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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
53rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2018

Bill Number	<u>SB124</u>	Sponsor	<u>Munoz</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.209260.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SCC/SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Public School Security Measures</u>		
Analyst	<u>Rogne</u>	Original Date	<u>1/25/18</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 124 (SB124) appropriates \$60 million in FY19 to the Public Education Department (PED) to fund security measures in public schools. Of the \$60 million total, \$15 million is for training school personnel how to respond to an armed threat or attack; \$15 million is for security personnel; \$15 million is to purchase, install, and maintain security cameras; and \$15 million is to purchase, install, and maintain metal detectors on school premises.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$60 million from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY19 and subsequent fiscal years. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY19 shall not revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA), their agency currently provides free training to member school districts and charter schools on the topics of active shooter, situational awareness, crisis intervention, de-escalation, as well as auditing school security measures. Every school district and charter school in New Mexico is a member of NMPSIA except for Albuquerque Public Schools (APS). According to APS, the APS police department, commissioned by the Bernalillo County Sheriff, has provided similar active shooter training for staff for years, but starting in FY18 APS is providing annual training for staff at every school as part of their PED site safety plan.

If SB124 passes, PED would provide training to school personnel on how to respond to an armed threat or attack at school in addition to existing trainings provided by NMPSIA and APS, potentially duplicating efforts.

As of January 24, there have been 11 school shootings so far in 2018. Since 2013, 277 school shootings have occurred across the country, including two incidents in New Mexico. In 2014, a

12-year-old boy shot and injured two students at Berrendo Middle School in Roswell. In December 2017, a 21-year-old male opened fire at Aztec High School, killing two students before fatally shooting himself.

Schools across the country are taking a variety of measures to improve safety, including physical surveillance; implementing school policies designed to prevent violence; instruction-based programs to address the precursors of violence, such as bullying; counseling at-risk students; and conflict mediation and resolution. At this time, only a handful of measures have been evaluated, and even fewer have been determined effective. Weapons deterrence, such as metal detectors and student searchers, are among the most common physical surveillance measures, and while research shows that fewer weapons are confiscated with these measures in place than without them, weapons deterrence cannot always prevent a school shooting. There are several examples of school shootings with fatalities where metal detectors were in place. In addition, some schools are decreasing their use of metal detectors and searchers because they increase students' fear and anxiety. According to the RAND cooperation, weapons deterrence may increase physical safety but compromise the psychological safety of students.

According to federal researchers, weapons deterrence measures are not likely to be effective, and are potentially harmful. The President of the National School Safety and Security Services organization advises “caution in avoiding making knee-jerk reactions after high-profile incidents of school violence... while he understands the normal parent reaction of wanting some physical, tangible ‘guarantee’ of greater security, such as metal detectors or cameras, [he] believes the practicality of implementation issues must first be considered.”

None of the measures in SB124 address why students carry weapons to school. Research suggests schools should be paying more attention to listening to students, as attackers often disclose their plans to other students, and discovering and discouraging attacks while the attacker is still in the planning stages.

Not all schools have the same security needs. NMPSIA suggests SB124 should allow schools to choose from a wider array of security measures best suited to address their most pressing concerns including but not limited to: ballistic glass, fencing, improved locking mechanisms on doors and entrances, etc. Furthermore, the open layout of many schools is not conducive to metal detectors as a security measure.

According to NMPSIA, increased efforts from PED to provide school personnel with training on the matter of armed threats or attacks on school premises (as well as financial support for schools regarding increasing school safety and security) would likely help to prevent future incidents from occurring and therefore would serve to minimize NMPSIA's liability regarding any claims.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED will need to develop processes and procedures for distributing the funds to school districts, as well as for providing trainings for school personnel.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

According to NMPSIA, SB124 needs to include definitions of “appropriately trained personnel” or otherwise reference existing state regulations for security personnel in order to ensure all security personnel are held to uniform standards of training and safety.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Are there other ways to promote a safe learning environment at schools?

Why are students bringing guns to school?

What is the efficacy of metal detectors?

What are the impacts of students attending school in a “prison-like” environment?

RELATED BILLS

Related to HB130, Public School Capital Outlay for Security, which reserves \$5 million of the public school capital outlay fund in FY19 through FY23 for school security system repair, renovation, or replacement awards.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Public School Facilities Authority
- New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority
- Regional Educational Cooperative #6

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