In 1973, New Mexico became the first state in the US to adopt a Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (BMEA). The law provides local districts with funds to implement bilingual multicultural instructional programs that provide students with opportunities to expand their conceptual and linguistic abilities while learning to value diversity.

The BMEA Memorial directs the State of New Mexico to:

- **Commemorate** the 50th anniversary of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act of 1973.

- **Recognize** that bilingualism and multilingualism have always been a reality in this land that is now called New Mexico.

- **Revise** the language and definitions of the Bilingual Multicultural Act and replace the label "English Learner" with "Emergent Bilingual."

- **Support** the development of an Elementary Bilingual Multicultural degree to increase the number of highly qualified New Mexico bilingual teachers.

- **Request** that the NMPED, in consultation with the Bilingual Multicultural Education Advisory Council (BMEAC), convene a task force to address the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee Program Evaluation: Bilingual and Multicultural Education Programs Report Findings and Recommendations as well as any community concerns.

- **Provide** additional remuneration to bilingual educators, administrators, and professors who use their bilingualism to teach languages, prepare bilingual teachers, evaluate teachers and classroom instruction, produce language materials, develop tools for assessment, and certify language teachers.

- **Grant** college credit to students who graduate with their NM State Seal of Bilingualism–Biliteracy throughout all of New Mexico’s institutions of higher education, including Indigenous students, regardless of whether their language is written.

- **Make** culturally relevant materials and textbooks available in multiple languages and accessible to all bilingual multicultural education students in both their classrooms and their school libraries.

- **Ensure** that NMPED adopts a bilingual/multicultural lens and consults bilingual multicultural education and Indigenous language experts when making decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and instructional materials.
Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, providing funding for school districts to create, implement, and staff bilingual education programs across the country. This was largely viewed as a remedy for civil rights violations, but quickly became an important tool to increase cultural awareness and encourage bilingual instructions.

Bilingual Multicultural Education Action of 1973 Accomplishments

- New Mexico was the first US State (1973) to pass a Bilingual Multicultural Education Act.
- 70% of New Mexico school districts are implementing at least one Bilingual Multicultural Education program (418 schools).
- Bilingual Multicultural Education is a foundation for ensuring educational equity for our English Learners and Native Americans, following the Martinez/Yazzie Court Ruling (2018).
- New Mexico was the first state to implement the Seal of Bilingualism/Biliteracy Program (1999).
- For SY2021-2022 a growing number of students (1105) completed their State Seal of Bilingualism/Biliteracy (SSBB), a 9% increase from SY2020-2021.

Still Needing to Be Done

- Support the development of an Elementary Bilingual Multicultural Education degree to increase the number of bilingual teachers in New Mexico.
- Ensure that curricula, instruction, assessments, and instructional materials be developed and selected through the lens of the bilingual multicultural needs of New Mexico’s population.
- NMPED must provide specific guidance and support to teachers and educational administrators in Biliteracy and Oral Language Development, the core of effective BMEP implementation.

*Art by Marissa Duran*