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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Jennings DATE TYPED: 02/25/03 HB _____

SHORT TITLE: Importance of Character in Schools SB 567

ANALYST: Segura

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$440.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

State Department of Education (SDE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 567 appropriates \$440.0 from the general fund to the State Department of Public Education to support programs in New Mexico that promote the importance of character in schools and communities.

The bill contains an emergency clause.

Significant Issues

This bill addresses the findings from a recent report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics that found incidents of cheating, stealing and lying by high school students have increased over the past decade. According to SDE, the survey based on student responses from 12,000 high school students revealed that from 1992 to 2002 the number of students who:

- cheating on an exam increased from 61% to 74%;
- stole something from a store during the last 12 months increased from 31% to 38%;
- lied to their teachers increased from 69% to 83%; and
- lied to their parents increased from 83% to 93%.

Clearly, the SDE analysis concludes, character building\education by parents, communities and schools is needed. (See OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$440.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2004 shall revert to the general fund.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The SDE reports that,

From 1995 to 1998, New Mexico was funded for the *Improvement of Education: Partnerships in Character Education* to establish a pilot using CHARACTER COUNTS! as the delivery vehicle for character education. The pilot project provided communities around the state with a model of school/community partnerships for addressing character development throughout all learning environments. As a result of the successful pilot projects, interest in establishing similar programs throughout New Mexico has increased and currently over 300 schools and communities have developed and implemented character education programs. Most of these programs are using CHARACTER COUNTS! as a framework for their program.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. How were the Character Counts pilot projects funded?
2. What evidence was used to determine the pilot projects were successful?
3. Is the flow of state funds the way these programs can be initiated and continued?

LRB/prr