

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 693

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Teen Parent High School Graduations

Sponsor(s): Representative Joni Marie Gutierrez

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 26, 2009

Bill Summary:

HB 693 makes an appropriation to fund a statewide recovery and retention program that targets teenage parents who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.

Fiscal Impact:

\$1.0 million is appropriated from the General Fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for FY 10.

Unexpended and unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

Currently, CS/HB 2 et al. includes an appropriation of \$795,500 for the Graduation Reality and Dual-Role Skills (GRADS) program, which targets teenage parents who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.

Issues:

The PED analysis identifies some of the circumstances that HB 693 would address:

- only 40 percent of teen mothers graduate from high school or earn a GED, as compared to 94 percent of teen girls who did not have a baby;
- studies have found that young adults with low education and skill levels are more likely to live in poverty and to receive government assistance;
- babies born to teen mothers are about one-third more likely to be of low birth weight and require 20 percent more medical attention at the cost of \$37,000 per child per year; and
- female babies born to teen mothers are 22 percent more likely to become teen mothers themselves.

The PED analysis also notes that the GRADS program, which is operating in 32 sites across the state in FY 09, has had some success in addressing these circumstances:

- GRADS is operating in 32 sites across the state in FY 09;
- 11,701 teenage parents have participated in the GRADS program since 1989;
- repeat pregnancies for GRADS students have been reduced to 2.3 percent compared to 21.4 percent statewide;

- 37 percent of GRADS students are employed while attending school;
- 50 percent of GRADS curriculum competencies address individual student career planning and development of employability skills; and
- GRADS has reduced the dropout rate among participating students to 4.62 percent.

Background:

The Department of Health analysis of HB 693 states that GRADS strives to help communities and schools provide quality teen parent and youth risk-taking behavior reduction programs across New Mexico. It is an evidence-based program with proven results, but currently it is able to serve less than 20 percent of pregnant and parenting teens.

Related Bills:

None as of 02-26-2009.