



LFC Requester: Liu

**PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
BILL ANALYSIS
2025 REGULAR SESSION**

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Check all that apply:

Original Amendment
Correction Substitute

Date Prepared: 03/04 /25

Bill No: HM48

Agency Name and Code: PED - 924

Sponsor: Matthews

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Short Title: STUDY FREE SCHOOL
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
None	None	N/A	NFA

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
None	None	None	N/A	NFA

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	None	None	None	N/A	Nonrecurring	NFA

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: None.

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: House Memorial 48 (HM48) proposes the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) convene a task force to assess the feasibility of making all educational activities offered by high schools free to students. The task force would include members from the LESC, the Public Education Department (PED), the Albuquerque Public School District, and individuals experienced in high school music education. The task force would be expected to report its findings and recommendations to the LESC and the Legislative Finance Committee by November 1, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The memorial does not contain an appropriation.

New Mexico provides state funding for fine arts education in grades kindergarten through six through a fine arts education program unit generated in the state equalization guarantee. [As of 2023](#), the number of fine arts education program units is determined by multiplying the full-time-equivalent membership in programs implemented in accordance with the provisions of the [Fine Arts Education Act](#) by the cost differential factor of 0.055 for fiscal year 2024 and succeeding fiscal years for elementary grades. It is the only one of the educational activities listed in HM48 that has any dedicated state funding.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HM48 highlights that many educational activities, such as marching band, speech and debate, graphic design, fine arts, and theater, do not receive adequate funding to permit universal participation without additional investment. Consequently, students and their families often bear costs to participate, covering expenses for items such as equipment, instruments, uniforms, and transportation. Ultimately, inadequate funding and high participation costs can prohibit student involvement, reducing the diversity and inclusivity of school arts programs and limiting the availability of enrichment opportunities.

School districts and charter schools often depend on additional funding sources to support student activities in middle and high school. These funding methods typically include charging participation fees, organizing fundraisers, and seeking donations from parents and private organizations, thus negatively impacting participation in these educational activities for low-income families.

A [University of Michigan](#) study found that about one quarter (27 percent) of parents in households earning less than \$60,000 per year said the cost of school activities caused a drop in participation for their child, compared to 12 percent in households earning greater than \$60,000 a year.

[A collaborative report](#) between Frontier Economics and the World Health Organization's Collaborating Centre for Arts and Health found participants of all ages, genders, and social backgrounds benefit substantially in health and wellbeing by regularly attending or participating in artistic pursuits.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

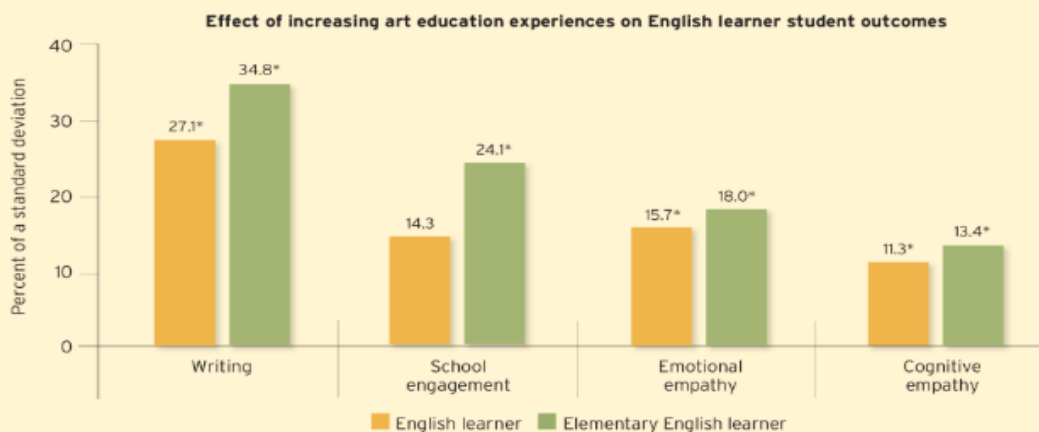
Eliminating participation fees in high school fine arts programs can significantly enhance access and provide numerous benefits for low-income students. Research indicates that financial barriers often deter students from engaging in extracurricular activities. [A study](#) from C.S. Mott's Children's Hospital found that 27% of parents from lower-income families reported reduced participation in school activities due to costs, with arts programs averaging \$218 per student annually.

[According to Americans for the Arts, removing these fees](#) would likely increase participation among economically disadvantaged students, granting them equal access to the advantages associated with arts education. Engagement in the arts has been linked to higher academic achievement, improved graduation rates, and enhanced critical thinking skills. Notably, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are highly involved in the arts are twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education.

[A 2023 report from Education Next](#) found that arts learning has positive effects on empathy, school engagement, student discipline, and writing achievement. Students' emotional and cognitive empathy increase by 7.2 percent and 3.9 percent of a standard deviation, respectively. At schools with expanded arts education, students are 20.7 percent less likely to have a disciplinary infraction. School engagement increases by 8 percent of a standard deviation. Arts learning improves writing test scores by 13 percent of a standard deviation but does not have significant effects on reading, math, or science test scores. The positive effects are especially pronounced among English language learners, whose writing scores improve by 27 percent of a standard deviation (see below). These results demonstrate that the arts positively affect meaningful educational outcomes and can inform strategies to restore and retain arts education in under-resourced schools.

Larger Effects for English Language Learners (Figure 2)

Students who are English language learners have outsized benefits when schools expand arts education, including increases in school engagement, college aspirations, empathy, and writing achievement. The greatest gains are among English language learners in elementary school.



ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would collaborate with LESC to assess the feasibility of making all educational activities offered by high schools free to students.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

None.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

None.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

None.

AMENDMENTS

None.