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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE
LAST UPDATED 2/1/15 **HB** 156/aHEC

SPONSOR McCamley

SHORT TITLE Innovations In Teaching Act **SB** _____

ANALYST Chavez

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		See Fiscal Implications				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)

Higher Education Department (HED)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Education Committee Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment for House Bill 156 removes the provision requiring PED to develop and implement the innovations in teaching program, and instead says that the department “may” implement the program. The amendment also changes language from requiring to giving the department the option to waive the use of the results of the participating teacher's students' standards-based assessments on the teacher's teacher evaluation. Finally, the amendment removes the section of the bill that waives the use of the results of the participating teacher's students' standards-based assessments on the public school's A-B-C-D-F school rating for up to two years at the request of the school principal.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 156 creates a new section in the Public School Code, entitled the Innovations in Teaching Act, to be implemented by PED beginning with the 2016-2017 school year. The program provides for teachers to apply for innovative teaching projects to give teachers the flexibility to experiment with pedagogical approaches and to foster the use of innovative teaching. Teachers and schools whose innovative teaching projects have been approved would

be granted waivers from the use of standards-based assessments in their teacher evaluations and A – F school ratings for two years. HB 156 outlines the application, reporting, and evaluation processes for proposed innovative teaching projects.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill does not contain an appropriation.

PED may incur additional administrative costs to promulgate rules and oversee the proposed program, but these costs should be minimal. The department notes the requirements of the bill would take significant administrative time and that the bill does not contain an appropriation for PED to complete this work. School districts that choose to apply for the Innovations in Teaching program may incur some minimal additional administrative costs as well. PED notes that classroom innovations may also need additional funding.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

HB 156 states the Legislature finds the state-mandated reliance on high-stakes testing for teacher evaluations and public school ratings likely to stifle teachers' and school principals' interest in investigating and implementing "cutting-edge" pedagogy. The Act provides an alternative means by which teachers may experiment with pedagogical methods without such experimentation affecting the teachers' evaluation scores. However, students of a teacher participating in the program are still required to participate in standards-based assessments as provided in the Public School Code.

The bill requires that teachers participating in the innovative teaching program have at least three years of teaching experience and to have received a "highly effective" or "exemplary" rating in the teacher evaluation system to be eligible to submit an innovative teaching proposal to PED. Accepted projects can last up to three years; however, a participating teacher and school are only eligible to receive waivers from students' standards-based assessment scores affecting a teacher evaluation or school grade for two years. . The department, the teacher and the school principal, working together, may develop other measures of teacher effectiveness or may assign different percentages to the remaining teacher evaluation measures. PED analysis notes this would require the department to develop and implement other measures of teacher effectiveness which would require significant administrative time.

Under the bill, successful project proposals must have specific goals, include research findings or successful implementation of the project in other schools, teach pertinent curriculum and prepare students to meet content and performance standards, including the common core state standards (CCSS), and contain means and measures to determine the success of an innovation teaching project.

HB 156 states PED, teachers, and school principles shall develop evaluation standards for accepted innovative teaching projects in order to assess the success or failure of those projects, and participating teachers must chart student progress using short-cycle or other assessments and measure classroom participation and behavior.

PED is required under the bill to report its findings and recommendations for each accepted innovative teaching project to the governor, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC),

and each superintendent. PED may rescind its approval of any innovative teaching project before the full term of the project is over if it becomes clear that the project is not succeeding based on standards-based assessments or other data.

WNMU notes unless a school is using prescriptive learning or some other principal required intervention, teachers should already be innovative and creative in using a variety of instructional strategies – including those that have been scientifically shown to work and those that are as yet untested.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

WNMU notes this bill would have the effect of paying teachers an additional amount of money for performing work that they are already expected to do. However, this bill as written would not pay teachers more for participating in the Innovations in Teaching program.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be required to promulgate rules for the Innovations in Teaching Act under the bill.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Section 3, subsection A of the bill defines “innovative teaching” as using “cutting-edge innovations” in pedagogical approaches and strategies to teaching a subject. However, it is not clear what is meant by the term “cutting-edge”.

Section 6, subsection C of the bill requires PED to report its findings and recommendations for the program and projects to the governor, LESC, and every local superintendent. However, the requirement excludes head administrators of state-chartered charter schools. If the intent of this section is for the report to be received by all schools in the state, head administrators should be added to the list of required recipients.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Some school districts in the nation are experimenting with district-wide innovations. For example, Shelby County Schools in Tennessee has created an Innovation Zone (I-Zone) as an experiment to try to improve long-struggling schools. Schools in the I-Zone rank in the bottom 5 percent of the state as measured by standardized test scores and aim to get in the top 25 percent in five years. I-Zone schools get flexibility over their budgets, staffing, schedules, and programming. In turn, they can try experiments such as a longer school day or using technology to enhance teaching through blended learning.