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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lundstrom ORIGINAL DATE 2/18/2015
 LAST UPDATED _____ HB 329

SHORT TITLE Vocational Education Curricula Development SB _____

ANALYST Hartzler

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY16	FY17	FY18	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		\$200.0	\$200.0	\$400.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

- Section 4J Higher Education Department, Policy Development and Institutional Financial Oversight
- Section 4F Workforce Solutions Department, Workforce Transition Services

Relates to HB 178 Career Technical Education Courses and Terms

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Workforce Solutions Department (WSD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 329 requires HED to create and maintain a curricula web site or other internet-based service to collect and disseminate vocational curricula and programming offered by public community colleges and technical-vocational institutions. Institutions receiving public funding to develop vocational educational courses and materials would be required to make this information available on the website. The website would provide a forum for institutions, local workforce boards, and others granted access to the site to consult and exchange pedagogical and other sources of successful and effective vocational education programming.

The bill also suggests that sharing vocational education resources, while providing institutions with opportunities to develop regionally-relevant programming, could prevent duplication of vocational education opportunities offered by institutions within the same geographic areas.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HB 329 does not include an appropriation.

HED reports that additional operating costs would be incurred to implement and maintain such a website. The bill

“requires additional study, review and resource assessment to ascertain the total financial impact of [the project identified in HB 329]. The preliminary review indicates an increase in administrative costs to HED. The project would require a minimum of 2 full time positions (FTE) to develop/maintain the website and coordinate and approve curriculum; these FTE would be highly specialized with competitive salary requirements. This request does not include any additional appropriation to help cover the increased costs. Moreover, there would likely be both up-front and recurring information technology infrastructure costs that would be required for successful deployment of the project.”

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The bill raises concerns about the duplication of vocational education programming offered by New Mexico’s public post-secondary institutions and the apparent lack of coordination or consultation between institutions and local workforce boards in developing regionally relevant vocational education programming.

HED notes that an existing program, supported with federal funds, maximizes opportunities for institutional collaboration, reduces duplicative programming, and uses distance learning opportunities to expand certificate and degree program options for students. New Mexico’s Skill Up Network (SUN) Online is a consortium of New Mexico public colleges sharing quality online courses to ensure that students have access to a variety of courses, certificates, and degree programs. The 11-school consortium reports that institutions and faculty are dedicated to excellence in online learning and professional development for faculty who teach online and committed to increasing access to quality online education for students across New Mexico. For example, students can participate in criminal justice and computer information and technologies programs.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HED reports that it would require additional operational funds. While the federal grant funding for SUN Online supports 11 institutions, it is likely that additional funding would be needed to expand programming to non-participating institutions.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Neither HED nor WSD provides the services described in HB 329, though the institution-led SUN Online seems to provide some of the services described.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

- How would services provided for in HB 329 duplicate or expand existing SUN Online efforts?
- What level of funding is needed to initiate the program in HB 329 or expand existing efforts?

TH/bb