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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Tallman/Sariñana **ORIGINAL DATE** 1/24/2020
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Development and Support of Robotic Teams **SB** 21
ANALYST Gaussoin

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY20	FY21		
	1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB58
 Relates to an appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC and LESC Files

Responses Received From
 Higher Education Department (HED)

No Response Received
 Public Education Department
 Department of Information Technology
 Workforce Solutions Department
 Regional Education Cooperatives

SUMMARY

Senate Bill 21 appropriates \$1 million to the Public Education Department from the general fund for expenditure in the FY21 for the development and support of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics – STEM – programs, including robotic teams in middle schools and high schools.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY21 shall revert to the general fund.

The appropriation, essentially, duplicates a \$5 million appropriation to the Public Education Department in the LFC recommendation for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) initiatives. Five million dollars for the same purpose is in the PED operating budget for FY20. The agency did not request the funding for FY21, although it did request \$16 million for an initiative that could include STEAM programs. LFC recommended \$5 million for STEAM; the Legislative Education Study Committee recommended \$6 million.

The Higher Education Department reports, while SB21 does not pertain to the department or state colleges, the funding could support an Eastern New Mexico University robotics program for third through 12th graders. “This program allows students to learn robotic techniques including design, building, programming, test payload delivering, firefighting and other autonomous robot challenges. Participating students are eligible to compete in an international robot competition held annually in New Mexico,” the department says.

The ENMU Robotics Program received general fund appropriations in FY15 and FY16, but funding was discontinued in FY17. In FY19, the program received a \$50 thousand nonrecurring appropriation.

Because PED already administers STEAM programs, SB21 will have no additional impact on operations.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Statewide proficiency rates in science have decreased 5 percent in the last three years, even though funding for STEAM initiatives more than doubled from \$1.9 million to \$5 million between FY18 and FY20.

According to PED partner MESA – New Mexico Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement, Inc. – robotics program promote an understanding of practical math and science, increase interest in STEM, and encourage abstract thinking, self-directed, learning, teamwork, and project management. MESA sponsors several robotics competitions. MESA received \$75 thousand for FY20, and PED requested the funding for FY21, but the funding was not included in either the LFC or LESC recommendations.

PED reports many schools have formed robotics teams as after-school activities. Those teams are funded through a variety of sources, including donations, student fees, and school activity funds.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Given the state’s significant investment in STEM and its importance to student success, the department should develop performance measures that reflect the impact of different programs on science and math proficiency.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

SB21 provides additional funding for an existing program and should have no impact on administration.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

HB58 would appropriate \$300 thousand from the general fund to Eastern New Mexico University for their robotics program for students in third through 12th grade.

The LFC recommendation for FY21 includes \$5 million for science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education programs.

HG/sb