

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 183

52nd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2016

Tracking Number: .203168.1

Short Title: Northern NM Early Childhood Programs

Sponsor(s): Senator Pete Campos

Analyst: Robin Shaya

Date: February 3, 2016

Bill Summary:

SB 183 appropriates \$150,000 from the General Fund to the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) for expenditure in FY17 to improve and expand early childhood education programs in Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, and Taos counties.

Fiscal Impact:

The bill appropriates \$150,000 from the General Fund to the LGD of DFA for expenditure in FY17. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY17 shall revert to the General Fund.

The FY17 Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) recommendation for public school support includes \$28.0 million to the Public Pre-kindergarten Fund; the executive recommended \$24.5 million.

The possible benefits of this bill are limited to the following seven counties: Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, San Miguel, and Taos.

Substantive Issues:

According to LGD, due to the specificity and technical expertise required by the bill's intent, funds might be more effectively appropriated to another agency such as the Public Education Department (PED) or Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), because LGD does not have particular technical expertise related to early childhood education. LGD would likely need to research early childhood education curriculum laws and regulations, conduct procurement or issue a notice of funds available to applicable public bodies, or enter a Memorandum of Understanding with another agency that would be more able to oversee the program.

The bill does not specify whether the funding is for all early childhood education programs or for a specific program, such as pre-kindergarten, child-care, home visiting, the Family Infant Toddler program, or others. These varied programs have different goals and outcomes. Without naming a specific program, it is unclear whether funding will be targeted to programs with proven results.

Background:

The Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard testimony on national trends in early literacy interventions by Dr. Lesaux, professor of education, Harvard Graduate School of Education. Describing her focus on children from minority, multi-lingual, and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, Dr. Lesaux compared New Mexico's demographics with those of the rest of the country:

- 33 percent of children ages birth through 5 in New Mexico live in poverty, compared to 26 percent of US children among the same age group; and
- 22 percent of children and youth in New Mexico are children of immigrants, compared to 24 percent in the United States. A majority of these children, this testimony emphasized, are generally not fluent in English, creating an obstacle to their proficiency in literacy.