Bill No: **SB 217**   **48th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2008**

Short Title: **School Math & Science Supercomputer Training**

Sponsor(s): **Senator Richard C. Martinez**

Analyst: **Eilani Gerstner**   Date: **January 19, 2008**

Bill Summary:

SB 217 appropriates funds to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech) for FY 09 for a statewide program to provide training on supercomputers for middle school and high school students in science, mathematics, engineering and technology applications and to strengthen teaching techniques in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

Fiscal Impact:

$200,000 is appropriated from the General Fund. The bill contains a reversion clause.

The Higher Education Department (HED) analysis of SB 217 states that HED's funding recommendation includes $60,000 in recurring funds for this project in FY 09.

Issues:

HED's analysis says that NM Tech is a long-time host of the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge, which provides a learning experience for teams of pre-college students in scientific inquiry, project management, computational analysis, and presentation skills. According to HED, SB 217 would offset costs incurred by students and teachers for travel expenses to attend the conference, which is held at the Glorieta Conference Center, Sandia National Laboratories, and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

According to the Supercomputing Challenge website:

- The Supercomputing Challenge is a year-long statewide competition for prizes and scholarships.

- Each team of up to five students and a sponsoring teacher defines and works on a single computational project of its own choosing. Past areas of study have included astronomy, geology, physics, ecology, mathematics, economics, sociology, and computer science.

- The Supercomputing Challenge is open to all interested students in grades 7 through 12 on a non-selective basis. Participants come from public, private, parochial, and home-based schools in all areas of New Mexico.

- In school year 2007-2008, 33 schools are participating, representing 15 New Mexico school districts, seven private schools, two charter schools, one alternative high school, and one Bureau of Indian Education school.

In FY 08, the Legislature appropriated $60,000 to NM Tech for supercomputing training. Also in FY 08, $2.5 million was appropriated to the Public Education Department (PED) for summer reading, mathematics, and science institutes. Of the appropriation, PED reports that the Mathematics and Science Bureau has allocated $75,000 to NM Tech to expand the Supercomputing Challenge.

Finally, the PED analysis reports that, in 2007, 30 students received scholarships through the Supercomputing Challenge, all of whom are now enrolled in postsecondary education.

Related Bills:

HB 131 *Science & Math Supercomputer School Training* (identical)
HB 137 *NM Supercomputing Challenge*