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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Jennings ORIGINAL DATE 2/9/2006 HB _____
LAST UPDATED _____ SB _____
SHORT TITLE Distance Learning Technologies SB 481
ANALYST Earp

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$250.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates HB 572
Relates to HB 573

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 481 appropriates \$250,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of Eastern New Mexico University for the Roswell branch to pay the start-up costs incurred by the Loving, Lake Arthur, Hagerman and Dexter school districts in implementing distance learning technologies.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250,000 contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This proposal was not included among the special program funding requests submitted by the Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) to the Higher Education Department (HED) for review. Consequently, this proposal has not been included in the HED fiscal year 2007 funding

recommendations to the Legislature.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

ENMU's Roswell branch campus would bear administrative responsibility for the expenditure of these funds. No significant administrative impact is apparent.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Senate Bill 481 and House Bill 572 are duplicate measures.

This bill is related to HB 573, which appropriates \$250.0 from the general fund to the PED to implement the Regional Education Cooperative VIII's distance learning model in the Dexter, Hagerman, Lake Arthur and Loving school districts.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED reports that distance learning has been identified as a crucial element to the survival of rural schools. Without the means to deliver a complete range of courses, students encounter significant obstacles to pursuing curriculum that implements recommendations of the High School Initiative and Math/Science Town Halls (which call for curriculum that is rigorous, relevant and builds relationships).

The HED analysis indicates that proper network infrastructure must be in place for effective online learning. User support and technical support are also required for the success of this program. This bill would pay for the infrastructure to facilitate the distance learning capabilities. An issue for the local districts would be the availability of technical help or advice within the last mile of distribution of services.

DKE/yr