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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/20/07

SPONSOR Lopez LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Tools for Schools Program SB 718

ANALYST Geisler

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	\$125.0	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: SB 378

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)
Public Education Department (PED)
Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 718 would appropriate \$125,000 from the general fund to the Department of Health to conduct environmental assessments of public schools pursuant to the indoor air quality tools for schools program. Any unexpended funds at the end of FY08 shall revert to the general fund.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

DOH notes that funding for this program is not included in the executive budget request. The tools for schools program was originally initiated for New Mexico public schools through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. PSFA notes that in 2006, \$330.0 thousand was appropriated (SB 450) from the public school capital outlay fund for expenditure to the tools for schools program in fiscal years 2007 and 2008. These funds are currently being expended by a contractor through a professional services contract between the Public School Facilities Authority and the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico. Under this contract, elementary schools at select New Mexico public school districts are currently being assessed for indoor air quality issues.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In New Mexico, about 325,000 students spend their days in our elementary and secondary schools. In New Mexico, 11.3% of children 17 years of age and younger (56,900) have ever had asthma and 7.5% of New Mexican children (37,800) currently have asthma (DOH Burden of Asthma in New Mexico 2006 Surveillance Report). Asthma is the leading cause of school absence.

Poor air quality caused by unsatisfactory ventilation systems and other structural problems are significant contributors to respiratory illnesses such as asthma. Poor ventilation and indoor allergens such as mold can play a significant role in triggering asthma attacks. Because students generally spend about 90% of their days indoors, poor air quality can trigger asthma symptoms. The Tools for Schools Program has been proven an effective in conducting environmental assessments and improving the air quality in school buildings in hundreds of schools nationwide. This Program has also been used affectively in several school systems in New Mexico – Albuquerque, Gadsden, Bernalillo, Carrizozo, Deming, and Rio Rancho. The proposed funding to implement the NM Tools for Schools Program will significantly enhance indoor air quality and minimize asthma and other respiratory illnesses in school children and staff.

SB 718 would help to improve air quality in New Mexico schools and enhance the efforts to reduce asthmas in children.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PSFA notes that the DOH should coordinate their efforts with the public school facilities authority on the use of these funds to expand the number of schools already in the program.

RELATIONSHIP

SB 378 is proposing to appropriate \$50 thousand for the same purpose.

ALTERNATIVES

The appropriation could be directed to the PSFA, which is already working on this program.

GG/nt