

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 263

51st Legislature, 1st Session, 2013

Tracking Number: .191816.1

Short Title: Bernalillo GED Educational Training

Sponsor(s): Senator Jacob Candelaria and Representative Antonio “Moe” Maestas,
and Others

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 5, 2013

Bill Summary:

SB 263 makes an appropriation to provide educational training for persons in Bernalillo County pursuing a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA). Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY 14 shall revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the LGD:

- “an education appropriation to DFA of the type contained in SB 263 appears to be outside the purview of DFA’s statutory oversight”;
- if SB 263 is enacted, “LGD will enter into a grant agreement with Bernalillo County and ensure that all expenditures are in compliance with state procurement code”; and
- “Bernalillo County may issue a request for proposal to any organization that has interest in administering educational training for persons attempting to attain [sic] their general educational development certificate.”

Substantive Issues:

The Higher Education Department (HED) reports that:

- approximately 320,000 New Mexico adults do not have a high school diploma, 120,000 of whom reside in Bernalillo County;
- the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Division of HED serves approximately 20,000 students annually at 26 ABE centers throughout the state;
- there are nine ABE sites that either are underserved or place students requesting service on waitlists;
- there are 11 communities that currently do not have an ABE center, but have requested ABE services; and
- HED-supported adult education centers in Bernalillo County include:

- Albuquerque GED, Inc.;
- Central New Mexico Community College;
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute; and
- Catholic Charities.

According to the Public Education Department (PED), there are five GED testing centers in Bernalillo County:

- Albuquerque Jobs Corps;
- Central New Mexico Community College;
- Foothill High School Children, Youth and Families Department Juvenile Justice;
- the University of New Mexico-Main Campus; and
- Youth Development, Inc.

Background:

History of ABE

In August 1998, the US Congress enacted the federal *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* (WIA), which rewrote federal statutes governing programs of job training, adult education, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation, in an effort to replace them with what the sponsors thought to be streamlined and more flexible components of workforce development systems. Previous versions of the act include the *Jobs Training Partnership Act of 1982*, and the *Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973*. Title II of the WIA is the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* (AEFLA), which defines adult education as services or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals:

- who have attained 16 years of age;
- who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and
- who:
 - lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;
 - do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
 - are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

The AEFLA's purpose is to:

- assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- assist adults who are parents to obtain educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and
- assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

The New Mexico Legislature took action in 2003 that amended law to transfer the responsibility of the state level ABE program from the former State Board of Education (now PED) to the Commission on Higher Education (now HED). The transfer of the state ABE program to HED occurred in April 2005.

ABE programs provide the following services:

- Adult Basic Education (grades 1-8 and adult literacy);
- Adult Secondary Education (grades 9-12 and GED preparation);
- English as a Second Language;
- Workplace Literacy;
- Work-based Learning; and
- English Literacy/Civics Education.

State funding for ABE has declined over recent years, while federal funding from the AEFLA has increased:

Fiscal Year	Federal Funds	Legislative Appropriation
FY 09	\$ 3,384,569	\$6,531,900
FY 10	\$3,571,629	\$6,212,100
FY 11	\$3,815,227	\$5,670,259
FY 12	\$3,910,247	\$5,386,786
FY 13	\$4,163,128	\$5,186,786 ¹

Current Practices in ABE

ABE covers a broad array of learning topics, from basic English communication skills to college preparation. The diverse nature of ABE requires flexibility in teaching and diversity in course offerings. In fact, in preparing this bill analysis, nearly all literature on the topic emphasized the notion that there is no one type of ABE student, but rather an eclectic mix of cultures, backgrounds, professions, and ethnicities. Nonetheless, HED has attempted to focus the ABE program in New Mexico toward helping students obtain a professional certificate and at least one year of college.

In 2008, an HED consultant advised the department on a variety of methods for addressing and improving career pathways, most notably, the I-BEST, or Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training, model. According to HED, the department has begun implementing a pilot program for the model. The reason for the pilot program and movement toward the I-BEST model revolves around the enhanced return on investment for both the student and the State of New Mexico for ABE through the model.

According to 2010 census data:

- persons working full-time who have “some college” have median annual earnings of \$40,556;
- individuals who earned a high school diploma received median annual earnings of \$34,197; and
- those who did not complete high school were reported to have median earnings of \$27,470.

¹ Additional, nonrecurring appropriations of \$200,000 (supplemental) and \$85,000 (special) were made for FY 13 to satisfy the state’s maintenance of effort requirements.

Because of the substantial earning gap between those who did not complete high school and those with some college education, HED is gearing its ABE approach not only toward adult literacy and successful GED test completion, but also toward technical and career training.

History of the GED

According to GED Testing Service, LLC:

- the GED test was first developed in 1942 and was primarily administered to armed service members whose military service interrupted their ability to complete high school;
- the original series of GED tests reflected the needs of the industrial era;
- at the time in which the test was developed, 37 percent of test-takers indicated plans to seek additional education at the postsecondary level;
- the original series English test focused on correctness and effectiveness of expression, while the other portions – social studies, science, and literature – relied on the interpretation of reading material;
- the test was revised in 1978, and the changes, as quoted below, were characterized by a:
 - “shift in emphasis from science and social studies reading materials to a separate reading test; and
 - transition away from a recall of facts toward application of conceptual knowledge and evaluation of presented information;
- the third series of the GED test, released in 1988, was based on the following recommendations from a panel of professionals and experts:
 - the addition of a direct writing sample;
 - increased emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
 - increased reflection of the diverse roles adults play in society;
 - greater emphasis on understanding the sources of societal change; and
 - an increase in contextual settings relevant to adults;
- in the 1988 series, the reason candidates took the test shifted, with over 65 percent saying they were taking the test in order to enroll in a postsecondary institution; and
- the fourth series, released in 2002, and also the current GED test, is based on content standards at the national and jurisdictional level, and will expire December 31, 2013.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 183 *Replace GED Terms With Equivalency Diploma*
SB 381 *Adult Basic Education Fund & Tests*
HB 321 *Adult Education Programs & GED Test*