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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2026

Bill Number	<u>HB256</u>	Sponsor	<u>Herndon/Gurrola/Johnson</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.233332.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HHHC/HEC</u>
Short Title	<u>Defibrillators at School Athletic Events</u>		
Analyst	<u>Hicks</u>	Original Date	<u>2/4/2026</u>
		Last Updated	<u>2/12/2026</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 256 (HB256) would amend the Public School Code to require schools' cardiac emergency response plans provide information on the appropriate response to sudden cardiac arrest or other life-threatening emergencies during school athletic activities. HB256 would also establish a definition for school athletic activities and require automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) to be clearly marked and accessible during school athletic events.

HB256 is accompanied by House Executive Message No. 64.

HB256 does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, or May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT

HB256 does not contain an appropriation.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

2025 Legislation on AEDs. During the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers passed, and the governor signed, [Laws 2025, Chapter 129 \(House Bill 54\)](#). This law phases in a requirement for all schools in New Mexico, both public and private, to adopt cardiac emergency response plans and install AEDs on school premises. By the 2027-2028 school year, all schools in New Mexico must have a cardiac emergency response plan in place and an AED onsite. This law did not have an accompanying appropriation to provide funding for schools to purchase AEDs.

In December 2025, the Public Education Department (PED) amended New Mexico Administrative Code 6.60.11 to align with Laws 2025, Chapter 129. This amendment added new training requirements for school personnel identified in a school's cardiac emergency response plan and provided guidance to schools based on the recommendations of the [American Heart Association](#), an organization focused on promoting cardiovascular health.

Youth Cardiac Events. According to the American Heart Association, anywhere from [7,000 to 23 thousand cardiac arrests](#) each year occur in children nationwide. About 39 percent of these youth cardiac arrests are sports related. When cardiac events occur, the length of time until defibrillation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) begin is crucial for an individual's chance of survival. According to the [American Red Cross](#), a nonprofit humanitarian organization focused on disaster relief and emergency assistance, a person's chance of survival declines by about 10 percent for every minute CPR and defibrillation are delayed.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would need to dedicate staff time to reviewing cardiac emergency response plans to verify schools comply with the additional content requirements outlined in HB256.

Schools in New Mexico would need to update their cardiac emergency response plans to provide information about responding to sudden cardiac arrest or other emergencies during school athletic events. Schools would also need to ensure AEDs are clearly marked and accessible during these events.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

AED Costs. The cost of a single AED unit can range from \$1,200 to \$4,000. Additionally, AEDs require maintenance, including replacing batteries and electrical shock pads. Battery prices can range anywhere from \$69 to \$300, while pads cost \$40 to \$100 and should be replaced after each use or upon expiration.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to SB123, Defibrillators in Schools, which would provide funding to schools to purchase, install, test, and maintain AEDs.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Public Education Department (PED)

CLH/mam/mca/jkh