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SENATE BILL 235

51ST LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2013

INTRODUCED BY

Michael Padilla

AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; REQUIRING A SOCIAL WORKER IN EVERY HIGH-POVERTY PUBLIC SCHOOL; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SOCIAL WORKER IN EVERY HIGH-POVERTY PUBLIC SCHOOL--DEFINITION--IMPLEMENTATION--EXCEPTION.--

A. As used in this section, "high-poverty public school" means a public school in which eighty-five percent or more of the students are eligible for free or reduced-fee meals.

B. Except as provided in Subsection C of this section, the department shall verify that every high-poverty public school in New Mexico has employed a licensed social

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1 worker. Employing social workers in every high-poverty public
2 school shall be phased in over a three-year period as
3 determined by department rule as follows:

4 (1) effective with the 2013-2014 school year,
5 one-third of New Mexico's high-poverty public schools shall
6 employ a social worker;

7 (2) effective with the 2014-2015 school year,
8 two-thirds of New Mexico's high-poverty public schools shall
9 employ a social worker; and

10 (3) effective with the 2015-2016 school year,
11 every New Mexico high-poverty public school shall employ a
12 social worker.

13 C. The department may develop exceptions to the
14 requirement that every high-poverty public school in New Mexico
15 shall employ a social worker for small rural public school
16 districts with a MEM of 200 or less."

17 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.**--Three million dollars
18 (\$3,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the
19 public education department for expenditure in fiscal year 2014
20 for the purpose of implementing the requirement that every
21 high-poverty public school shall employ a licensed social
22 worker. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at
23 the end of fiscal year 2014 shall revert to the general fund.