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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 01/31/08

SPONSOR Lopez LAST UPDATED \_\_\_\_\_ HB \_\_\_\_\_

SHORT TITLE Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program SB 479

ANALYST Geisler

### APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$20.0	Recurring	General

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates: Senate Bill 165

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

### Responses Received From

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

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 479 would appropriate \$20,000 from the General Fund to the Department of Health (DOH) to support the Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program for expenditure in fiscal year 2009). Any unexpended funds would revert to the General Fund.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding in SB 479 is not included in DOH's executive budget request.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In New Mexico, about 325,000 students spend their days in our elementary and secondary schools. In New Mexico, 11.3% of children 17 years of age and younger (56,900) have ever had asthma and 7.5% of New Mexican children (37,800) currently have asthma (DOH Burden of

Asthma in New Mexico 2006 Surveillance Report). Asthma is the leading cause of school absence.

Poor air quality caused by unsatisfactory ventilation systems and other structural problems are significant contributors to respiratory illnesses such as asthma. Poor ventilation and indoor allergens such as mold can play a significant role in triggering asthma attacks. Because students generally spend about 90% of their days indoors, poor air quality can trigger asthma symptoms. The DOH Asthma Program often responds to calls from the public and schools who are concerned that air quality in school classrooms are triggering respiratory illnesses such as asthma.

The Tools for Schools Program has proven effective in conducting environmental assessments and improving the air quality in school buildings in hundreds of schools nationwide. This Program has also been used effectively in several school systems in New Mexico – Albuquerque, Gadsden, Bernalillo, Carrizozo, Deming, Rio Rancho, Roswell and Maxwell.

PED notes that the tools for schools program was originally initiated for New Mexico Schools through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In 2006, \$330.0 was appropriated from the PSCOC fund for this program. The Public School Facilities Authority has contracted with the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico to provide assessments at selected elementary schools for indoor air quality issues.

Good indoor air quality is an essential component of a healthier environment and may have a direct impact in assisting schools in educating children. The funds from this bill will be used to improve indoor air quality in New Mexico schools through an assessment process. Certain schools will be selected for participation. After a thorough assessment has been done a detailed summary will be written containing the findings and recommendations to the school districts' superintendents. Recommendations may include repairs of roof leaks, HVAC systems, etc.

## **DUPLICATION**

Senate Bill 165 contains \$33,200 to conduct environmental assessments of public schools pursuant to the indoor air quality tools for schools program

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

DOH notes that it has been reported that children living in poverty have higher asthma rates. K-5 students in public school districts where less than 58.3% of students received free or reduced lunches had a lower prevalence of asthma (6.5%) than students in school districts where more than 58.3% of students received free or reduced lunches (8.0%). In addition, public elementary school students in Large Town Areas had the highest asthma prevalence (9.2%). Also, asthma hospitalization rates are higher for boys than girls until the teenage years at which point rates become higher for girls than boys.

GG/nt