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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**54th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2020**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>HM46</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Romero, G. Andrés/Trujillo, C.</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.216745.1</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>HEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>Educator Compensation Task Force</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Canada</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>2/7/2020</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u></u>

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**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Memorial

House Memorial 46 (HM46) creates a taskforce to study, assess, and make recommendations to address educator compensation in New Mexico.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

House memorials do not contain appropriation.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

**Educator Compensation in New Mexico.** HM46 points out the 3-tiered licensure system corresponding salary minimums are not helping the state's ability to retain experienced educators. With an across-the-board salary increase, pay for extended teaching time, and higher minimum salaries for all licensure levels, teachers across New Mexico saw an average overall increase of 10.4 percent in FY20 based on school district reports. In FY20, the Legislature increased teacher salary minimums to \$41,000 from \$36,000 for level 1 teachers, to \$50,000 from \$44,000 for level 2 teachers, and to \$60,000 from \$54,000 for level 3-A teachers. Teachers who participated in K-5 Plus and extended learning time, programs approved in the 2019 legislative session, also saw increased pay for their additional service. In addition, all teachers received a 6 percent salary increase.

New Mexico teacher pay has improved significantly but is still low compared with other states. The National Education Association (NEA) ranked New Mexico 34<sup>th</sup> in the nation for average starting pay and 48<sup>th</sup> for average pay during the 2017-2018 school year, the most recent year of data available. New Mexico's average teacher salary of \$47,152 was three-quarters of the national average and behind every state in the southwest region except Oklahoma- although, notably, the cost of living in New Mexico is also lower than other states in the region. Legislative action during the 2019 session certainly raised the average, but other states also increased pay in the last year. Current-year comparisons are not yet available.

HM46 explains that the task force would study how the new teacher cost index can be enhanced with additional teacher attributes that reward teacher qualification such as microcredentials in specific specialties, additional duties, and leadership positions. Laws 2018, Chapter 55 (HB188) amended the Public School Finance Act to replace the instructional staff training and experience (T&E) index with a teacher cost index (TCI) that aligns with the three-tiered licensure system. The law phases in the TCI over a four year period starting in FY20. Both the T&E index and TCI are staffing cost multipliers; the index is multiplied by a block of units to provide school districts and charter schools additional units based on student enrollment. Current law provides for minimum teacher salaries based on a teacher's level of licensure but does not compensate school districts and charter schools for licensure advancement. The T&E index only increased funding based on teachers' highest academic degree and years of experience, but not licensure level. To better account for the increased costs as teachers advance from one licensure level to the next, TCI is based on teachers' years of experience and licensure level. Starting in FY21, the public education department (PED), LESC, and Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) are required to submit an annual report on how well TCI reflects the additional costs from tier mitigation incurred by school districts and charter schools.

**Educator Retention.** Efforts to build a high-quality New Mexico educator workforce are hampered by difficulties in both recruitment and retention. Figures from the *2019 New Mexico Educator Vacancy Report*, prepared by the New Mexico State University Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center, show a continuing decline in the numbers of students admitted to and completing educator preparation programs, both traditional bachelor degree programs, and the alternative licensing programs offered to those who already hold noneducation bachelor degrees. Turnover rates among New Mexico teachers are among the highest in the United States—at 23 percent and second only to Arizona between 2011 and 2014, according to the Learning Policy Institute. The 2019 Phi Delta Kappa poll of the Public's Attitude Toward Public Schools, a survey of all teachers found that teachers feel undervalued in the profession and are leaving due to stress, pressure, and burnout. The poll also found motivators for teacher retention include higher pay and benefits.

**Career Ladders to Compensate Educators.** HM46 states that many states and school districts have made a move towards compensating and advancing teachers through career ladders. During the December 2019 interim committee meeting, LESC heard from the national and state representatives from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) on a similar approach to compensating teachers. After studying how other states implement this policy approach, AFT suggested the approach for New Mexico should build on the current three-tiered licensure system by enhancing the TCI with teacher attribute factors that would carry a weight in the SEG, much in the same way the public school funding formula attaches a weight, or multiplier, to students' attributes. AFT noted this policy approach would address the compression issues that have been a result of adding additional funding to the base of each tier; would acknowledge and reward leadership roles; reward qualifications and attributes of teachers; and reward additional compensation for added responsibility. Following the AFT teacher compensation proposal, LESC Chair Christine Trujillo notified the committee this is an issue she wants LESC to study during the interim in preparation for the 60-day legislative session in 2021.

## ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

**Membership.** The task force consists of 31 members including:

- The secretary of PED;
- Four representatives selected by the National Education Association (NEA);
- Four representatives selected by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) New Mexico;
- 12 teachers statewide selected by New Mexico education partners such as;
  - Two level 2 elementary school teachers;
  - Two level 3 elementary school teachers;
  - Two level 2 middle school teachers;
  - Two level 3 middle school teachers;
  - Two level 2 high school teachers;
  - Two level 3 high school teachers;
- Six principals that represent elementary, middle, and high schools; and
- Four superintendents from across the state selected by New Mexico education partners.

The task force can create work groups that include non-task force members with appropriate expertise represented by state, regional, and national experts. The task force would be required to report its findings and recommendations to the office of the governor and the LESC by November 1, 2021.

## RELATED BILLS

Relates to the House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and # (HB2/HAFCS) includes a \$6.8 million increase to the state equalization guarantee (SEG) to establish pay differentials for teachers assuming additional responsibilities for mentorship. The increase is contingent on the passage of SB171.

Relates to HB2/HAFCS also includes an appropriation of \$14.7 million for an average 5 percent increase for all licensed teacher whose primary duty is classroom instruction.

Relates to HB86, Early Childhood Care Workforce Support Program, amends the Early Childhood Care and Education Act to create an advisory council to develop a voluntary early childhood care and education workforce support program to include compensation incentives for pursuing higher education as well as a wage and career ladder.

Relates to HB135, would create a new program unit, with a 0.5 cost differential, for bilingual multicultural education programs that teach native languages.

Relates to HB62, Teacher Mentorship Program, which would amend the School Personnel Act to provide annual stipends of up to \$2,000 for teachers that mentor a beginning teacher. Funding for HB62 would be provided through a categorical appropriation, rather than through the public school funding formula, as provided for in SB171.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

**CEC/tb/mc/sgs**