

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 197

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .197479.2

Short Title: High School Water Conservation Program

Sponsor(s): Senator Michael Padilla

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 19, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 197 makes an appropriation to establish and implement a water management and conservation program as a two-year pilot project that creates a one-credit, elective high school course. The purposes of the course are to:

- provide students with an understanding of the basic principles of water management and conservation; and
- prepare high school students for entry into the workforce or vocational or academic programs in the subject area.

The bill also requires Public Education Department (PED) to:

- develop a suitable curriculum for program implementation in one or more high schools;
- determine application requirements;
- establish procedures and criteria for evaluating applications;
- establish reporting and evaluation requirements for participating schools, including student and program assessments;
- provide reports to the Legislature and Governor on the efficacy of the program; and
- use up to 4.0 percent of the appropriation for professional development of educators working in the program and for administrative costs.

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 16 and FY 17. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund at the end of FY 17.

Substantive Issues:

According to PED, water management is critical for the long-term viability of New Mexico's industry and livability. Both the University of New Mexico and New Mexico State University offer programs of study in water management and sustainability. Several community colleges also offer certificate programs related to water management, such as:

- Central New Mexico Community College's water treatment plant operator certification; and
- Santa Fe Community College's water and wastewater technology certificate program.

These programs prepare postsecondary students for entry into the workforce with an understanding of the principals of water management and conservation. High school students can learn about topics similar to what might be offered in a high school water management and conservation course through dual credit offerings at several of these postsecondary institutions. In FY 14, 94 high school students took a course called Natural Resources and Conservation through the dual credit pathway.

Background:

PED also reports that the department's College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) oversees career technical education in New Mexico and administers the federal Carl D. Perkins grant for career and technical education. A major initiative of the Perkins grant is the career clusters initiative. This initiative emphasizes alignment of secondary and postsecondary programs with industry requirements so that students are well-prepared for technical careers. Through the use of aligned, sequential, rigorous programs of study, high school students are trained in basic principles that align to postsecondary requirements.

CCRB has several initiatives that emphasize programmatic alignment between secondary and postsecondary programs as well as relationships between educational programs and regional industry partners designed to ensure that educational programs are aligned with industry requirements. Courses and instructional sequences generally involve convening focus groups comprising industry and educational representatives. These groups specify a sequential program of study, often with a dual credit course leading to either an industry certification or directly into a community college program focused on water management and conservation. National advocacy groups assert that it is in the best interest of students and state businesses for such educational programs to be developed in partnership with industry.

Committee Referrals:

SCONC/SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

HB 178a *Career Technical Education Courses & Terms*
HJM 6 *New Mexico Water Awareness Week*