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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/04/10
 SPONSOR Harden LAST UPDATED 02/09/10 HB _____
 SHORT TITLE Study Autism & School Services SJM 25/aSFI#1
 ANALYST Hanika-Ortiz

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY10	FY11	FY12	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$5.0 - \$25.0			Nonrecurring	Various

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)
 Public Education Department (PED)
 Department of Health (DOH)
 Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFI Amendment #1

The Senate Floor Amendment #1 makes a correction by striking “first session, 2009” and replacing it with “second session, 2010”; and includes the New Mexico State University Autism Project in the collaborative efforts of PED and other stakeholders in developing a written plan for students with ASD.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 25 (SJM 25) requests the PED to study Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and to determine how to provide best practice services to all children with Autism in the public schools.

The joint memorial provides for the following:

- ASD’s are neurobiological disorders that interfere with the normal development of communication, behavior, learning and social interaction skills;

- the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that ASD's are the second most common type of developmental disability and are seen in all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups throughout the world;
- the Autism Society of America reports that autism spectrum disorders are the fastest growing developmental disability, with an annual cost of ninety billion dollars (\$90,000,000,000);
- experts attest that the cost of lifelong care for an individual with an ASD may be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis, intervention and education;
- early ASD diagnosis and intervention is instrumental in determining success;
- the National Research Council report on *Educating Children with Autism* recommends, as a best practice, teaching individuals with Autism a minimum of twenty-five hours per week through active engagement begun as early as possible;
- children with Autism need specialized teaching methods;
- the usual teaching methods that work with other students, including students with other disabilities, are not necessarily successful with students with Autism;
- specialized training is needed for school personnel working with children with Autism; and
- children with Autism are all different and require an individualized approach.

PED will report its findings with a written plan to the Legislative Education Study Committee by September 30, 2010.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

PED reports the department would need to hire a contractor to conduct and work with the study group, and develop a written plan.

PED reports that IDEA funds for the 2008-09 school year were directed to:

- Project SET: a training and technical assistance program addressing the needs of families and young children with ASD;
- the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule; providing training for school personnel on how to assess student's with Autism; and
- the Early Childhood Evaluation Program; providing evaluations of students' age 0-5.

DOH notes that the cost of lifelong care for individuals with ASD may be reduced by two-thirds with early diagnosis, intervention and education.

Medicaid costs for this group continue to rise nationwide due to the lack of effective early intervention and educational support services for ages 0-21.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HPC reports on the different types of ASD's:

- Autistic Disorder - People with autistic disorder usually have significant language delays, social and communication challenges, and unusual behaviors and interests.

- Asperger Syndrome - People with Asperger syndrome usually have some milder symptoms of autistic disorder. They might have social challenges and unusual behaviors and interests. They typically do not have problems with language or intellectual disability.
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder - People with PDD-NOS usually have fewer and milder symptoms than those with autistic disorder. The symptoms might cause only social and communication challenges.

DDPC reports that by the time the student reaches high school, transition services should be in place, but there is inadequate expertise to guide them on to adult responsibilities, employment and independent living. The personal care costs increase exponentially as the student matures, because services failed to be provided at the early developmental stages.

DOH further notes that specialized training is needed for personnel working with children with ASD.

PED reports that the number of students Aged 6-21 with Autism has increased in New Mexico.

School Year	# of Students with Autism
2005-06	494
2006-07	612
2007-08	763
2008-09	948

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED notes that the term Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The IEP is designed to meet the unique needs of the student.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The PED will develop a written plan on how the department will work actively, collaboratively and cooperatively with other state agencies, groups and stakeholders in order to develop and implement appropriate systems of care for all students with ASD.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

PED recommends that the word “plans” be struck and replaced with “programs” when referring to IEP’s.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED notes that the department with stakeholders created a technical assistance manual which provides a menu of interventions, approaches, and methodologies for school districts and families to consider.

PED further notes that since 2005, the department has been working with one Autism expert who assists twelve school districts in building capacity.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The quality of services to ASD children in the public schools will continue to vary widely depending on the school district the child attends.

AHO/mew:svb