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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/26/13

SPONSOR Kernan LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Teacher Licensure Content Knowledge SB 418

ANALYST Gudgel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY13	FY14		
NFI	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

University of New Mexico (UNM)
 Higher Education Department (HED)
 New Mexico State University (NMSU)
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 418 requires applicants for a level one elementary teaching license to show individual content knowledge in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies beginning January 1, 2015.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The current contract with Pearson/National Evaluation Systems provides for the development of three full assessments within the four years of the contract at no cost to New Mexico.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Similar to most states, New Mexico's licensure system requires the completion of a minimum of three competency examinations prior to level one licensure, including an assessment of basic skills, teacher competency, and content knowledge. Pearson Education, Inc. developed these tests, known as the New Mexico Teacher Assessments (NMTA). Currently, passage of the

content knowledge assessment is determined by a composite score, which may include a failing score in one or more of the content areas assessed. The Public Education Department (PED) states this system of assessment does not ensure that elementary candidates are appropriately prepared for all content areas.

This bill will require individuals seeking a level one elementary teaching license to receive a passing score on four individual content knowledge assessments – language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies – prior to licensure. The current content knowledge assessment would not meet the requirements of this bill and either a new assessment would have to be developed or the state would have to use an existing assessment, such as the existing Pearson/National Evaluation System assessment. The current contract with Pearson provides for the development of three full assessments within the four years of the contract at no cost to the state.

PED indicates the new content knowledge assessments will not be an additional assessment for elementary teachers, but will replace the existing content knowledge assessments.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

According to PED

It is anticipated that the pass rate of the elementary content knowledge assessment will decrease in the initial years of implementation, as schools of education align core content requirements with common core content standards.

During the 2011-2012 school year, there was a 91 percent pass rate of the elementary content knowledge assessment, but scale scores vary greatly by content area. It is estimated that first time pass rates could decrease to 50 percent.

Passage of this bill would ensure that all entering elementary content teachers would have sufficient knowledge of core content subjects to implement common core content standards. Along with increased rigor in Essential Elements of Reading instruction, this assessment would better assess preparation of pre-service candidates to enter into the teaching field.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED indicates implementation of this bill by January 2014 will not provide enough time to develop a new assessment, if one is required. However, the department indicates that the National Evaluation System (NES) assessment could be used and would not have to be developed.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 167 is essentially a duplicate; however it changes implementation from January 2015 to January 2014.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The cut-off scores are currently set at one standard deviation below the mean. This means that teachers in the 16th percentile of NMTA test-takers can qualify for an elementary teaching

license. In addition, it is likely that candidates who test at the low end of the cut score will be below the cut score in one or more core subject areas.

Currently, test takers pay \$114 to take the NMTA. If the individual fails the test they are required to pay \$114 to retake the test. The PED anticipates the new content knowledge assessments will be similarly priced, and retakes of individual subtests (language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) will be prorated.

The University of New Mexico indicates that this bill will likely result in an immediate significant decrease in the numbers of in-state teachers, as well as a major disincentive to out-of-state teachers (currently about 47 percent of all teachers in New Mexico) to either afford or pass the tests.

The Higher Education Department indicates reciprocity would be granted to candidates from outside New Mexico who have met or exceeded the requirements of HB167.

ALTERNATIVES

The University of New Mexico indicates the preferred alternative would be to eliminate the New Mexico Teacher Assessments and other tests and move to the PRAXIS II tests that are now used in 46 states. UNM indicates this would reduce the cost to candidates and create a comparability of test scoring that includes most of the U.S.

RSG/blm