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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Jennings DATE TYPED 2/14/04 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Chaves County Character Counts Program SB 435

ANALYST Wilson

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
	\$70.0			Recurring	General Fund

Relates to HB 41, HB 242, HB 244 and SB 83

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
 Department of Health (DOH)
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 435 appropriates \$70 thousand from the General Fund to the PED to contract for Character Counts Program services in Chaves County.

Significant Issues

Character building programs can help children from difficult backgrounds have more positive growth and development. Through studies, it has also been proven effective in the building of specific protective factors, which a character building program would impact. Youth are less likely to use or commence use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Chaves County has been a Character Counts community since 1994 when it first established a partnership with Albuquerque for the 1995-1999 *Secretary's Fund for the Improvement of Education: Partnerships in Character Education* federal grant awarded to New Mexico. Chaves County continues to support Character Counts through the Chamber of Commerce and a website.

This appropriation is needed to support the continued expansion of Character Counts throughout Chaves County to include public and private schools, county government and the business community. The county has developed an ethics book that will serve as a foundation document for the expanded activities of the county.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$70 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2005 shall revert to the General Fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED will be able to implement the provisions of this bill with existing staff.

RELATIONSHIP

SB 435 relates to:

HB 41, Indian Youth Program
HB 242, San Juan Youth Character Building
HB 244, Zuni Youth Development Initiative
SB 83, Mid Rio Grande Character Counts Program

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED provided the following:

On a national level, the findings of a new report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics shows cheating, stealing and lying by high school students have continued their alarming, decade-long upward spiral. A survey of 12,000 high school students showed that students admitting they cheated on an exam at least once in the past year jumped from 61% in 1992 to 74% in 2002; the number who stole something from a store within the past 12 months rose from 31% to 38%, while the percentage who say they lied to their teachers and parents also increased.

The report, released as part of National Character Counts Week (October 20-26), also reveals significant deterioration over the past two years: Cheating rose from 71% in 2000 to 74% in 2002, theft increased from 35% to 38% and those who said they would be willing to lie to get a good job jumped from 28% to 39%.

The 2002 report also found that students who attend private religious schools were less likely to shoplift, 35% vs. 39%, but more likely to cheat on exams, 78% vs. 72% and lie to teachers, 86% vs. 81%. In addition, students participating in varsity sports cheated on exams at a higher rate than students who did not, 78% vs. 73%.

To provide greater insight into the factors that may impact the ethics of young people, the Institute's 2002 survey sought information about attitudes and affiliations that add new dimensions to the data: participation in varsity sports, student leadership, attendance at private religious schools and possession of strong religious beliefs.

Here are some of the findings of this report:

- **GENDER.** The most significant differentiating factor among high school students is gender. Though girls cheat and lie as much as boys, in general they are significantly less likely to engage in theft or other dishonest practices and they have more positive attitudes toward ethics.
- **SPORTS.** Participation in varsity sports does not appear to build or undermine character. In most cases it was not a differentiating factor with one significant exception: varsity athletes were more likely to cheat on exams.
- **RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS.** Those who attend private religious schools do not behave or think much differently from others. In most cases, it was not a differentiating factor. They did steal less but they cheated and lied more to teachers and parents.
- **RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.** Students who said that their religion was essential or very important to them regardless of the kind of school they attended, also generally performed at the national average, though they shoplifted at a slightly lower rate, were less likely to lie to get a job and tended to have more positive attitudes about the importance of ethics.
- **COLLEGE AND HONORS CLASSES.** Generally, those who intended to go to college and attended honors or advanced placement classes said they cheated stole and lied less than others.

The surveys underlying Report Card 2002: The Ethics of American Youth were administered by schools throughout the country in 2002.

DW/dm