LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS

Bill Number: SB 184   **52nd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2016**

Tracking Number: .203164.1

Short Title: Early Childhood Programs

Sponsor(s): Senator Pete Campos

Analyst: Robin Shaya   **Date: February 3, 2016**

Bill Summary:

SB 184 appropriates $10.0 million from the General Fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for early childhood programs.

Fiscal Impact:

The bill appropriates $10.0 million from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY17. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY17 shall revert to the General Fund.

The FY17 Legislative Finance Committee budget recommendation for public school support includes $28.0 million for the Public Pre-kindergarten Fund; the executive recommended $24.5 million.

SB184 is a nonrecurring appropriation to be used for recurring purposes; programs funded to serve additional children could not continue beyond FY17 without subsequent appropriations.

Substantive Issues:

The bill does not define "early childhood programs," but the term could reasonably include pre-kindergarten. Section 32A-23-9 requires any funds used from this appropriation for pre-kindergarten programs be divided equally between PED and Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD).

Background:

During the 2014 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard testimony from the New Mexico Early Childcare and Early Education Task Force, which made the following recommendations for future development of early childhood programs:

- support for early education and care professionals;
- workforce development;
- reduction of administrative burdens;
- enhancement of higher education; and
- stability with regard to the eligibility of children and families for services.

This testimony concluded with some specific recommendations of the task force, including:

- identifying and pursuing incentive options that would encourage child-care subsidy families to select high-quality, evidence-based child-care;
- setting an attainable goal for the percentage of subsidized children who attend high quality programs within the next five years; and
- providing support to enable registered home-based providers to become licensed.