

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 108

51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014

Tracking Number: .195680.1

Short Title: Rio Arriba Bilingual Early Childhood Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Miguel P. García

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 4, 2014

Bill Summary:

HB 108 makes an appropriation for a community organization to provide a bilingual early childhood program in Rio Arriba County to serve the communities of:

- Gallina;
- Youngsville;
- Rio Puerco;
- Arroyo del Agua;
- Mesa Poleo;
- Coyote; and
- Cañones.

Fiscal Impact:

\$30,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) for expenditure in FY 15 to contract with the North Central New Mexico Development District Council of Governments in order to contract for services with a community organization. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the Fiscal Impact Report (FIR) from the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), \$15.0 million is available for PreK programs through the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) in FY 14 (current school year). Early childhood program providers from around the state are encouraged to apply for these funds.

Similarly, according to the FIR, the Public Education Department's (PED) FY 14 operating budget contains \$42.5 million in PreK, K-3 Plus, and Early Literacy funds available for school districts for early childhood programming. Many districts have never applied for this funding.

For FY 15, the LFC budget recommendation includes \$17.3 million for CYFD PreK and \$61.9 million for PED PreK, K-3 Plus, and Early Literacy programming.

Substantive Issues:

According to CYFD, The New Mexico PreK program provides comprehensive early childhood education to English language learners in an individualized approach by implementing research-based practices that have been proven to make a positive impact in children's learning. Creating a similar program targeting a particular group with a segregated approach would duplicate current efforts and not be supportive of the state's inclusive practices.

CYFD further states that the appropriation in HB 108 suggests that the targeted program is already in existence since startup and transportation costs to provide services to the communities would far exceed that amount. For example, the current cost for a half-day PreK program per child is \$3,000, and the half-day Head Start program cost per child is \$6,000 to \$9,000.

CYFD also notes that as funding becomes available, it is expected that PED and CYFD will be issuing Request for Applications to school districts and private entities interested in supporting early childhood programs. When an entity applies for funding the organization can choose to apply for startup, safety, and transportation costs. Programs that are awarded PreK contracts are also eligible for comprehensive and ongoing training and technical assistance.

According to DFA, the agency does not have the capacity or expertise to oversee a bilingual early education program.

Background:

According to CYFD, the agency's PreK program provides comprehensive early childhood education to English language learners in an individualized approach by implementing research-based practices that have been proven to make a positive impact in children's learning.

It should be noted, however, that a bilingual education program is not exactly the same thing as an English language learner program. Research on bilingual early childhood education at McGill University, in Montreal, Canada (*Learning Through Two Languages: Studies of Immersion and Bilingual Education*, Heinle & Heinle, 1987; and *Educating Second Language Children*, Cambridge University Press, 1994) has shown that:

- bilingual acquisition is a common and normal childhood experience;
- all children are capable of learning two languages in childhood;
- knowing the language of one's parents is an important and essential component of children's cultural identity and sense of belonging;
- bilingual acquisition is facilitated if children have sustained, rich, and varied experiences in both languages;
- proficiency in both languages is more likely if children have sustained exposure in the home to the language that is used less extensively in the community so that the language that is used more widely will get support outside the home; and
- parents can facilitate bilingual proficiency by using the language they know best and by using it in varied and extensive ways.

Committee Referrals:

HEC/HAFC

Related Bills:

HB 7 *General Appropriation Act of 2014*