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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/06/2007

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Nurse in Every School Program Implementation SB 320

ANALYST Aguilar

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$3,200.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Department of Health (DOH)

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 320 appropriates \$3.2 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department for the purpose of funding the initial year of a five year phase in of the nurse in every school program.

The bill provides that by the 2011-2012 school year all schools in the state will employ a nurse.

The bill provides for exceptions for small rural school districts.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$3.2 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.

PED reports that at present there are 841 schools in New Mexico including charter schools. The number of charter schools is expected to continue to expand annually.

Using a department estimate of \$40,000 as an average salary it is projected to cost \$33.6 million for salaries and an additional \$6.1 million in benefits for a total cost of \$39.7 million to fully implement the provisions of this bill. Based on a five-year phase-in this translates to approximately \$7.9 million annually.

This bill provides for the need for continuing appropriations to complete implementation. If incremental funding is not appropriated in future years, this would become a significant unfunded mandate for schools.

The LFC is concerned with funding programs outside of the funding formula in that it tends to disqualify school funding.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

The Department of Health notes school nurses in New Mexico provide important health services and are a critical link to the health care system for students and their families. According to the most recent data available (2005-2006 School Health Services Report), there are 408 FTE school nurses serving 758 public schools. This represents one nurse for every 750.5 public school students, which is the ratio recommended by the National School Nurse Association. However, the range of school nursing services varies significantly between school districts; some have a nurse on every school campus full-time and other districts have as few as one nurse who covers six school campuses. In some areas, school nurses travel long distances between schools and may be at a particular campus for as few as three hours per week.

DOH reports that school based health centers have significantly increased in the last two years; if enacted, DOH would work to establish an effective interface with school nurses.

The proposed SB 320 may be challenged by the significant nursing shortage currently in New Mexico.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The Department of Health has an active role in the support, training and technical assistance for school nurses. In addition, the Regional Health Officers, by law, have a role in school nurse supervision. This proposed large expansion of school nursing would increase the demand on DOH staff for school nurse support, for which additional staff might be required over time, as the initiative goes statewide.

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

The Department of Health suggests the following for consideration by the Legislature:  
Page 1, line 22, Delete the words “certified nurse” and replace with the words “Registered nurse certified by the PED”.