

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Balderas DATE TYPED 02/17/05 HB 543

SHORT TITLE NM Highlands Total Immersion Language Program SB _____

ANALYST Woods

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY05	FY06	FY05	FY06		
	\$250.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to the Appropriation for New Mexico Highlands University in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to SB567

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

New Mexico Public Education Department (PED)
 New Mexico Commission on Higher Education (CHE) (SB567)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 543 – Making an Appropriation to New Mexico Highlands University for a Pilot Project to Design and Develop Total Immersion Language Programs – appropriates \$250,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Highlands University for expenditure in FY06 and subsequent fiscal years for a pilot project to design and develop a total immersion English language program in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and a total immersion Spanish language program in Chihuahua, Mexico. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

Significant Issues

PED indicates that if this legislation is successful, individuals from different disciplines, including teachers from New Mexico and Mexico, will have the opportunity to improve or expand their knowledge of the Spanish/English language and culture through an immersion program. Language immersion programs are recognized as one of the best models for achieving language proficiency. As general background information, PED further notes that:

- the Spanish language is the second most commonly spoken language in the United States, and it is second in the world as a language of business (Source: Spanish Embassy Report);
- HB212, approved by the 2003 Legislature, requires students (K-12) to be proficient in two languages (English and a second language, which could be Spanish);
- New Mexico has been a leader in the nation in recognizing the academic, economic and social value of being bilingual. Since 1973, the *Bilingual Multicultural Education Act* has provided financial support for programs that allow students to become proficient in two languages, English and a second language (one of which is Spanish), and to succeed academically;
- currently, there is a significant need to continue and expand preparation programs for individuals in various disciplines to become bilingual;
- NMHU has been an leader in educating and preparing teachers to serve the needs of students of Hispanic descent; and
- for the 2004-2005 academic school year, 174,165 students (53.3 percent of all students) attending New Mexico public schools are of Hispanic descent (Source: ADS 40th Report);

CHE indicates this request was not in the list of priority projects submitted by New Mexico Highlands University to the Commission on Higher Education for review. Accordingly, the request was not included in the commission's funding recommendation for FY06.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED suggests that, if enacted, this legislation would impact a core performance measure that assesses students in grades 3 to 9 on achieving proficiency or above on the New Mexico criterion-referenced assessments in reading/language arts and math.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$250,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP OR RELATIONSHIP

Relates to the Appropriation for New Mexico Highlands University in the General Appropriations Act.

Relates to SB567 in that SB567 also seeks to appropriate \$250,000 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico Highlands University to support an English-Spanish language immersion program. However, SB567 seeks the appropriation for FY06 with any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY06 reverting to the general fund.

BFW/lg