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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/27/10
 SPONSOR García, M.H. LAST UPDATED 02/16/10 HB 44/aSEC
 SHORT TITLE Health Education Required for Graduation SB _____
 ANALYST Hoffmann

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY10	FY11		
	*NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)
 *See Narrative

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)
 Public Education Department (PED)
 Higher Education Department (HED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee amendment to House Bill 44 simplifies the subsection describing the requirement for health education. Students entering the eighth grade in school year 2012-2013 would be required to have a course in health education in order to graduate. School districts may require health education either in middle school or high school. In school year 2011-2012 school districts must submit a health education implementation plan that would begin the next school year and subsequent years. The plan would specify the grade in which health education would be required, and how it aligns with PED content and performance standards.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 44 amends the graduation requirements in Section 21-13-1.1 NMSA 1978 to eliminate one-half elective unit and add one-half unit in health education as a requirement for successful completion of the requirements of the New Mexico diploma of excellence required for graduation beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 2012-2013 school year.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The PED states that there are no fiscal implications to their department or to schools or districts.

The CYFD reports that their department will absorb the cost of hiring a licensed health instructor or providing access to on-line classes taught by a licensed health instructor with existing resources. CYFD operates schools in its large juvenile justice facilities, so the graduation requirements would apply to CYFD students as well.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The PED reports that the requirement for health education may be accomplished by integrating health education content in several required classes (e.g., teach about drugs in science, nutrition in physical education, etc.) or districts may meet the requirement for health education instruction at the secondary level by offering a stand-alone health education course. They further report that research and experts in the field concur that integrating health education into existing courses is not as effective as when it is taught as a stand-alone course. “When health education is integrated into existing courses, it is taught sporadically with a focus on health-related knowledge with little to no attention given to skills required for the reduction of health risk behaviors. When health education is delivered as a stand-alone course, taught by licensed health educators, it is the most effective way in increasing student knowledge, skills and attitudes and influencing positive health behaviors.” (William Potts-Datema, Chief, Program Development and Services Branch, CDC/DASH).

According to a PED Licensure Bureau report, there are currently 1,600 individuals that hold a PED licensure endorsement in health education. When health education is integrated into other subject areas it is not a requirement that it be taught by teachers licensed in health education. If health education is offered as a stand-alone course then it must be taught by a licensed PED teacher with an endorsement in health education.

Health education is not currently required as a stand-alone course for graduation. Currently Section 22-13-1 NMSA 1978 requires health education to be taught in the first, second and third grades; be one of the required programs in grades four through eight; and in ninth through 12th grades provides for health education that meets academic content and performance standards.

The HED reports that requiring a half unit of health education would place New Mexico near the middle nationally in regards to the amount of health education required. Twenty-three states do not have any health education requirements. Seventeen states require more than a half of a unit for public schools. Five states require the half unit of health education. Six states offer varied options on health education and physical education.

The PED notes that 34 school districts already have a local graduation requirement for health education. Among these districts are Albuquerque, Bernalillo, Roswell, Las Cruces (pilot), Santa Fe, Zuni, Questa and others.