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SENATE BILL

**57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2025**

INTRODUCED BY

Michael Padilla

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; CREATING THE HIGH SCHOOL WATER  
MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PROJECT AS A SIX-YEAR PILOT PROJECT  
ADMINISTERED BY THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT; REQUIRING THE  
PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP ACADEMIC CONTENT AND  
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND MODEL CURRICULUM FOR A HIGH SCHOOL  
ELECTIVE COURSE IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION, SELECT AT  
LEAST FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT  
PROJECT, AWARD FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS TO PARTICIPATING  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COLLECT DATA; ALLOWING FOR POTENTIAL  
COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, POST-  
SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND COUNTIES AND  
MUNICIPALITIES; REQUIRING ANNUAL REPORTING AND A FINAL REPORT;  
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

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1           SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is  
2 enacted to read:

3           "[NEW MATERIAL] PILOT PROJECT--HIGH SCHOOL WATER  
4 MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PROJECT CREATED--ADMINISTRATION--  
5 COLLABORATION--REPORTING.--

6           A. The "high school water management and  
7 conservation project" is created as a six-year pilot project  
8 administered by the department to study the feasibility of  
9 offering practical environmental education to high school  
10 students and the outcomes from offering such education.

11           B. The department shall:

12                   (1) develop academic content and performance  
13 standards and a model curriculum for a high school elective  
14 course in water management and conservation that:

15                           (a) focuses on practical and  
16 experiential learning;

17                           (b) is offered as a sequence of courses;

18                           (c) is multidisciplinary and combines  
19 pedagogical approaches; and

20                           (d) meets the requirements of two or  
21 more units required for graduation;

22                   (2) select at least five school districts to  
23 participate in the project and make reasonable efforts to  
24 select districts from different regions of the state and from  
25 rural communities, small cities and large cities;

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1 (3) award financial assistance grants to  
2 participating school districts to be expended for personnel,  
3 supplies and equipment and other expenses reasonably related to  
4 the cost of providing the water management and conservation  
5 coursework; and

6 (4) collect data regarding:

7 (a) student participation in the water  
8 management and conservation courses offered;

9 (b) students' performances in the  
10 courses taken; and

11 (c) students' post-graduation plans.

12 C. The department may collaborate with the  
13 department of environment, state post-secondary educational  
14 institutions and counties and municipalities to identify  
15 statewide and local issues involving water management and  
16 conservation that may be incorporated in the development or  
17 application of the high school water management and  
18 conservation project, and the collaboration may include  
19 potential post-graduation employment or pre-employment,  
20 apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship or educational  
21 opportunities for students.

22 D. The department shall provide annual reports to  
23 the legislative education study committee by December 31 of  
24 each year of the project and a final report to that committee  
25 by June 30, 2031."

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SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.--One million two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$1,250,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the public education department for expenditure in fiscal years 2026 through 2031 to administer the high school water management and conservation project. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2031 shall revert to the general fund.

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