

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill No: SB 153a**

**49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009**

**Short Title: Continue Family & Youth Resources Program**

**Sponsor(s): Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Jane M. García**

**Analyst: Peter B. van Moorsel**

**Date: March 7, 2009**

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**AS AMENDED**

**The Senate Finance Committee amendment strikes the appropriation from the bill.**

**Original Bill Summary:**

SB 153 amends the *Family and Youth Resource Act* (FYRA) to allow a public school or a group of public schools that has received a grant to establish a FYRA program to continue to be eligible for funding if its percentage of Free or Reduced-Fee Lunch (FRL) program eligibility drops below 80 percent, so long as it maintains a three-year average of 80 percent or more.

SB 153 also appropriates funds to the Family and Youth Resource Fund to award grants to support and increase the number of public schools with FYRA programs.

**Original Fiscal Impact:**

\$1.5 million is appropriated from the General Fund to the Family and Youth Resource Fund for expenditure in FY 10 and subsequent fiscal years.

Since FY 05, the Legislature has appropriated approximately \$7.8 million to the Family and Youth Resource Fund to finance the operation of FYRA. For FY 09, the Legislature appropriated \$1.5 million to the FYRA fund, which the Public Education Department (PED) allocated as follows:

- \$1.43 million to fund FYRA programs in 90 public schools, charter schools, alternative schools, family schools, and community centers, awarded on a competitive basis based on the eligibility criteria, using Requests for Application;
- \$30,000 to contract with the University of New Mexico to evaluate FYRA; and
- \$40,000 for training and support of FYRA sites and the advisory committee.

PED reports that in FY 09 the department allocated an additional \$150,000 in fund balances from previous fiscal years to:

- conduct a longitudinal study of FYRA sites that have been funded since the beginning of the program; and
- a case management project that will be developed and implemented in New Mexico.

### **Fiscal Issue:**

A PED report dated January 16, 2009 indicates that on that date, of approximately \$1.6 million FYRA funds budgeted by the department, approximately \$96,000 had been expended, and approximately \$1.5 million remained after half of the fiscal year had passed.

A Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) staff report regarding statutorily created funds presented to the committee in June 2008 found a pattern of delayed distributions from some of the funds examined. LESC staff further reported that delayed disbursements tend to undermine the purpose for which a given fund was created and to postpone whatever benefit might be derived from receipt and expenditure of the funds, resulting, of course, in adverse effects upon districts, schools, teachers, and the students whom schools and teachers are intended to serve.

### **Issues:**

PED's analysis of SB 153 reports that, from August 2007 through May 2008:

- 16 New Mexico school districts receiving FYRA funding served a total of 18,588 students and 5,095 family members;
- 1,859 students required an extensive amount of assistance and/or services from the FYRA programs; and
- the major reasons clients access the FYRA grant programs include basic needs (food, clothing), poor attendance in school, educational concerns, student behavior problems, adult education needs, and parenting issues.

### **Background:**

The FYRA was created as part of the comprehensive school reforms passed by the Legislature in 2003 resulting from recommendations of the Education Initiatives and Accountability Task Force. The act permits the creation of a family and youth resource program in any New Mexico public school that meets the eligibility requirement. The purpose of a Family and Youth Resource program is to serve as an intermediary to assist public school students and their families in accessing social and healthcare services. More specifically, the act:

- creates the non-reverting PED-administered Family and Youth Resource Fund to carry out the purposes of the act;
- authorizes PED to award grants to a public school or group of public schools that apply in which 80 percent of students are eligible for FRL; and
- creates an advisory committee to make recommendations pertaining to the creation of new FYRA programs in schools, review applications, and make recommendations for FYRA grants. The advisory committee is composed of the secretaries of Public Education, Health, Human Services, and Children, Youth and Families, or their designees, as well as five members appointed by the Secretary of Public Education representing four different community-based organizations including faith-based providers, and a superintendent from a school district that has participating schools.

To meet the act's purpose of serving as an intermediary to assist public school students and their families in accessing social and healthcare services, the act requires that each FYRA program employ a resource liaison. Among other duties, this liaison must:

- assess and match student and family needs with appropriate public and private providers of age-appropriate resources and services;
- make referrals to healthcare and social service providers;
- recruit service providers and business, community, and civic organizations to provide needed goods and services not otherwise available to students and their families; and
- promote family support and parent education programs.

A review of FYRA presented to the LESC during the 2007 interim found that FYRA programs are successful in providing students and families with the basic needs that enable students to succeed in school. However, the percentage of students eligible for FRL in some schools that had previously received FYRA grants dropped below 80 percent, and because they were no longer eligible, PED discontinued funding to them. To ensure continuity in funding FYRA programs in public schools, the LESC recommended the change in SB 153—that schools remain eligible for FYRA grants so long as the three-year average of the percentage of students eligible for FRL is 80 percent or greater. In addition, because of the success of the program, the LESC recommended that the appropriation to the Family and Youth Resource Fund be increased to allow for FYRA programs to be expanded to more schools statewide.

**Related Bills:**

None as of March 7, 2009.