

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 148

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Charter School Governing Body Training

Sponsor(s): Senators Mark Boitano and Gerald Ortiz y Pino

Analyst: David Harrell

Date: February 17, 2009

Bill Summary:

SB 148 adds a new section to the *Charter Schools Act* to require the Public Education Department (PED) to develop a mandatory training course for all members of a governing body of a charter school. This course must explain:

- department rules, policies, and procedures;
- statutory powers and duties of governing boards;
- legal concepts pertaining to public schools; and
- finance and budget matters, as well as any other matters that PED deems relevant.

Finally, SB 148 requires that PED notify governing body members of the dates of the training courses.

Fiscal Impact:

SB 148 makes no appropriation.

Issues:

Noting that SB 148 is endorsed by the department, the PED analysis says that the bill “would provide training to the members [of a governing body of a charter school] in a uniform and consistent manner,” whereas currently “there is no uniformity to the qualifications or knowledge skills of governing body members.”

The analysis by the Office of Education Accountability adds that SB 148 would address concerns about the preparation of charter school governing board members especially in the areas of public school finance and budget management. The result, this analysis continues, is likely to be improved management of charter schools.

Background:

The language in SB 148 mirrors that currently in the *Public School Code* applicable to members of a local school board [Section 22-5-13 NMSA 1978].

Currently, the New Mexico Coalition for Public Charter Schools (NMCCS) offers workshops and conferences covering a variety of topics of interest to members of governing boards of charter schools. At the eighth annual conference in November 2008, for example, there were sessions on capital outlay, school budgets, distance learning, by-laws, renewing a charter, and student assessments, among other topics. The month before, the NMCCS, together with the Charter Schools Division at PED, provided a training session for governance council members. In correspondence with the Legislative Education Study Committee, the NMCCS says that, although the Coalition favors less of a “top-down” regulatory approach to training so that charter schools have more flexibility in selecting training pertinent to their approved charters, the NMCCS supports SB 148.

During school year 2008-2009, 63 charter schools are operating throughout New Mexico. Four are chartered by the Public Education Commission (PEC) and the rest by their respective local school boards. Six more PEC-chartered charter schools have been approved to open in the fall of 2009, and one more locally chartered school has been approved for fall 2009.

Related Bills:

HB 289a *Charter School Authority Subcommittees*

HB 292 *School Chartering Authority Transfers*

SB 212 *Expand Definition of Nepotism in Schools*