

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current and previously issued FIRs are available on the NM Legislative Website (www.nmlegis.gov) and may also be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Gonzales/Herrera/ Trujillo, CH/Allison ORIGINAL DATE 2/15/19 LAST UPDATED 3/07/19 HB 449/aHAFC

SHORT TITLE 5-Year Literacy Initiative SB _____

ANALYST Chilton

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY19	FY20		
	\$4,075.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 182, HB 394, HB 567, HJR 1, SB 270, SB 398

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Regional Education Cooperatives Association (REC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Amendment to House Bill 449 removes the appropriation from the bill, and removes the five-year specified duration of the program. It inserts a new requirement for inclusion in the literacy program to be developed by the Northeast Regional Education Cooperative, that literacy materials be culturally and linguistically appropriate and age-appropriate for the various ages being helped with their literacy skills.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 449 appropriated \$4,074,950 from the General Fund to the Northeast Regional Education Cooperative, centered in Las Vegas, NM, for the purpose of developing a five-year initiative to boost literacy in children and adults. Specifics of the approaches to be taken in increasing literacy among some 600,000 persons in the area include:

- 1) Working directly with children from pre-K to 12th grade, providing texts and after-school tutoring to increase oral language and reading fluency.
- 2) Providing early literacy services to pre-school children and their families.

- 3) Fostering little free libraries to provide free books in each community.
- 4) Bringing about community reading events
- 5) Teaching family members the importance of early reading and learning, in part through home visits.
- 6) Providing classroom sets of learning materials based on core principles for K-3, 4-6 and 7-12th grade.

The program must have an assessment component.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$4,074,950 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2020 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Both child and adult illiteracy can have serious consequences. Reading skills for children are vitally important in all subject areas. Although workarounds exist for children with dyslexia or with poor reading skills related to lack of exposure to reading at an early age, these procedures are problematic and would be best avoided through early literacy efforts.

Adults with poor reading skills may suffer from health problems due to an inability to read medical directions or prescription labels. Children of parents with poor literacy skills fall behind in school because parents cannot provide support with schoolwork. Nationally, two-thirds of jobs require literacy skills above level 2. However, according to the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy (NMCL), 20 percent of New Mexicans over age 16 have literacy skills at level 1 (the lowest level on a scale of 1 to 5). Individuals at level 1 have difficulty locating simple information in a news article or using basic math to determine the total on a bill or receipt. 46 percent of New Mexicans over age 16 are at level 2 or below (“functionally illiterate”). NMCL estimates that almost 900,000 adults in the state are in need of literacy services.

Literacy programs have been highly cost-effective, resulting in decreases in school failure and drop-outs, decreased referrals to juvenile justice systems, and increased high school graduation rates and earnings in later life.

There are many evidence-based practices that can foster literacy among both children and adults. For example, giving children books, as contemplated in this bill through little free libraries and as practiced by

- the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which mails out a free book to enrolled children under age five every month (available in 23 of New Mexico’s 33 counties, but only a small number of the counties comprising the Northeast Region), and
- Reach Out and Read (a program in physicians’ offices) that has been proven to have highly reproducible positive effects on early literacy. Reach Out and Read’s research indicates impressive results: Parents served are two and one half times more likely to read to their children than those not receiving these services, Parents are twice as likely to read to their children more than three times a week. Families are two and one half times more

likely to enjoy reading together or have books in the home, and Children's language development is improved by 3-6 months. Children's language ability improves with increased exposure to Reach Out and Read.

In some parts of New Mexico, there are multiple early literacy programs, often needing coordination to avoid gaps and overlaps.

With respect to adults, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) recommends the following research-based best practices for implementing adult literacy interventions:

- Collect and share student performance data upon program entry and track student progress over time.
- Select evidence-based instructional materials and delivery models for adult students, including multimedia technology, direct instruction in comprehension strategies, and workplace-oriented materials.
- Ensure that schedules – course duration, length, and accessibility – are conducive to adult students. Seventy percent or more of classroom time should be spent on literacy practice.
- Ensure that adult educators are well trained and prepared for instruction and that ongoing professional development and coaching is offered. Examples of evidence-based recommendations for teacher preparation include use of experienced, full-time teachers and providing teachers with aides in the classroom.
- Ensure that the instructional environment is conducive for adult education students and that processes are in place that support student engagement and productivity. Examples of evidence-based recommendations for the instructional environment include learner-centered classes, community building, and differentiated teaching environments.

RELATIONSHIP with the following bills:

HB 182	READING INITIATIVE LITERACY & BILITERACY
HB 394	CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC APPROPRIATE EDUCATION
HB 567	SCHOOL TREATMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY
HJR 1	PERMANENT FUNDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD, CA
SB 270	FEB. 14 "RUDOLFO ANAYA I LOVE TO READ DAY"
SB 398	DYSLEXIC STUDENT EARLY INTERVENTIONS

In addition, House Bill 2 (page 131) contains an appropriation of \$696,100 to the Higher Education Department for contractual services to provide adult literacy initiatives.

LAC/sb