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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/31/12

SPONSOR Fischmann LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Science and Technology Distance Education SB 239

ANALYST Chabot

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY12	FY13		
	\$200.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 239 appropriates \$200.0 thousand from the general fund to PED for an online and blended learning distance education program that will develop online science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$200.0 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2013 shall revert to the general fund. Per LFC letter dated January 16, 2012, appropriations for public education will grow approximately 3 percent per year through FY 15. According to the LFC staff General Fund Recurring Appropriation Outlook for FY14 and FY15, December 2011 forecasted revenues will be insufficient to cover growing recurring appropriations.

PED states the development, quality assurance and delivery of the courses must be selected to determine costs. If existing systems are use the cost will be lower. If the program is administered through Innovative Digital Education and Learning, the courses could be then delivered through the Cyber Academy. Development could be done by the Learning

Management System.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HED states less than 30 percent of high school graduates are ready for college-level science, and less than 45 percent are ready for college-level math. However, the U. S. Department of Labor predicts jobs needing these skills will increase 34 percent between 2008 and 2016. The New Mexico Computing Applications Center (NMCAC) will work in partnership with PED to develop three online advanced placement classes including computer science, chemistry and biology.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED estimates 1 FTE would be required to provide oversight of curriculum development, course design and evaluation. Contracts would be needed for content course review to ensure alignment with standards and benchmarks.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

PED suggests changing the title of the bill to “MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE AND BLENDED SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS COURSES FOR STATEWIDE DELIVERY.”

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED adds SB 239 references use of the education gateway sites at New Mexico Public post-secondary educational institutions. It is unclear how these sites will be used specifically in relation to online and blended delivery of STEM courses. Further clarification is needed. The education gateways site refers to the 44 gateways (remote access points) independently managed at every public college campus in New Mexico through the New Mexico Computer Applications Center (NMCAC). The purpose of the gateways is to strengthen STEM education through technology (i.e. three-dimensional simulations). Also important to clarify is how schools that are not located near a public college campus will be able to use the gateways to strengthen STEM education. The role that the PED will play in the use of the education gateways needs to be defined.

GAC/lj