

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$6.2 million contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund, appropriated to a new nonreverting fund (BMTF). Additionally, the bill changes the mentorship requirement from a first-year teacher to a beginning teacher, which is synonymous with level 1 teachers in the School Personnel Act. Because beginning teachers can maintain level 1 licensure for up to 5 years, provisions of this bill may require school districts and charter schools to provide mentorship programming for these teachers until they obtain level 2 licensure (after 3 years) or leave the position.

The bill distributes up to \$2,000 per year per beginning teacher from BTMF for mentorship programs to school districts and charter schools. As such, the appropriation can cover 3,100 beginning teachers in FY21 at the maximum rate of \$2,000, which would be reduced accordingly if more than 3,100 teachers are considered eligible for mentorship programs. **The HAFC amendment strikes this appropriation.**

According to PED, around 10 percent of New Mexico teachers are first-year teachers. The number of level 1 teacher licenses decreased linearly from 4,500 in FY17 to 4,107 in FY18 and 3,754 in FY19, likely due to the decline in the number of teacher candidates graduating from educator preparation programs (EPP) and choosing employment in New Mexico. Other factors contributing to the decline include general teacher turnover and level 2 license advancement. Assuming the state continues to lose 8.5 percent of level 1 teachers each year, an estimated 3,143 beginning teachers could be eligible for mentorship programs in FY21.

Assuming more beginning teachers are retained from mentorship programs in FY21 (4.3 percent turnover rate), an estimated 3,008 level 1 teachers could become eligible for mentorship programs, which would create an operating budget impact of \$6 million in FY22. Costs to maintain these distributions would likely be about \$6 million annually.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

In FY03, the state enacted the teacher mentorship program requirement for level 1 teachers, requiring structured training for mentors and ongoing evaluation of each beginning teacher's performance during the first 3 years of teaching. The Legislature appropriated \$998 thousand to PED for this purpose in FY03, which grew to \$2 million in FY09. In FY10, PED's beginning teacher mentorship funding fell to \$1.4 million and was discontinued in FY11. In FY15, the Legislature appropriated \$1.5 million to public schools for beginning teacher mentorships through the public school funding formula.

In FY16, the Legislature appropriated \$1 million to PED for Teachers Pursuing Excellence (TPE), a department initiative for teacher mentorship. The TPE appropriation grew to \$2.5 million in FY20 and is budgeted to increase to \$4.5 million in the FY21 LFC recommendation. In FY20, PED announced that TPE would be used for the Achieve Excellence initiative, a one-year program aimed at supporting early career and alternatively-licensed teachers.

New Mexico has more inexperienced teachers than the national average. In FY19, 28 percent of New Mexico teachers began the school year with less than four years of classroom experience. One third of teachers in urban districts and one quarter of teachers in suburban or town districts had less than four years of experience. These figures are significantly higher than the national

average of 15 percent reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures's *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State* report, most high-performing countries allocate a greater share of teacher's time working with other teachers to develop their own teaching skills and developing the skills of new and struggling teachers. Providing training on best practices for mentorship and strategically pairing quality mentors with new teachers could reduce turnover among new teachers and improve teaching practices and skills.

Research from the Learning Policy Institute suggests that teachers who receive effective mentoring are more likely to be retained as a teacher at rates more than twice those of teachers who did not receive mentoring support. According to LESC, effective mentoring includes mentors who have content area expertise, time to support beginning teachers, and support from school leadership. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) highlights a three-year induction and mentor program used by the Rodel Foundation's Teacher Initiative in Arizona as an effective model for placing and retaining teachers in high-need schools.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

The LFC and executive budget recommendations for public school support include new performance measures on certified teacher vacancies. Strengthening mentorship programming may improve retention of teachers and potentially reduce the number of vacant positions.

The Legislature appropriated \$1.6 million in FY17 and FY18 for TPE programs, which provided cohorts of teachers with professional development and mentoring for two years. In FY19, PED reported that teachers participating in TPE programs improved their teacher evaluation ratings, and students at TPE schools achieved higher growth than the state average growth on PARCC exams. According to PED, students of TPE teachers experienced 4.5 times more growth than the state average growth in PARCC English language arts proficiency, and 2.7 times more growth in PARCC math proficiency from 2016 to 2017. While TPE was intensive and involved frequent support from, the program only reached 16 schools in its first two years.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED may need to train school districts and charter schools on how to apply for mentorship funds, and the department will need to ensure that it has employees who will, with fidelity, administer and evaluate this program. PED will need to develop a statewide mentorship framework to support implementation and coordinate with partners such as the regional education cooperatives to ensure school districts and charter schools have the support they need with qualified mentors.

