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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR <u>Herndon/Gurrola</u>	LAST UPDATED <u>01/29/2025</u>
	ORIGINAL DATE <u>01/27/2025</u>
SHORT TITLE <u>Mental Health Programs in Schools Funding</u>	BILL NUMBER <u>House Bill 58</u>
	ANALYST <u>Chilton</u>

APPROPRIATION* (dollars in thousands)

FY25	FY26	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
\$2,050.0	\$2,050.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Public School Facilities Authority (PSFA)
Health Care Authority (HCA)
Public Education Department (PED)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From

Regional Education Cooperatives (REC)
Albuquerque Public Schools (APS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 58

House Bill 58 (HB58) appropriates \$300 thousand from the general fund to the Public Education Department for the purpose of partnering with an organization to train school staff, students, and community members in culturally appropriate suicide prevention and trauma-informed care. It also appropriates \$1.75 million to support the operation of 14 mental health rooms in schools throughout the state. The bill does not specify school management (public or private) or level (elementary, junior/middle, or high school) in the schools to be chosen.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriations of \$2.05 million contained in this bill are recurring expenses to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY26 shall revert to the general fund.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Mental health problems are common among children throughout the United States and within New Mexico. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states about one in every seven school-aged children is afflicted by a mental health disorder. CDC data from prior to the pandemic are as follows:

Condition	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-11	Ages 12-17
Anxiety	2.2%	8%	15.3%
Depression	0.1%	1.8%	8.9%
Behavior Disorders	4.6%	8.4%	7.5%

Further, the prevalence of mental health disorders seems to be increasing, whether due to pandemic-related restrictions and social isolation, children’s heavy use of social media, unrest in the larger society, or other factors. CDC findings from 2023 indicate that 4 in 10 high school students had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, 2 in 10 high school students had seriously considered attempting suicide, and 9 percent had attempted suicide. Clearly students afflicted with mental health disorders are at risk for self-injury and have difficulty learning in school.

According to PED:

New Mexico ranks 34 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia for prevalence of mental health issues and access to mental health services among children. States with greater access to mental health services rank higher on the list. Approximately 16 percent of children ages 12 to 17 nationwide reported suffering from at least one major depressive episode in the past year, compared with 19 percent of children in the same age group in New Mexico. From 2018 to 2021, 99 children ages five to 17 died from suicide in New Mexico. New Mexico's youth suicide rate of 6.9 deaths per 100 thousand residents was more than double the U.S.'s youth suicide rate of 3.2 deaths per 100 thousand residents.

HCA notes data gathered within New Mexico:

Per the 2022 *State of Mental Health in New Mexico* report published by the Behavioral Epidemiology Bureau, Epidemiology and Response Division, within the New Mexico Department of Health, youth in New Mexico are currently in need of mental health support. In 2019, 2 out of 5 high school students stated they felt sad and hopeless and 1 out of 6 youth ages 12-17 experienced a major depressive episode. [Almost 94] youth per 10 thousand experienced a hospitalization for a mental health concern in 2020. This suggests that any wellness efforts aimed at supporting mental health should be explored in places where youth and children will have access to them. A number of schools, including schools in Utah and California, have utilized wellness rooms in schools and their initial data is promising.

Addressing these disorders in school-based mental health rooms or clinics appears to be a worthwhile approach to a growing problem, especially with the well-documented paucity of other mental health care in this state. Fourteen centers throughout the state would represent a significant starting point, even as that would serve only 1.6 percent of the 854 schools in the

state. Although the bill does not identify this as a pilot program, it appears to be one, and as such, might need to include monitoring and reporting requirements to assess effectiveness. PED notes the success of existing mental health wellness spaces, including 21 already existing in New Mexico.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HCA indicates its Behavioral Health Services Division “could partner with the Public Education Department (PED) to identify trauma-informed and culture-centered suicide prevention training to school staff, students and community members that aligns with the Pax good behavior games, mental health first aid Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention and other efforts that are utilized statewide currently.”

PSFA notes that schools would not be able to locate wellness rooms unless they had unused space, but “[d]epending on the room requirements of the wellness rooms, schools could potentially utilize underutilized or vacant rooms in schools where they are available.”

RELATIONSHIP

HB58 relates to House Bill 112 from 2023, which did not pass but would have appropriated \$5 million to establish school wellness rooms at schools chosen by PED using bill-specified criteria, including geographic representation throughout the state. It also relates House Bill 70 from 2024, which would have provided \$38 million for school-based mental health counselors in public middle and high schools. It also did not pass.

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