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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/27/13
LAST UPDATED 02/28/13 **HB** _____

SPONSOR Kernan

SHORT TITLE Replace GED Terms with Equivalency Diploma **SB** 183/aSfI#1

ANALYST Gudgel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation | | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|---------------|------|------------------------------|------------------|
| FY13 | FY14 | | |
| NFI | NFI | | |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SfI #1 Amendment

The Senate Floor #1 amendment to Senate Bill 183 amends Section 5 to clarify that an individual who holds a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma is eligible for certification as a telecommunicator. This restores to the law to its current state and is a technical correction to reverse a drafting mistake.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 183 replaces the terms “general education development certificate”, “general equivalency certificate”, “general educational development certificate”, “certificate of general equivalency”, “general education diploma”, and “GED certificate” in the Chapter 21 (State and Private Education Institutions), Chapter 22 (Public Schools), Chapter 27 (Public Assistance), Chapter 29 (Law Enforcement), Chapter 31 (Criminal Procedure), Chapter 33 (Correctional Institutions), Chapter 52 (Workers’ Compensation), and Chapter 58 (Financial Institutions and Regulations) with the term “high school equivalency diploma”.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

None

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The acronym “GED” is a registered trademark that generally refers to “general education diploma”, “general education development”, and “general equivalency diploma”. The GED Testing Service is a joint venture between Pearson and the American Council on Education (ACE) that offers adults the opportunity to earn a high school equivalency credential. The GED test is not the only high school equivalency program recognized in the U.S, though it appears to be the most widely recognized test of its kind.

The Higher Education Department (HED) notes the GED® test will be the only high school equivalency test available in New Mexico beginning in 2014, and may present accessibility issues for approximately 320,000 adults who lack high school credentials. Issues noted by the HED include the following:

- The test is computer-based and will not be available in pencil-and-paper form except “in limited circumstances such as accommodations or for test versions not yet released in the computer delivery mode.” (<http://www.gedtestingservice.com>)
- There is no foreign language version available.
- The test will be available to testing centers at \$120 per test, more than twice the current cost (averaging between \$50 and \$60) for the first two years, and, according to Pearson VUE, probably up to twice the initial cost subsequently.
- The availability of practice tests and preparation materials is uncertain as to time and publisher.
- The Public Education Department (PED) is preparing itself to oversee the purchase and administration of the new GED® test.
- The increased cost and availability only at certified Pearson testing centers will reduce access to potential test takers, particularly the poor and those in rural areas.

Standardizing language throughout the NMSA to refer to a “high school equivalency diploma” will eliminate reference to a proprietary exam and allow the possibility of state-approved alternatives.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Page 9, line 4 eliminates the ability of an applicant to have a high school diploma, and now only allows a high school equivalency diploma. It should read “holds a high school or high school equivalency diploma from an accredited institution.” The Senate Floor amendment addresses this.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The PED notes that the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act uses the term “general educational development credential” in 34 CFR Section 300.102.

RSG/svb:blm