

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 329aa

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .199167.2

Short Title: School Licensure Reciprocity Requirements

Sponsor(s): Senator Gay G. Kernan

Analyst: Heidi L. Macdonald

Date: March 12, 2015

AS AMENDED

Senate Floor Amendment 1 changes the effective date of the act to July 1, 2016 from July 1, 2015.

The Senate Public Affairs Committee amendments:

- **add licenses in special education and in early childhood education to those licenses affected by the bill's amendments to the minimum requirements for licensure or reciprocity; and**
- **require applicants to complete six semester hours in mathematics, rather than three semester hours.**

Original Bill Summary:

SB 329 amends the *School Personnel Act* to change the minimum requirements in the college of arts and sciences for applicants seeking licensure or reciprocity in elementary or secondary education as follows:

- nine semester hours in communication;
- three semester hours in mathematics;
- eight semester hours in laboratory science;
- nine semester hours in social and behavioral science; and
- nine semester hours in humanities and fine arts (see "Background," below, for the current requirements in terms of semester hours and academic areas).

Finally, SB 329 increases to 16 (from 14) the number of weeks of student teaching for applicants seeking licensure in elementary or secondary education, except for licensure by reciprocity.

Fiscal Impact:

SB 329 does not contain an appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

Although SB 329 does not have a fiscal impact, the Higher Education Department (HED) analysis indicates that the bill may reduce the total cost of obtaining a degree, thereby saving

money for the student in tuition, and for the institution, the state, and federal government in grants and financial aid.

Substantive Issues:

The bill proposes to reduce the total number of mandatory semester hours for elementary or secondary education licensure or reciprocity to 38 credit hours from 57 credit hours. According to the University of New Mexico (UNM) analysis, the reduction of semester hours would be beneficial because it would give colleges of education in New Mexico more latitude in how teachers are prepared. Moreover, it would permit students to obtain an additional minor, which could be in another content teaching area. The proposed changes will also permit students to possibly obtain a dual license in special education without having to take more hours.

According to the CNM analysis, the reduction in required student credit has recently been urged by HED and is a performance measure tracked by HED on its institutional performance dashboard. In addition, a reduction in required student credit hours could result in a slight decrease in an institution's General Fund appropriation as the current HED funding formula factors an institution's completed credit hours into its performance funding recommendation.

The analysis by Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) suggests that SB 329 may expand the teaching pool of highly qualified educators by removing unnecessary and unproven barriers existing in the current credit hour requirements. Teacher education students now must attend institutions of higher education on the average of two additional semesters to satisfy the extra general education requirements currently in statute. According to ENMU, this requirement is an ever increasing financial burden and disincentive to joining the teaching profession.

Finally, the Public Education Department (PED) analysis makes these points:

- the increase in the student teaching requirement can help new licensees be more prepared; and
- the bill provides teacher preparation programs with the flexibility to determine the best way to educate prospective teachers, including the addition of content more in line with subjects the teachers will teach.

Background:

Current Statute

Under the *School Personnel Act*, PED requires a person seeking licensure or reciprocity in elementary or secondary education to complete the following minimum requirements in the college of arts and sciences:

- 12 hours in English;
- 12 hours in history, including American history and western civilization;
- nine hours in mathematics for elementary education and six hours in mathematics for secondary education;
- six hours in government, economics, or sociology;
- 12 hours in science, including biology, chemistry, physics, geology, zoology, and botany; and
- six hours in fine arts.

In addition, PED requires a person seeking standard or alternative elementary licensure to complete six hours of reading courses and three hours of reading courses in subject matter content.

Lastly, except for licensure by reciprocity, PED requires, prior to initial licensure, no less than 14 weeks of student teaching, a portion of which shall occur in the first 30 credit hours taken in the college of education and shall be under the direct supervision of a teacher and a portion of which shall occur in the student's senior year with the student teacher being directly responsible for the classroom.

Current Regulations

Under PED rule, the minimum criteria for applicants seeking an initial teaching license for grades Pre-K through 12 are as follows:

- bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, including:
 - 12 hours in English;
 - 12 hours in history, including American history and western civilization;
 - six hours in mathematics;
 - six hours in government, economics, or sociology;
 - 12 hours in science, including biology, chemistry, physics, geology, zoology, or botany; and
 - six hours in fine arts;
- 24-36 hours in professional education in an education program approved by PED, including completion of PED's approved functional areas and related competencies in professional education;
- a mandatory student teaching;
- 24-36 semester hours in one teaching field;
- three hours in the teaching of reading;
- passing scores on all portions of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments; and
- satisfying the requirements of a highly qualified beginning pre-K to 12 teacher; or
- possessing a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the appropriate grade level and type.

PED approves teacher preparation programs and post-graduate level educational leadership programs offered in New Mexico institutions of higher education. According to a Legislative Finance Committee report from 2012, there were seven institutions in New Mexico that offered preservice programs:

1. ENMU;
2. New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU);
3. New Mexico State University (NMSU);
4. Northern New Mexico University;
5. UNM;
6. University of the Southwest; and
7. Western New Mexico University (WNMU); and

five institutions that offered post-graduate educational leadership programs:

1. ENMU;
2. NMHU;
3. UNM;
4. NMSU; and
5. WNMU.

Committee Referrals:

SPAC – DPa; SEC – DP; FL/a, PASSED/S (39-2); HEC

Related Bills:

SB 91 *Teacher Licensure Levels & Advancement*

SB 126aa *Level 3-B School Admin Licensure Requirements*

SB 153a *Streamline Teacher Administrative Licensure*

SB 378 *Teacher & Admin Differential Performance*

HB 71a *Streamline Teacher & Administrator Licensure*

FL/HB 76a *Teacher Licensure Levels & Advancement*