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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/24/06
 LAST UPDATED 2/14/06 HB 43/aHEC/aHAFC/aaSFC

SPONSOR Stewart

SHORT TITLE Extend Kindergarten Plus Pilot Project SB _____

ANALYST Aguilar

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY06	FY07		
NFI			

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in House Bill 3

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY06	FY07	FY08	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total	\$39.0	\$39.0		\$78.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Office of Education Accountability (OEA)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFC Amendment

The second set of amendments adopted by the Senate Finance Committee requires that student progress be measured by using standardized assessments in kindergarten and first grade. The amendments strike the requirement that literacy, numeracy and cognitive and social skills be used in the assessment process.

Synopsis of SFC Amendment

The Senate Finance Committee amendment to House Bill 43 as amended provides that students that participate in kindergarten plus shall be evaluated at the beginning of kindergarten plus and their progress in literacy shall be measured through standardized assessments in kindergarten and first grade. The prior version required evaluation of progress in literacy, numeracy, and cognitive and social skills.

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee amendment to House Bill 43 as amended removes appropriation language from the title and removes the appropriation.

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment to House Bill 43 adds an emergency clause.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 43 appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department to expand the Kindergarten Plus pilot project.

The bill extends the length of the Kindergarten Plus pilot project by three years. The pilot provides for extending the kindergarten year by up to four months but no less than 40 instructional days for the purpose of demonstrating increased time in kindergarten narrows the achievement gap, increases cognitive skills and leads to higher test scores.

The bill further expands the program beyond the Albuquerque, Gallup-McKinley, Gadsden and Las Cruces school districts to any other school district with high poverty schools while allowing those districts participating to continue their existing program or expanding by adding additional classes.

The bill also provides for educational assistants to be paid at the same rate and under the same terms as they would be paid for regular full-day kindergarten programs.

The bill also removes the provision requiring the department to provide professional development to Kindergarten Plus teachers in how children learn to read.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

PED notes that by increasing funding to \$1 million, House Bill 43 proposes to nearly triple the number of students potentially served, moving from 266 to approximately 665, increasing the administrative burden on the PED. An additional FTE would be required to administer the program full-time.

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a nonrecurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2007 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Kindergarten Plus Pilot began in FY04 as a three year pilot study to extend the traditional full-day Kindergarten Year by an additional four months. The pilot was based on the premise that additional days spent in kindergarten would decrease the risk of disadvantaged, particularly high poverty children of falling behind their peers and beginning first grade without skills necessary to learn. Classrooms were begun in Albuquerque, Gallup-McKinley, Las Cruces and Gadsden. Schools within these districts were eligible to apply if 85% or more of the students were eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

Kindergarten Plus does not promote a specific curriculum, but rather, according to the Public Education Department (PED) application, each program applying must certify that it was “comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and based on scientific research. Districts were allowed significant flexibility in the implementation of Kindergarten Plus. In addition to not outlining a specific curriculum, after the first pilot year, each district was allowed to allocate the additional classroom time in ways that were appropriate to the district needs, which created four distinct Kindergarten Plus programs.

Evaluations conducted by OEA and PED found that students who participated in Kindergarten Plus demonstrated positive results on the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessment. The evaluation also found that teachers and administrators felt that Kinder

garten Plus helped at-risk students gain important social and oral language skills, that they began first grade ready to learn, and in some instances were more academically advanced in first grade than peers who had not participated in Kindergarten Plus.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Implementing the provisions of Bill 43 is expected to support the PED’s performance measure relating to the percent of fourth-grade students who achieve proficiency or above on the criterion-references assessments in reading and language arts; and (2) percent of fourth-grade students who achieve proficiency or above on the criterion-referenced assessment in mathematics.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 43 relates to an appropriation contained in House Bill 3.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The Office of Educational Accountability notes House Bill 43 requires that Kindergarten Plus students be assessed in “literacy, numeracy and cognitive and social skills,” (page 3, line 23). Currently, New Mexico does not have an official measure of Kindergarten numeracy. The Legislature may wish to consider removing the word numeracy from the requirement of the bill until the adoption of a Kindergarten numeracy assessment.