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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 03/01/11

SPONSOR Picraux LAST UPDATED _____ HJM 23

SHORT TITLE Academic Champions Task Force SB _____

ANALYST Earnest

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	FY12	FY13	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		SEE FISCAL IMPLICATIONS SECTION				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Human Services Department
 Children, Youth, and Families Department
 Public Education Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Memorial

House Joint Memorial 23 asks the interagency behavioral health purchasing collaborative to convene a task force to:

1. develop a process to train, educate and empower parents, caregivers, social workers and behavioral therapists to become academic champions for children;
2. develop recommended changes to the OptumHealth contract to ensure adequate funding for training and support systems to support training academic champions;
3. report its findings to the interim legislative health and human services committee and the governor by October 2011 and all the members of the legislature when the fiftieth legislature convenes.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The direct fiscal implications of the memorial will be primarily limited to the administrative impact of the three agencies that will dedicate staff to study this issue. Staff from three departments would need to be assigned for four months to perform the duties requested in

HJM23 for four months. PED puts this cost at about \$13 thousand for its agency.

In addition, however, any changes to the contract with the statewide entity to support academic champions would likely reduce funding for other services.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED notes that HJM 23 does not define what constitutes an “Academic Champion.” Therefore, it is unclear what the training would consist of and how academic champions would contribute to reducing aggressive behavior in schools and the need for clinical interventions.

In addition, PED states: “While the vision to training individuals with the intent of reducing aggressive behavior in schools and the need for clinical interventions is worthy of further discussion, creation of a task force would appear to be contrary to efforts during the 2010 interim to create better efficiencies in state government. Further, it is not clear how the proposed memorial would improve transparency, accountability and effectiveness.”

HSD reports the following:

Children and youth are exposed to powerful risk factors for aggressive behavior in their formative years. The risk factors to which they are exposed are present in families, communities, and the larger society (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, OJJDP, 1995). The more risk factors one is exposed to and the longer one is exposed to them, the greater their negative effects. Addressing these multiple factors successfully requires an array of best practices in families, schools, and communities. Addressing these risk factors and increasing the protective factors that give children, youth, and families the skills and support they need are ongoing challenges addressed by all the child-serving agencies in New Mexico and by local communities and schools.

HJM23 correctly states that no funding exists to train, educate and empower parents, caregivers, social workers and behavioral therapists to become academic champions and better prepared advocates for children. Recommended changes to the contract with OptumHealth to ensure adequate training are requested. Such changes would require that State general funds currently expended by direct service providers for children, youth and families with behavioral health needs be reduced and redirected to training activities. Redirecting funds from services to training at a time when services are being reduced due to budget restrictions is likely to be problematic. No Medicaid match is available for the activities described here.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Staff from three agencies will be dedicated over four months to perform the study requested by this memorial.

BE/mew