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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019

Bill Number	<u>HB449/aHAFC</u>	Sponsor	<u>Gonzales/Herrera/Trujillo, C./Allison</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.212477.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HAFC</u>
Short Title	<u>5-Year Literacy Initiative</u>		
Analyst	<u>Rogne</u>	Original Date	<u>2/13/2019</u>
		Last Updated	<u>3/7/2019</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Amendment to HB449 (HB449/aHAFC) strikes the entire appropriation, and removes language so that the statewide literacy initiative is no longer a five-year initiative. In addition, HB449/aHAFC adds language requiring the initiative to include “reading material that is culturally and linguistically responsive and relevant and age-appropriate for children, students and adults being taught to read or tutored to improve their reading.”

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 449 (HB449) would require the northeast Regional Education Cooperative (REC) to conduct a five-year, statewide literacy initiative for low-income children and adults.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill does not contain an appropriation.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB449/aHAFC would have the northeast REC establish a statewide literacy initiative comprised of a wide variety of strategies to improve literacy for low-income students and adults. The REC would work directly and indirectly with prekindergarten through 12th grade students, including after-school literacy tutoring and providing a variety of texts so students can practice reading skills both at school and at home. HB449/aHAFC requires that the literacy initiative also include reading material that is culturally and linguistically relevant and age appropriate, providing embedded literacy professional development and mentoring, community and school book distributions through little free libraries in each community, community reading events, tutoring parents and communities on the importance of supporting emergent literacy and learning, providing classroom sets with instructional material to kindergarten through 12th grade students, and assessments to show programmatic success each year.

A firm foundation in literacy is essential for student success. Third grade is a pivotal point for students' reading success, research indicates up until that point students are learning to read, while after third grade, students are reading to learn. Sociologist Donald Hernandez with Hunter College, City University of New York, found students who were not proficient in reading by the end of third grade were four times more likely to drop out of school before high school graduation than students who were proficient in reading. While prekindergarten and K-3 Plus – particularly when executed in combination – have been shown to help close the achievement gap for students entering kindergarten, third-grade reading proficiency remains low. Although student proficiency has generally increased, the majority of third-grade students are not proficient in reading or math.

The district court decision in the consolidated *Martinez* and *Yazzie* lawsuit indicated the state is violating the rights of at-risk students by failing to provide them with a uniform statewide system of free public education sufficient to prepare them for college or career. As part of the finding that the state has violated the rights of at-risk students, the court indicated there is a strong correlation between the state's failure to fund programs to teach students how to read and students' proficiency scores. HB449/aHAFC would address this finding by requiring the northeast REC to develop and implement a statewide literacy initiative aimed at low-income children and adults.

ALTERNATIVES

The New Mexico Coalition for Literacy, which encourages and supports community-based literacy programs, would receive a \$696.1 thousand appropriation in the General Appropriation Act of 2019 (HB2/HAFCS) through the Higher Education Department for an adult literacy program. According to the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy, they provide many of the services in HB449/aHAFC, though they primarily serve adults.

RELATED BILLS

HB182, Reading Initiative Literacy & Biliteracy, would require the Public Education Department to design and implement a statewide, research-based literacy and biliteracy initiative to improve reading, writing, and spelling proficiency in New Mexico that is culturally and linguistically relevant to each student.

HB390, CYFD Early Literacy Learning Program, would appropriate \$50 thousand from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for an early literacy learning program.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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