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

Bill Number	<u>HB587</u>	Sponsor	<u>Stapleton/Herrera/Madrid/Maestas/Small</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.213391.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HAFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Civics Courses</u>		
Analyst	<u>Ochoa</u>	Original Date	<u>2/18/19</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 587 (HB587) would appropriate \$50 thousand to the Public Education Department (PED) to contract for annual weeklong high school civics courses that focus on New Mexico state government. The courses would be held in postsecondary educational institutions across the state.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would appropriate \$50 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. It is unclear how many students would benefit from this appropriation or if it is targeted for a specific population or program.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB587 would appropriate funds for PED to contract for annual weeklong high school civics courses that focus on New Mexico state government. It is unclear what standards and content areas would be covered in these courses. In order to graduate, New Mexico high school students are required to complete 3.5 units of social science including United States history and geography; world history and geography; government and economics; and .5 units of New Mexico history. Civics and New Mexico-specific standards are covered throughout the social science requirements. It is unclear if the weeklong civics course would count toward fulfillment of any of the social science requirements.

The state's social studies standards for ninth through 12th grade include a component on civics and government, which asks that students understand the ideals, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship and understand the content and history of the founding documents of the United States with particular emphasis on the United States and New Mexico constitutions and how government functions at local, state, tribal, and national levels. Under the civics and government component, students should be able to understand how to exercise rights and responsibilities as citizens by participating in civic life and using skills that include interacting, monitoring, and influencing,

including describing and analyzing the influence of public issues and the political system, evaluating candidates and their positions, and debating current issues.

In 2014, the Education Commission of the States (ECS), a nonpartisan education research organization, published a guidebook that reviews the “Six Proven Practices for Effective Civic Learning,” a report by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement and the Carnegie Foundation of New York, for which civic education scholars and practitioners used data and evidence to identify the components of effective and feasible civic education programs. Stakeholders determined the following practices to be effective:

- Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy;
- Incorporate discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives;
- Design and implement programs that provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction;
- Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities;
- Encourage student participation in school governance; and
- Encourage students’ participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

According to ECS, high-quality, school-based civic learning fosters civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes; promotes civic equality; builds 21st century learning skills; improves school climate; and lowers school drop-out rates. It is unclear if the weeklong civics course provided under HB587 would align to best practices or render the benefits of high-quality civics education because the course would not be school-based.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be responsible for administering the funds appropriated under HB587. It is unclear how the department will evaluate requests for use of funds.

HB587 would require the weeklong civics courses to be held at post-secondary educational institutions. Consideration would need to be given to daily transportation, chaperones, sponsor teachers, and other field trip requirements.

RELATED BILLS

HM45, Review Civics Education

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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