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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
56th Legislature, 1st Session, 2023

Bill Number SFIS/SB417 **Sponsor** Senate Floor Substitute

Tracking Number .226238.2 **Committee Referrals** SHPAC/SEC; HEC

Short Title Teacher Vocational Ed Licensure Track

Analyst Hathaway **Original Date** 3/14/23
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Floor Substitute

The Senate Floor Substitute for Senate Bill 417 (SFIS/SB417) amends the School Personnel Act to create additional statutory pathways for vocational educators to receive a level one license and progress to level two and level three licenses. The bill also exempts vocational education teachers from the salary minimums associated with each license level. The Public Education Department (PED) would grant these vocational education licenses.

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT

SFIS/SB417 does not contain an appropriation.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

SFIS/SB417 adds additional ways for vocational educators—teachers who teach career technical education (CTE) courses—to enter the teaching profession and receive a level one license. The bill also increases flexibility in how these educators transition among levels, notably from holding a level two license to a level three license.

Level One Licensure. As outlined in the proposed bill, a standard level one vocational license would be issued to applicants who: 1) follow current licensing requirements for level one licenses; or 2) are at least 23 years old, have five or more years of professional experience in the vocational field in which they will teach, and meet other qualifications for level one licensure, including a background check. It appears the provisions of the proposed bill would allow increased flexibility for vocational educators to enter the teaching profession. Vocational teachers holding a level one license would be required to receive mentorship and evaluation, consistent with other level one licensees.

Level Two Licensure. The bill makes no changes in how vocational educator progress to level two licensure. Vocational educators would be required to meet all current requirements as all other educators in the three-tiered licensure system to progress to holding a level two license.

Level Three Licensure. SFIS/SB417 would add a pathway to a level three license specifically for vocational education teachers that does not require a bachelor's degree—this would be an addition to the three-tiered system, which currently requires educators to hold post-baccalaureate degrees or National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification to hold a level three license. This change would only apply to vocational education teachers.

As proposed in SFIS/SB417, PED would be required to grant a level three-A license to vocational educators who have been a level two teacher for at least three years and who: 1) Provide documentation from an accredited higher education institution of eligibility to teach dual credit courses at the post-secondary level; or 2) Complete a department-approved CTE training certificate course of study that is a minimum of 16 hours at an accredited higher education institution.

Exemption from Salary Minimums. SFIS/SB417 exempts vocational education licensed teachers from current statutory salary minimums across all licensure levels. This means the state's minimum salary amounts—\$50 thousand for level one teachers, \$60 thousand for level two teachers, and \$70 thousand for level three teachers—would not apply to educators teaching under a vocational education license.

Current Vocational and CTE Licensure. New Mexico currently offers a secondary vocational technical license for teachers who teach grades seven through 12, commonly known as an “800-level license,” because of its license code in PED guidance documents. This current license was developed in administrative code and is attached to the state's three-tiered licensure system.

It appears SFIS/SB417 codifies some provisions currently in administrative rule developed by the department ([6.61.7 NMAC](#)), which already allows for licensure in secondary vocational-technical education without a baccalaureate degree. Currently, vocational licensure candidates must hold one of the following:

- Bachelor's degree including 32 credit hours of vocational-technical training related to the occupational area; or
- Associate degree plus two years of work experience related to the occupational area; or
- Certificate plus three years of work experience related to the occupational area; or
- A high school diploma (or its equivalent) plus five years of work experience related to the occupational area.

It is unclear what changes PED would make to administrative rule to align these proposed statutory changes with existing rule.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department (PED) would need to review current administrative rule and promulgate new rules to align with the provisions of SFIS/SB417. SFIS/SB417 is created in the School Personnel Act (Chapter 22, Article 10A NMSA 1978), so its changes would be subject to all related provisions of law.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Subsection C of Section 3 (page seven, lines one through five) notes vocational education licensees can progress to a level three license by completing a “department-approved career-technical education training certificate course of study that is a minimum of sixteen hours at an accredited higher education institution.”

The sponsor may wish to clarify this to require 16 *credit* hours, rather than a total of 16 hours.

RELATED BILLS

Relates to HB126, which amends high school graduation requirements; amendments include increased access to CTE courses in high schools.

Relates to HB198, which amends the career technical education pilot project and the career technical education fund to include secondary schools funded by the federal Bureau of Indian Education.

Relates to SB108, Career Technical Education Program Unit, which creates a CTE program unit of 0.25 as part of the program cost calculation of the state’s public school funding formula.

Relates to SB211, which would create a career development success pilot program that offers financial incentives to public schools whose students earn industry-recognized credentials.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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