

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 282

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199075.1

Short Title: Brain Education Advanced Learning Project

Sponsor(s): Senator Linda M. Lopez and Others

Analyst: James Ball and David Harrell

Date: February 26, 2015

Bill Summary:

SB 282 makes an appropriation to conduct a professional development pilot project to train public school teachers how to meet students' emotional and cognitive needs through a holistic brain education program.

Fiscal Impact:

\$200,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University (NMSU) for expenditure in FY 16. Unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

According to the Higher Education Department (HED), this request was not submitted by NMSU to HED as part of the annual budget review process.

Substantive Issues:

While no information on SB 282 had been submitted by NMSU as of the date of this analysis, NMSU's analysis of a similar bill in 2014 indicated that the brain education program would conduct a basic level pilot training at three schools, including:

- teacher workshops for training of trainers;
- weekly classes provided by certified brain education instructors; and
- supplemental parent workshops.

In addition, the website of the NMSU College of Education has announced an emerging scientific field called "educational neuroscience," which brings together researchers from a number of disciplines "to explore the interactions between biological process and education." According to this website, researchers in educational neuroscience study the neural mechanisms of reading, numerical cognition, attention, and related conditions such as dyslexia as they relate to education. "The aim of educational neuroscience," this website explains, "is to generate basic and applied research that will provide a new transdisciplinary account of learning and teaching, which is capable of informing education," especially in mathematics and reading.

Background:

During the 2013 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard testimony about the techniques and benefits of brain education.

The International Brain Education Association (IBREA), a nongovernmental organization that is designed to increase awareness of the brain's potential, defines brain education (BE) as an educational program for developing innate human capacity to reach health, well-being, and optimal achievement, by managing the brain effectively. One of the chief components, according to this testimony, is physical exercises that use intricate coordination between the body and the brain to promote health and wellness for optimal brain function and that commonly produce such benefits as:

- improved physical health;
- deeper concentration;
- greater creative power; and
- increased empathy.

The IBREA testimony also cited two studies of Brain Wave Vibration, described as a brain fitness and holistic healing method that helps bring the body and mind into balance by using basic vibration exercises to stimulate the brain stem and calm higher frequency brain wave activity. One study found that participants experienced mental, physical, and emotional benefits, such as improvements in sleep and an increase in energy and vitality; and the other found that practitioners were less stressed and displayed increased positive emotion.

Finally, according to the IBREA website, within the United States, more than 30,000 students in approximately 350 schools are being taught BE, and an estimated 10,000 teachers have been trained to teach BE.

The next testimony on the topic came from the University of New Mexico (UNM) Family Development Program in the College of Education, which housed a professional development program called The Mind in the Making: New Mexico (MMNM). According to the program website, MMNM:

- involves a 12-module training program that integrates current research from leading scientists in brain development, neuroscience, psychology, and child development;
- can be taken for a three-credit hour course through the UNM Extended University; and
- is recognized by the New Mexico Office of Child Development as the equivalent to the 45-hour entry level course that must be taken by all child-care employees in licensed facilities within their first year of employment.

In addition to the 12-module MMNM training, the UNM Family Development Program has also tailored training around an approach that relates to “seven essential life skills every child needs”: focus and self-control, perspective-taking, communicating, making connections, critical thinking, taking on challenges, and self-directed engaged learning.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 89 *UNM Brain Safe Program*

SB 431 *Student Athlete Brain Injury Training*