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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Powdrell-Culbert/ Harper ORIGINAL DATE 2/20/19 HB 574/aHEC
 LAST UPDATED 2/26/19 SB _____
 SHORT TITLE Drug Counseling Pilot Project SB _____
 ANALYST Hawker

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation					Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23		
	\$300.0				Recurring	General Fund

Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY19	FY20	FY21	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		Indeterminate, see fiscal implications				

Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)
 Department of Public Safety (DPS)
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment to House Bill 574 amends the length of the pilot project to a two-year pilot project.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 574 creates in the Public School Code a five-year pilot project in the Rio Rancho Public Schools (RRPS) to determine whether having licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselors or school counselors who specialize in alcohol and substance abuse in public schools helps

improve school attendance, lower truancy rates, and better prepare students to set and achieve goals toward a drug-free life.

RRPS is directed to consult with PED to design the pilot, to include benchmarks. Annual reporting to the Legislature is required during the pilot program with a final report with recommendations to be submitted to the governor and Legislature.

The drug counseling pilot project fund is created as a nonreverting fund in the state treasury. HB 574 appropriates \$300 thousand into this fund to be used to pay salaries and benefits of at least three drug and alcohol abuse counselors, supplies, and equipment for the pilot project.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$300 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY20 shall not revert until the pilot project is complete.

PED cannot determine the fiscal implications on the department at this time. PED, in conjunction with RRPS, is required to seek public and private gifts, grants, and donations to benefit the pilot project. Additionally, PED is to administer the drug counseling pilot project fund as well as to provide approval for the purchase of goods and services necessary for the project.

This bill creates a new fund and provides for continuing appropriations. LFC has concerns with including continuing appropriation language in the statutory provisions for newly created funds, as earmarking reduces the ability of the Legislature to establish spending priorities.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Alcohol problems have been linked to poor school attendance, lower grades, and increased dropout rates. Behaviors associated with substance use include a lack of motivation and self-discipline. School-based interventions can be an effective strategy for alcohol and drug prevention. Substance abuse can be addressed through providing education, counseling, early intervention, and referring students for assessment and intervention. School can partner with community programs, mental health professionals and families to address youth substance abuse. School-based health centers also play a role in counseling students in need of treatment.

According to the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS), Sandoval County, shows rates of alcohol and drug use similar to the state average. This may demonstrate that RRPS is an example of an average New Mexico school district and an appropriate setting for a pilot project to address substance abuse prevention. Of the high school students that participated in the 2017 YRRS, 27.5 percent of students in Sandoval County currently drink alcohol. A total of 22.4 percent of Sandoval County students had their first drink before 13, 10.9 percent, 30 percent use marijuana, and 8.5 percent use painkillers to get high.

HB2/HAFCS funds the public school at-risk formula factor at 0.25, more than doubling the previous factor. These funds could be used to support drug and alcohol abuse counselors.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED will consult with RRPS in the design of the pilot project, development of benchmarks, performance measures, and evaluations. The department will provide administration of the drug counseling pilot project fund. PED and RRPS will submit annual reports and a final report.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to DOH:

New Mexico had the 17th highest drug overdose death rate among all states in 2017, down from 2nd in 2014:

<https://ibis.health.state.nm.us/indicator/view/DrugOverdoseDth.State.html>.

New Mexico has the highest alcohol-related death rate in the nation (https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2014/13_0293.htm). In 2017, 1,461 people died of alcohol related causes in New Mexico, which amounts to nearly four people dying of alcohol-related causes every day.

In NM “in 2017, past 30-day marijuana and methamphetamine use were more prevalent among NM students than among US students.” (2018 NM Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile <https://nmhealth.org/data/view/substance/2201/>, p. x of the Executive Summary).

In NM “in 2017, 26.2 percent of high school students reported that they were current drinkers... Boys and girls are equally likely to be current drinkers.” (2018 NM Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile <https://nmhealth.org/data/view/substance/2201/>, p. 77).

Since 1995, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) has operated Crossroads which is a substance abuse prevention/intervention program for high school students. “The program services are delivered by a group of licensed school counselors with training and experience in the field of substance abuse.” (<http://www.aps.edu/counseling-services/crossroads-project-success-pip-program>).

In 2017 in New Mexico, “the use of marijuana was more commonly reported by American Indian students than by students in other racial/ethnic groups. Asian or Pacific Islander students were more likely to report past-30-day use of cocaine, painkillers, heroin, methamphetamine, and inhalants than students of other racial/ethnic groups.” (2018 NM Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile <https://nmhealth.org/data/view/substance/2201/>, p. x).

In 2017, students who identify as Hispanic were most likely to be current drinkers, followed by White students. American Indian students were the least likely to be current drinkers. (2018 NM Substance Abuse Epidemiology Profile <https://nmhealth.org/data/view/substance/2201/>, p. 77).