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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** HEC **ORIGINAL DATE** 03/16/09  
**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_ **HB** 659/HECS  
**SHORT TITLE** Require Health Education in High School **SB** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ANALYST** Varela

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Department of Public Education (PED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

The House Education Committee substitute for House Bill 659 amends the section of law dealing with graduation requirements (Section 21-13-1.1 NMSA 1978) to eliminate one-half elective unit and add one-half unit in health education as criteria for successful completion of the requirements of the New Mexico diploma of excellence required for graduation. The substitute clarifies that the new graduation requirement is for students entering ninth grade beginning in the 2010-2011 school year.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill carries no appropriation and contains no fiscal impact.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to PED, Section 22-13-1 NMSA 1978 requires health education to be taught in the first, second and third grades; be one of the required programs in grades four through eight; and in ninth through 12th grades, instruction that meets academic content and performance standards shall be provided in health education.

- The requirement for health education may be accomplished by integrating health education content in several required class (i.e. teach about drugs in science, nutrition in physical education, etc.) or districts may meet the requirement for health education instruction at the secondary level by offering a stand-alone health education course. If taught as a stand-alone course, then health education must be taught by a licensed PED teacher with an endorsement in health education.
- There are currently 228 PED licensed teachers that carry an endorsement in Health Education.

According to the 2008-09 STARS 40th-day count, 54 of the 89 school districts currently offer health education as a stand-alone course. Among these districts are Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, and Gallup.

Currently schools are required to align K-12 curriculum to the Health Education Content Standards with Benchmarks and Performance Standards.

Leading national education organizations recognize the close relationship between health and education, as well as the need to embed health into the educational environment for all students.

Promoting academic achievement is one of the four fundamental outcomes of modern school health programs. Scientific reviews have documented that school health programs can have positive impacts on educational outcomes, as well as on health risk behaviors and health outcomes.

PED reports that health education in schools is essential to enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote health. Students who have health knowledge and skills have better health status and as adults will be better prepared to contribute to the nation's economic competitiveness by:

- Working more effectively;
- Missing fewer days from work due to injury and illness;
- Using fewer medical services due to prevention or delayed onset of disease; and
- Reducing use of health insurance benefits

(National Health Education Standards: Achieving Health Literacy. An Investment in the Future. developed by the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards).

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

According to PED, this bill may support PED's state goal of ensuring that all students attend schools in a safe and healthy learning environment. Additionally, as there is evidence of the linkage between health and academic success, passage of this bill could positively impact student reading and math scores, thereby assisting in closing the achievement gap.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

There would be minimal administrative impact for PED. Schools would be required to establish a new graduation requirement and staff accordingly.

PV/svb