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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Heaton **ORIGINAL DATE** 02/13/07
LAST UPDATED 02/25/07 **HB** 796/aHAFC

SHORT TITLE Extending Public School Year **SB** _____

ANALYST Hanika Ortiz/Aguilar

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY07	FY08	FY09	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		\$62,000.0	\$62,000.0	\$124,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates SB 728
Relates to HB 501

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)
Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee amendment to House Bill 796 removes the appropriation.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 796 appropriates \$62 million from the general fund to the State Equalization Guarantee for the purpose of extending the school year by five instructional days.

House Bill 796 extends the school year by increasing the annual minimum number of hours regular students are required to be in school and increases the length of the school year by five full instructional days from 180 days to 185 days.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$62 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2008 shall revert to the general fund.

Since FY04 the Legislature has appropriated \$208.2 million for salary increases and funding of the three-tier career ladder with no corresponding increase in instructional time for students. Funding is also included in the General Appropriations Act for FY08 to implement the \$50,000 minimum salary for Level 3-A teachers.

The bill increases the length of school year from 180 days to 185 days. PED notes that this will increase school district and charter school salaries and fixed costs relating to an instructional day by 3 percent. This however does not take into account the commitment made by the Legislature noted above.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB 796 increases the length of the school year as follows:

- Full-day kindergarten (5.5 hours per day) from 990 hours to 1,017.5 hours;
- Grades one through six (5.5 hours per day) from 990 hours to 1,017.5 hours;
- Grades seven through twelve (6 hours per day) from 1,080 hours to 1110 hours.

At present, some districts with the approval of the department shift the number of daily classroom hours around to allow for additional teacher prep time, professional development time or other school uses. Although meeting the minimum number of contact hours for school directed programs, these practices tend to reduce the actual number of days children are in the classroom.

The challenge of extending the time students spend in schools is being addressed in a number of ways in New Mexico. In FY07, for example, the \$2.4 million appropriated for the Schools In Need Of Improvement Fund was dedicated to extended day and extended year programs for intensive interventions for students not meeting proficiency in reading and/or mathematics in high-needs schools and several initiatives aimed at extending school time are being considered during the 2007 legislative session including funding for the Schools In Need Of Improvement Fund and the Kindergarten Three-Plus program. While these initiatives differ in fundamental ways, they all focus on extending the number of school days in high-poverty and high-need schools.

OEA reports that education reformers have long suggested that extending the time that students spend in school is one key strategy for raising student achievement. In 1894, the U.S. Commissioner of Education argued that it was a mistake not to keep urban schools open for the entire year. One hundred years later, in 1994, the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, for example, published an influential report entitled “Prisoners of Time” that argued that American education was built on a foundation of sand by relying on a uniform six-hour day and a 180-day year.

In 2005, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to implement a systematic effort to expand learning time as a strategy to close the achievement gap. Massachusetts chose to make this effort because they believed that more time in school could promote greater learning in the following ways:

- A longer school day provides more opportunity for longer classes, particularly in core academic subjects, which allows students more time to practice and master key skills and

fully explore lessons and materials.

- Additional time can offer teachers extra periods for planning and professional development, both essential for enhancing teacher quality.
- An extended schedule can enable schools to offer valuable enrichment activities such as art, drama, music, physical education, and languages, which broaden and enrich learning and engage students more deeply in school.
- The extra hours make it possible for schools to allocate time for one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions to address specific student learning needs.
- School reform is a process that often takes several years to yield significant results, so it is essential to secure long-term commitments from political leaders and a sustainable funding and evaluation strategy.
- To maximize impact, school reform efforts cannot be isolated to a small number of schools.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Current statute (22-8-9.A.1-2): (1) a school year consisting of at least one hundred eighty full instructional days or the equivalent thereof, exclusive of any release time for in-service training; or (2) a variable school year consisting of a minimum number of instructional hours established by the department.

For at least 25 years, the Public Education Department (PED) has permitted local school districts to submit for approval a four-day week in which extended hours would be added to each of the four days so that these schools would meet or exceed the minimum instructional hours required by the PED.

AHO/PA/mt:csd