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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/29/08

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Regional Educational Technology Assistance SB 323

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$600.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
 Public Education Department (PED)
 Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 323 appropriates \$600.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University for the Regional Educational Technology Assistance Program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$600.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

This request was not on the list of priority projects submitted by NMSU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) for review and was not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY09.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states:

The Regional Educational Technology Assistance Program's (RETA) mission is to promote innovative uses of technology to improve teaching and learning by:

- Serving educators and other education-related professionals and organizations.
- Establishing collaborative partnerships to leverage resources.
- Providing quality professional development opportunities.
- Developing media-rich educational resources.

According to the Co-Director of RETA at NMSU, a proposed increase in funding is to expand services to build organizational capacity and to cover the increase in operational costs. The intent is to increase the number of free face-to-face and online professional development workshops (approximately 180 additional workshops and/or services) provided by the RETA instructors.

The \$100,000 reduction in RETA's funding between 2005-2007 required closing two regional resource centers.

The RETA Program supports and is aligned with the P-20 mission for public education. In 2007-2008, RETA collaborated with the New Mexico Public Education Department's Educational Technology Bureau to provide professional development in support of the Laptop Learning Initiative and work on the planning and implementation of IDEAL-NM and professional development for IDEAL-NM online teachers.

The PED states:

- The Regional Educational Technology Assistance (RETA) program offers professional development opportunities to educators across the state in the integration of technology into academic content. The program emphasizes developing regional expertise among classroom teachers who can act as peer technology mentors in their communities. In addition, the program addresses issues of education technology policy at a statewide level and provides resources to pre-and in-service teachers through partnerships with institutions of higher education at several Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) throughout the state. The program works to reach teachers of students who are often underserved by more traditional professional development efforts. RETA also deploys the I-safe program that is congressionally funded and supports teachers in the three-tier teacher licensure advancement process, which involves the development of a professional development dossier and assists with professional development related to the New Mexico Laptop Learning Initiative.
- NM's state leaders have helped address the challenge of 21st Century learning by funding the NM Laptop Learning Initiative (LLI) and IDEAL-NM/New Mexico Cyber Academy. A critical component in the success of both these initiatives is teacher professional development, because the technology is only as effective as the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the users. In short, in order for NM teachers and students to meet

the technology integration mandates of No Child Left Behind and expand educational opportunities via distance/online learning technologies, they need ongoing professional development and support. Given the many competing demands for districts and limited funding, ongoing professional development for technology integration is often sporadic, not available or not accessible.

- Rural public school districts often have difficulty providing their staff with professional development activities due the geographic proximity of their districts and the locations of the desired training. Staff frequently is required to travel to a more urban location and may incur overnight accommodations. High-quality distance learning professional development activities can provide a more desirable alternative for rural public school districts.
- RETA is currently receiving \$400,000 from the Teacher Professional Development Fund, managed by the PED, through a contract with NMSU.
- In alignment with the New Mexico Professional Development Framework (6.65.2.1 NMAC) and the Legislative Education Study Committee's Oct. 15, 2007, Staff Report on Professional Development, PED staff will ensure that the appropriated funds and the resulting services and/or products align with the New Mexico Professional Development Framework (PDF).

GH/mt