LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: **HB 328**   **48th Legislature, 2nd Session**, **2008**

Short Title: **NM Tech Summer Science Program**

Sponsor(s): **Representative John A. Heaton**

Analyst: **Peter van Moorsel**   Date: **January 27, 2008**

Bill Summary:

HB 328 appropriates funds to the Board of Regents of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology to support the Summer Science Program (SSP).

Fiscal Impact:

$50,000 is appropriated from the General Fund for FY 09. The bill contains a reversion clause.

The appropriation will fund the tuition of eight New Mexico high school students to attend the Summer Science Program (SSP) at a cost of $6,250 per scholarship.

For FY 08, the Legislature appropriated $72,000 for SSP. Since 2005, 18 New Mexico students have participated in SSP, including five students in summer 2007.

Issues:

During the 2007 interim, the vice-chairman of the board of Summer Science Program, Inc. testified before the LESC that the SSP is an intense, college-like academic experience, intended to recruit the brightest high school seniors from around the nation and several foreign countries into mathematics and science careers. The SSP began in California in 1959 and, in 2003, expanded to the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, in Socorro.

• The SSP offers students 140 hours of college-level lectures: 30 percent in mathematics, 30 percent in physics, 25 percent in astronomy, and 15 percent in computer programming and other related areas during the day.

• At night, students work in teams of three, take telescopic observations of an asteroid, measure them precisely, and write software to convert their measurements into a mathematical description of the asteroid's orbit.

• The curriculum includes two prominent guest speakers each week and field trips to places like the Very Large Array (VLA) and Apache Point Observatory (in New Mexico) and Jet Propulsion Laboratories and Table Mountain Observatory (in California).

Related Bill:

SB 295 *NM Tech Summer Science Program*