

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: CS/HB 34

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199316.1

Short Title: Science, Tech & Math Coach Program Units

Sponsor(s): Representative Bill McCamley

Analyst: Ian Kleats

Date: January 28, 2015

**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR HOUSE BILL 34**

Bill Summary:

CS/HB 34 makes an appropriation, and amends a section and enacts a new section of the *Public School Finance Act* to:

- create new program units in the public school funding formula, also known as the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG), equal to the sum of:
 - 0.25 times the number of middle school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) coaches employed or contracted by a school district or charter school on or before the first reporting date, being the second Wednesday in October; and
 - 0.5 times the number of high school STEM coaches employed or contracted by a school district or charter school on or before the first reporting date;
- require that approval of these units is subject to verification by the Public Education Department (PED) that the school district or charter school are receiving a one-time salary differential or contract stipend equal to or greater than the amount of formula funding generated by the STEM coach program units;
- require that middle and high school STEM coaches receive the one-time salary differentials or contract stipends at the end of their service for that year;
- prescribe the duties of STEM coaches to include:
 - serving as a STEM club sponsor;
 - developing club activities and goals, and identifying competitions in which STEM club members will participate; and
 - assisting students as needed to reach STEM club goals;
- provide a process for the application and employment of non-licensed school employees in the capacity of a STEM coach by a local superintendent (see “Technical Issues,” below); and
- amends provisions for the calculation of program cost in the *Public School Finance Act* to include STEM coaches program units.

If enacted, CS/HB 34 would:

- become effective on June 19, 2015, 90 days after the end of the legislative session; and
- according to Section 4, apply to the 2016-2017 and succeeding school years.

Fiscal Impact:

\$660,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the SEG distribution to provide salary differentials or stipends for STEM coaches for FY 17. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

CS/HB 34 requires that school districts and charter schools eligible for STEM coach program units verify to PED that all STEM coaches are receiving stipends in at least the amount generated through those units. Based on the FY 15 preliminary unit value, each STEM coach would receive a stipend of:

$$(\text{Units per STEM Coach}) \times (\text{FY 15 Preliminary Unit Value}) = \text{Stipend per STEM Coach}$$

$$\text{Middle School: } 0.25 \times \$4,005.75 = \$1,001.44$$

$$\text{High School: } 0.5 \times \$4,005.75 = \$2,002.88$$

According to PED data, there were 139 middle schools and 189 high schools in school districts, including locally chartered charter schools in school year 2013-2014. Additionally, for the school year 2014-2015, there were 45 state-chartered charter schools serving middle or high school students, of which 30 provided middle school grades and 30 provided high school grades.

Assuming every one of New Mexico's 169 public middle schools and 219 high schools each employed a single STEM coach, CS/HB 34 would generate units and SEG funding based on the following calculation:

$$(\# \text{ of STEM Coaches}) \times (\text{Cost Differential Factor}) = \text{STEM Coach Program Units}$$

$$\text{Middle School: } 169 \times 0.25 = 42.25 \text{ units}$$

$$\text{High School: } 219 \times 0.50 = 109.5 \text{ units}$$

$$(\text{STEM Coach Program Units}) \times (\text{FY 15 Preliminary Unit Value}) = \text{SEG Funding}$$

$$151.75 \text{ units} \times \$4,005.75/\text{unit} = \$607,872.56$$

Operational funding to school districts and charter schools through the SEG is discretionary to the local school board or governing body to meet local priorities and responsibilities. The addition of new units to the public school funding formula, if not fully funded, may dilute the unit value, potentially impairing the ability of school districts and charter schools to meet their local obligations.

Technical Issues:

On page 3, lines 1 and 3-4, CS/HB 34 makes reference to “local superintendent” with respect to the application and employment process for non-licensed school employees as STEM coaches. Charter schools, which are eligible for the proposed program units, do not have local superintendents. The sponsor may wish to consider amending the bill to read “the local superintendent or the head administrator of a charter school” in those instances.

Substantive Issues:

The PED analysis suggests that the provisions of a bill similar to CS/HB 34 could contribute to significant growth in the number of STEM programs statewide; however, an appropriation for costs related to STEM clubs, including infrastructure, materials, coach training, or travel for field trips and competitions, is not included.

The PED analysis of a bill similar to CS/HB 34 raises several concerns, including:

- the precedent of unlicensed staff generating program units through the public school funding formula;
- uncertainty about which organizations would qualify as STEM clubs;
- different stipends for middle and high school STEM coaches, even though their skills and time commitments are comparable; and
- the absence of performance expectations or accountability measures for these programs, suggesting that there is not yet a substantive body of research on the impact of STEM coaches.

Background:

For FY 15, the *General Appropriations Act of 2014* contained a \$2.0 million appropriation to PED for the department’s STEM initiative, of which \$500,000 was dedicated to professional development for math and science teachers statewide. It is unknown whether any of this appropriation was used to fund STEM coaches in schools.

Although the New Mexico public school funding formula currently includes units attributable to salary differentials paid to National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certified teachers, the most recent comprehensive study of the funding formula conducted in 2008 by the American Institutes of Research advocated that these, and any other differential stipends to school employees, should be funded through categorical appropriations rather than through the SEG.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 59, *ENMU Statewide Robot Workshops*
HB 60, *NMSU Science, Tech & Math Outreach*
HB 82, *School Academic & Enrichment Programs*
HB 159, *Science, Tech, & Math Coach Program Unit*
HJM 1, *Unified Science, Tech & Math Championship*