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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 3/15/2007

SPONSOR Griego LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Study School Closures and Board Policies SJM 70

ANALYST Schuss

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY07	FY08	FY09	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total	Unknown	Unknown		Unknown	Non- Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 70 requests that the Public Education Department study school closure policies and practices of local school boards.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department is requested to conduct this study. There is a potential cost to the general fund, depending on factors such as, time necessary to complete the study and administrative impacts.

There is no appropriation in SJM 70 to complete this study.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Senate Joint Memorial 70 states that local school boards have discretionary power to close local schools without regard to any criteria set forth by state law and local school boards have discretionary power to close local schools and sell the buildings with no obligation to make them available for use as charter schools, even if there is substantial and continuing support for such an effort in the neighborhoods affected. Parents, teachers and other stakeholders in a school district have a vested interest in the board members whom they elect to office and local school boards should be required to look at and consider heavily the following question: If this school did not exist, would this community be attempting to create it.

Senate Joint Memorial 70 – Page 2

SJM 70 reports that parents, teachers and other stakeholders in a school district have a vested interest their neighborhood schools, which have educated many generations of families and have been blessed by community fundraising efforts to finance programs and brick and mortar. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of public education dollars are expended each year to refurbish, expand and otherwise repair and upgrade neighborhood schools that become targets of closure efforts by local school boards.

SJM 70 states that in recent years, local school boards have made closure decisions that are, or are perceived to be, driven by political expediency at best or class prejudice at worst and some of the recent closure efforts have been aimed at some of the most academically successful, recently renovated and physically expanded schools with the heaviest parent involvement and support. Some of these recent closure issues between parent groups and their local school boards have raised concerns over fiscal responsibility, board member ethics and the methods by which boards initiate closures.

The Legislature of the State of New Mexico requests that the Public Education Department study the process and practices of local school boards in the state to determine what works and what does not with regard to local school closures. SJM 70 also requests that the Public Education Department come forth with a proposal to address whether facilities of closed schools should be offered up to charter school efforts and that they study and recommend options to change laws regarding the closure of local schools, taking into consideration recent expenditure of public funds to renovate or expand, parent support of, academic achievement at and attraction of students from other areas to such schools.

SJM 70 requests that the Public Education Department study and recommend changes in law to require that the facilities of closed schools be provided without charge to charter schools and that the Public Education Department report its findings and recommendations to the Interim Legislative Education Study Committee no later than November 1, 2007.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department will have to dedicate staff to conduct this study.

BS/mt