
Bill Analysis 2017 Regular Session**BILL NO: SB 115****SPONSOR: Senator Bill Soules****SHORT TITLE: Safe Schools for All Students ACT**

SYNOPSIS OF BILL: 115 repeals and replaces New Mexico’s current bullying prevention statute. The bill mandates new reporting and monitoring protocols for instances of bullying as well as procedures for “progressive discipline” to address student behavior. Bullying is defined as severe, pervasive or persistent conduct that targets a students physically, electronically or verbally based on actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, spousal affiliation, physical or mental handicap or other distinguishing characteristics.

STRENGTHS: A 2014 survey of public school district and charter school bullying prevention policies indicate that 80 percent are not in compliance with Title IX, IDEA and/or the New Mexico Human Rights Act. Based on a survey of educators in New Mexico public schools, teachers feel they do not have the tools or support to properly address a student’s tendency to bully other students. 50,000 bullying incidences go unreported each year and 10,400 students miss school each month because they do not feel safe at school. Principals at schools that have progressive discipline policies in place feel that it provides students with the means to understand and correct their behavior rather than just punishment. (Baird, Steven 2014)

ADDITIONAL INFO: Local school boards will have until July 1, 2018 to adopt bullying prevention policies focused on preventing bullying, outlaying consequences, creating safe and anonymous reporting and additional measures to protect targets of bullying. Progressive discipline is defined as disciplinary action other than suspension or expulsion from school that is designed to correct and address the basic causes of a student’s specific misbehavior such as meeting with the student and their parents, reflective activities, counseling, anger management, health or mental health counseling, skilling building activities, community service, in-school detention.

<u>S</u>afer	<u>A</u>political	<u>F</u>iscally-Responsible	<u>E</u>vidence Based	Grade
<p>Studies have shown that adolescents who are bullied miss more school, show signs of poor school achievement, and report greater levels of anxiety and depression than their non-victimized peers. Studies have linked bullying to suicidal ideation (van der Wal, de Wit, & Hirasing, 2003)</p> <p>The Safe Schools Act would provide measures to increase safety of students in schools.</p>	<p>Bullying prevention is a bi-partisan issue as bullying takes place in every school district in the state.</p>	<p>There is no appropriation included for SB 115 and school districts may incur costs implementing policies and reporting procedures.</p>	<p>A qualitative study of a school district that implemented the Safe Schools for All Students Act showed that Progressive Discipline “provides students with the means to understand and correct their behavior rather than just punish them for it.” (Baird, Steven 2014)</p>	<p>A</p>