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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Papen ORIGINAL DATE 2/8/16  
LAST UPDATED 2/10/16 HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Science Early Education Program SB 111/aSEC

ANALYST Fernandez

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY16	FY17	FY18	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
<b>Total</b>		See Fiscal Implications				

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee amendment strikes the appropriation of \$250 thousand; removes sixth grade from the Science Early Education Program; changes administration of the program from PED to school districts; and changes the requirement that one-half of funding shall be provided by schools to one-half shall be provided by the school district.

#### Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 111 creates a Science Early Education Program as a five year pilot project for physics education for students in sixth through eighth grades at high poverty schools; creates the Science Early Education Fund; appropriates \$250 thousand dollars from the general fund to the Science Early Education Fund and declares an emergency.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2021 shall revert to the general fund. This bill contains an emergency clause this making the funds available for expenditure in FY16 – FY21.

Senate Bill 111 requires PED to administer the program as well as to seek public and private grants and donations for the science early education program. A school which receives a grant from PED for the science early education program will be required to provide half of the funding for the program. As the program has not been developed and the level of awards to be given to schools has not been established by PED, it is difficult to predict what the impact would be on the operating budgets of schools selected to participate in the program.

According to PED, implementation of this program will require an additional FTE. The department does not provide an estimate, however; based on the average salary and benefits for a similar position, the estimated cost may be \$42.5 thousand. (Based on an average salary for an Education Administrator, including benefits).

### **Continuing Appropriations**

This bill creates a new fund and provides for continuing appropriations. The LFC has concerns with including continuing appropriation language in the statutory provisions for newly created funds, as earmarking reduces the ability of the legislature to establish spending priorities.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

SB 111 adds a new section to the Public School Code to establish the Science Early Education Program as a five-year pilot project to incorporate hands-on, age-appropriate physics education into the sixth through eighth grade curricula. PED must administer the program and contract with an organization to provide professional development and teaching materials.

The bill provides school districts may apply, on behalf of their schools, to PED for a grant from the Science Early Education Fund. PED must select for participation as many schools that qualify, but no more than 10. The department may select schools that are generally distinct from one another in urban or rural character, location and concentration of poverty. Selected schools shall match the grant awarded from PED.

Participating students must undergo evaluations at the beginning of the program and be measured through standardized assessments. The department establishes reporting and evaluation requirements, student and program assessments for schools participating in the program. Currently, the New Mexico Standardized Based Assessment (NMSBA) in science is only administered in grades four, seven and eleven. PED notes that since this bill does not specify which assessment is required, it is possible that additional assessments may be required.

At the end of each program year, the department must report on the efficacy of the program to the Governor and Legislature.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

PED indicates that the current standardized assessments align to the current standards which incorporate life science, physical science and earth science. It is difficult to predict if the proposed program will align to the current New Mexico Science Standards.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

According to PED, the provisions of this bill will strain existing PED staff resources. PED only has 1 FTE dedicated as a science specialist. Implementation of this program will require an additional FTE.

**TECHNICAL ISSUES**

PED notes that since “end of program” is not defined, this term should be replaced with “at the end of fiscal year 2021”, on page 3, line 19.

PED also indicates that “physics” is not defined relative to grades 6-8. Physics is often associated with complex math procedures and excludes chemistry. It is important that the program is aligned to the Common Core Math Standards in grades 6-8.

CTF/al/jo