PED notes school districts and charter schools typically spend funds on stipends for mentors; however, New Mexico schools may not currently have enough qualified staff to serve as mentors for beginning teachers, given the significant number of first-year teachers.

RELATIONSHIP

This bill relates to House Bill 92, which establishes a teacher residency program; House Bill 177, which creates a teacher preparation clinical residency program; House Bill 241 and Senate Bill 171, which create a mentor teacher pay differential in the public school funding formula; Senate Bill 36, which establishes a teacher preparation task force; and Senate Bill 38 which establishes a

commission on equity in education.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

In the last decade, the total number of teachers in New Mexico fluctuated between 20 thousand and 21 thousand each year. Between FY15 and FY19, however, the total number of teachers decreased by 3.4 percent, with stronger declines in urban areas. Although the total number of students increased from 323 thousand in FY09 to 332 thousand in FY15, overall enrollment declined to 326 thousand students in FY19, which resulted in a flat statewide student-to-teacher ratio of 16:1 over the 10-year period. This ratio is similar to national averages, and in many smaller school districts, the ratio can be as low as 8:1.

Approximately 45 percent of the state’s teachers are located in urban areas, and nearly 7.6 percent of teachers work in a state or local charter school. Although the share of students in urban areas has increased in the last decade, the number of teachers in urban areas has not grown at the same pace, resulting in a larger urban student-to-teacher ratio over time. Larger class loads can contribute to more stressful working conditions (particularly for beginning teachers), reduce time and capacity available for mentorship programming, and lead to higher turnover rates.

While the total number of teachers in New Mexico has remained relatively flat in the last decade (mirroring trends in student enrollment), teacher turnover continues to be higher than national averages. Between 2014 and 2018, about 25 percent of New Mexico teachers left their school district each year. Findings in the consolidated *Martinez* and *Yazzie* education sufficiency lawsuit pointed to the challenges of finding and retaining experienced and skilled teachers at high-poverty schools.

Teacher turnover is inherently disruptive and costly. According to a 2017 Learning Policy Institute report, turnover in a single position can cost small, rural, and suburban districts \$10 thousand and large urban districts \$20 thousand to recruit, on-board, and train new hires. Nationally, two-thirds of teachers leave the profession for a reason other than retirement. Teachers report family or personal reasons, financial compensation, and working conditions as the major reasons for staying or leaving the teaching workforce. New Mexico does not have a consistent system for tracking why teachers are leaving and where they are going.

Between FY10 and FY18, in-state enrollment in traditional EPPs decreased by 5,078 students, or 74 percent, and the total number of EPP completers fell by 682 students, or 50 percent. Beginning in FY17, the number of individuals enrolling in alternative licensure programs surpassed the number of students in traditional EPPs. While alternative licensure programs are less costly and quicker pathways for individuals to become teachers, national trends show these individuals are 25 percent more likely to leave the profession than traditionally trained teachers when controlling for students, schools, and teaching conditions.

According to New Mexico State University’s Southwest Outreach Academic Research (SOAR) lab’s 2019 Educator Vacancy Report, New Mexico reported 644 teacher vacancies as of September 23, 2019. Last year, SOAR found 740 teacher vacancies, indicating a decrease of 94 vacancies (or a 13 percent improvement). For FY20, the largest reported vacancies include teachers licensed to teach elementary school (173 positions) followed by special education (151 positions). SOAR’s report also found fewer teacher candidates completed a traditional educator preparation program (EPP) in FY19, although total completers increased slightly due to growth

in alternative licensure program completions.

ALTERNATIVES

The FY21 LFC budget recommendation for public school support includes \$6.8 million for mentor teacher pay differentials, \$12 million for school mentorship and professional development costs, and \$4.5 million to PED for teacher mentorship support.

According to the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), teachers in the United States are less likely than teachers in top-performing countries to have adequate preparation. LPI finds that well-designed and well-implemented teacher residency models, which provide intensive, extended learning experiences for teachers, could improve readiness for teaching and target high-need subjects and areas. Residencies can diversify the teacher workforce and improve retention of new teachers, and potentially improve student outcomes as well.

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