

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 124

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Create School Leadership Institute

Sponsor(s): Senators Gay G. Kernan and Cynthia Nava and Others

Analyst: David Harrell

Date: February 3, 2009 (revised)

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

SB 124 adds a new section to the higher education statutes to create the School Leadership Institute, administratively attached to the Higher Education Department (HED). The bill also requires HED to provide administrative services for the institute and requires the institute to provide a comprehensive and cohesive framework for preparing, mentoring, and providing professional development for principals and other leaders in public schools.

In addition, SB 124 requires the School Leadership Institute to offer at least the following programs:

- licensure preparation for aspiring principals;
- mentoring for new principals and other public school leaders;
- intensive support for principals at schools in need of improvement;
- professional development for aspiring superintendents; and
- mentoring for new superintendents.

Finally, SB 124 requires the institute to partner with state agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional associations to identify and recruit candidates for the institute.

Fiscal Impact:

\$200,000 is appropriated from the Appropriation Contingency Fund of the General Fund to HED for FY 09 and FY 10 to establish the School Leadership Institute and to provide salaries and benefits for up to three FTEs. SB 124 further specifies that the appropriation come from the separate account of the Appropriation Contingency Fund called the "education lockbox."

In their respective budget recommendations, both the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and the Legislative Finance Committee have included \$200,000 for the School Leadership Institute, contingent upon the enactment of legislation.

The bill contains a reversion clause.

According to HED's analysis of SB 124, the department will receive the appropriation and then issue a request for proposals (RFP) to create the leadership institute; and the analysis by the Public Education Department (PED) says that department will collaborate with HED, the Office

of Education Accountability (OEA), and other key educational partners in the development of the RFP.

Issues:

Like SB 123 and SB 133, also endorsed by the LESC and introduced during the 2009 legislative session, SB 124 addresses needs identified in testimony before the LESC during the 2008 interim. At that time, the LESC received a report from OEA, in collaboration with PED and HED, that described these agencies' study, in collaboration with school districts and institutions of higher education, in response to Senate Joint Memorial 3 (2008).

- Endorsed by the LESC, SJM 3 requested that these agencies develop a plan to enhance the recruitment, preparation, mentoring, evaluation, professional development, and support for school principals and other school leaders.
- Through a series of statewide meetings, focus groups, and surveys during the 2008 interim, school district superintendents, principals, teachers, college deans, university faculty, staff from state and legislative agencies, members of the business community, and a variety of other interested parties examined school leadership issues and concerns in New Mexico; studied national research; consulted with representatives of successful programs in other states; and reviewed federal, state, and district policies affecting school leadership.
- The report in response to SJM 3 made six recommendations to address the issues identified in the joint memorial, to strengthen New Mexico's capacity to attract and retain strong school leaders.
- SB 123 implements one of the report's recommendations: to develop and implement the School Leadership Institute.

As the report on SJM 3 explains:

Across the country, the states that are making the most progress in strengthening their school leadership systems have developed statewide leadership institutes. These state-level programs are designed to recruit, prepare, and support school principals. They share several common characteristics:

1. Leadership initiatives are developed through partnerships with state agencies, professional associations, and institutions of higher education.
2. Training for prospective principals addresses specific statewide needs and is accompanied by mentoring and coaching.
3. Learning activities for new principals are experiential, including extended internships, on-the-job-training, professional learning communities, and networking with peers.
4. Finally, strong principal leadership programs have shifted the emphasis from traditional administrative and managerial roles to a focus on the school principal's influence on school effectiveness and student learning.

According to the OEA analysis of SB 124, the design of the School Leadership Institute combines elements identified as effective practices in other states that have implemented similar initiatives: Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, and Massachusetts. This analysis adds that these effective practices have been adapted to meet New Mexico's specific needs in improving student achievement and reducing turnover among educational leaders.

Finally, although the bill does not so indicate, the intention of the agencies involved in developing the institute is to house it in an existing office at a postsecondary educational institution.

Background:

One of the central publications to document the value of and need for effective school leadership is *Strong Leaders, Strong Schools*, by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

- "More than ever," this report says, "states need to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to ensure that today's leaders have the skills, knowledge and support required to guide the transformation of schools to meet higher standards and new requirements for progress."
- Responding to this need, the NCSL report continues, during 2007 alone at least 25 states, New Mexico among them, enacted 42 laws "to support school leader initiatives."
- In addition, during the 2008 interim a representative of NCSL testified before the LESC in support of the recommendations in the SJM 3 report.

Among the other organizations that have recently developed similar themes are the Southern Regional Education Board (*Schools Can't Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs*; and *Good Principals Aren't Born – They're Mentored*) and the Education Commission of the States (*Strong Leaders, Strong Achievement: Model Policy for Producing the Leaders to Drive Student Success*). This last report, published in January 2009, emphasizes the importance of effective program design.

Another recommendation of the SJM 3 report "to refine and revitalize university principal preparation programs" is intended to complement the leadership institute created by SB 124. Under this recommendation, colleges of education would develop a core educational leadership curriculum and ensure the transferability of this core curriculum. They would also partner in the development of the School Leadership Institute. In a letter to the Director of OEA and the secretaries of public education and higher education, the LESC has requested that this recommendation be implemented, along with two others that do not require statutory action:

- **Revitalize school principal standards:** by devoting particular attention to alignment between the PED rule on administrative licensure and the recently adopted framework for the evaluation of principals and assistant principals; and by implementing a revised, standards-based process through which PED approves all educational leadership preparation programs in New Mexico.
- **Strengthen recruitment, incentives, and retention:** by identifying potential school leaders; by considering financial incentives like a loan-for-service program; and by improving the working conditions through such activities as mentoring, internships, and defining school

success in terms broader than just the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB).

Addressing the entire group of six recommendations, the PED analysis asserts that they ðare highly interconnected and represent a pathway to establishing a coherent and congruent support system for New Mexico's educational leaders.ö

Finally, the reference to ðschools in need of improvementö in the ðBill Summary,ö above, stems from a provision in both state law and NCLB. Under this provision, schools are required to make AYP, which is a prescribed degree of improvement, primarily in student achievement ó not only for their entire student populations but also for certain subgroups of students: economically disadvantaged students, major racial or ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and English language learners. Schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years are labeled ðschools in need of improvement.ö As such, they face a series of increasingly prescriptive sanctions in the school improvement cycle until they make AYP for two consecutive years. The ultimate goal is that all students, including those in all the subgroups, will be proficient in reading and math by school year 2013-2014. As many experts have observed, the need for effective school leadership is especially acute in these schools in need of improvement.

Related Bills:

SB 123 *Administrators in Accountability Reporting*

SB 133a *Teacher Licensure Changes*

HB 234 *School Administrator Licensure Consideration*