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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019

Bill Number SB444 **Sponsor** Ingle
Tracking Number .211524.2 **Committee Referrals** SEC/SFC
Short Title ENMU Teacher Education Students
Analyst Sena **Original Date** 2/8/19
Last Updated _____

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 444 (SB444) appropriates \$300 thousand to Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) to pay tuition and fees for 50 teacher education students who are reflective of ENMU's student body ethnic and racial make-up and who earned an ACT composite score of at least 24 and had a high school GPA of at least a 3.3. In order to qualify, potential students would have to commit to teach in one or more New Mexico public schools for at least four years.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$300 thousand from the general fund to ENMU for expenditure in FY20 and subsequent years. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of any fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Diversity. Educator diversity has become a focus of concern, as research has shown students perform better academically when taught by teachers with similar backgrounds. Judge Sarah Singleton in her Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in the *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit found, "Teacher diversity is important for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds because they can serve as role models for students, often living in the same community and having a shared cultural experience."

According to the Public Education Department (PED), more than about 62 percent of New Mexico's public school students are Hispanic, 10 percent are American Indian, and about 2 percent are African American. However, only about 37 percent of teachers in New Mexico during the 2011-2012 school year were Hispanic, only 3 percent were American Indian, and fewer than 1 percent were African American, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

In an effort to increase the diversity of teachers in New Mexico, PED began including student demographics in 2018 as one factor in rating teacher preparation programs, with those with a more diverse student population receiving higher ratings.

SB444 attempts to encourage more diversity in ENMU’s teacher preparation program by requiring qualifying teachers to mirror the university’s overall student demographics. According to ENMU, 40 percent of students enrolled at ENMU in fall 2018 were Caucasian, 36 percent were Hispanic, 5 percent were African American, 2 percent were American Indian, and 12 percent were unknown. Meanwhile, 65 percent of students who completed its teacher preparation program in the 2017-2018 school year were white, non-Hispanic, 28 percent were Hispanic, 3 percent were Asian, and 2 percent were American Indian/Alaskan Native. ENMU currently has 250 students enrolled in its teacher preparation program.

New Mexico Average ACT Score by Race and Ethnicity

	2016	2017	2018	Percent of Tests
Asian	23.4	22.8	22.7	2%
White	22.6	22.7	22.4	23%
Two or More Races	21.4	20.6	21.5	3%
Black/African American	18.8	18.7	18.4	1%
Hispanic/Latino	18.8	18.8	18.6	54%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18.3	20.6	19.7	0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	16.8	16.6	16.3	10%

Source: ACT

Qualifications. SB444 requires teacher education students to have earned an ACT composite score of at least 24. That threshold is higher than New Mexico’s average composite score of 19.4 and higher than average composite scores for all ethnicities. While requiring a higher composite score could increase the quality of teacher preparation students, the benchmark could also hamper the university’s efforts to recruit a diverse student population.

Funding. SB444 appropriates \$300 thousand to pay tuition and fees for 50 teacher education students. Tuition and fees at ENMU total \$3,103.32 per semester, or \$6,206.64 per year. Based on current rates, the appropriation would cover four years of tuition and fees for only 12 students.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

ENMU would be responsible for screening potential candidates and administering funds.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SB444 requires that qualified candidates commit to teach in one or more New Mexico public schools for four years. However, there are no provisions to ensure that the commitment is fulfilled.

RELATED BILLS

- HB464 is a duplicate bill.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files