

# Final Synthesis of Community Listening Sessions hosted by the *Yazzie* Legal Team

2025 Cross-Event Analysis of Community Findings/Themes, Gaps & Challenges, and Recommendations & Priorities to transform NM's education system for Yazzie/Martinez student groups

**PURPOSE** This placemat presents a consolidated synthesis of findings across multiple Yazzie/Martinez community events, forums, and data reviews. It highlights consistent system gaps, community-driven insights, and the policy implications necessary to meet constitutional obligations to Native students.

## CONSISTENT FINDINGS (Across All Events)

Native students continue to experience persistent inequities in access, instruction, and outcomes.

Culturally and linguistically responsive education remains inconsistent and under-implemented.

Funding intended to close gaps is misaligned with student need and impact.

Accountability systems lack clear benchmarks, timelines, and enforcement.

Tribal voices are not meaningfully embedded in decision-making.

Student wellbeing needs remain largely unmet.

## PRIMARY SYSTEM GAPS

**Instruction:** Indigenous language and culturally sustaining curriculum remain optional.

**Funding:** Resources do not consistently reach tribal and community-led programs.

**Governance:** No unified accountability system for Native student outcomes.

**Data:** Inconsistent, opaque, and often misaligned with lived experience.

**Supports:** Mental health, transportation, and basic needs insufficiently addressed.

## KEY COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Language and culture are foundational, not supplemental.

Schools must reflect the communities they serve to be effective.

Youth voice is largely missing from education planning.

Trauma, poverty, and basic needs directly affect learning outcomes.

Communities know what works — implementation is the failure point.

## SYNTHESIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

Treat culturally and linguistically responsive education as a baseline requirement.

Align funding with documented student needs and measurable outcomes.

Establish enforceable accountability measures tied to Yazzie/Martinez obligations.

Require meaningful Tribal consultation and shared decision-making.

Improve data accuracy, transparency, and accessibility.


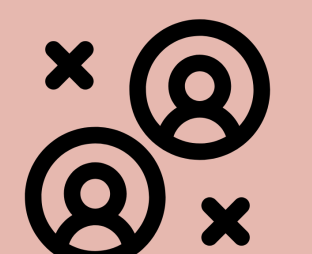
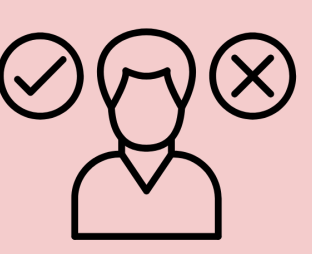
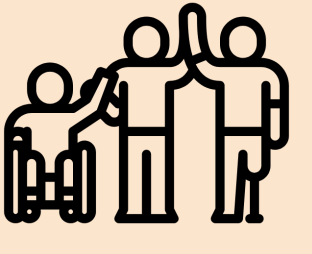

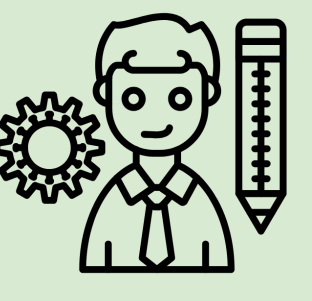
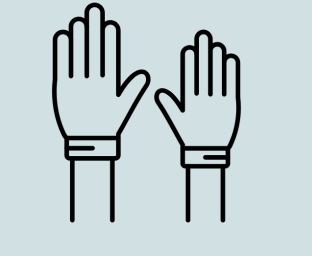

# Community Listening Session hosted by the *Yazzie* Legal Team

## The People’s Review - NMPED Education Plan

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

November 21, 2025

**Community Input.** These themes and recommendations reflect what community members across New Mexico identified as essential to transform education as required by the Yazzie/Martinez decision & order -- rooted in lived experience, cultural relevance, and a call for systemic change.

