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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Townsend DATE TYPED: 3/15/03 HB 708/aHAFC/aSEC

SHORT TITLE: Distance Learning for Disabled Persons SB _____

ANALYST: L. Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
			See Narrative		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: HB 197, Distance Education for Teacher Programs
SB 95, NMSU Teacher Distance Education

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

- State Department of Education (SDE)
- Commission on Higher Education (CHE)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
- NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NMCDHP)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SEC Amendments

The amendments adopted by the Senate Education Committee (on pages 3 through 10) strike Section 2, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DUTIES, and insert a new Section 2 that makes the language and provisions applying to public schools identical to those applied to institutions of higher education.

“[NEW MATERIAL] DISTANCE LEARNING AND COMPUTER-BASED COURSES. - - Public schools that offer distance learning and computer-based courses shall provide accompanying electronic formats that are usable by a person with a disability using assistive technology, and those formats shall be based on the American standard code for information interchange, hypertext markup language and extensible language.”

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The amendments adopted by the House Appropriations and Finance Committee strike the terms “courses of study” and “instructional materials” throughout the bill; amend the title and the bill to require that institutions of higher education and public schools that offer distance education learning and using computer-based courses of study will provide accompanying course work with accessible instructional materials that shall be based on the American standard code for information interchange, hypertext mark-up language and extensible mark-up language (language changes are underlined).

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 708 requires each public school and institution of higher learning that offers distance learning and computer-based instructional materials for any course of study to provide the course work with accessible electronic formats that are usable by an individual with a disability using assistive technology.

Significant Issues

The SDE analysis points out that publishers of materials adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) are required to provide electronic versions of texts upon request by schools and school districts for use by students with disabilities. Further, the SDE observes, distance learning may require materials not on the state’s adopted textbook list, and schools may have difficulty acquiring electronic versions of these materials.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HB 708 has no appropriation. However, the CHE reports, some distance education directors estimate that each learning unit will have an additional \$3.0 to \$6.0 cost.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons emphasizes that, if instructional materials include videotape, or real-time presentations, videos must be captioned or real time presenters should have signed language interpreting to facilitate complete access to visual communication.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Have the potential cost implications to school districts and institutions of higher education been studied?
2. How many persons this bill might affect?
3. Has a reaction to this bill be requested from either the CHE or the SDE?

LRB/njw:yr