

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE
LAST UPDATED 01/31/08 **HB** 544

SPONSOR Miera

SHORT TITLE School Violence & Bullying Prevention **SB** _____

ANALYST Escudero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$20.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 544 appropriates \$20.0 for a program to prevent violence and bullying in the schools. The Public Education Department (PED) would be the fiscal agent for this program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$20.0 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the general fund.

This bill would require approximately 50 hours minimum of an Education Administrator's time, at a cost of about \$1675.00 (\$25.50/hr + 30% benefits = \$2.6). If the PED administrator would be required to travel to implement this program, more hours would be needed.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

A recent nationally representative study of more than 15,000 6th-10th graders in the United States found that:

House Bill 544 – Page 2

- Nearly 20% admitted to bullying others “sometimes” or more often within a school semester, and 9% bullied others once a week or more often;
 - 17% said that they had been bullied “sometimes” or more often, and were bullied at least once per week.
 - 6% of the total sample said that they bullied *and* had been bullied “sometimes” or more often. (Nansel, T.R. 2001)
-
- The current leader in Bullying Prevention Programs is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. On its website, the following materials are recommended for each school: 1 guidebook per school @ \$90.00, 1 book per teacher @ \$30, questionnaire set and scoring program @ \$250. This would total over \$500,000 in materials alone, without any training of teachers, administrators or counselors. (Olweus, 2008).
 - Stop Bullying NOW is a free U.S. Department of Education-endorsed program through the Health and Human Services Department. (HHSA)
 - Violence and vandalism in New Mexico public schools has consistently gone down from 1999 to 2005, from 17,411 to 11,316 total incidents. (New Mexico Public Education Department, University of New Mexico, 2005)

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Although HB 544 does not contain any specific performance implications for PED, many New Mexico schools are seeking ways to prevent bullying and violence and this type of program may have a positive impact on academic success by creating a safer learning environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

An education administrator could be required to travel to help implement a program and this could become very costly in relationship to the appropriation amount.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

- The PED does not recommend or mandate any prevention model or program. This is a district level decision.
- \$20.0 may not be enough to implement a quality program in one district
- There is no mention of which schools or districts would have priority to this funding.

PME/bb