



LFC Requester: Liu

**PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
BILL ANALYSIS
2025 REGULAR SESSION**

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:

Original Amendment
Correction Substitute

Date Prepared: 02/21 /25

Bill No: SB461

Agency Name and Code: PED - 924

Sponsor: Pinto

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Short Title: LEGISLATIVE EQUITY & EXCELLENCE TASK FORCE

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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
\$250.0	None	Nonrecurring	PERF

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
None	None	None	N/A	NFA

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	None	None	None	None	N/A	NFA

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: None.

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: Senate Bill 461 (SB461) would create the Equity and Excellence in Education Task Force. The task force would be charged with developing a long-term vision and plan with associated goals to ensure public school students are prepared for post-secondary education and workforce, capable of success in the national and global economies, and able to effectively participate in civic society. SB461 would require the task force to review the *Martinez and Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit and how the PED, school districts, and public schools are using state and federal funds to close the achievement and opportunity gaps and improve outcomes for all students. SB461 also proposes to create the equity and excellence in education fund, to be administered by PED.

The task force proposed by SB461 would comprise:

- six legislative members;
- three teachers who are current or former “teachers of the year;”
- two people with expertise in Indian education;
- two people with expertise in bilingual education;
- two people with expertise in special education;
- three elementary school principals of Title 1 schools recommended by the New Mexico coalition of educational leaders;
- three superintendents recommended by the New Mexico Superintendents’ Association;
- two representatives recommended by the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce and the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce; and
- two representatives recommended by an approved four-year teacher preparation program at a public post-secondary education institution.

The bill does not provide an effective date, but the Act would convene a task force from July 1, 2025 – July 1, 2029. Laws go into effect 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature enacting them, unless a later date is specified. If enacted this bill would become effective June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill appropriates \$250,000 from the public education reform fund to the equity and excellence in education fund, for PED to administer and to pay per diem, mileage, and other expenses of the task force. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY29 shall revert to the public education reform fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In 2018, the ruling in the *Martinez and Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit found that the state of New Mexico was not adequately preparing students, particularly at-risk students, for college and career. The ruling emphasized the need for systemic changes to ensure that students receive equitable educational opportunities.

Although SB461 aims to improve the public education system in New Mexico, its mission may duplicate existing strategies in the executive and legislative branch, many of which are informed

by the *Martinez-Yazzie* ruling.

PED released its [2025 Strategic Plan for Success](#) that outlines the agency's vision and strategies to improve the state's education system. The strategic plan names four main organizational pillars: educator ecosystem, whole student and culturally responsive education, college and career readiness, and student support opportunities. These pillars are focused on improving educational outcomes for all students in New Mexico by 2027. The strategic plan is aligned with the findings from the *Martinez and Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit by focusing on at-risk student outcomes, culturally and linguistically responsive education, comprehensive support systems, and shared accountability.

LESC published a [comprehensive report to the 2025 legislative session](#) that reviewed the state's educational progress and challenges over the past year. The LESC noted in its report that effective long-term planning required clear accountability systems and data-driven evaluations so that strategies remain relevant and responsive. The report covered topics such as educator workforce, student success, long-term planning, whole-child education, assessments, public school finance, infrastructure, governance, support services, and equity. The report recommends targeted policy considerations to better serve students.

The Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) examined effective practices in high-performing schools serving at-risk students in its [Policy Spotlight: Successful School Practices](#) report. The report highlighted the importance of robust instructional planning, teacher development, student progress monitoring, and stakeholder communication. The report also addressed challenges like principal turnover and accountability systems that promote better student outcomes. This analysis emphasizes the need for evidence-based interventions that improve educational equity across the state.

These documents provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving New Mexico's educational landscape. The PED's strategic plan sets the overarching goals and strategies, while the LFC's report offers insights into successful school practices that can inform policy and implementation. The LESC's annual report provides a broad overview of the current state of education, highlighting areas of progress and those needing attention, thereby guiding legislative action.

The task force lacks direct student representation, parent groups, and community organizations. SB461 does not identify how Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations have or will be consulted when identifying a representative for Indian Education. It is unclear if the task force will include a representative who is knowledgeable about the fiscal responsibilities and implications of the Indian Education Division (IED). Members are to be appointed by the New Mexico Legislative Council, which may lead to political bias and may not reflect actual state demographics or the diverse educational needs of the state.

The bill references requirement of appointing members with "expertise" in Indian education, bilingual education, and special education, yet does not identify how expertise is to be determined. In addition, it is not clear who has oversight of this task force, how the council is structured, or how recommendations and reports are to be considered and adopted.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Establishing and maintaining the task force would require significant resources, including staffing and funding, which might be more effectively utilized by enhancing current educational efforts or supporting existing oversight bodies. The creation of a new task force may also contribute to bureaucratic complexity without guaranteeing effective outcomes, especially if its roles overlap with those of existing bodies.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

SB461 may require the PED to recommend an expert in Indian Education and consult with current or former “teachers of the year” to serve on the task force. The bill also requires the PED to reimburse task force members pursuant to the Per Diem and Mileage Act.

The tasks outlined for the proposed task force, such as reviewing the *Martinez and Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit and studying educational systems, are activities already undertaken by existing legislative committees and educational departments. This redundancy could lead to inefficiencies, conflicting recommendations, and waste.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to HB193, Study Public Education System

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The proposal does not specify mechanisms for considering or implementing the task force's recommendations, potentially hindering accountability and follow-through.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

None.

AMENDMENTS

None.