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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/16/15
LAST UPDATED 03/10/15 HB _____

SPONSOR Kernan

SHORT TITLE School Licensure Reciprocity Requirements SB 329/aSPAC/aSFI#1

ANALYST Gudgel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY15	FY16		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)
Western New Mexico University (WNMU)
Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)
Deans and Directors of Colleges of Education (NMDDE)
Higher Education Department (HED)
University of New Mexico (UNM)
Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFL Amendment #1

Senate Floor Amendment #1 to Senate Bill 329 as amended by Senate Public Affairs Committee changes the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2016.

Synopsis of SPAC Amendment

SPAC Amendment to Senate Bill 329 clarifies that the general education requirements of certain teaching candidates are applicable to individuals seeking elementary education, special education, early childhood education, and secondary education licenses. The amendment increases the number of required hours in math from three to six.

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 329 amends the School Personnel Act to change the minimum educational requirements in college of arts and sciences courses for elementary or secondary education licensure to include fewer course hours and increased student teaching. The bill requires 38 total hours of general requirements 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.

Current provisions requiring 57 hours of general requirements as follows are being eliminated: 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.

The bill also increases from 14 to 16 weeks the required number of student teaching.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill does not have an appropriation; however, HED states the bill may reduce the total cost to obtaining a degree, thereby saving money for the student in tuition, and the institution and state and federal government in grants and financial aid.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Existing requirements add additional required credit hours for education baccalaureate degrees, resulting in degree requirements of 130 to as many as 150 credit hours at a time when the state is trying to reduce the number of required credit hours for a baccalaureate degree to 120 hours when possible. This change could reduce both the time to obtain a degree and overall cost for students. Changes proposed in this bill align with current lower division general education core courses, which are courses required in all other bachelor's degree programs offered by public post-secondary institutions in New Mexico. HED notes the changes proposed in the bill would make licensure requirements consistent with general education core course transfer requirements.

Additionally, the reduction of student credit hours has recently been urged by HED and is a measure tracked by NMHED on its institutional performance dashboard.

The proposed reduction of mandatory credits from 57 credit hours to 38 credit hours and the increase in student teaching from 14 to 16 weeks required in this bill are the result of careful consideration of the New Mexico deans and directors of colleges of education.

The changes proposed in the bill align the general education coursework required of a teacher education undergraduate student with the upper limits of the New Mexico core general education articulation agreement, allowing teacher preparation programs added flexibility to determine the subject content required for future teachers. The flexibility will allow teacher preparation programs to determine the best way to educate prospective teachers in the state, including the addition of content that is more in line with what the students will be teaching once they are licensed and courses that sharpen skills needed in the classroom. Teacher preparation programs will be able to program coursework and use available credit hours to address deficiencies that

they are currently unable to address because of the high number of mandatory credit hours required by statute. Programs will now be able to consider feedback from PED, results from the new teacher assessments (NES Essential Skills tests), results from new standards-based testing (PARCC testing) administered to students, and school district feedback. Currently, programs are constrained in addressing such deficiencies due to the burden of extra general education coursework on students who want to become teachers.

PED also notes the federal government is considering grading education preparation programs and granting preparation programs the flexibility to address training needs to make teachers more effective may result in teacher preparation programs graded higher under potential new federal requirements. PED also notes reducing the number of required credit hours eliminates unnecessary barriers for individuals interested in teaching and may expand the teaching pool, as many teaching candidates are currently required to spend more than four years in college to meet the credit requirements in statute.

The bill may expand the teaching pool of highly qualified educators by removing unnecessary and unproven barriers existing in the current 57 credit hour requirement. NMDDE indicates teacher education students now must attend an institution of higher education an average of two additional semesters to satisfy the extra general education requirements as currently in statute; providing a increased financial burden and a disincentive to joining the teaching profession. It is pertinent to note that those teachers who participate in alternative licensure programs who have undergraduate degrees from New Mexico institutions are not required to present the same general education requirements as in current statute for undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

Additionally, the bill will increase the field experience requirement for all candidates from 14 weeks to 16 weeks. As field experiences spread consistently and evenly throughout a teaching program are a critical component in the preparation of new educators, any increase in this requirement would help teacher candidates be better prepared for classrooms. PED indicates quality student teaching experience is integral to any teacher preparation program and the 14 percent increase proposed by this bill for all teaching candidates will likely help new teachers be more prepared. Additionally, the increase in weeks aligns the public school year periods with New Mexico public post-secondary institution semester lengths.

UNM and ENMU note the math equipments included in the bill may be low and should be between six to nine hours dependent on the level of licensure, as are currently in law. The SPAC amendment increases the number of hours from three to six.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

PED states there research does not support current teacher general education requirements included in statue. Allowing teacher preparation programs to adjust their programmatic requirements based on current needs and research will allow them to produce graduates with the appropriate skills needed or success. Additionally, public post-secondary institutions will be able to align the core requirements of their bachelor's level teacher education degrees with all other bachelor's degrees offered at their institution, serving to decrease the time in which it takes a student to complete their program while still maintaining the desired teacher skills.

CONFLICT

This bill conflicts with SB 378.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

CNM notes increasing the number of student teaching weeks from 14 to 16 may pose some potential issues for May 2015 graduates. These students will likely not meet the 16-week student teaching requirements by the July 1, 2015 date and may not be eligible for licensure after July 1, 2015 without seeking an additional two weeks of student teaching. The Legislature may want to clarify that student graduating prior to July 1, 2015 will not be required to meet the 16-week student teaching requirement. The Senate Floor Amendment changes the effective date of the bill to July 1, 2106, addressing this concern.

RSG/je/bb/aml