

LESC bill analyses are available on the New Mexico Legislature website (www.nmlegis.gov). Bill analyses are prepared by LESC staff for standing education committees of the New Mexico Legislature. LESC does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2020

Bill Number	<u>HB224</u>	Sponsor	<u>Romero, G. Andrés</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.216440.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/H AFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Statewide Literacy Programs</u>		
Analyst	<u>Andrews</u>	Original Date	<u>2/5/2020</u>
		Last Updated	<u>2/19/2020</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 224 (HB224) makes an appropriation from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) for regional education cooperatives (RECs) to provide or contract for a statewide literacy program for children and adults, and for literacy professional development.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill appropriates \$4 million from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY21. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY21 shall revert to the general fund.

The Senate Finance Committee Amendment to the House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 (HB2/HAFCS/aSFC) does not include the \$4 million in HB224, but includes \$2 million for school districts to apply to PED for early literacy and reading support for kindergarten through second grade students. HB2/HAFCS/aSFC also includes \$875 thousand for early literacy summer professional development, and \$10 million in the state equalization guarantee for early literacy and reading support programs.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB224 requires that the statewide literacy program use a wide variety of strategies to improve literacy for approximately 35 thousand low-income school-age students and approximately 600 thousand children and adults. HB224 would require participating RECs to assign one REC to coordinate the program, including financial accounting and disbursement of PED funding. The statewide literacy program would include the following:

- Culturally and linguistically relevant and age-appropriate reading material;
- Work with low-income prekindergarten through 12th grade students, including after-school literacy tutoring and providing a variety of texts for school and at home;
- Early childhood cultural literacy services for children and their families;

- Teaching parents, extended families, and communities strategies for supporting emergent literacy and learning, including books and English language learner and cultural instructional materials for parents and caregivers who conduct home visits;
- Embedded literacy professional development;
- Book distributions to communities and schools through community and school literacy events and little free libraries;
- Community reading events for family and community members to read with children; and
- Classroom sets of books with instructional materials tied to the common core principles for kindergarten through third grade, fourth through sixth grade, and seventh through 12th grade teachers to supplement classroom materials.

HB224 requires the designated lead REC to report on the literacy program for children and adults to PED, the governor, and the Legislature by January 15, 2021, including a quantitative assessment of programmatic success. While this date is too late for budget recommendations, the appropriation in HB224 is only for one fiscal year.

Regional Education Cooperatives. New Mexico’s RECs have been an effective resource for school districts since 1997, and provide training, professional development, technical assistance, coordination of ancillary services, and accountability measures to school districts within an identified region. REC member school districts collaborate to share costs, leverage limited resources, and obtain funding and support through grants and inter-governmental agreements. The PED request for RECs was \$5.7 million, a substantial increase from FY20. The department requested additional funding to build RECs capacity to provide technical assistance and better synchronize regional efforts with PED initiatives.

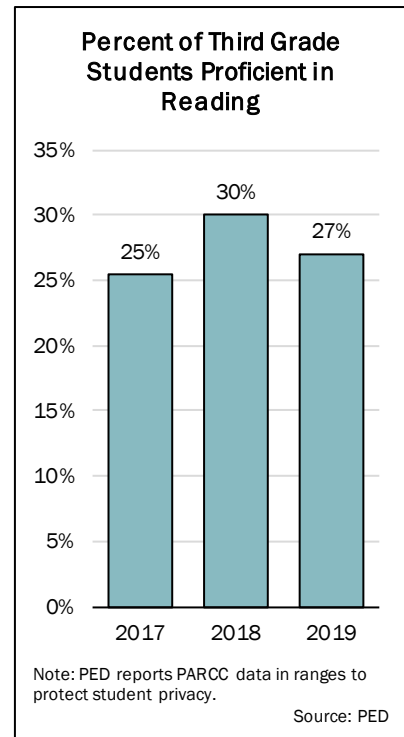
Culturally and Linguistically Relevant Materials. HB244 represents a strategy to provide students with culturally responsive materials. The district court found in the consolidated *Martinez* and *Yazzie* lawsuit the state lacked culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and materials, particularly for Native American students and English learners. In an analysis on a similar bill, the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) cites findings from a 2010 report, *Indian Education in New Mexico, 2025*, which recommends the state provide more relevant instructional materials, engage in holistic instruction that engages students, and use local languages to bridge the gap between the school and the community. The state has struggled to fully implement the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, which requires research-based bilingual and multicultural education programs to include, in addition to linguistically diverse materials, professional development for teachers and instruction and assessment for students.

After-School Programs. After-school programs could help to reduce the opportunity gap for some students. A longitudinal Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) program evaluation, Longitudinal Student Performance Analysis - Impact of School, Teacher and Program Interventions, found New Mexico schools, on average, provide a year’s worth of educational growth for every school year. However, students who start out behind generally stay behind, and a number of studies find this achievement gap is exacerbated by opportunity gaps – differences in academic and learning experiences outside of the classroom. Research has shown up to a 6,000-hour learning gap can develop between students from low-income families and their more affluent peers by sixth grade.

Early Literacy in New Mexico. The percent of third graders achieving reading proficiency in New Mexico’s standards-based assessment remains below 30 percent. Research shows third grade

is a “pivot point” when students shift from learning to read to reading to learn. In addition, on New Mexico’s standards-based assessments in FY19, economically disadvantaged third graders performed 24 percentage points below non-economically disadvantaged third graders in achieving reading proficiency. The scale of the achievement gap was a focal point in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit. The district court cited proficiency rates as evidence the state was not upholding its constitutional obligation to provide New Mexico students the opportunity to obtain an education that prepares them for college or a career.

Family Engagement in Student Learning. Research consistently finds that parent involvement such as attending parent-teacher conferences or family workshops is positively associated with student success regardless of race, ethnicity, class, or guardian education level, although only when school staff prioritize parental involvement, share decision-making with parents, and work to understand class and cultural differences. Furthermore, according to a 2020 report by the National Parent Teacher Association, increased family engagement can also lead to increased cultural awareness and inclusivity in curriculum and classroom culture.



Professional Development. PED has defined high-quality professional development as any initiative that improves teaching practices, addresses the needs of students with different learning styles, improves student classroom behavior, involves parents in the student’s education, uses data and assessments to improve classroom practice, is based on a needs assessment, is on-going and job-embedded, and raises student achievement. Research from Learning Forward, an educator professional development association, found that effective professional development enables educators to develop the knowledge and skills they need to address students’ learning challenges.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) notes in its analysis that while HB224 requires RECs to “work directly and indirectly with low-income pre-kindergarten children” it is not clear if these will be prekindergarten children in public schools only, or if the target population includes children from community-based private prekindergarten programs. In addition, focusing only on low-income children directly or indirectly may have unintended consequences as a result of singling out these children. CYFD also notes that the program in HB224 is designed to be implemented in one fiscal year, and programs need sustainability, exposure, and expansion to build trust with communities and ensure a relationship-based approach to culture, language, and literacy, particularly for dual language and tribal communities.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to SB74, Voluntary Early Reading Development Program, which would create a statewide, voluntary early reading professional development summer program for teachers.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
- Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)

MCA/tb/mc/sgs