

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: HB 514

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Bernalillo Stay in School Program

Sponsor(s): Representative Antonio “Moe” Maestas

Analyst: James Ball

Date: February 9, 2009

Bill Summary:

HB 514 makes an appropriation for a program designed to provide at-risk youth in Bernalillo County with:

- employability and life skills training;
- tutoring and homework assistance; and
- after-school work experience opportunities.

Fiscal Impact:

\$100,000 is appropriated to the Local Government Division at the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) from the General Fund for FY 10.

Unexpended and unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

Initiated by the Executive in 2004, the Governor’s Truancy Prevention Program was originally administered by CYFD, and funded in FY 04 with \$1.0 million in Federal Fiscal Relief Funds. The administration of the program was transferred to PED in FY 04, and the program has been funded by the Legislature since FY 05. In FY 09, \$1.0 million was appropriated for truancy/dropout prevention, including \$230,000 for the Second Judicial Court for truancy court; however, the Governor vetoed the funds for the Second Judicial Court resulting in a final appropriation of \$770,000. According to PED, the \$770,000 FY 09 appropriation provides funds for the following current initiatives:

- \$495,000 for school-based projects at 16 school sites;
- \$30,000 for program evaluation;
- \$70,000 for program support, site visits, and technical assistance;
- \$30,000 for Native American initiatives;
- \$40,000 for training funded sites;
- \$27,500 for a project that correlates community service with detention and schools;
- \$27,500 for a truancy prevention community collaborative in northern New Mexico; and
- \$50,000 for dropout prevention.

Issues:

The Department of Health (DOH) analysis of HB 514 asserts that truancy is an early indicator of difficulties in school and that a young person who is truant from school may be likely to engage in risky behaviors. In school year 2007-2008, the percentage of habitually truant students in New Mexico was 9.5 percent for middle school and 20.2 percent for high school. Reducing the number of children who are truant is a goal of the Children's Cabinet. Youth advocates, corrections entities, and community-based dropout and truancy prevention organizations, working together, have seen reductions in habitual truancy in recent years.

Background:

According to the Public Education Department (PED), the goals of the Governor's Dropout and Truancy Prevention Initiative are to decrease truancy and dropout and to increase student attendance. In order for students to achieve in schools they must first be present. In addition, the underlying issues for dropout and truancy are oftentimes associated with social, family, and health barriers that prevent students from achieving. These barriers contribute to the disparities seen in the state's diverse cultures that contribute to the achievement gap. Dropout and truancy prevention programs provide supports to students, schools, and families to increase academic success and close the achievement gap for all students.

According to the *2006-2007 New Mexico Student Dropout Report*, the Albuquerque Public Schools in Bernalillo County reported 3,253 dropouts out of the total student enrollment of 42,755, for a dropout rate of 7.6 percent.

Related Bills:

None as of 02-09-2009.