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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** Sanchez **LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ORIGINAL DATE** 2/24/25  
**BILL**  
**SHORT TITLE** Student Water Safety Guidance **NUMBER** House Bill 532  
**ANALYST** Mabe

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
	No fiscal impact					

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.  
 \*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files  
 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
 American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)  
 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)  
 U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP)

Agency Analysis Received From  
 Regional Education Cooperatives (REC)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From  
 Public Education Department (PED)  
 Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)  
 Environment Department (NMED)  
 Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of House Bill 532

House Bill 532 (HB532) mandates that all school districts and charter schools develop and provide student water safety guidance at the beginning of each school year, starting with the 2025-2026 school year.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact because schools would simply provide written guidance for families.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of death for children ages 5-12, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Drowning deaths vary by state. With 1.62 drowning deaths per 100 thousand, New Mexico ranks higher than the national average.

Drowning deaths also vary by race and ethnicity, with Black children 5 to 9 years old fatally drowning at rates 2.6 times higher than white children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and American Indian or Alaska Native people under the age of 30 fatally drowning at rates 2.7 times higher than white people, according to the CDC.

Basic swimming and water safety skills have been shown to prevent drowning, along with close supervision, life jackets, fences enclosing pools and other bodies of water, CPR training, and lifeguards. However, access to lessons is not equitable—around 63 percent of Black adults and 72 percent of Hispanic adults report never having taken a swim lesson.

Overall, drowning deaths have decreased by one-third since 1990, but they have been increasing in recent years. In 2022, drowning deaths among children ages 1-4 were 28 percent higher than in 2019. New Mexico is not alone in introducing legislation to address the issue. A nonprofit called Stop Drowning Now, lists 15 states with legislation around water safety, and this list does not include several states with legislation on the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) bill tracking website. Approach to water safety varies in these bills. For example, Michigan enacted legislation last year to teach required safety as part of classes like health and physical education.

The U.S. National Water Safety Action Plan (USNWSAP), a 10-year roadmap to addressing this issue nationally, supports the idea in House Bill 532 that providing targeted water safety information to parents is a useful way to enhance overall drowning prevention efforts. However, the plan urges people to “move beyond the perception that prevention is merely education.”

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

School districts and charter schools will need to create or adopt water safety educational materials and include information about local water safety and swimming classes.

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