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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR:	Romero	DATE TYPED:	02/15/00	HB	
SHORT TITLE:	School Counseling to Prevent Violence			SB	217
				ANALYST:	Fernandez

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY00	FY01	FY00	FY01		
	\$ 1,500.0			Recurring	G/F

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to HB75

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

State Department of Public Education (SDE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 217 appropriates \$1,500.0 to SDE for the purpose of increasing school counseling programs by lowering the counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250 and to provide school counseling services for violence prevention, mediation and conflict resolution, stress and conflict management, child abuse, harassment, family problems, interpersonal concerns and other concerns that may impede student learning.

Significant Issues

In order to receive funding, schools must submit an application along with a written comprehensive school counseling program services plan. This bill requires that the plan comply with the department's technical assistance handbook and national standards for school counseling programs. The plan shall also include a proposal to reduce the counselor-to-student ratio to 1:250 and demonstrate that counselors devote 85 percent of their time for direct services to students.

According to SDE, school counselors provide services in the areas of violence prevention, mediation and conflict resolution, stress and conflict management, child abuse, harassment, family problems, and other issues that may impede student learning. The department reports that most counselors spend only 50 percent of their time providing these types of services to students.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill appropriates \$1,500.0 from the general fund to SDE for expenditure in fiscal year 2001. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2001 shall revert to the general fund.

SDE is required to distribute funds to public schools based on applications submitted by schools.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

SDE and each school is required to develop an evaluation component with measures that demonstrate the impact of lowering the counselor-to-student ratio and report findings to the Legislative Education Study Committee by November 2001.

SDE indicates that this program can be administered with existing staff.

RELATIONSHIP

Relates to HB75.

CTF/njw