

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill No: HB 302**

**48th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2008**

**Short Title: Las Cruces High School Summer Pilot Project**

**Sponsor(s): Representative Mary Helen García and Others**

**Analyst: Pamela Herman**

**Date: January 29, 2008**

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**Bill Summary:**

HB 302 requires the Public Education Department (PED) and Las Cruces Public Schools to design a four-year “summer intensive instructional project” to be instituted at Las Cruces High School and appropriates funds to PED to support the project.

HB 302 would establish the pilot project in statute, as follows:

- the pilot project shall provide funding to support intensive technology-based supplementary instruction in rigorous summer programs in English and mathematics for grades 9 through 11;
- its purpose shall be to determine the efficacy of summer intensive instruction on student achievement during the next school year and the effect the program has on the school dropout rate;
- each summer program shall be at least four weeks in duration;
- the pilot project shall include an annual evaluation phase that tracks Las Cruces high school students and their academic achievement and provides other data sufficient to determine the efficacy of the pilot project;
- insofar as practicable, data collection and reporting shall be consistent with requirements of the Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS);
- PED and the school district shall report to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) by July 1 of each year on the past year’s success in improving the academic standing of Las Cruces high school students; and
- PED and the school district shall provide a written report, including findings and recommendations, to the LESC at the end of the pilot project.

**Fiscal Impact:**

\$500,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 09 for distributions to Las Cruces Public Schools. The bill contains a reversion clause.

Separate appropriations to specific schools or school districts for operational expenditures circumvent the Public School Funding Formula, which provides operational funds for all school districts, and may compromise the equity of the formula.

HB 302 establishes a four-year pilot program but only provides funding for one year.

## **Issues:**

- To address the needs of schools in the school improvement cycle, such as Las Cruces High School, PED received more than \$11.2 million in state and federal funds for school improvement efforts in school year 2006-2007, and more than \$8.7 million for school year 2007-2008. Of these amounts, \$8.4 million was appropriated by the Legislature for FY 07 and \$6.5 million for FY 07. For FY 09, the Executive requested an additional \$5.5 million in recurring funds for the School Improvement Framework and the School Improvement Fund, plus \$10.0 million in nonrecurring funds for the Framework.
- PED states that, through the Framework, the department uses these funds to assist schools and school districts to implement systemic, research-based, data-driven programs designed to improve student achievement that includes staff development, on-site support in the classroom, and facilitated coaching for school staff.
- The academic issues at Las Cruces High School mirror those facing many high schools across New Mexico. For example:
  - approximately 56 percent of Las Cruces grade 9 students are below proficiency in reading and 65 percent are below proficiency in mathematics;
  - Las Cruces High School, like the city's other two comprehensive high schools and 100 other schools around the state, is now in corrective action, having failed to make adequate yearly progress for at least the past three years;
  - according to a 2007 report from Johns Hopkins University that looked at the "promoting power" of high schools in the United States, the ratio of seniors to freshmen four years earlier at Las Cruces High School ranges from 60 to 69 percent, the lowest for Las Cruces' three high schools, and approximately at midpoint among high schools statewide; and
  - an average of 44 percent of recent graduates from Las Cruces High School who went on to an in-state public postsecondary institution between 2001 and 2007 needed remediation in their freshman year.
- These data reflect concerns that have arisen nationally about the rigor and relevance of high school programs. For example:
  - fewer than one in 10 adults surveyed by the Educational Testing Service believe that students are significantly challenged in high school;
  - each year, almost a third of all public high school students, and nearly half of all blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans, do not graduate from public high school on time; and
  - the Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that high school dropouts cost the nation approximately \$329.0 billion over their lifetimes in lost wages. In New Mexico, the cost is approximately \$3.0 billion, not including the cost of criminal justice and social services.

## **Related Bills:**

HB 301 *Las Cruces High School Drop-Out Prevention*

HB 304 *Las Cruces High School At-Risk Project*