

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: CS/HB 659¹

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Require Health Education in High School

Sponsor(s): Representative Mary Helen Garcia

Analyst: James Ball

Date: March 12, 2009

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL 659

Bill Summary:

HB 659 amends the section of the *Public School Code* dealing with high school graduation requirements to reduce the number of elective units and to add one-half required unit in health education for students entering the ninth grade in school year 2010-2011.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 659 makes no appropriation.

However, the bill may have a fiscal impact on school districts and charter schools if they have to find or hire teachers with licensure endorsements in health education.

Issues:

The Public Education Department (PED) rule requires that a health education teacher hold a licensure endorsement in that field. By requiring health education for graduation, school districts would have to find teachers endorsed in health education to provide the instruction.

According to PED, in school year 2008-2009 there are:

- 897 teachers licensed in New Mexico with a health education endorsement; and
- 54 school districts, including Albuquerque Public Schools, Las Cruces Public Schools, Santa Fe Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, and Gallup-McKinley County Public Schools, that offer health education as stand-alone courses.

Background:

In its original analysis of HB 659, PED stated that the *Public School Code* currently requires health education to be taught:

- in the first, second, and third grades;
- as one of the required programs in grades 4 through 8; and

¹ Version .178591.1

- in grades 9-12, including instruction that meets academic content and performance standards in health education.

PED further stated that the current requirement may be accomplished by integrating health education content in other required classes. For example, a district curriculum might address drug use in a science class or healthful nutrition in a physical education class. Districts can also meet the current requirement for health education instruction in high school by offering stand-alone health education classes. As noted under “Issues” above, if taught as stand-alone classes, health education must be taught by a licensed teacher with an endorsement in health education.

In the original analysis of HB 659, PED quotes the National Health Education Standards developed by the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, which finds that “students who have health knowledge and skills have better health status and as adults will be better prepared to contribute to the nation’s economic competitiveness by:

- working more effectively;
- missing fewer days from work due to injury and illness;
- using fewer medical services due to prevention or delayed onset of disease; and
- reducing use of health insurance benefits.”

Related Bills:

HB 342a *Public School Media Literacy Classes*

SB 46a *High School Pre-Apprenticeship Programs*