

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 324

48th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2008

Short Title: Community Service Learning Opportunities

Sponsor(s): Senator Cynthia Nava and Others

Analyst: Pamela Herman

Date: January 29, 2008

Bill Summary:

SB 324 appropriates funds to the Public Education Department (PED) to support a regional center network throughout the state to support teachers and community educators in incorporating community service learning into standards-based education by providing coordinated training, technical assistance, and project support.

Fiscal Impact:

\$250,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to PED for expenditure in FY 09. The bill contains a reversion clause.

Issues:

- Since FY 00, service learning has received a total of \$410,000 from the General Fund in the form of appropriations or allocations from the Teacher Professional Development Fund, as follows:
 - \$100,000 in FY 00, vetoed by the Governor;
 - \$100,000 in FY 01, vetoed by the Governor;
 - \$100,000 in FY 04;
 - \$100,000 in FY 05; and
 - \$70,000 each year for FY 06 through FY 08 from allocations by PED of funds appropriated annually to the Teacher Professional Development Fund.

- According to PED and the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), beginning in 2004, legislative appropriations have been used to support a Service-Learning Project Director under the umbrella of the New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community, as well as to provide mini-grants to eight Regional Centers for Service Learning.

- In 2007, the Legislature passed SJM 51, *Study Service Learning Program with Credit*, requesting PED and CYFD to study the benefits of implementing a service learning program that grants academic credit to high school students and students in the 8th grade entering high school. The report of the departments' findings and recommendations in response to SJM 51, presented to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) in January 2008, included the following:
 - Some of the benefits of service learning for students, schools and the community are:
 - preparing students for college and the workforce;
 - enhancing students' personal, social, educational, and emotional development;
 - supporting the rigor and relevance of education by providing hands-on activities;

- building the relationships among schools, students, and communities; and
- promoting the recognition and awareness of communities' needs;
- There is growing research suggesting a direct correlation between service learning and student achievement, although it is not yet possible to accurately measure these outcomes in New Mexico; and
- Funding and support from many entities have sustained service learning projects and programs throughout the years, including the federal Learn and Serve America program, private foundations, universities, school districts, and Americorps-VISTA staff provided by the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism, as well as General Fund appropriations. However, this support has not been sufficient or consistent and many programs have sustained themselves with little or no funding.

Related Bills:

SB 329 *Create Statewide Service Learning Framework*

*HB 418 *Teacher Professional Development*