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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2020

Bill Number	<u>SB21</u>	Sponsor	<u>Tallman/Sariñana</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.215909.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Development and Support of Robotic Teams</u>		
Analyst	<u>Porter</u>	Original Date	<u>01/23/2020</u>
		Last Updated	<u>02/06/2020</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 21 (SB21) appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) in FY21 to fund science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs, including robotics teams in middle schools and high schools. Unexpended funds revert to the general fund at the end of the fiscal year.

FISCAL IMPACT

SB21 appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY21. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY21 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Despite significant investment in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) programs, statewide proficiency rates in science have decreased 5 percent in the last three years. To improve the rigor of STEAM instruction, PED recently adopted the NM STEM-Ready Science Standards (NMSRSS), which combine the national Next Generation Science Standards and six New Mexico-specific standards. State funding for STEAM programs has increased considerably in the past several years, from a low of \$1.9 million in FY18 to \$5 million in FY20. The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 contains a related recurring appropriation of \$5 million to PED the department's STEAM initiative, and \$75 thousand for the mathematics, engineering, science achievement (MESA) program. Investment in new forms of effective STEAM programs can help to improve student outcomes.

SB21 allows teams from New Mexico schools to participate in robotics competitions with minimal out-of-pocket costs. MESA – a PED partner – promotes several robotics competitions, one of which is boosting engineering science and technology robotics competition for middle school and

high school teams. According to MESA, benefits of participating in the challenge include gaining an understanding of the practical use of math and science, gaining an increased interest in STEAM, and experiencing “design-to-market” product development. Additionally, students gain competence in abstract thinking, self-directed learning, teamwork, project management, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership.

According to PED, many districts and schools have formed robotics teams as part of after school activities and support students as they prepare to participate in the many state and local competitions available. PED states that current funding for robotics teams come from different sources, including school activity funds, student fees for participation and private/industry donations.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED will be required to administer the funds and will have broad authority to make awards to schools, school districts, or other organizations.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Laws 2019, Chapter 278, appropriated \$75 thousand to the MESA program. The PED requested this funding for FY21 but the Legislative Finance Committee and LESC did not include it in their FY21 recommendations.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Public Education Department (PED)

LAP/tb/mc/sgs