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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

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ORIGINAL DATE 2/7/15

SPONSOR Griggs LAST UPDATED _____ HB _____

SHORT TITLE Public School Adjunct Instructors SB 228

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)

Duplicates House Bill 181

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Western New Mexico University (WNMU)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 228 creates the Adjunct Instructors Act, allowing the certification and contracting of adjunct instructors in the public school code. The act requires background checks for instructors under Section 22-10A-5 NMSA 1978 of the School Personnel Act, but other provisions of the School Personnel Act shall not apply to adjunct instructors.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill does not contain an appropriation. However, PED will be required to administer this new initiative.

The bill may have significant fiscal implications for the department and school districts depending on the number of applications received and reviewed. Staffing levels may need to be increased in the future to accommodate these new duties and may result in future requests for general fund appropriations.

PED also notes that the bill may lead to increased revenue through application fees. New applications for licenses would be determined by the department and be used to pay for the review of application materials. The revenue could only be used for administrative costs associated with reviewing the application.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Adjunct Instructor's Act would include additional provisions as to minimal qualifications of adjunct instructors. These include: 1) a bachelor's degree; 2) a minimum of three years' experience in the area of expertise in which the instructor will provide services; 3) the instructor must pass the New Mexico teacher assessments in each area of expertise in which services will be provided; and 4) completes a department-approved pedagogy course provided by the department, a school district or a regional education cooperative in conjunction with a New Mexico institution of higher education, or another provider provided by the department. The department may establish other requirements.

PED notes SB 228 would provide flexibility for districts to recruit professionals from their community with content expertise to teach courses relevant to their professional degrees or background. This flexibility will allow districts to hire local content experts to teach courses that may only require one or two sections, fill vacant positions, or replace teachers in certain classes that are unequipped to teach the subject area content of the class. For example, PED notes districts often struggle to recruit and retain teachers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The state has high levels of professional expertise in STEM fields. SB 228 allows districts to leverage that local expertise to fill in vacancies.

PED cites research from Teachers College at Columbia University which showed that over one-third of high school teachers and over one-fourth of middle school teachers do not feel well-prepared to teach grade level content standards to their students (Schmidt and McKnight, Teachers College Press, 2012). Creating the license provides schools with greater ability to serve the needs of students by having access to more content experts.

WNMU notes that this bill may cause enrollments in New Mexico colleges of education to decline.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There may be additional administrative expenses in hiring and performing background checks for adjunct instructors. The bill currently does not include fee requirements for adjunct instructors to obtain and maintain certification. The educator licensure bureau collects license renewal fees, currently \$95 for teaching, administrative and instructional support providers. However, no such fee is included for adjunct instructors to help defray the administrative costs of implementing the new initiative. The department should consider implementing a fee to cover increased workload caused by the bill.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

WNMU notes that teachers hired under the Adjunct Instructors Act should also be evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

DUPLICATION

HB 181 is a duplicate.

KC/bb