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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019**

**Bill Number** SM128                      **Sponsor** Campos  
**Tracking Number** .214944.1              **Committee Referrals** SEC  
**Short Title** Athletic Trainers in Public Schools  
**Analyst** Force                                      **Original Date** 3/13/19  
**Last Updated** \_\_\_\_\_

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**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Memorial 128 (SM128) notes the Athletic Trainer Practice Act defines athletic trainers as one who, with the advice and consent of a licensed physician practices the treatment, prevention, care, and rehabilitation of sports injuries. SM128 further notes such persons could be of value to secondary schools by, among other things, reducing the incidence and severity of sports injuries, the cost of treating them, and resolves to request the Public Education Department (PED) to convene a task force to study the economic impact of employing athletic trainers in secondary schools. The memorial would request the task force be composed of representatives of PED, the Department of Health, the Human Services Department, the Office of the Superintendent of Insurance, the Athletic Trainer Practice Board of the Regulation and Licensing Department, the New Mexico Athletic Trainers' Association, and the New Mexico Activities Association. Finally, SM128 requests the task force to report its findings to the Legislative Finance Committee by October 1, 2019.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to a 2012 study from the American Academy of Pediatrics, high schools with athletic trainers on staff have lower overall injury rates. Notably, schools that employ trainers are also more likely to have their athletes diagnosed with concussions. Specially, the study indicates overall injury rates were 1.73 times higher among soccer players and 1.22 times higher among basketball players in schools without athletic trainers. Further, Recurrent injury rates were 5.7 times higher in soccer and 2.97 times higher in basketball in schools without athletic trainers. In contrast, concussion diagnoses were 8.05 times higher in soccer and 4.5 times higher in basketball in schools with athletic trainers.

According to a survey from the University of Michigan, two-thirds of middle and high school parents supported a requirement that high schools have athletic trainers onsite for practices and games. One of the most often cited reason for not having trainers on staff is budgetary constraints, according to a 2015 study in the *Journal of Athletic Training*. However, the Korey Stringer Institute suggests that insurance premiums tend to be higher for schools who lack athletic trainers, noting in one instance, insurance premiums were greater than the salary of a trainer who was laid off in order to save money. Noting the increased attention to concussions in recent years, the institute indicates athletic trainers, who have a relationship with their athletes, would be more likely to spot aberrant behavior that may indicate a concussion.

A 2011 study from the *American Journal of Sports Medicine* notes physicians were on site at the time of reported concussions suffered by high school athletes during the 2009-2010 school year only 7.7 percent of the time, while trainers were on site for at least 70 percent, and, where they were present, assessed an athlete for concussion 94.4 percent of the time. The study found trainers and physicians used similar return-to-play intervals when managing athletes who sustained sports-related concussions although, where the return to play decision was made by a physician, they were more likely than trainers to utilize computerized neuropsychological testing in making that decision, trainers returned athletes to play more quickly than physicians. The differences were not found to be statistically significant, however.

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files

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