

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
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State Capitol North, 325 Don Gaspar, Suite 200
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
Phone: (505) 986-4591 Fax: (505) 986-4338
<http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lesc/lescdefault.aspx>

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July 25, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Peter B. van Moorsel

**RE: UPDATES: PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (PED): INNOVATIVE
DIGITAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING-NEW MEXICO (IDEAL-NM)**

In 2007, Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC)-endorsed legislation was enacted to establish the New Mexico Cyber Academy (NMCA) to provide distance learning courses for students in grades 6 through 12. That same year, the Legislature appropriated funds to implement Innovative Digital Education and Learning (IDEAL-NM). Both of these initiatives represent steps toward providing New Mexicans with access to online learning resources. Cooperatively administered by the Public Education Department (PED) and the Higher Education Department (HED), the initiatives aim to:

- provide eLearning services to public schools, higher education institutions, and state agencies;
- reduce geographic and other barriers to educational opportunity statewide; and
- increase the computer literacy skills, online learners need to participate in a global economy.

This staff brief summarizes the FY 12 budgeted expenditures of both the PED's and HED's funding for NMCA and IDEAL-NM.

Public Education Department

The Legislature appropriated \$500,000 in General Fund dollars to PED for the New Mexico Cyber Academy. PED has provided the LESC with a proposed FY 12 Budget (see Attachment), and the department reports that it is proposing to expend the funds to pay for:

- the salaries and benefits of between five and seven full-time staff, including:
 - the Executive Director;
 - up to two IT Technology Support Specialists;
 - an Academic and Student Services Director;
 - a Student Services Coordinator; and
 - a Business Operations Specialist.
- the costs fiscal agent services (through an inter-governmental agreement with Regional Education Cooperative #10) for course development, eTeacher training, and other contracts related to virtual school operations; and
- supplies.

PED adds that, under its reorganization plan, it will move the NMCA staff to Santa Fe from Albuquerque.

Finally, PED reports that until this proposed budget is approved internally, the staff positions for the NMCA will be funded with \$50,000 in Government Services Funds pursuant to the federal *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA, see Background, below).

Higher Education Department

HED staff note that the agency's expenditure of funds related to IDEAL-NM centers on paying the \$1.4 million contract with Blackboard Inc. for a Learning Management System, which is able to catalog, register, deliver, and track learners and learning, accessible via a web-portal. HED reports that the contract will be paid for in three portions:

- \$500,000 in federal ARRA Government Services Funds (see Background, below);
- \$450,000 from the HED agency budget; and
- higher education institutions that used Blackboard through the HED contract. HED notes that it will establish a fee schedule for the use of Blackboard by these institutions.

In addition, HED notes that the state agencies that used Blackboard through the state contract will continue to be able to do so in FY 12, albeit without receiving technical assistance.

Background

Since 2007, the Legislature has appropriated a total of approximately \$11.6 million for IDEAL-NM, to fund the implementation and operation of the program, including:

- \$7.9 million to HED; and
- approximately \$3.7 million to PED.

In addition to the General Fund dollars above, for FY 12 a portion of the costs of IDEAL-NM and the NMCA will be paid using federal ARRA funds. In a June 13, 2011 report, the staff of the Legislative Finance Committee reported that the Governor allocated the following from the federal discretionary ARRA Government Service Fund provided to New Mexico by the US Department of Education:

- \$50,000 to PED to provide funding to support the “Cyber Academy/Virtual School Program;” and
- \$500,000 to HED for data hosting and software maintenance for New Mexico K-12 and higher education online learning system.

IDEAL-NM BUDGET		
2012 Budget		
Total Budget		\$500,000
200 Category - Salaries & Benefits		
Executive Director		\$83,649
IT Technology Support Specialist II		\$42,000
IT Technology Support Specialist II		\$42,000
Academic & Student Services Director		\$69,388
Student Services Coordinator (Bus. Ops A)		\$41,000
Bus. Ops Specialist O		\$44,512
Staff Benefits (30%)		\$96,765
Subtotal 200		\$419,314
300 Category - Contractual Svcs		
Fiscal Agent IGA <i>Course development, teacher training, and other contracts related to virtual school operations</i>		\$68,300
Subtotal 300		\$68,300
400 Category - Other		
Supplies		\$12,386
Subtotal 400		\$12,386
TOTAL FY11		\$500,000
<i>Difference from Appropriation</i>		\$0

Proposed