Leader, Rick Miera, and his Chief of Staff, Regis Pecos, consistently validate how important it is to honor New Mexico’s rich linguistic diversity and build upon our linguistic and cultural assets to prepare all students for 21st century success.”

Several local high schools already issue a seal of bilingualism/biliteracy. However, HB 330 offers the opportunity to expand these practices statewide. The proposal of HB 330 began with a grassroots effort between local schools, The New Mexico Coalition for the Majority, The New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education, Dual Language Education of New Mexico, The American Indian Language Policy Research and Teacher Training Center at UNM, and The Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations at NMHU. Once House Majority Leader Miera drafted the initial legislation, other local groups such as Somos Un Pueblo Unido, The Learning Alliance, NM OLE, and AFT New Mexico expressed their support. The groups were adamant about the importance of being inclusive with the seal. Therefore it will be offered to all students, whether native speakers or second language learners, who demonstrate high levels of proficiency in English and another language. It also encourages the state to work with local tribal councils to establish criteria for proficiency in non-written indigenous languages.

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About Dual Language Education of New Mexico:

Dual Language Education of New Mexico is a New Mexico based 501c-3 non-profit dedicated to the establishment of high quality dual language enrichment programs. DLeNM offers programmatic and instructional support to schools in NM and across the US, and also engages in leadership development and advocacy to ensure high quality programs are available for all students.

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