HB 87 // Indian Education Fund Distributions (Sponsor: Rep. Lente)

Equitable and Targeted Funding for Tribal Education

Native students have long been deprived of the resources they need to succeed. The *Yazzie/Martinez* court ruled in 2018 that public school funding failed to reach the students who most needed it. Yet recent funding increases were not targeted at Native students. Indian education remains chronically underfunded.

HB 87 takes an important step toward funding the Indian Education Act in a way that advances tribal education sovereignty. The bill **aligns the distributions of the Indian Education Fund with the needs of Native students and their tribal communities.** Instead of short-term, restricted grants, the Indian Education Fund will disburse regular and predictable funding through cooperative agreements between Tribes and the PED. This will provide flexible and recurring resources for tribal education programs designed to meet Native students' needs.

To secure equitable and sustainable funding for tribal education, **HB 87** will:

- Distribute funding through Joint Powers Agreements between PED and Tribes. Tribes can use this funding flexibly for any of the purposes outlined in the Indian Education Act.
- Distribute no less than 70% of Indian Education Fund appropriations to Tribes. Currently, half of all grants go to school districts.
- Distribute funding equitably among Tribes via a formula based on tribal capacity needs and student counts.

Appropriation: $20 million starting in FY24. The LFC's budget includes $15 million for the IEF.

What Is Education Sovereignty?