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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR:	Botano	DATE TYPED:	1-31-00	HB	
SHORT TITLE:	New Mexico Virtual School Act			SB	288
				ANALYST:	Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY00	FY01	FY00	FY01		
\$1000.0*				Recurring	GF

*The appropriation is for expenditure in fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 112

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

State Department of Education (SDE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

The New Mexico Virtual School Act directs that a "virtual school" to serve all New Mexicans be established, that existing technical infrastructures be utilized and that a fourteen (14) member virtual design and implementation team be appointed to advise SDE in carrying out the responsibilities detailed in the law.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

Significant Issues

During the 1999-2000 school year (FY 2000), twenty-eight (28) of the state's eighty-nine (89) school districts report enrolments of less than five hundred students and twenty (20) districts having less than one thousand (1,000) students. The small enrollments make it impossible for school districts to offer students much variety, if any, in course offerings. The use of a virtual school is intended to remedy this limitation by making greater course choices available to all students.

Access to the virtual school should not be a problem because, according to a recent SDE survey, 75 percent of public school classrooms are already connected to the Internet.

The bill stipulates the duties of the SBE and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and directs that one member of the virtual design and implementation team shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one by the President Pro Tempore and twelve (12) by the SBE. The bill further outlines the duties of the SBE and those of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction

The bill also requires that SDE prepare progress reports of the virtual school, submit them to the SBE and,

after approved by the SBE, submit them to the legislature. One report shall be prepared by July 1 of each year and submitted to the LESC , and one shall be prepared by January 1 of each ear and submitted to the legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Senate Bill 288 appropriates \$1,000.0 the SDE for expenditure in fiscal years 2000 and 2001. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2001 shall revert to the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The bill provides for the hiring of virtual school administrator and support staff. Three (3) FTE will be added to SDE staff.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

- Will the fifteen or sixteen month period called for in the bill be sufficient time to establish the virtual school?

LB/gm