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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Martinez, R. ORIGINAL DATE 1/25/20
LAST UPDATED _____ HB 198
SHORT TITLE WNMU Early Childhood Ed Program SB _____
ANALYST Valenzuela

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY20	FY21		
	1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates Senate Bill 7

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)
Public Education Department (PED)

No Response Received

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

SUMMARY

House Bill 198 appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to Western New Mexico University for expenditure in FY21 for an early childhood education center for excellence. There is no effective date in this bill. It is assumed the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY21 shall revert to the general fund.

Although requested by Western New Mexico University (WNMU), neither the Higher Education Department nor LFC recommended funding for an early childhood center of excellence at the university.

Currently, the only similar center is at the Santa Fe Community College. That center is primarily self-funded, although it does receive some state money for First Born, a home-visiting program that provides supports and education to new families.

According to WNMU, the proposal for appropriation includes the following expenditures:

- \$700 thousand for salaries and benefits for a clinical director, educational psychologist, early childhood counselor, graduate assistants, play therapist, and billing accountant;
- \$10 thousand for professional development, training, and support for classroom teachers;
- \$5,000 for software, technology, and research resources; and
- \$285 thousand for facilities improvement and expansion.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

WNMU says a center of excellence would allow the university to expand training across the state and region through our distance and online education programs, helping to build a high-quality childhood education system across the state.

- According to WNMU, designating its early childhood programs a center of excellence will allow the university to: Provide targeted training for trauma-informed practices, infant mental health, challenging behaviors and other specialized practices; expand services to the community; support an increased demand for early childhood workers; expand field and clinical opportunities offered through the Child Development Center and to create and expand research on working with children who have experienced significant trauma:

The Public Education Department notes the WNMU Child Development Center is a “lab school” that supports professional development and clinical hours and those programs would be expanded with the appropriation.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

House Bill 198 does not include performance measures but PED and WNMU both suggest performance measures be created to assess the program’s impact. A measure assessing the quality of the teachers and other educators who participate should be among those.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

An expanded program will require additional oversight by the WNMU school of education, although it is unlikely this will require additional staff beyond that covered by the appropriation.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED reports the early childhood program at WNMU served a total of 119 children in the fall of 2019. A branch of the WNMU early childhood programs is also located on the campus of Silver Consolidated Schools and works directly with teen parents, especially through the program’s family facilitators. The early childhood center on the Silver Schools site also provides care for infants and toddlers.