Theme	Systemic Gaps & Challenges (Why this matters)	Community Recommendations & Priorities.
 <b>Legal Context</b> NM students’ right to sufficient education denied (Native, ELL, disabled, economically disadvantaged)	“Every student deserves a chance to prepare for career or college, not just survive in school.”	PED plan must align with 9 components, include measurable actions & accountability
 <b>PED Plan Deficiencies</b> Descriptive, vague, non-budgeted, limited input, short timeframe	“The plan looks good on paper, but it doesn’t reflect what our children actually need.”	Reject incremental adjustments; demand systemic, culturally responsive remedies
 <b>Culturally &amp; Linguistically Responsive Education (CLR)</b> HQIM focus, missing native languages, bilingual education, heritage language programs	“Our languages, our culture—they’re not optional, they are critical for identity.”	Implement statewide CLR repository, teacher training, and biliteracy programs
 <b>Equity &amp; Inclusion</b> Black, Indigenous, Hispanic students, students with disabilities, ELLs marginalized	“We are the experts on our children; outsiders don’t understand our needs.”	Inclusive stakeholder-driven plan; honor tribal sovereignty; intersectional approach
 <b>Student Wellbeing &amp; Behavioral Health</b> Mental health & behavioral supports inadequate	“Kids can’t learn when they don’t feel safe or valued in school.”	School-based behavioral health initiatives, uniform baseline behavior training, trauma-responsive ecosystems
 <b>Teacher Development &amp; Retention</b> Insufficient professional learning, retention, equity micro credentialing	“If teachers aren’t supported, students won’t succeed. Teacher conditions = student conditions.”	Embedded CLR training, teacher retention microcredential, leadership training
 <b>Youth Engagement</b> Limited voice in the PED Plan	“School should be exciting, not standard. Every student deserves to be seen and heard.”	Freedom Dreaming programs: youth visioning & participatory design
 <b>Action &amp; Declaration</b> PED plan rejected; systemic reform needed	“Our children deserve classrooms that honor their culture, language, and potential every single day.”	Community-driven declaration; measurable, culturally relevant, sustainable outcomes

“There is no mention or recognition about the efficacy and benefits of early childhood programs that are grounded in native culture, language, and local tribal standards.” - Professor’s insight on the NMPED ED Plan




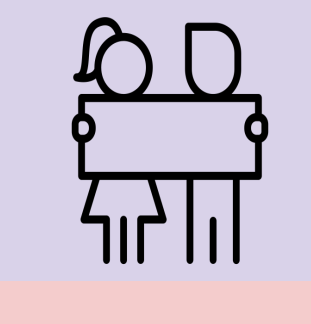

**Community Listening Session hosted by the Yazzie Legal Team**

**Education for Liberation: *Community Conversation on the Yazzie/Martinez Plan***



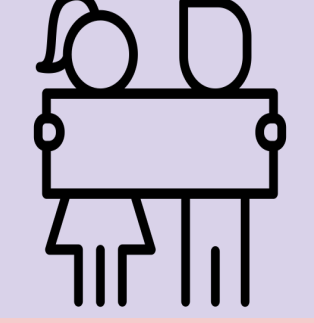


**Virtual Session | September 18, 2025**

**Community Input.** These themes and recommendations reflect what community members across New Mexico identified as essential to transform education as required by the Yazzie/Martinez decision & order -- rooted in lived experience, cultural relevance, and a call for systemic change.

*“We have the wisdom and expertise we need here. If PED is not willing to listen and include community voices, we will not be successful in changing education in New Mexico.” – Educator*

		<u>Theme</u>
	<b>Mentorship &amp; Representation</b>	Teachers and mentors who see and support students transform futures.
	<b>Culturally Relevant Curriculum</b>	Indigenous, Hispanic, and other marginalized cultures must be reflected.
	<b>Real-World Opportunities</b>	Workforce programs, apprenticeships, arts, and trades give students agency.
	<b>Community Connection</b>	Schools must serve communities, not just individuals.
	<b>Student Voice &amp; Leadership</b>	Youth must meaningfully participate in shaping their education.
	<b>Trauma-Informed &amp; Equity-Centered</b>	Build systems that prioritize mental health and embed anti-bias instruction as core—not optional—practices.

