

LFC Requester:	Becerra
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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2021 REGULAR SESSION**

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:

LFC@NMLEGIS.GOV

and

DFA@STATE.NM.US

{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Check all that apply:
Original **Amendment**
Correction **Substitute**

Date 3/5/2021
Bill No: HB233

Sponsor: Reps. Ambrose Castellano & Roger E. Montoya
Short Title: INTERNET ACCESS FOR TEACHERS

Agency Name and Code PED - 924
Number: _____
Person Writing: John Sena
Phone: 505-570-7816 **Email** John.Sena@state.nm.us

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY21	FY22		
NFI	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY21	FY22	FY23		
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to: HB86, Native American Library, Internet, and Education; HB141, Ed Infrastructure Technology Definition; and SB144, Remote Education Technology Infrastructure.

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: House Bill 233 (HB233) would enact a temporary provision of law to require the Public Education Department (PED) to provide funding to school districts to assist teachers in paying for internet access if they have not been provided a wi-fi hotspot by their school district and have not returned to in-person teaching beginning July 1, 2021 until the termination of the public health emergency.

HB233 also would require school districts to report to the PED monthly the number of teachers in the school district in need of assistance paying for Internet access and receipts from each teacher for actual expenses paid out of pocket for Internet costs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

HB233 does not contain an appropriation. HB233 would require the PED to provide up to \$150 per teacher monthly if they are using a wi-fi hotspot not provided by their school district or up to \$75 per teacher monthly for regular internet access if they are using it to provide online lessons to students.

There are approximately 22,000 teachers in New Mexico. It is unclear how many teachers would need financial assistance. It is also unclear for how long teachers would need assistance since there is no way to determine how long the public health emergency will last. Providing the minimum amount of assistance for all teachers would cost approximately \$1.5 million monthly. That cost would increase in order to support teachers using a wi-fi hotspot not provided by the school district.

As HB233 contains no appropriation, the PED would be required to cover the cost of this assistance. Based on the estimate above, a full school year of assistance could range between \$13.5 million and \$27 million.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced New Mexico teachers to provide a significant portion of instruction remotely. Many have likely had to use or acquire personal Internet connections in order to provide instruction. It is unknown how many teachers have had to acquire Internet access in order to do so.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB233 would require monthly reporting from school districts to the PED about the number of teachers who need assistance and actual receipts for expenses. Such reporting requirements may be overly burdensome.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

HB233 relates to HB86, Native American Library, Internet, and Education; HB141, Ed Infrastructure Technology Definition; and SB144, Remote Education Technology Infrastructure.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

HB233 would require school districts to report the number of teachers who need assistance paying for Internet costs, as well as receipts with each teacher for actual expenses. However, the proposal does not specify that PED pay only for actual expenses. The sponsor may wish to clarify whether teachers are entitled to amounts specified in the bill or only to reimbursement for actual expenses. Further, the bill does not specify the means by which PED would provide payment to school districts.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

N/A

AMENDMENTS

N/A