



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: 03/12 /25  
Bill No: HM54

**Agency Name and Code:** PED - 924

**Sponsor:** Baca/Romero

**PED Lead Analyst:** Duncan Christensen  
**Phone:** (505) 470-5303 **Email:** duncan.christensen@ped.nm.gov

**Short Title:** STUDY PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY

**PED Policy Director:** Denise Terrazas  
**Phone:** (505) 470-5303 **Email:** denise.terrazas@ped.nm.gov

**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
<b>Total</b>	None	None	None	N/A	N/A	NFA

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act: The [House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bill 2](#) contains an appropriation of \$1.5 million to the Public Education Department (PED) for safety and statewide deployment of mobile panic buttons at public schools, as well as an appropriation of \$200,500 for regional and statewide school safety summits.

## **SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

### **BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis: House Memorial 54 (HM54) would request the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department, and the PED to research and study public school safety and the potential benefits of the establishment of a school safety entity that would be tasked with developing and establishing a state public school safety plan and distributing school safety resources. HM54 also requests that this collaborative group report the results of the study to the Governor and the New Mexico Legislative Council.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

This memorial does not contain an appropriation.

### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

School safety is consistently a primary concern of New Mexico public school educators and administrators and often the highest priority to community constituents, parents, and the students themselves. The PED issues guidance to school districts and charter schools and provides schools a template and resources to develop school safety plans. The PED also offers technical assistance in school safety plan development, reviews all school plans every three years (approximately 300 plans per year), and evaluates the plans, which must contain four minimum components: introduction, school policies and procedures, prevention, and a school Emergency Operation Plan (EOP). Additionally, in 2019, [the Safe Schools for All Students Act](#) was signed into law. This required the PED to promulgate rules that require school districts to develop and implement bullying prevention policies and programs aimed at reducing school violence, which can be found at Rule 6.12.6 NMAC.

The PED also provides guidance and information to prepare and prevent school violence. As part of this, the [Safe Schools Advisory Council \(SSAC\)](#) and the [Safe Schools Working Group \(SSWG\)](#) collaborate to develop training opportunities and deliver technical assistance to local education agencies to assist them in developing and implementing high-quality EOPs. This volunteer group has provided subject-matter expertise, outreach, and other resources to further the objective of improving emergency preparedness and response in New Mexico schools. Additionally, the PED addresses issues related to discipline and attendance through the [New Mexico Prevention, Response, and Resiliency Program \(PRRP\)](#) which is dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive school environment.

Outside the PED, the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority regularly conducts safety audits and security and vulnerability assessments of public school facilities as part of its loss prevention measures. Similarly, the Public School Facilities Authority has administered and overseen previous appropriations for school safety and security to the Public School Capital Outlay Fund. The [LESC also notes in a 2024 report](#) that there has been a significant level of capital outlay funds for safety infrastructure in New Mexico schools in recent years. This funding has resulted in spending towards school panic buttons, school bus cameras, safe school summits, school security awards, adequacy standards, safe school plans, and incident reporting methods, among others.

School safety has been a major concern for lawmakers across the country with hundreds of bills related to K-12 school safety introduced nationally each year. Per the [Education Commission of the States \(ECS\)](#), 29 bills were enacted in 2020, 50 bills in 2021, and 36 bills in 2022. The ECS also highlights that the inclusion of law enforcement in aspects of school safety has been a growing trend across the country including in conducting school safety drills (in 17 states, including New Mexico), creating district or school safety plans (30 states), or completing audits of school facilities (35 states). As noted by HM54, several states have separate Offices of School Safety such as [Colorado](#), [Wisconsin](#) and [Michigan](#). These offices are relatively recent creations, and a majority are established as part of each state's police or DPS, although, Indiana is considering housing such an office within its Department of Homeland Security, pending passage of relevant legislation. Others may instead have a Chief of School Safety, such as in Texas. There, the chief works within the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and reports directly to the TEA commissioner and the governor.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

Students who feel secure in their surroundings are better able to attend to lessons and perform better in school.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The PED is one of the agencies named as part of the collaborative research group. Group participation by the PED is likely to be significant and will require department staff and resources.

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

Relates to:

- [House Bill 39](#), Juvenile Record in Firearm Background Checks, which would limit access to firearms among people who have committed certain juvenile offenses.
- [House Bill 260](#), Allowable Responses to Student Behavior, which would restrict the use of certain disciplinary actions in response to student behavior, particularly when the student may be a danger to themselves or others.
- [House Bill 467](#), Multicultural Student Safety and Support, which seeks to broaden elements of discrimination and disparate treatment to enhance safety and support services for multicultural students.
- [House Bill 473](#), School Security Personnel, which would provide for a greater number of experienced professionals to qualify as school security personnel.
- [House Bill 485](#), School Marshal Act, which would allow school districts to employ school marshals.
- [Senate Bill 136](#), Firearm Detection Software Fund, which would allow school districts and charter schools to apply for funding to install firearm detection software.
- [Senate Bill 256](#), School Teachers On-Site Protection Act, which proposes establishing a licensure program to allow certain school employees to carry handguns on school premises following the completion of a state-administered training program.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

None.

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

School safety has consistently been a major issue for all states. Nationally, trends in gun violence have increased with the [K-12 School Shooting Database](#) showing increases in shooting incidents, victims, and deaths since 2017. In New Mexico, there have been 25 shooting incidents impacting the state since 1971. However, both nationally and in New Mexico the prevalence of firearms and other weapons being carried in schools has declined according to the [Center for Disease Control](#). While New Mexico students were more likely than the national average to report bringing weapons to school in 2021 (national average was 3.1 percent), only 4.2 percent of students reported doing so, which represents a substantial decrease from eight percent reported in 2005, although the New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NMYRRS) indicates in 2015, 22.5 percent of students had *carried* a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club in the prior 30 days, compared with 16.2 percent, nationally. Further, according to NMYRRS, in 2019, 13.9 percent of New Mexico students reported avoiding school because they felt unsafe, compared with 8.7 percent, nationally.

Reported incidents related to several crime and safety issues have also appeared to decline in recent years. Specifically, incidents of nonfatal student and teacher victimization, reports of student bullying, and reports of some unfavorable conditions at school have become less prevalent following increases after the Covid-19 pandemic according to the [National Center for Education Statistics 2023 Report](#). New Mexico shares in some of these trends with [declines in several important risk factors](#) among New Mexico students including violence and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs over the past 10 years.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

None.

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

None.

## **AMENDMENTS**

Behavioral health is a crucial factor in school safety. As such, the sponsor may consider including the New Mexico Health Care Authority as a participating agency in the study.