**Systemic Gaps & Challenges (Why this matters)**

	<b>Lack of Culturally Connected School Leadership</b>	Teachers and leaders often lack meaningful and sustained connections to local communities and the challenges they face
	<b>Culturally Relevant &amp; Real-World Curriculum</b>	Curriculum focused on testing rather than practical, culturally grounded skills
	<b>Youth Voice &amp; Empowerment</b>	Minimal student participation in decision-making
	<b>Trauma-Informed &amp; Equity-Centered Supports</b>	Insufficient trauma-informed supports and mental health resources
	<b>Community Integration &amp; Well-Being</b>	Disconnect between schools and communities, perpetuating inequities

**Community Recommendations & Priorities**

- Hire and support local, culturally representative educators.
- Expand apprenticeships, arts, trades, and culturally responsive electives.
- Empower students through councils, leadership opportunities, and advocacy.
- Treat schools as community hubs integrating culture, mental health, and collective well-being.

*“Exposing kids to something culturally they’ve never seen before can be transformative.” — Parent/Educator*




# Community Listening Session hosted by the *Yazzie* Legal Team

## Yazzie/Martinez Case Update/Community Discussion

September 10, 2025 | Native American Community Academy

**Community Input.** These themes and recommendations reflect what community members across New Mexico identified as essential to transform education as required by the Yazzie/Martinez decision & order -- rooted in lived experience, cultural relevance, and a call for systemic change.

### Systemic Gaps & Challenges (Why this matters)

Theme	Gap	Details
 <p><b>Representation &amp; Voice</b></p> <p><i>“Our voices and knowledge are missing from the system.”</i></p>	<b>Tribal Curriculum Not Recognized</b>	No statewide system to credit Native language proficiency or tribal curriculum
	<b>Missing Tribal Advocacy in PED</b>	Vacant liaison roles → weak equity voice for Native students.
	<b>Curriculum Excludes Indigenous Perspective</b>	Reinforces colonial narratives, erasing Native knowledge.
	<b>Few Native Teachers/Role Models</b>	Impacts student identity, self-esteem, and sense of belonging
 <p><b>Equity &amp; Access</b></p> <p><i>“Our kids don’t have the same opportunities.”</i></p>	<b>Barriers to Extracurriculars</b>	Activities are too expensive; Native students excluded from opportunities.
	<b>Social Needs Ignored</b>	Poverty, transportation, food insecurity, and financial literacy not addressed in policy.
	<b>Funding Inequities</b>	Tribal schools and programs consistently underfunded compared to others.
 <p><b>Accountability &amp; Systems</b></p> <p><i>“The system fails our children and no one is held accountable.”</i></p>	<b>IEPs Don’t Work for Native Students</b>	Plans go unimplemented, leaving students unsupported.
	<b>Broken Data Systems</b>	506 form drops Native identity for biracial students → erases representation
	<b>Higher Ed / K–12 Disconnect</b>	Misaligned calendars, curriculum pathways, and credit transfer barriers.
	<b>Systematic Racism</b>	Discrimination embedded in policies and school culture, not just isolated incidents

### Theme

<b>Colonial definitions of education</b>	The state only values Western curriculum, leaving tribal knowledge and language invisible.
<b>State systems not built with tribes</b>	Decision-making happens at PED without tribal voices or representation.
<b>Funding formulas inequitable</b>	Resources flow through models that disadvantage tribal schools and Native students.
<b>Licensure and teacher prep programs</b>	Don’t require cultural competency, creating a workforce unprepared to serve Native students.
<b>Data systems erase Native identity</b>	Federal/state forms misclassify or undercount Native students.
<b>Systemic racism in schools</b>	Policies and practices reinforce discrimination, from discipline to curriculum.

### Community Recommendations & Priorities

<b>Tribal-led curriculum and language programs</b>	Center Indigenous knowledge, stories, and ways of knowing.
<b>Culturally responsive teacher pathways</b>	Recruit, train, and license Native educators; require cultural competency for all.
<b>Accountability systems with consequences</b>	Schools must be held responsible when they fail Native students.
<b>Equitable funding</b>	Allocate resources that reflect the real needs of Native communities.
<b>Whole student supports</b>	Address poverty, trauma, transportation, and food insecurity as part of education.