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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lopez ORIGINAL DATE 2/7/19
LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Transfer Completed Course Work SB 341

ANALYST Liu

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB 168, HB 236, HB 435

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)
Higher Education Department (HED)
Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 341 amends the Public School Code, requiring public schools to give students transferring between schools (due to a disruption during high school) credit for any work completed prior to the transfer. The bill requires school districts and PED to create policies that determine how credit shall be awarded for courses that are partially completed.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

PED notes the bill has no major fiscal implications. It is unlikely the changes proposed in this bill will significantly affect overall student mobility rates in New Mexico, which impacts the calculation of the at-risk index in the public school funding formula.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED notes the bill amends a provision of statute that currently applies to students who transfer

due to disruptions in their high school education. This clause refers to students in limited specific circumstances (homelessness, adjudication, treatment, or program placement).

The bill creates provisions requiring districts to develop a partial credit policy when students have started but not completed a course. The bill specifies that students must get partial credit even if the transfer did not occur at the end of the grading period.

PED notes partial credit might benefit students who are subject to disruptions and are later able to access a course that is similar to one that they did not complete; however, partial credit for core academic requirements may be more difficult to measure equally. Partial credits might impact the total credit count on a student's record toward graduation requirements. For example, if a district implemented a partial credit policy that was a direct fraction, then a student attending for half of the scheduled course time could earn half a course unit. If a student was taking eight block-scheduled courses and transferred mid-way through the semester, the receiving school might reflect that student as earning four course units toward graduation, even though the student has not completed any of the courses in question.

If well-aligned courses are unavailable, the student might need to take different courses, and the district would need to again only award partial credit. For example, a student might be taking algebra and then transfer into an integrated math course. The bill would require the transcript to reflect a half course unit for each class. PED notes this might increase the complexity of determining when a student has met graduation requirements.

PED notes the bill might be interpreted as applying to all transferring students, not just those defined as experiencing disruption in their education.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED notes when students transfer into a required course midway through the year, districts typically award a full unit of credit if the student successfully completes the course. If partial awards for prior work result in less than full awards for partial attendance in a class the student successfully completes, the net effect could be that it takes more coursework for students to earn required credits. To the extent that students are unable to earn a full unit for academic courses they successfully complete, graduation rates might be impacted.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The bill requires school districts to create policies determining how credit shall be awarded for partially completed courses with guidance from PED. PED indicates additional staff may be required to support all school districts in policy development.

RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to House Bill 168, which requires PED to identify students enrolled in public schools every 10 days; House Bill 236, which establishes interventions for absent or chronically absent students; and House Bill 435, which requires public schools to develop student pathway plans in middle school and high school.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HED notes many high school students in New Mexico enroll in college coursework as part of the state's dual credit program. If a student transfers within the same school district and is taking a college course on the college campus, the transfer may not affect the student's ability to complete his or her dual credit course. If a student is taking a college course on the high school campus and transfers to another high school in the same district or if the student transfers to another school district in another part of the state, the student may no longer have access the dual credit course. While there are a few notable exceptions, higher education institutions (HEI) do not have an established mechanism for granting partial credit for incomplete courses.

HEIs may offer students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level knowledge using standardized tests, challenge exams, portfolios or other methods described in the credit for prior learning policy. However, to receive credit for a course, a student would have to demonstrate college-level learning that matches an entire existing course at the HEI.

SL/sb