

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/31/06
 LAST UPDATED 2/5/06 HB 391/aHEC

SPONSOR Balderas, H.

SHORT TITLE Cimarron Schools Online Education Program SB _____

ANALYST Hoffmann

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
	\$236.6	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)
 Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment changes the appropriation from the Higher Education Department to the Public Education Department.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 391 appropriates \$263,600 from the general fund to the Higher Education Department for an online educational program for kindergarten through twelfth grade in the Cimarron municipal school district.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$263,600 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

This proposal was not submitted to NMHED through research, public service, and special program requests by the school district. This request was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY07.

While distance learning is well developed around the state within the higher education environment, few online programs exist within the K-12 school system throughout the State of New Mexico. Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Rio Rancho are in the development stages of online education programs and this bill proposes a similar program for the remote, northeastern Cimarron Municipal School District.

RELATIONSHIPS

This bill is related to HB 284, which appropriates \$5,000,000 to the Public Education Department for a web browser-based that targets students in the lowest 20% achievement level.

This bill is also related to House Bill 466, which appropriates \$305,000 to the Raton public schools for a distance learning and virtual learning school curriculum.

Senate Bill 481 is also related. It appropriates \$250,000 to the Eastern New Mexico University Roswell to pay the start-up costs incurred by the Loving municipal, Lake Arthur municipal, Hagerman municipal and Dexter consolidated school districts in implementing distance learning technologies.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to the Public Education Department, distance learning has been identified as a crucial element to the survival of rural schools. Without the means to deliver a complete range of courses, students encounter significant obstacles to pursuing curriculum that implements recommendations of the High School Initiative and Math/Science Town Halls (which call for curriculum that is rigorous, relevant and builds relationships). Without access to more students, and the funding they bring, rural schools cannot support the budgets required to attract and retain highly qualified teachers in required subject areas.

The Higher Education Department notes that proper network infrastructure must be in place for effective online learning. User support and technical support are also required for the success of this program.

CH/yr