

Fiscal impact reports (FIRs) are prepared by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) for standing finance committees of the NM Legislature. The LFC does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of these reports if they are used for other purposes.

Current FIRs (in HTML & Adobe PDF formats) are available on the NM Legislative Website (legis.state.nm.us). Adobe PDF versions include all attachments, whereas HTML versions may not. Previously issued FIRs and attachments may be obtained from the LFC in Suite 101 of the State Capitol Building North.

FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/29/08

SPONSOR Garcia, M.H. LAST UPDATED _____ HB 304

SHORT TITLE Las Cruces High School At-Risk Project SB _____

ANALYST Escudero

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY2009-FY2013		
	\$500.0	Non-Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates To: HB 301, HB 302 and HB 304

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 304 appropriates \$500.0 from the general fund to design a four-year at-risk activities pilot project at Las Cruces High School (LCHS) for expenditure from FY 09 to FY 13. The pilot project shall provide funding for extracurricular programs and student clubs that target students who are at risk of dropping out of school, with no more than \$5,000.00 per year given to any one student club or other extracurricular program or activity.

The pilot project will determine whether such support of extracurricular activities will significantly improve the dropout rate at LCHS.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$500.0 contained in this bill is a non-recurring expense to the general fund any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY09 shall revert to the general fund.

As stated by PED, the department may be required to designate staff to award the project, flow

the funds, monitor the flow through of and expenditures of monies and monitor the program and evaluation of the program. PED would be able to monitor these funds with existing staff. Estimated staff time for an Education Administrator 0 is 200 hrs x \$22.74/hr x 30% salary & benefits= \$5.9/year.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to PED, the dropout rate for Las Cruces Public Schools is 1.6% as compared to 12% for the State (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2005-06).

According to the National Center for School Engagement (National Center for School Engagement, 2008):

- Truancy has been identified as one of the early warning signs of students headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation or educational failure via suspension, expulsion or dropping out.
- Truancy is considered to be one of the top 10 problems facing schools. 80% of dropouts were chronically truant before dropping out. 90% of youths in detention for delinquent acts were chronically truant.
- If the attendance rate continues to decrease, the graduation rate will be affected. Further, dropout and truancy have been correlated to an increase in juvenile crime.
- The underlying issues for dropout and truancy are often associated with social, family and health barriers that prevent students from achieving. These barriers contribute to closing the achievement gap.

According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (*Introduction, 2007*).

- After-school hours are a critical time for youth. That time can represent either an opportunity to learn and grow, through quality after-school programs, or a time of risk to youths' health and safety.
- After-school hours are the peak time for juvenile crime and risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use.
- Most experts agree that after-school programs offer a healthy and positive alternative. These programs keep kids safe, improve academic achievement and help relieve the stresses on today's working families. They can serve as important youth violence prevention and intervention strategies.
- Most youth do not have access to after-school programs. Every day, at least eight million children and youth are left alone and unsupervised once the school bell rings.
- While nine in 10 Americans think that all youth should have access to after-school programs, two-thirds say it is difficult to find programs locally.
- With more and more children growing up in homes with two working parents or a single working parent, today's families can benefit from the safe, structured learning opportunities that after-school programs provide.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Relates to HB 302 and HB 301. All three bills -- HB 301, HB 302 and HB 304 -- would establish a four-year pilot for dropout prevention in Las Cruces public schools:

- HB 301 focuses the pilot on academic improvement strategies;

- HB 302 focuses the pilot on summer intensive instruction; and
- HB 304 focuses the pilot on extracurricular activities.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

HB304 refers to providing funding for dropout prevention for “extra curricular” activities. Many students at-risk of dropping out of schools will not meet the NMAA requirements for participation in extracurricular activities. Academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, according to New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA), include:

A student shall have a **2.0 grade** point average with no more than one F, based on a 4.0

- grading scale, or its equivalent, either cumulatively or for the six- or nine-week grading period immediately preceding participation (New Mexico Activities Association, 2008).

HB 304 calls for an appropriation of \$500.00 over a four-year period, with no more than \$5.0 per year given to any one student club or other extracurricular program or activity. This means that there would need to be a minimum of 25 different programs at LCHS every year.

ALTERNATIVES

According to PED:

- Combine HB 301, HB 302 and HB 304 to allow for a single comprehensive dropout pilot project.
- Change “extracurricular” activities to before/after-school programs.
- Eliminate the limit of \$5,000 per program and allow for the district to determine the adequate amount of funding for each program needed in the pilot.
- Include rural and alternative schools, schools with higher concentrations of American Indian students and schools with graduation rates lower than LCHS in the pilot.
- Specify the piloting of research-based interventions at LCHS. Starting with interventions that have documented protocols and a prior record of success will provide some assurance that the interventions can be faithfully and successfully implemented in other New Mexico schools.

Provide for an independent evaluation of the interventions. An experienced program evaluator can provide valuable assistance and objectivity by selecting standardized, valid and reliable measures for determining the effectiveness of the pilot project. The evaluator can also gather information about the level of fidelity in providing the interventions and gather information about students that discontinue enrollment. As data are not collected statewide by the PED on student transfers out of state or into private schools, home schools or other educational settings, collecting this data will be critical to determining if students are dropping out. The funding for the pilot should provide for this evaluation, which should include a report with recommendations.