

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 469

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .198468.1

Short Title: LESC Study Public & Post-Secondary Education

Sponsor(s): Representatives Dennis J. Roch and Jimmie C. Hall and Others

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 25, 2015

Bill Summary:

HB 469 amends state law to provide for the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) to study issues that pertain to the public education system, including public postsecondary education in New Mexico.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 469 does not contain an appropriation.

Substantive Issues:

Provisions in current statute direct the LESC to conduct a continuing study of all education in New Mexico, the laws governing education, and the policies and costs of the New Mexico K-12 education system. Although current statutory provisions require that the work of the LESC not include higher education topics other than the training of certified teaching personnel, many topics blur the line between secondary and postsecondary education. For example, several higher education topics have come before the committee due to their roots in the K-12 education system, among them:

- dual credit;
- adult basic education; and
- career technical education.

Further, as state policies continue to focus on college and career readiness, the current direction of public education is toward a seamless continuum of education from preschool to graduate school, often called P-20. Likewise, some public school initiatives can have an influence on higher education offerings. As an example, although the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted for use in K-12 schools, higher education institutions have been encouraged to become involved in the CCSS movement, particularly with regard to first-year course design. This development has additional implications for higher education institutions when it comes to placement exams, as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers test, which is designed around the CCSS, is being promoted as a college placement test for freshman English language arts and mathematics courses.

Additionally, LESC members and staff have been requested to participate in various higher education initiatives throughout the years. For example, HM 101 (2013), *Lottery Scholarship*

Fund Solvency Work Group, resulted in the formation of a work group to study the Legislative Lottery Tuition Scholarship program. Because this work group specifically named the LESC director as a work group member, LESC staff attended and participated in work group meetings for this higher education issue throughout the 2013 interim.

Similar legislation was introduced during the 2010 legislative session. Additionally, during the 2012 legislative session, the Legislature considered a joint memorial requesting the creation of a two-year interim legislative committee to examine issues related to higher education, among other items. Neither the 2010 bill nor the 2012 joint memorial passed.

Background:

Created in 1965 as a permanent bipartisan, bicameral interim committee of the New Mexico Legislature, the LESC:

- conducts a continuing study of all education in New Mexico, the laws governing such education, and the policies and costs of the New Mexico educational system, including the training of certified teaching personnel in postsecondary institutions;
- recommends changes in laws relating to education; and
- makes a full report of its findings and recommendations.

The LESC comprises 27 legislators (10 voting, 17 advisory) appointed to provide proportionate representation from both chambers and both political parties. Assisted by a permanent staff, the committee meets regularly during the interim between legislative sessions to study education issues. To fulfill its statutory responsibilities, LESC staff work to provide all legislators with objective information pertaining to New Mexico public schools as well as to state and national education trends.

Work During the Interims

During each interim, the LESC examines a wide range of education issues, both fiscal and programmatic, that affect the achievement and well-being of preschool, elementary, and secondary students in New Mexico. Issues are identified at the initiative of committee members, other legislators, or bills or memorials; and the LESC Interim Workplan establishes the framework for the committee's research, data collection, deliberations, and analysis.

The committee regularly travels to other communities to meet in local schools and to invite wider public participation in LESC meetings. Typical meetings consist of reports by the LESC staff, supplemented by testimony from the Public Education Department, the Higher Education Department, or other agencies, as well as testimony from various parties interested in a particular issue. This process ensures that committee meetings provide forums for school personnel and other citizens to present their opinions on education matters to legislators.

The LESC staff supports the committee by conducting research, preparing reports, and presenting findings and recommendations to the committee at its regularly scheduled meetings. Staff members also are available to assist individual legislators in obtaining information about education, analyzing potential legislation, and providing other related services.

Each year, the LESC provides the Legislature with a report of its activities, summarizing the findings of interim studies and the recommendations of the committee for action during the

upcoming legislative session. Hard copies of the report are distributed to members of the Legislature, to other legislative offices, and to certain offices of the executive branch. In addition, education associations receive electronic copies, which they are encouraged to forward to their members; and the report is available on the LESC website, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lesc/>. Other information – such as agendas, meeting minutes, and staff reports – is also accessible on this website.

Finally, the office of the LESC serves as a resource to New Mexico citizens, particularly to public schools, as well as to other states and national organizations seeking information about education in New Mexico. Using local, state, and national resources, as well as networks and databases, the staff provides information to legislators, education policymakers, and local school districts and education agencies.

Work During Legislative Sessions

The major responsibility of LESC staff during legislative sessions is to assist the education committees of the two houses, as well as other committees, by providing analyses of public school-related legislation under consideration. In this role, staff members prepare expository, statistical, and graphic analyses of both financial and programmatic aspects of the New Mexico educational system; staff members also assist individual legislators in the initial stages of drafting legislation and help legislators analyze potential advantages and disadvantages of measures under consideration.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HRPAC

Related Bills:

HJM 13 *Study Student Loan Forgiveness Program*
HM 6 *College Students as 3rd Grade Reading Mentors*
SJM 12 *Review Branch & Community Colleges*
SM 2 *College Students as 3rd Grade Reading Mentors*