

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 225

51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014

Tracking Number: .195944.2

Short Title: Mesa Vista & Peñasco School Early College Pgm

Sponsor(s): Senators Richard C. Martinez and Carlos R. Cisneros

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 11, 2014

Bill Summary:

SB 225 makes an appropriation for the early college high school program at Mesa Vista Consolidated School District (MVCSD) and Peñasco Independent School District (PISD).

Fiscal Impact:

\$150,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for expenditure in FY 15. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 15 shall revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

For FY 15, CS/H2 et al., the *General Appropriation Act of 2014*, includes an appropriation of \$500,000 to PED for early college high school start-up.

According to a story in the *Las Cruces Sun News* (January 16, 2014), four school districts – Albuquerque Public Schools, Carlsbad Municipal Schools, Gadsden Independent Schools, and Hobbs Municipal Schools – were awarded grants of \$100,000 each to help start or expand early college high school programs. The money came from the Daniels Fund, based in Denver, which awarded \$500,000 to The Bridge of Southern New Mexico (see “Background,” below), which vetted the 14 applicants. The remaining \$100,000, according to the story, is to cover unforeseen expenses.

According to PED:

- MVCSD was awarded \$137,000 for an early college high school for school year 2013-2014 with an understanding that a plan for sustainability would be developed for an additional three or more years using for- and nonprofit sources for support; and
- PISD is in expansion to the approved application of MVCSD.

Substantive Issues:

According to PED:

- MVCSD is currently operating an early college high school serving 140 students enrolled in pathways related to:

- business services;
 - engineering;
 - construction;
 - manufacturing;
 - agriculture;
 - health and biological sciences; and
 - hospitality and tourism;
- the funded application for MVCSD requires an agreement with one or more higher education institutions for provision of dual credit courses;
 - the University of New Mexico-Taos and Northern New Mexico College are partnering to offer an associate degree, with alignment toward a bachelor's degree; and
 - pursuant to MVCSD's agreement to seek support from for- and nonprofit entities, the district has partnered with the following organizations for work-study; workplace mentoring; and the donation of materials, money, property, or other financial support:
 - Rio Arriba County;
 - Kit Carson Electric Cooperative;
 - the US Forest Service;
 - Ohkay Hotel and Casino;
 - Ojo Caliente Mineral Springs Resort and Spa; and
 - Las Clinicas del Norte.

According to the Higher Education Department, the New Mexico GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate) initiative could effectively support the early college high school proposal. The New Mexico GEAR UP initiative now operates in 25 schools within 12 school districts, including PISD; and it aims to bring awareness of college attendance to students.

Background:

During the 2012 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee heard testimony from the Chief Executive Officer of The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, who testified about the Arrowhead Park Early College High School in Las Cruces, noting that the high school:

- was created by a collective group of community stakeholders;
- provides the opportunity for students to graduate with a New Mexico High School Diploma of Excellence and an associate degree simultaneously;
- addresses “at risk” students;
- maximizes education assets through collaborations with:
 - Las Cruces Public Schools (owns and operates the school);
 - Doña Ana Community College (provides the dual credit courses); and
 - New Mexico State University (donated the land for the school);
- had 342 students, with demographics of:
 - 78 percent Hispanic;
 - 63 percent first-generation college attendees;
 - 43 percent eligible for free or reduced-price meals;

- 11 percent identified as gifted and talented; and
- 4.0 percent English language learners; and
- had a zero percent dropout rate and a 100 percent promotion rate, as of July 2012.

Committee Referrals:

SCC/SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 3 *Tribal College Dual Credit Program Fund*

SB 139 *Tribal College Dual Credit Program*

SB 158a *Dual Credit Program Parity*