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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/28/09

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Secondary Academic Counselor Program SB 151

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	\$195.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 151 appropriates \$195.0 from the general fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University to support middle and high school academic counselors and develop an academic advising tool kit to inform the practices of academic counselors.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$195.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2010 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The HED states that this request was submitted by NMSU to the HED for review, but not included in the Department's funding recommendation for FY10.

The LFC Appropriation Recommendations, Volume II, pages 364-365 states:

The committee has concerns about the growth of research and public service projects within the higher education budget, as well as the alignment of these projects with state goals and strategic plans. The committee also continues to have significant concerns about accountability and performance outcomes for these projects.

The committee recommendation reduces funding included in the HED request by varying levels from FY09 funding amounts for research projects, public service projects and P-20 pipeline projects focusing on students.

With respect to special projects, higher education institutions advanced 114 proposals for new projects and expansions at a total general fund cost of \$54 million during the HED budget request process in fall 2008.

According to the December 2008 revenue estimate, FY10 recurring revenue will only support a base expenditure level that is \$293 million, or 2.6 percent, less than the FY09 appropriation. All appropriations outside of the general appropriation act will be viewed in this declining revenue context.

The Executive Budget in Brief notes that over the years more than 300 RPSPs have been created, accounting for a large portion of institution budgets. The current RPSPs were reviewed while considering the relevance of the project to the core mission of the institution, the community benefit and the outcomes associated with each project. (Budget in Brief and Policy Highlights, P 9-10.)

NMSU states that:

By developing an assessment tool to gain feedback from middle and high school counselors, project staff and a subcommittee of the NMSU Academic Advising Council will assess and evaluate statewide efforts to align high school and college advising policies and procedures.

The project will develop a toolkit to support the mission of middle and high school counselors to prepare students for successful transition to college. The Advising Toolkit will help counselors ensure that all students receive timely, accurate information concerning the importance of higher education and the circumstances required to be successful. This tool kit will provide an information point for advisers, counselors, other education professionals, families, and students. The toolkit will help counselors assist in middle and high school course selection to ensure alignment with university admissions requirements and student success in college. Through collaboration with the NMSU Office of Financial Aid, information on proactive funding strategies for college and financial literacy, including material on the Lottery Scholarship will be accessible. The project will facilitate four regional conferences to promote information sharing among New Mexico's middle and high school counselors and our institutes of higher education. These conferences will assist in the creation of a state-wide coalition that focuses on the needs of our students, with special emphasis on the large population of first-generation and underserved students and families in New Mexico.

Assessment of public school counseling will initially focus on Bernalillo, Dona Ana, and Santa Fe counties because of the access these areas offer to institutions of higher learning. In addition, the numbers of counselors at middle and high schools in these counties will permit more data for analysis and feedback to develop the Academic Advising Toolkit.

The PED notes that:

In the late 1990's the State Education Department (SDE) and the Department of Labor developed a counselor's guide to support academic advisement for secondary school counselors. Copies of this document have been depleted and there is currently no access to this information.

By offering academic counselors additional support, professional development and resources, schools, students and the community at large would benefit from having students well prepared in their academic planning.

There is no Public Education Performance Measure that would be impacted by this legislation. However, this proposal would support the PED State Goal 2 for Public Education, increase academic excellence and student achievement.

GH/mc