

LFC Requester:	LFC
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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2026 REGULAR SESSION**

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:

LFC@NMLEGIS.GOV

and

DFA@STATE.NM.US

{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Click all that apply:

Original **Amendment**
Correction **Substitute**

Date Prepared: 2026-01-23
Bill No: SB84

Sponsor: Padilla, Michael
SCHOOL WATER
Short Title: MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Agency Name and Code NMHED
Number: _____
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
N/A	\$5,000.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue	Recurring	Fund Affected

FY26	FY27	FY28	or Nonrecurring	
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act:

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Senate Bill 84 (SB84) adds a new section to the New Mexico Public School Code to establish the High School Water Management and Conservation Program: A two-year pilot that offers a one-credit elective high school course focused on practical environmental education and career preparation in water management and conservation. The bill appropriates five million dollars (\$5,000,000) from the General Fund to the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) for expenditure in FY27 and FY28. NMPED will administer the program in collaboration with the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED), New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the New Mexico State Engineer Office, and American Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. SB84 requires NMPED to submit interim and final annual reports to the Legislature and the Governor on the program's efficacy.

NMHED's analysis of this bill focuses on the higher education implications of the proposed legislation. Additional insight may be obtained from other agencies' analyses.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB84 appropriates five million dollars (\$5,000,000) from the General Fund to NMPED for expenditure in FY27 and FY28. SB84 states that these funds are to be used for curriculum development and operational expenses, including teacher salaries. NMPED may allocate up to four percent (4%) of the appropriated funds to educator professional development and NMPED administrative costs.

SB84 assigns new functions and duties to NMHED. These additional responsibilities may increase NMHED's administrative costs, although further review is needed to determine the full fiscal impact of SB84.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The New Mexico Groundwater Alliance, a group of water policy experts, released an 80-page report on groundwater (Thornberg Foundation). New Mexico's groundwater resources account for a substantial share of the state's overall water supply and drinking water, and recent policy discussions have highlighted increasing strain on these resources due to climate conditions and sustained groundwater pumping. Concerns about long-term water availability and water stress have reinforced the importance of strengthening the state's water workforce pipeline and increasing public understanding of water management and conservation.

SB84 establishes the High School Water Management and Conservation Program as a two-year pilot project that creates a one-credit elective high school course to assess the feasibility of providing practical environmental education and preparing students for careers in water management and conservation. The bill requires the Public Education Department to administer the program and develop curriculum in collaboration with NMHED, NMDOH, the Office of the State Engineer, and Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. SB84 also requires NMPED to select three participating high schools representing a Class A county, a Class B high-valuation county, and a Class B low-valuation county, and to establish evaluation and reporting requirements, including interim and final annual reports to the Governor and Legislature.

SB84 does not specify which students may enroll, teacher credentialing requirements, or whether the course counts toward a specific graduation pathway, suggesting these details would likely be determined through NMPED implementation, rulemaking, and curriculum design.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

SB84 would require NMPED to administer and implement a new two-year pilot program, including curriculum development in collaboration with NMHED, NMDOH, the Office of the State Engineer, and Indian Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. NMPED would also need to select three participating high schools, establish reporting and evaluation requirements, and submit interim and final annual reports to the Governor and Legislature.

For NMHED, administrative implications are limited to coordination and participation in curriculum development and implementation discussions, as needed by NMPED.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

N/A

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

If SB84 is not enacted, the High School Water Management and Conservation Program will not be established, and NMPED will not implement the proposed two-year pilot course or conduct the required evaluation and reporting on program efficacy.

AMENDMENTS

N/A