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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/16/09

SPONSOR Gonzales LAST UPDATED _____ HB 435

SHORT TITLE Attendance at State Fair as Instruction Day SB _____

ANALYST Varela

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	None		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 435 enacts a new section of Public School Code (Chapter 22, NMSA 1978) to allow up to one instructional day each year for students to attend the New Mexico State Fair if an educational plan is in place pertaining to the viewing of educational exhibits at the Fair and the plan has been reviewed and approved by the school principal or other school administrator in the school district.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

According to PED, districts may incur transportation costs associated with attending the state fair.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

DFA notes in their analysis that public schools throughout the state currently schedule field trips to the New Mexico State Fair during regular school days as part of their program curriculum

The New Mexico State Fair sponsors “School Days” in partnership with school districts to allow schools to arrange visits for students. By completing and submitting a one-page application form, schools register to receive free admission for students and staff (and there is no parking fee) to the Fair during the two week (not on weekends) run of the Fair.

The Public Education Department (PED) K-12 Visual and Performing Arts Education program annually displays over 4,000 pieces of K-12 school student’s art and writing work from over 50 districts, private parochial, and charter schools. Parents and students from these schools regularly visit the exhibit in the school arts building during the New Mexico New Mexico State Fair

PED states that the significant issues in this legislation are the quality of education provided to students, the adherence to providing activities that teach to curriculum standards, and compulsory attendance.

Local school boards are charged with the responsibility of setting policy governing extended class activities (field trips). Principals, as campus instructional leaders, are responsible for oversight of any instructional activity whether on or off campus.

According to PED, members of student organizations often staff information booths at the fair and participate in other fair activities, such as exhibiting and judging livestock. These are considered co-curricular activities (field trips) as they are based on state standards; students’ absences are excused.

A concern has been expressed in other legislation that schools strictly adhere to the number of instructional days prescribed. Any instructional activity including field trips must be based on teaching to state standards. It has been the practice of some schools to simply release their students for a “fair day” with no accountability for student attendance at the state fair or for their participation in any of the educational activities. This bill attempts to close this “holiday” and use the viewing of fair exhibits as a learning activity. The monitoring of the education plan by the school principal or other administrator could add considerably to the excessive duties of school administrators.

PV/mt