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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/20/09

SPONSOR Salazar LAST UPDATED _____ HB 679

SHORT TITLE Middle & High School Supercomputer Training SB _____

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$150.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Public Education Department (PED)

No Responses Received From

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NMIMT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 679 appropriates \$150 thousand from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology for a statewide program to provide training on supercomputers for middle school and high school students in science, mathematics, engineering and technology applications and to strengthen teaching techniques in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$150.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states that this request was not submitted by NMIMT to the HED for review and is not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY10. The HED states that the program currently receives a \$56,400 recurring General Fund appropriation in addition to the funding proposed in HB 679. The program also received \$28,000 of non-recurring General Fund dollars for expenditure in FY09.

The LFC Appropriation Recommendations, Volume II, pages 364-365 states:

The committee has concerns about the growth of research and public service projects within the higher education budget, as well as the alignment of these projects with state goals and strategic plans. The committee also continues to have significant concerns about accountability and performance outcomes for these projects.

The committee recommendation reduces funding included in the HED request by varying levels from FY09 funding amounts for research projects, public service projects and P-20 pipeline projects focusing on students.

With respect to special projects, higher education institutions advanced 114 proposals for new projects and expansions at a total general fund cost of \$54 million during the HED budget request process in fall 2008.

According to the February 2009 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$575 million less than the FY09 appropriations before the 2009 solvency reductions. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

The Executive Budget in Brief notes that over the years more than 300 RPSPs have been created, accounting for a large portion of institution budgets. The current RPSPs were reviewed while considering the relevance of the project to the core mission of the institution, the community benefit and the outcomes associated with each project. (Budget in Brief and Policy Highlights, P 9-10.)

The HED states:

According to a representative from NMIMT, the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge provides a learning experience for teams of pre-college students in scientific inquiry, project management, computational analysis and presentation skills. The challenge is a year long, state wide competition for prizes and scholarships. The goal of the Challenge is to have at least one team compete from each New Mexico middle school and high school and one instructional sponsor with the necessary skills to support the team by 2012. NMIMT is the host of the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge.

A representative from NMIMT explained that the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge is open to all interested students in grades 7 through 12 on a non-selective basis. Former participants have come from public, private, parochial and home-based schools in all areas of New Mexico. The program has no grade point average, class enrollment, or computer experience prerequisites. Students and teachers are shown how to use supercomputers, to learn programming languages, to analyze data, and to write reports.

The New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge is currently offered at minimal cost to the participants and the New Mexico school districts with representatives. A representative from the NMIMT Research Office explained that the funds from HB679 will be used to offset costs incurred by students, teachers, and school districts to attend or send representatives to the Supercomputing Challenge.

In addition to generating interest in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering, and technology, the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge allows participating institutions such as NMIMT to recruit New Mexico students who are interested in pursuing a higher education in these fields.

The PED notes that this program supports the Public School Performance Measure- Percent of middle school students who achieve the No Child Left Behind Act annual measurable objective for proficiency or above on standards-based assessments in mathematics and Goal 1 of PED's *A Strategic Action Plan for Advancing Math and Science Education in New Mexico 2007-2010* : "Increase student interest, participation and achievement in math and science".

GH/svb