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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/17/2007

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Autism Disorder Professional Development SB 1014

ANALYST Schuss

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$410.0	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to SB 164, HB 375, HB 463, SB 197

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Department of Health (DOH)

Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 1014 appropriates \$410,000 from the general fund to the Public Education Department for the purpose of:

- professional development for educators in the area of autism spectrum disorders, including graduate level course work leading to an autism transcribed certificate;
- ongoing classroom consultations for education statewide
- outreach to students and their families

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$410,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY08 shall revert to the general fund.

PED reports that currently, their Special Education Bureau allocates approximately \$410,0000 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) discretionary dollars for professional development and technical assistance in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

It appears that PED is trying to supplant federal dollars with general fund dollars.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED reports that the IDEA defines autism as a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

The number of three, four and five-year-old students with autism with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) receiving special education and related services in preschool has increased steadily over the past three years. During the 2005 – 2006 school year, 1.49% of the students enrolled in preschool qualified for special education and related services under IDEA in the autism disability category. The number of students ages 6 – 21 enrolled in the public schools who qualify for special education and related services under IDEA in the autism disability category has increased from .78% in 2003 – 2004 to 1.13% in 2005 – 2006.

DOH reports that Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are lifelong neurodevelopmental, neurobiological conditions. Autism is the fastest growing low incidence disability (US Department of Education, 1999). Prevalence rate in New Mexico (NM) is estimated to be 3.6 per 1,000 (National Survey of Children's Health, 2003-04). In New Mexico this rate translates to approximately 1,813 children under the age of 18 with autism, with a range up to 2,246 (NM Treatment Service Data, 2004) with estimates of all individuals (children and adult) from 3,600 to 10,800 (SWAN, 2004). NM Public Education Department data for 2005-06 show there to be 590 children (96 of whom are ages 3 to 5) with "Autism Exceptionality" which underestimates the number because some students with ASD enter special education with other diagnoses such as developmental disability. The Southwest Autism Network (SWAN) database shows individuals with autism in every county but two in NM. It is a tremendous challenge for rural communities to provide services and trained individuals to provide those services.

RELATIONSHIP

SB 164, which would create a recurring appropriation for \$7,750,000 to establish and operate programs to benefit children with neurodevelopmental disorders, including autism.

SB 197 would amend Chapter 59 of the New Mexico State Statutes to prevent specific health insurance policies, health care plans, or contracts delivered or issued for delivery in New Mexico from excluding coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

BS/csd