

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 378

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .191917.1

Short Title: Northern NM Youth Science & Math Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Stephanie Garcia Richard and Others

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 13, 2013

Bill Summary:

HB 378 makes an appropriation for a program to stimulate and encourage the interest of youth in northern New Mexico in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as career opportunities in those fields.

Fiscal Impact:

\$150,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of Northern New Mexico State School (also known as Northern New Mexico College, or NNMC) for expenditure in FY 14. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert at the end of FY 14.

Fiscal Issues:

According to NNMC, the college will serve as the fiscal agent for a program known as Café Scientifique (see “Substantive Issues,” below).

According to the Higher Education Department (HED), Café Scientifique received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that supported the program for the past five years, but funding from the grant is ending in June 2013. NNMC notes that the appropriation would provide funding for Café Scientifique to operate through 2014.

Additional support for the program has been provided by Los Alamos National Laboratory and Los Alamos National Security, LLC.

Substantive Issues:

According to NNMC, Café Scientifique is a teen program that has provided STEM education outreach since 2008 in:

- Española;
- Pojoaque;
- Los Alamos; and
- Santa Fe.

Because HB 378 states that the funds would be used in Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Santa Fe, and Taos counties, it seems as if the program would expand to Taos and Sandoval counties, while no

longer providing service in Los Alamos County. Furthermore, according to HED, Café Scientifique has previously provided outreach activities in Albuquerque.

There are also other state-supported organizations that provide outreach and STEM education. One example of such an organization is New Mexico Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (NM MESA Inc.), which is a pre-college program that prepares students for college majors and careers in mathematics, engineering, science, or technically related fields. New Mexico MESA Inc. operates throughout the state and has a regional office in Española.

Background:

New Mexico’s Café Scientifique for teenagers appears to be based on a broader, worldwide version of the program for adults. This larger, adult version of Café Scientifique, according to www.cafescientifique.org, is “a place where, for the price of a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, anyone can come to explore the latest ideas in science and technology.” Furthermore, “meetings take place in cafes, bars, restaurants, and even theaters, but always outside a traditional academic context.”

The website for New Mexico’s Café Scientifique (www.cafenm.org) states that the program is run by teenagers, for teenagers. The content of the website is under a copyright of Science Education Solutions Inc., which is a small research and development company “invested in promoting science and technology literacy.” Headquartered in Los Alamos, the company is headed by geophysicist Michelle K. Hall.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

- HB 25 *ENMU Robot Workshops*
- HB 213 *Minority Math, Engineering & Science Program*
- HB 378 *Northern NM Youth Science & Math Program*
- HB 435 *Bernalillo Achievement Gap Programs*
- SB 150 *ENMU Robot Workshops & Competition*