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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

<b>SPONSOR</b>	<u>Cote</u>	<b>ORIGINAL DATE</b>	<u>1/18/2008</u>	<b>HJM</b>	<u>3</u>
<b>SHORT TITLE</b>	<u>Study School Staff Shortage Issues</u>	<b>LAST UPDATED</b>		<b>SB</b>	
		<b>ANALYST</b>		<u>Padilla</u>	

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From  
Public Education Department (PED)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 3 requests that the Public Education Department (PED) and the Office of the Education Accountability (OEA) examine issues related to turnover and emergencies resulting from predicted shortages of school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel in public school districts and charter schools. The results of this study are to be reported to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) prior to the first session of the 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

House Joint Memorial 3 (HJM3) states that school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel are essential to children's learning in New Mexico schools and New Mexico schools must recruit and retain qualified school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel to cope more adequately with the demands of the Federal No Child Left Behind Act.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The PED indicates in its analysis that the Department may be required to designate staff to oversee and implement the study, produce a report and submit the report of the study with recommendations and findings to the LESL. The PED further indicates that it can do this with existing staff; however, it is estimated that it would take 40 hours by a Social/Community Services Coordinator A to accomplish this task, i.e., (40 hrs x 22.74/hr + 30% salary & benefits).

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HJM3 is a LESL bill.

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HJM3 proposes that school districts have a difficult time attracting and retaining qualified school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel. PED indicates that instructional support personnel is defined in the Public School Code as “a person who is employed to support the instructional program of a school district, including educational assistant, school counselor, social worker, school nurse, speech-language pathologist, psychologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, recreational therapist, interpreter for the deaf and diagnostician.” Furthermore, the PED notes that the School Personnel Act includes the following positions as instructional support providers that must be licensed by PED: educational assistants, school counselors, school social workers, school nurses, speech-language therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and recreational therapists, interpreters for the deaf, diagnosticians and other service providers.

HJM3 further proposes that school counselors play a critical role in helping students focus on academic, personal, social and career development in order to be prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. Accordingly, many school counselors, nurses and other instructional support personnel in New Mexico average more than fourteen years of experience; however, due to competition for their services from the private sector, they can choose employment in a variety of settings other than public schools, such as hospitals, pediatric clinics, rehabilitation facilities, mental health centers and nursing homes.

HJM3 indicates that examination of the current issues resulting from predicted shortages of school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel in public school districts and charter schools needs to be studied by the PED and the OEA and the findings should be presented before the Legislative Education Study Committee prior to the first session of the Forty-Ninth Legislature with copies of this Memorial to be transmitted to the Secretary of Public Education, the Director of the Office of Education Accountability, and the Secretary of Finance and Administration.

As part of the PED’s analysis provided to the LFC analyst, it is important to note the significant research implications regarding the projected shortage of school professionals in the Public School system. Accordingly, upon research findings provided by the PED from a study completed by the American Association of Colleges and Nursing (AACN, 2007), “The United States is in the midst of a nursing shortage that is expected to intensify. Moreover, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA, 2006) “projected that the nation’s nursing shortage would grow to more than one million nurse by the year 2020. The average age of the Registered Nurse (RN) population in March 2004 was 48.8 years of age.” A ratio of one nurse per 750 pupils is recommended by the National Association of School Nurses.

Further research as indicated in the PED’s analysis provided to the LFC states as follows:

According to a publication from the American School Counselor Association (Baker, 2007):

- 1) The Optimum ratio of school counselors to student is one to 250. No state meets that goal.
- 2) Even if the number of school counselors is increased, shifting populations and increasing numbers of school-aged children remain a problem.
- 3) For example, the number of school counselors statewide in California inched up during the 90’s but has not kept pace with increasing school enrollment. Because of increased school enrollment, the ratio of students to counselors has remained roughly the same despite the gradual increase of new counselors.

- 4) Shortages of school nurses, counselors and other support personnel may intensify.

### **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The PED states that HJM3 aligns to the PED goal of “Ensuring that all students attend schools in a safe and healthy environment and the PED strategy of keeping students ready to learn by providing access to health care (including mental health), healthy foods and physical fitness.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The PED explains that coupled with the OEA, they are the administrative agents for this bill. The PED also indicates that it could accomplish this task with existing staff.

### **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

According to the PED, a study of the shortage of school nurses, counselors and other professionals instructional support staff by PED and the OEA may not occur if this bill is not enacted.

### **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS**

- 1) What are the social, emotional, psychological, and health implications for New Mexico’s children in Public Schools if school counselors, nurses and other professional instructional support personnel are leaving the public sector for the private sector?
- 2) What incentives are available for public professionals to remain in the public sector?
- 3) What measures can be taken to reverse the shortfall of public personnel through the PED?