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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019

Bill Number HB532 **Sponsor** Ferrary/Thomson/Bash
Tracking Number .213452.1 **Committee Referrals** HEC/HAFC
Short Title Friendships Between Certain Students
Analyst Ochoa **Original Date** 2/18/19
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 532 (HB532) would make an appropriation to the Public Education Department (PED) for programs in middle and high schools that foster friendships between students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and students without intellectual and developmental disabilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$150 thousand from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY20. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB532 would appropriate funds to PED for middle and high schools to implement or enhance programs that promote inclusion within the school environment. According to the PED technical manual for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), pursuant to a student's individualized education plan (IEP), to the maximum extent possible, students with exceptionalities should be educated in the regular education classroom with appropriate aid and supports. If a school is unable to appropriately meet the needs of a student, the student should be afforded opportunities to engage in nonacademic and extracurricular activities with peers who do not have an IEP. Per state and federal regulations, agencies, such as PED, are required to provide schools with a continuum of alternative placement in order to meet the needs of individual students with exceptionalities.

New Mexico Programs. Best Buddies is a program that offers one-to-one friendship, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living support for individuals with and without disabilities. To date, the New Mexico chapter partners with three middle schools and 15 high schools in five counties across the state. Best Buddies International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The New Mexico chapter receives financial support from corporations, individuals, foundations, and government entities. For

example, the New Mexico chapter has received funds from PED through Regional Education Cooperative 7.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be required to administer the funds appropriated by HB532. It is unclear how the department will be required to evaluate requests in order to distribute funds.

RELATED BILLS

SB612, Public Education Dept. Special Needs Division

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

ALO/mhg