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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/10/11

SPONSOR Nuñez LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB 224

SHORT TITLE NMSU Approp For County Education Initiative SB \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST Haug

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12		
	\$100.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

New Mexico State University (NMSU)  
Higher Education Department (HED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 224 appropriates \$100 thousand dollars from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University to implement the Dona Ana county regional educational initiative.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100 thousand dollars contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2012 shall revert to the General Fund.

The HED notes that this request was not submitted by NMSU to the New Mexico Higher Education Department for review. NMHED's funding request for higher education from November 2010 recommended a 3% reduction for all existing line item appropriations for FY12.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states:

According to NMSU, the Regional Education Initiative (REI) was a result of a task force commissioned in 2007 to develop solutions and recommendations to prepare all Dona Ana graduating high school students to compete in a global work force. The group has been instrumental in its leadership and proactive guidance of community discussions regarding school attendance rates, and how to provide a prepared and well-qualified workforce for a stronger economic future for Dona Ana County. REI has created collaborations between public and private sectors including businesses, nonprofits, and both secondary and postsecondary educational institutions to support educational excellence and optimize the county's workforce.

In 2010, the initiative was formalized into an entity called "The Bridge". The Bridge is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that "bridges the gap" between students and the needs of the local workforce by continuing to work to reduce the dropout rate, integrating the educational system with business, and including technical and career education in the curriculum. The mission and primary focus of this organization is to facilitate collaboration and leverage resources between public and private sectors to support educational excellence and optimize the county's workforce. Their vision is that all students in Dona Ana County graduate with skills to compete in an international workforce. The Bridge was instrumental in developing New Mexico's First Early College High School (ECHS) housed at Dona Ana Community College. Opened in July 2010, ECHS offers students the chance to earn not only a high school diploma, but also to graduate from high school with an associate's degree and credits toward a bachelor's degree. ECHS curriculum emphasizes science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) classes, entrepreneurship, along with career and technical education (CTE) courses.

NMSU states that the appropriation will be used by NMSU Dona Ana Community College to support the Dona Ana county regional education initiative also know as The Bridge Program. The Bridge Program is an educational initiative driven by the local business community which intends to develop the local workforce and reduce the high school drop-out rate. A nonprofit Board of Directors has been initiated to oversee the project which includes the coordination of educational partners including the Las Cruces, Gadsden, and Hatch public schools, New Mexico State University and NMSU Dona Ana Community College. A major goal of The Bridge Program is to support the development Early College High Schools in Dona Ana County.

GH/bym