

February 9, 2021

I write to you today in support of House Bill 130. As an educator, a scholar, and co-author of the report *Access Denied/System Failure: Gifted Education in the United States*¹ I advocate for equity in gifted education for historically underrepresented students (Latino/Hispanic, Native American, African American/Black, low-income, and rural students).

Our research found between 6,211 and 23,801 (28% to 59%) youth with gifts and talents are missing from gifted identification in New Mexico. The majority of these students are from historically underrepresented populations and/or attend Title I schools.

I implore you to vote for HB 130 for the following reasons:

Cultural Responsiveness: The Federal definition of giftedness has long included leadership, artistry, and performance or potential in specific academic areas, such as math. New Mexico's current definition of giftedness requires that a student must either have a high score on an IQ test or be gifted "overall". HB 130 would add culturally important areas such as leadership, artistry, and ability or achievement in other cultural competencies to our State definition, while removing gatekeepers, making gifted education more culturally responsive.

Racial/Ethnic Equity: New Mexico's Yazzie/Martinez finding calls for equity in education for our diverse cultural and language groups, and was to some extent prompted by lack of access to advanced educational services. HB 130 would require schools to address equity of access to gifted education programs across racial and ethnic groups.

Equitable Treatment of Latinx/Hispanic Students: New Mexico is ahead of the Nation overall in serving Latinx/Hispanic gifted students, but they are still represented less than other groups in gifted education. I encourage you to support the HB 130 so that gifted Latinx/Hispanic students are guaranteed the opportunity to develop their talents as much as anyone else.

Equitable Treatment of Native/American Indian Students: New Mexico is behind the Nation overall in serving Native gifted students, even though they are a substantial population in our schools. I encourage you to support HB 130 so that gifted Native and Indigenous students are guaranteed the opportunity to develop their talents as much as everyone else.

¹ Gentry, M., Gray, A., Whiting, G. W., Maeda, Y., & Pereira, N. (2019). *Access Denied/System Failure: Gifted education in the United States: Laws, access, equity, and missingness across the country by locale, Title I school status, and race. Report cards, technical report, and website.* Purdue University: West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University & Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.
<https://www.education.purdue.edu/geri/new-publications/gifted-education-in-the-united-states/>



Equitable Treatment of Black/African American Students: New Mexico is far ahead of the Nation overall in serving Black/African American gifted students, but they are still represented less than other groups in gifted education. I encourage you to support the HB 130 so that gifted Black students are guaranteed the opportunity to develop their talents as much as other students.

It is imperative that New Mexico support the talent development, growth, and motivation of all students in the state, especially those with gifts and talents who will be the leaders, scholars, scientists, and artists of tomorrow. HB 130 should be part of New Mexico's response to the Yazzie/Martinez finding, and to our State's development of a bright economic future.

Sincerely,

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