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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/23/07

SPONSOR T. A. Garcia LAST UPDATED _____ HB 866

SHORT TITLE Raton Virtual Classroom SB _____

ANALYST McOlash

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$305.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 209/HB 201, SB 78/HB 62 and SB561/HB 584.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 866 appropriates \$305,000 from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 2008 to implement a distance-learning alternative school curriculum through a virtual classroom in Raton Public Schools.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$305,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the General Fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 2008 shall revert to the General Fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Distance learning has been identified as an essential element of rural schools. Without the means to deliver quality eLearning courses, students encounter significant obstacles in pursuing individual career goals. Student recovery, advancement and concurrent enrollment opportunities exist within online

programs, enabling rural districts in better-serving student needs.

The Raton Public schools received a PED grant (2006-2007) and has already implemented the Raton Individual Distance Education Academy (IDEA). According to the IDEA website, the program's mission is to provide resources and support to parents who have elected to educate their children in their home or in another alternative setting. It appears that the IDEA project is separate from the virtual classroom proposed in HB 866.

This virtual classroom request and IDEA could be in conflict with the Pre K-20 Executive Initiative, *The Innovative, Digital, Education and Learning, New Mexico* (IDEAL-NM) Project. IDEAL-NM's goal is to create a sustainable, statewide eLearning support program that will allow public education, higher education, and state government agencies to better serve the needs of all New Mexico learners. It is an outgrowth of work currently being undertaken by the New Mexico Learning Network (formerly New Mexico Virtual College) and has as its first initiative the creation of the New Mexico Cyber Academy, a statewide program providing all middle and high schools the option to obtain high quality courses online for their students, with initial consideration for rural districts. The NM Cyber Academy will also coordinate with Regional Education Cooperatives (REC). The REC 3 in Raton will receive funding through the IDEAL-NM project.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

CS/S 209/CS/H 201 enacting the Cyber Academy Act.

CS/S 78/CS/H 62, Education Technology Deficiency Correction.

SB 561/HB 584 High School Redesign, Section G requiring 2009- 2010 students must have one of the following units for graduation – Advanced Placement, Dual Credit or Distance Ed class.

Relates to the Executive's Public School Support Recommendation of \$6,000.0 for the Educational Technology Fund and \$8,501.6 for IDEAL-NM (additional funds are included in the HED budget).

ALTERNATIVES

Raton Public Schools will have the option of participating in the statewide Cyber Academy currently being proposed.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Will IDEAL- NM act as a coordinating agency for the various programs in a number of districts (e.g., Raton, Rio Rancho, and Albuquerque)?