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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 1/24/2022

SPONSOR Stefanics LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Increase School Nurses SB 58

ANALYST Chilton

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY22	FY23		
	\$1,000.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Related to SB 67

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)  
Board of Nursing (BON)

No Response Received

Department of Health (DOH)

### SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 58, Increase School Nurses, appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to the Public Education Department for the purpose of increasing the number of school nurses in New Mexico. "School nurse" is defined as a registered nurse licensed through the Board of Nursing as a registered nurse and through the Board of Nursing and the Public Education Department to function as a school nurse.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed that the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$1 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY23 shall revert to the general fund.

The average school nurse salary in New Mexico is listed in salary.com as \$47,953, which is roughly corroborated by other estimates in the following websites: ziprecruiter.com and glassdoor.com. That would suggest that the \$1 million appropriation could pay for the average salaries of approximately 21 additional school nurses; however, salary.com estimates a median salary of \$59,280 for registered nurses in New Mexico as a whole, and in a decided seller's market (New Mexico has a great need for registered nurses in other settings, such as hospitals), it is uncertain whether the added funding would result in 21 additional nurses being found and hired to function as school nurses, unless school nurse salaries were also increased.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The American Academy of Pediatrics, a strong supporter of the importance of school nurses, summarized its support in a 2016 policy statement as follows:

School nurses, working with pediatric patient-centered medical homes, school physicians, and families, are in a critical position to identify unmet health needs of large populations of children and adolescents in the school setting. Promoting the presence of a qualified school nurse in every school and a school physician in every district fosters the close interdependent relationship between health and education. Academic achievement, improved attendance, and better graduation rates can be a direct result of a coordinated team effort among the medical, family, and educational homes all recognizing that good health and strong education cannot be separated.

As noted by BON, "School nurses provide vital health care services for school students that supports the students' academic efforts. The care school nurses provide extends to students' families – through health education, helping them access health resources for the student and the like – which promotes the health of community the school is situated in."

PED figures for school nurse services delivered in the school year 2018-2019, the most recent figures available, are as follows:

There were more than 1.9 million visits to school district health offices during the school year. The top three reasons for visits were acute illness, chronic conditions, and injuries. School nurses were responsible for 21,961 prescription medications for students in their school district. By providing health services, such as care for acute illness, chronic disease management, medication administration, and other services, during the school day, the school nurse supports students' ability to return to class and have a greater opportunity to learn. According the 2018-2019 Annual School Health Services Report, 91 percent of all students visiting the health office returned to class.

PED also notes that 18 New Mexico school districts have less than one full time school nurse, and few districts approach the recommended ratio of one school nurse for every 750 enrolled students.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

As noted by PED, school nurses are funded out of district funds (including the state equalization formula) without PED becoming involved. PED continues, “Because funding appropriated by SB58 would go directly to the PED, department staff would be required to develop a distribution method for the funds. Demand for school nurse funding could potentially exceed the amount of the appropriation; PED staff would need to establish standards and procedures to prioritize funding to schools and school districts without nurses.”

### **RELATIONSHIP**

Relates with SB 67, which expands funding for school-based health centers.

### **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

According to BON, “The board of nursing does not issue school nurse licenses. This authority is granted to the public education department.”

LC/acv