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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 324

**SHORT TITLE:** School District Firearm Safety Training

**SPONSOR:** Duncan/Henry/Dow/Montoya

**LAST ORIGINAL**  
**UPDATE:** 02/12/2026      **DATE:** 02/09/2026      **SPONSOR:** Chilton

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Department of Public Safety	0	\$80.0-\$120.0	\$80.0-\$120.0	\$160.0-\$240.0	Recurring	General Fund
Public Education Department	0	Minimal fiscal impact	Minimal fiscal impact	Minimal fiscal impact	Recurring	General Fund
Total	0	\$80.0-\$120.0	\$80.0-\$120.0	\$160.0-\$240.0	Recurring	General Fund

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

Relates to House Bill 25 and Senate Bill 17.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Regional Educational Cooperatives  
Department of Public Safety  
Public Education Department

Agency or Agencies That Were Asked for Analysis but did not Respond

Albuquerque Public Schools

Because of the short timeframe between the introduction of this bill and its first hearing, LFC has yet to receive analysis from state, education, or judicial agencies. This analysis could be updated if that analysis is received.

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of House Bill 324

House Bill 324 (HB324) adds a section to the Public School Code, Chapter 22 NMSA 1978, to require education on firearm safety for children in sixth through twelfth grade beginning in the 2027-2028 school year.

Annual firearm safety training, using curricula approved by the Public Education Department (PED) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS), would be required for these students. The age-appropriate training would cover school safety, safe firearm storage, and strategies to prevent injury if a firearm is encountered by a child or teenager.

The material must be politically neutral and cannot involve firing a firearm or being in the presence of firearms or live ammunition. It should not reference any content branded by any commercial or non-commercial organization. The material can either be live and in person or online or in the form of physical or digital materials. Each school district and charter school will determine how to fit this instruction into its school year.

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

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

DPS reports it would need to add staff if the bill is enacted, anticipating the need for one additional compliance officer to carry out the bill's requirements. DPS notes it has no existing statutory authority or institutional infrastructure for K–12 curriculum development; under the Law Enforcement Training Act (NMSA 1978, Section 29-7-1 et seq.), NMLEA's mandate is limited to law enforcement training, certification, and compliance. Expanding DPS's role to include public school curriculum oversight would represent a significant departure from its core statutory mission. Accordingly, DPS would likely require an additional FTE, with estimated salary, benefits, and equipment costs ranging from \$80 thousand to \$120 thousand.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to a [report](#) from the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, firearms are the leading cause of death among U.S. children aged one to seventeen, exceeding cancer and motor vehicle accidents. The report finds that gun deaths—including homicide, suicide, and accidental deaths—rose by 106 percent in this age group between 2013 and 2022. In 2022, 2,526 children aged one to seventeen died from gunshot injuries nationwide; in New Mexico, 33 children in this age group died from gunshots. New Mexico had the fourth-highest overall gun death rate in the country. Johns Hopkins estimates that gun violence imposes an annual economic cost of \$6.2 billion. Education on safe firearm handling, including guidance on avoiding contact with found firearms, could be one measure to reduce this toll, particularly with respect to accidental deaths, which Johns Hopkins reports accounted for 5.3 percent of the 530 gun-related deaths in New Mexico in 2023. See the attached data summary, *Gun Violence in New Mexico*, from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

PED makes note of similar statistics, which also indicate that New Mexico's gun-suicide rate is almost three times as high as the national rate. PED makes note of similar legislation having been passed in three other states, but also that research does not show a positive effect of gun-safety instruction on children's gun-play behavior. PED suggests another option:

While the efficacy of gun safety trainings for children remains ambiguous, safe storage laws are a proven, effective tool for promoting responsible gun storage practices and restricting access to unauthorized or at-risk individuals. Safe storage laws are linked to reductions in gun suicides, theft, mass shootings, and unintentional shootings,

and these laws can be bolstered by community outreach efforts. Schools serve as trusted and effective channels for delivering health and safety information to students and their families. Schools can use established relationships with caregivers to provide education on safe gun storage to help prevent firearm suicide, accidental shootings, and firearm theft...

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) states that its role in creating curriculum would be new, involving not only the creation of curriculum but also monitoring, compliance, enforcing legal/political neutrality, and assuring quality. DPS goes on to state that “DPS has no existing statutory authority or institutional infrastructure for K–12 curriculum development. NMLEA’s current mandate under the Law Enforcement Training Act, NMSA 1978, Section 29-7-1 et seq., is limited to law enforcement officer training, certification, and compliance. Extending DPS’s role into public school curriculum oversight represents a significant departure from its core statutory mission.”

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

PED states that “Lack of specificity in Tennessee’s program has left superintendents unclear on how to implement the training. HB324 does not state how long the course should be, and school districts and charter schools may decide how to incorporate the training into instruction, provided that the training is “developed or otherwise approved” by PED and DPS; however, the approval process for course materials, level of department oversight, and responsibility for enforcing implementation is unclear.”

PED also notes that “It should be noted that legal requirements of “viewpoint neutrality,” while ostensibly acting to prevent ideological discrimination, are often vague and difficult to navigate, as governments and courts struggle to find a path between appropriate prohibitions and encroachments upon rights of free expression.”

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Related to Senate Bill 17, “Stop Illegal Gun Trade Act” and House Bill 25, “Juvenile Firearm Use and Background Checks.”

LAC/dw/ct