

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SJM 14

**49th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2010**

**Tracking Number:** .180747.1

**Short Title:** Develop Accelerated Learning Master Plan

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Mary Jane M. García and Senator Cynthia Nava

**Analyst:** Ally Hudson

**Date:** February 15, 2010

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**Bill Summary:**

SJM 14 requests that the Higher Education Department (HED) and the Public Education Department (PED) convene a work group to develop a master plan for accelerated learning that would offer high school students multiple options for study at the postsecondary level.

The memorial requests that the work group:

- include representatives not only of HED and PED, but also of school districts, charter schools, state-supported schools, two-year public postsecondary educational institutions, four-year public postsecondary educational institutions, the middle college high school in Gallup, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges, the Council of University Presidents, the New Mexico Coalition for Charter Schools, the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators, and others as appropriate;
- address issues in the uniform implementation of the dual credit program;
- identify ways in which the various programs available to students, among them dual credit, advanced placement, articulated courses, concurrent enrollment, and middle college high school, could complement, rather than compete with, each other; and
- present its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) by November 1, 2010.

SJM 14 further specifies that, before the plan is implemented, it will be reviewed by the LESC.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SJM 14 makes no appropriation.

**Substantive Issues:**

During the 2008 interim, Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) staff presented the results of an LESC examination of the dual credit program during school year 2008-2009, the first year that both legislation and HED/PED rules were in effect. The staff examination focused on the two fundamental issues that had prompted the 2007 legislation in the first place:

1. the need for reliable data; and
2. the need for uniformity in program features and requirements.

While the examination found progress on both fronts, staff testified, certain issues remained in each case.

Staff testimony concluded with a review of several other aspects of the dual credit program, among them:

- the broad support for the program at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, as indicated by responses to an LESC questionnaire; and
- the barriers to the program that questionnaire respondents identified, among them the competition and confusion among similar programs such as concurrent enrollment, articulated courses, Advanced Placement, and middle college high schools.

Later in the 2009 interim, the LESC heard testimony from HED and PED about the two agencies' first annual evaluation of the dual credit program. Among other points, the evaluation report:

- previewed some possible revisions to agency rules governing eligible courses (including core courses), the Dual Credit Council, and the uniform master agreement;
- identified two "areas of opportunity": (1) the relationship between articulated courses and dual credit courses and (2) certain issues with the geographic areas of responsibility assigned to each two-year postsecondary institution; and
- reviewed the fiscal impact of the dual credit program, in terms of the short-term reimbursements for tuition waivers for dual credit students and of the expected positive long-term return on investment.

Finally, according to the HED analysis, SJM 14 appears to be further formalizing the work of the Dual Credit Committee. In essence, the committee currently has the representation requested in the memorial.

### **Background:**

In 2007, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to create a dual credit program in state law to replace the multiple and varied local agreements that had been in effect throughout the state. This legislation was amended in 2008, also as endorsed by the LESC, to expand the program to include special state-supported schools, in addition to school districts and charter schools, and to allow dual credit courses to be taken during the summer term. In 2009, in response to recommendations of an LESC work group, the LESC endorsed another dual credit measure that would have created a fund and a distribution method to help secondary schools provide the required textbooks and course supplies. The bill itself did not pass, but the appropriation of \$1.5 million for that purpose was included in the *General Appropriation Act of 2009*.

### **Related Bill(s):**

SB 114 *Dual Credit Textbook Fund*

HB 90 *Native American Schools Dual Credit Program*