

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 53

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: NMSU Speech-Language Pathology Project

Sponsor(s): Senator Mary Kay Papen

Analyst: James Ball

Date: January 22, 2009

Bill Summary:

SB 53 makes an appropriation to support a speech-language pathology and special education extension outreach project based at New Mexico State University (NMSU).

Fiscal Impact:

\$250,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents at NMSU for FY 10.

SB 53 contains a reversion clause.

Issues:

According to the Department of Health (DOH), this project is intended to:

- provide direct services to children with special needs;
- provide training to local, especially rural, speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who work with children, including children with autism spectrum disorder who require speech therapy; and
- alleviate the growing shortage of SLPs in New Mexico in both urban and rural locations. On this point, DOH says that SLPs often opt for higher paying jobs outside of the education system, resulting in fewer providers to children in schools and early intervention programs.

Background:

According to the Public Education Department (PED), speech-language pathology is a recognized related service under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*. Speech-language pathology services generally are provided in an educational setting as part of a student's Individualized Education Program. PED also indicates that speech-language pathology ranks as one of the fastest growing occupations in the health-related field and the need for more SLPs over the next few years will grow significantly.

The speech-language pathology and special education extension outreach project at NMSU received a legislative appropriation of \$171,700 for FY 09. According to the Higher Education Department (HED), the NMSU project targeted SLP shortages and unmet special education needs in Doña Ana, Luna, Sierra, Otero, Grant, Eddy, Hidalgo, Lea, Lincoln, and Chaves counties. This request was submitted by NMSU to HED for review. HED does not oppose this project.

Related Bills:

- SB 34 *Autistic Child Services Medicaid Plan Waiver*
- SB 39 *Insurance Coverage for Autism Treatment*
- SB 43 *Voluntary Autism Registry*