

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 555

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: 200215.1

Short Title: Early Childhood Educator Scholarship Fund

Sponsor(s): Representatives Christine Trujillo and Stephanie Maez

Analyst: Kevin Force

Date: March 10, 2015

Bill Summary:

HB 555 proposes to create the Early Childhood Educator Scholarship Fund as a non-reverting fund in the state treasury. Specifically, HB 555:

- directs the State Treasurer to deposit in the fund all amounts appropriated to the fund;
- directs the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) to administer the fund;
- allows disbursement of funds only on warrant of the Secretary of Finance and Administration, upon voucher signed by the Secretary of CYFD;
- notes that earnings from investment of the fund shall be credited to the fund;
- appropriates money in the fund to CYFD for the creation of scholarships to help early childhood caregivers and educators obtain:
 - a child development associate (CDA) credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition¹ (see “Background,” below); or
 - a New Mexico Child Development Certificate (NMCDC) issued by CYFD² (see “Background,” below);
- directs CYFD to adopt and promulgate rules to administer the fund and to establish criteria for making awards from the fund;
- indicates that awards from the fund:
 - may be used for eligible expenses; and
 - shall not be used to cover educational expenses for which a potential recipient received a state income tax credit;
- limits the amount from the fund to be expended for administration to 5.0 percent of the total awards made in each fiscal year; and
- defines terms specific to the proposed section, for:
 - “eligible applicant,” which means a resident of the state who:
 - is currently working in a child-care or education setting with children under five years of age; and

¹ Please see, <http://www.cdacouncil.org/the-cda-credential/about-the-cda>.

² Please see, https://www.newmexicokids.org/content/our_partners/cyfd/Office_of_child_development.

- has not previously earned a CDA or NMCDC; and
- “eligible expense,” which means any fee, book, supplies, or educational preparatory program used while in pursuit of a CDA or NMCDC.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 555 makes no appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

As noted in the Legislative Finance Committee Fiscal Impact Report (FIR):

- CYFD received \$1.1 million from the General Fund for FY 15 for provider educational development, as well as income supplements; however,
- the provisions of HB 555 allow only disbursement of money in the fund for educational development, not for income supplements.

Substantive Issues:

According to the analysis from CYFD:

- CYFD currently contracts with New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC) to provide scholarships through the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps Early Childhood Scholarships;
- these scholarships are for individuals who are:
 - employed by a licensed child-care program (including Head Start), New Mexico PreK program, Home Visiting, and Early Intervention and Consultation Programs in New Mexico; and
 - working toward a degree in early childhood education at a New Mexico institution of higher education with corresponding certification or licensure from the state in these paths:
 - New Mexico Child Development Certificate (NMCDC);
 - Associate of Arts Degree;
 - Bachelor’s degree;
 - Master’s degree; and
 - doctorate degrees;
- funding for these scholarships comes from Child Care federal and state funds, New Mexico Pre-Kindergarten funds, and Race to the Top funds;
- it is unclear whether HB 555 is intended to replace or support existing scholarships;
- as noted, current Teacher Education and Compensation Helps scholarships assist with college coursework in furtherance of a degree that leads to a state-issued early childhood teacher certification or license, while the scholarships proposed by HB 555 would include the CDA, which does not lead to a degree in New Mexico’s early childhood paths;
- CYFD worked with the Office of Head Start to create the NMCDC, which does lead to either an associate or bachelor’s degree;
- the cost of obtaining a CDC is lower than that for obtaining a CDA; and

- the bill makes no mention of either associate or bachelor degrees, even though few candidates stop with just a CDC, particularly now that Head Start and Pre-K programs require a BA for teachers and an AA for teacher assistants.

Background:

The Council for Professional Recognition, which awards the CDA:

- promotes improved performance and recognition for professionals in the early education of children from birth to five years old;
- works to ensure that all professional early childhood educators meet the developmental, emotional, and educational needs of the nations’ youngest children; and
- administers the program for CDA, which:
 - is designed to assess and credential early childhood education professionals in all types of early childhood programs, including:
 - Head Start;
 - Pre-Kindergarten;
 - infant-toddler programs;
 - family child-care; and
 - home visiting programs;
 - first granted credentials to early childhood educators in 1975, with funding from the (then-named) United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Administration on Children, Youth, and Families;
 - has awarded more than 350,000 CDA credentials, with approximately 18,000 being awarded annually; and
 - as noted previously, does not lead to a degree in New Mexico’s early childhood education path.

The New Mexico Child Development Certificate is administered by the Office of Child Development of CYFD as part of a “career lattice” that is designed for those working in home- or center-based child-care programs, Head Start, home visiting programs, public school programs for children from birth to third grade, and early intervention programs for children at risk for developmental delays. The career lattice comprises six levels:

1. a 45-hour entry-level course;
2. the CDA credential or the NMCDC;
3. a one-year vocational certificate;
4. an Associate of Arts degree;
5. a Bachelor’s degree; and
6. a Masters degree in Early Care.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 56 *Child Care Teacher Retention* (Identical to SB 86)
HB 281 *Child Care Licensure Recognition*
HB 451 *Increase Number & Quality of Pre-K Programs*
HB 547 *Create Early Learning Dept.* (Identical to SB 607)
HJR 16 *Land Grant Fund for Early Childhood, CA* (Identical to SJR 5)
HM 47 *Reconvene J. Paul Taylor Childhood Task Force*
HM 92 *Federal Child Care Program Task Force*
SB 86 *Child Care Teacher Retention* (Identical to HB 56)
SB 224 *Early Learners Events*
CS/SB 301a *Create Early Childhood Funds*
CS/SB 379 *Child Care Assistance Accountability Act*
SB 607 *Create Early Learning Dept.* (Identical to HB 547)
SB 668 *Child Care Licensure Recognition*
SJM 10 *Reconvene J. Paul Taylor Childhood Task Force*
SJR 5a *School Fund for Early Childhood, CA* (Identical to HJR 16)