



SUPPORT THE PARTIAL CREDITS BILL SENATE BILL 341 (Senator Linda Lopez)

Make Sure Students in Foster Care Get Credit for the Work They Do

THE ISSUE

Students in foster care are often forced to change schools when they move foster homes or come into care. This often happens in the middle of a semester. When students move schools, they typically lose credit for work they did in previous public schools. As a result, students are not able to graduate on time, and many of them give up and leave school.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The partial credits bill will address this concern by:

- Ensuring students who are system-involved and who have moved schools receive credit for the work completed in their previous school.
- Ensuring that students in foster care and other students who move frequently have the same opportunities as their peers.

SEE REVERSE FOR FAQ'S

Support the Partial Credits Bill, Senate Bill 341 (Senator Linda Lopez)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is this legislation for?

Students who change schools during a school year as the result of homelessness, placement by the child welfare system, mental health system, or juvenile justice system will benefit from the legislation. It is estimated that at any given time there 18,000 homeless children in New Mexico, 14,000 children in contact with the juvenile justice system and 4,000 children in foster care. Many of these students change schools often multiple times during a school year, negatively impacting their educational attainment.

What does the bill do?

The proposed legislation ensures that students who change schools mid-semester receive credit for the work they completed in their previous school, helping moderate the education disruptions they experience.

Why do we need it?

These young people have vast potential and capacity, but they face traumatic changes in their home lives. As a result, they are repeatedly asked to adapt to new teachers, new classrooms, and new peers. **Research shows that high school mobility has negative effects on academic achievement and is associated with school dropout. This disruption often results in a loss of school credits, a delay in earning a high school diploma, and too often a failure to graduate.** Studies show high school students who change schools even once are less than 50 percent as likely to graduate as those who don't change schools. Other studies also suggest that every school move will account for six months of delayed academic achievement and growth.

Who will administer it?

School districts, with guidance from the New Mexico Public Education Department, will determine how credits will be awarded for partially completed classes.

What will it cost?

Because this legislation will be administered at the local level, there are no state costs associated with its implementation. Further, the actual impact is spread out among the state's 89 school districts and the number of students who change schools will not be so large as to impose a significant burden on districts. Districts have existing staff and resources to assist with school transfers, enrollment, and graduation support who can perform the responsibilities outlined in this legislation. In effect, this legislation will reduce the high percentage of dropouts for this population and reduce the long-term cost burden associated with high school dropout such as unemployment, homelessness, and other negative social impacts.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Contact: Ezra Spitzer
Executive Director
505-463-0660
Ezra.Spitzer@nmcan.org

Arika E. Sánchez
Director of Policy and Advocacy
808-225-1494
Arika.Sanchez@nmcan.org



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