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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2024

Bill Number	<u>SB211</u>	Sponsor	<u>Padilla</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.226886.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SCC/SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Science Education Promotion Fund</u>		
Analyst	<u>Estupiñan</u>	Original Date	<u>1/29/2024</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 211 (SB211) would create a science education promotion fund that institutions could apply to for grants to develop and implement a strategic plan for increasing their educational curriculum and degree offerings in aerospace, bioscience, cybersecurity, renewable energy, intelligent manufacturing, and agriculture.

The bill does not contain an effective date and it would therefore be effective May 15, 2024.

FISCAL IMPACT

SB211 would appropriate \$1 million from the general fund to the proposed science education promotion fund for expenditure in FY25 and subsequent fiscal years. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

For FY25, the House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 (HB2/HAFCS) includes \$125.2 thousand for science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) initiatives at Northern New Mexico College, \$10 million for scholarships to students enrolled in a master's or doctoral program in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) program, and \$20 million in the state equalization guarantee (SEG) for education innovations. This \$20 million may be flexibly used by school districts and charter schools for community schools, career technical education programs, and literacy programs, among other potential uses.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

If the bill were enacted, a public elementary, middle, junior high, high school, postsecondary institution, or state educational institution cited in Article 12, Section 11 of the constitution of New Mexico could apply for grants from the proposed science education promotion fund. All funds in the science education promotion fund would be administered by the Economic Development Department (EDD), which would be required to promulgate rules for soliciting, approving,

monitoring, and renewing grants to institutions. The department would also be required to develop metrics for determining the success of funded institutions in implementing their proposed strategic plan.

Existing Supports for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). In FY24, the Legislature appropriated \$3.1 million for STEAM initiatives in K-12 public schools, \$125.2 thousand for STEAM initiatives at Northern New Mexico College, \$10 million for scholarships to students enrolled in a master’s or doctoral degree in a STEM program, and \$1.1 million for mathematics, engineering, and science achievement at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

Currently, the \$3.1 million in STEAM funding for K-12 public schools is being used to support the Math and Science Bureau at the Public Education Department (PED), and prior appropriations have historically been used to contract with regional educational cooperatives for math and science support.

Economic Development

SB211 could support economic development initiatives throughout the state by increasing student access to programming that prepares them for careers in particular fields. One example is the 2019 Energy Transition Act, which sets a statewide renewable energy standard of 50 percent by 2030 for New Mexico investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives in addition to setting zero-carbon resources standards for investor owned utilities by 2045 and rural electric cooperatives by 2050. This ongoing energy transition may be a key source of employment for New Mexicans in the coming decades, and SB211 could support this growing field of employment.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

EDD has indicated the provisions of the bill, including setting up a new grant program, evaluating strategic plans submitted by applicants, administering the new grant program and grant funds, and developing metrics to determine the success of awardees in implementing the funds, would be a burden on the department’s existing staff.

The department also suggests it may be more appropriate for the bill to assign the administration of the proposed fund to either PED or the Higher Education Department.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Economic Development Department (EDD)

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