

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 252

48th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2008

Short Title: Truchas Pre-Kindergarten Resources

Sponsor(s): Senator Carlos R. Cisneros

Analyst: David Harrell

Date: January 26, 2008

Bill Summary:

SB 252 appropriates funds to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) to contract with a preschool provider in Truchas to provide a pre-kindergarten program that is combined with a preschool program for two-, three-, and five-year-old children.

Fiscal Impact:

\$50,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to CYFD for FY 09. The bill contains a reversion clause.

According to the CYFD analysis of SB 252, this appropriation was not included in the Executive recommendation or the CYFD request. The Executive has recommended more than \$4.6 million for CYFD to increase pre-kindergarten programs in FY 09.

Altogether, the Legislature has appropriated \$28.4 million in General Fund revenue to implement New Mexico PreK (see "Issues," below), including \$14.0 million for FY 08. These funds have been divided evenly between the two state agencies administering the program: CYFD and the Public Education Department (PED).

Issues:

Because the bill does not specify the age group to be served, it is unclear whether the funding in SB 252 would expand an existing program in Truchas for two-, three-, and five-year-old children or provide a pre-kindergarten program for four-year-old children. At least since 2005, however, with the enactment of the *Pre-Kindergarten Act*, the term "pre-kindergarten" has indicated four-year-old children. If that is the case with SB 252 (as the PED bill analysis suggests), then the appropriation would support a program that would not be subject to the funding processes and program criteria with which other state-funded pre-kindergarten programs must comply.

- Endorsed by the Legislative Education Study Committee, the *Pre-Kindergarten Act* established a voluntary program of pre-kindergarten services for four-year-old children offered by public schools, tribes or pueblos, Head Start centers, and licensed private providers.
- As noted above, the program created to implement the act, New Mexico PreK, is jointly administered by PED and CYFD. The PED administers programs offered through the public schools, and CYFD administers programs offered through other providers, such as a program in Truchas not offered by the public schools.

- The *Pre-Kindergarten Act* created two non-reverting funds: the Public Pre-Kindergarten Fund, administered by PED; and the Children, Youth and Families Pre-Kindergarten Fund, administered by CYFD. Both funds consist of appropriations to the fund, income from fund investments, gifts, grants, and donations. Up to 10 percent of the money in each fund may be used for administrative expenses by the respective department.
- In each case, the respective agency issues a request for proposals containing criteria that a program must meet in order to receive state funding. Criteria for the curriculum, which are prescribed in law, address the total developmental needs of the child and include aspects of health care, nutrition, safety, the needs of the family, and multicultural and linguistic sensitivity, in coordination with other resources for families.
- The PED analysis of SB 252 adds: “State funded pre-kindergarten programs must meet PreK program standards, implement the required child assessment system based on child outcomes/indicators, participate in statewide professional development and trainings, use developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning materials, implement a parent engagement program and attend required coordinator meetings.”

Finally, the PED analysis offers an alternative: that the preschool provider referenced in the bill submit a proposal to CYFD requesting funding for a pre-kindergarten program through New Mexico PreK. Doing so would seem to meet a current need: the CYFD analysis of SB 252 notes that, as a geographically isolated rural community, Truchas has “a scarcity of early childhood programs from which parents may choose” although Head Start is an option for those families who meet the income guidelines.

Related Bills:

None