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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/12/2007

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Science Education and Teacher Outreach Program SB 253

ANALYST Moser

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$300.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 24, SB 29 and HB 111.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Higher education Department (HED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 253 appropriates \$300,000 from the General Fund to the board of regents of New Mexico State University to pay for a science education enhancement and kindergarten through grade twelve teacher outreach program.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$300,000 contained in this bill is recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY08 shall revert to the General Fund.

This proposal was submitted to the HED by New Mexico State University and was not included in HED's funding recommendations for FY07.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to NMSU, this bill would provide matching money for a grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute intended to improve science education at NMSU and throughout the State of New Mexico. The program includes an undergraduate research scholar's program and biology laboratory that will travel to rural high schools. This appropriation would 1) fund a two day refresher course for teachers in the fields of biology, geology, astronomy, physics and chemistry; 2) fund two week courses for teachers working on a Masters of Arts degree in teaching science; 3) provide salaries for peer leaders who assist in teaching introductory biology classes at NMSU; and 4) partially support the salary for the administrator of the program.

NMSU adds that the grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute will further improve the readiness of entering students and the quality of the undergraduate science program at NMSU by establishing several programs that enhance teacher training in the sciences, by revamping the undergraduate curriculum in the biological sciences at NMSU, and by establishing an undergraduate research scholars program. However, the 1.5 million dollar grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute will not adequately fund all of these programs; state support is necessary for full implementation of the teacher training programs.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The PED notes that the activities that would be funded by this legislation are in alignment with recommendations in *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Executive Summary* to “Strengthen the skills of 250,000 teachers through training and education programs...” (Action A-2) and “Enlarge the pipeline of students who are prepared to enter college and graduate with a degree in science, engineering, or mathematics...” (Action A-3) [*National Academy of Sciences, 2006*].

There is a need to improve students' achievement in science and preparation for higher education. The percentage of New Mexico students scoring at or above the Proficiency level in science on the 2006 Standards-Based Assessment decreased from a high of 77.3% in 3rd grade to a low of 22.8% in 8th grade and rebounded slightly to 34.8% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The state ranks 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 50 states in the academic readiness of its high school graduates for higher education and has a reported graduation rate of 56.7%.

More than 100 teachers will enter the MAT in Science program according to NMSU. Another 20 teachers a year will take a refresher course. High schools in every region of the state will be visited by the traveling molecular biology laboratory. As a result of these programs, we expect to see measurable improvements in scientific literacy among students trained in the educational system of New Mexico.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The HED states that the MAT in science is a new degree program on the NMSU campus as are the immersion courses for teachers. These programs will be located in the teacher training programs of the College of Education. All new Masters programs are subject to HED review.

## **DUPLICATION, RELATIONSHIP**

Duplicates SB29. Relates to SB24 and HB109 which appropriate \$500,000 to NMSU to pay for the coordination and expansion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics educational outreach programs.

**WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

NMSU would absorb the additional costs of the programs not covered by the Howard Hughes grant.

GM/nt