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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/11/13

SPONSOR Padilla LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE School Special Education Coordinators SB 256

ANALYST Roberts

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY13	FY14		
	\$3,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY13	FY14	FY15	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	\$3,823.8	\$3,823.8	\$11,471.4	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

There are two sections of Senate Bill 256. Section 1 creates a new section in the public school code implementing a qualified special education coordinator for each two hundred fifty students in each public school district. Section 2 appropriates \$3 million dollars from the general fund to the public education department for implementing the requirement that one-third of the public school districts in New Mexico employ a qualified special education coordinator for each two hundred fifty students.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$3 million dollars contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2014 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The PED reports that the average salary of Level III special education teachers in New Mexico is \$53 thousand. By including the cost of benefits approximated at 30 percent of a teacher's average salary, the total cost for a special education coordinator to a school district would be approximately \$66 thousand.

There are presently 888 Level III special education teachers licensed by PED in New Mexico. There is not readily available data that shows how many have six years of teaching experience and three years in a special education classroom.

Providing one special education coordinator for each 250 students would require a need of about 172 special education coordinators. The total cost would be \$11.47 million for a three year phase-in using the estimated average cost of \$66 thousand per special education coordinator. Cost per year based on a three year phase-in would be broken down as follows:

- In the 2013-2014 school year: \$3.8 million.
- In the 2014-2015 school year: \$7.6 million.
- In the 2015-2016 school year: \$11.47 million.

The above formula does not take into account the current number of qualified special education coordinators employed in the school districts and charters.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The bill states that the special education coordinators will not be required to carry a special education caseload. This may result in the need to replace a special education teacher who becomes a special education coordinator or to create a new position for the special education coordinator. In either case, it may increase the school district's staffing budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department would be responsible for administering implementing the qualified special education coordinators for each two hundred fifty students in each public school district. The department will also be responsible for administering the funds for implementing the requirement that one-third of the public school districts in New Mexico employ a qualified special education coordinator for each two hundred and fifty students.

MIR/blm