

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 217

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: .184547.1

Short Title: Field Trips to Jails in 7th and 8th Grade

Sponsor(s): Representative David C. Chavez and Others

Analyst: Ally Hudson

Date: February 8, 2011

Bill Summary:

HB 217 adds a new section to the *Public School Code* to require every school district to institute in every middle school in the district a delinquency deterrence program that requires field trips to jails and juvenile detention facilities for seventh and eighth grade classes.

Among its other provisions, HB 217:

- requires each student to go on at least one field trip to a jail or juvenile detention facility in the seventh and eighth grade, unless the student's parent signs a waiver of participation; and
- in the case of a waiver, requires the middle school to provide an alternative learning experience about the consequences of juvenile and adult crime.

Finally, HB 217 contains an implementation date of school year 2011-2012.

Fiscal Impact:

HB 217 does not contain an appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

An analysis by the Administrative Office of the District Attorneys (AODA) notes that:

- “there is no money provided [in HB 217] for the schools to add these [delinquency deterrence] programs to their curriculum;”
- the field trips required in the legislation may take time away from other subjects in the school curriculum; and
- liability issues may arise if students are injured while on a field trip.

Similarly, an analysis by the Public Education Department (PED) points out that middle schools would be required to secure buses for the field trips. Because bus rates are negotiated at the local level, “the fiscal impact [may] vary depending on the bus cost and the length of time for the field trip.”

Substantive Issues:

According to the PED analysis, research indicates that delinquency deterrence programs are not effective. For example, “the original New Jersey Scared Straight program was evaluated in 1982 using a randomized control group [and] reported that not only was there no effect on the criminal behavior of participants who went through the program in comparison with those who did not, the participants were actually more likely to be arrested.”

Related Bills:

None as of February 8, 2011.