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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR:	Jennings		DATE TYPED:	2/23/03	HB	
SHORT TITLE: Character Counts Pro		ogram		SB	625	
			ANAL	YST:	Wilson	

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation	on Contained	Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	\$400.0			Recurring	General Fund

Relates to SB 567 and HB 684

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

State Department of Education (SDE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 625 appropriates \$400,000 to the SDE from the general fund for the purpose of making grants to school districts for the implementation and support of the character counts program.

Significant Issues

The legislation addresses 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. A survey of 12,000 high school students showed that:

- The number of students admitting that they cheated on an exam at least once in the past year jumped from 61% in 1992 to 74% in 2002;
- The number who stole something from a store within the past 12 months rose from 31% in 1992 to 38% in 2002;
- The number who lied to their teachers rose from 69% in 1992 to 83% in 2002; and

Senate Bill 625 Page 2

• The number who lied to their parents rose from 83% in 1992 to 93% in 2002.

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 and 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.

CHARACTER COUNTS! uses practical and explicit strategies to build partnerships with communities (e.g. youth organizations, business, civic organizations, local government and schools) and often the partnerships have produced changes within these communities. For example, many communities around the state have met to develop a statewide network to coordinate efforts and resources to support character education.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$400.0 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The SDE will establish guidelines for awarding funds and monitoring the CHARACTER COUNTS! programs.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to SB 567, Importance of Character in Schools and HB 684, School Programs Promoting Character.

DW/yr