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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 159

**SHORT TITLE:** K-12 Student Mental Health Platform

**SPONSOR:** Lujan/Borrego

**LAST UPDATE:** \_\_\_\_\_      **ORIGINAL DATE:** 02/06/2026      **ANALYST:** Chilton

### APPROPRIATION\* (dollars in thousands)

FY26	FY27	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	\$1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

\*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files

#### Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Health Care Authority

Public Education Department

Regional Education Cooperatives

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of House Bill 159

House Bill 159 (HB159) appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department (PED) to develop a pilot mental health platform for children in kindergarten through twelfth grade and their families. The platform would offer free, comprehensive mental health education, as well as tools to identify mental health resources and support self-management. PED would be requested to contract for implementation of the pilot program and to report its analysis of the program's impact to the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee (LESC).

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY28 shall revert to the general fund. PED does not identify additional fiscal impacts of this program.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED notes the high prevalence of mental health issues among school children, quoting an NIH [study](#) as showing that twelve to thirty percent of school-age children “suffer from mental illness of sufficient intensity to adversely affect their education.” PED continues that

HB159 may support student mental health needs and potentially improve academic outcomes. Digital platform delivery of mental health services may have potential benefits. For example, families may be less likely to encounter barriers such as transportation issues and taking time off from school or work. Conversely, concerns and considerations for digital platform service delivery may include inconsistent impact of services, time constraints, privacy concerns, treatment relevancy, and overall satisfaction with the platform design and user-experience.

The Rural Education Cooperatives Association (RECA) notes that a platform such as the one proposed may ameliorate the existing shortage of licensed mental health personnel in rural areas.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers a number of resources to prepare pediatricians in addressing mental health concerns but does not appear to address the proliferating on-line mental health resources offered to children and their families. However, the AAP, along with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children’s Hospital Association authored a [joint statement](#) during the time of the COVID pandemic advocating for more mental health resources, including “increase[ing] implementation and sustainable funding of effective models of school-based mental health care, including clinical strategies and models for payment.”

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HCA suggests that its Behavioral Health Services Division and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department might collaborate with PED on development of the platform.

## TECHNICAL ISSUES

The term “platform” is not defined but probably means an online resource.

LAC/ct/dw/ct