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**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO**

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*(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)*

**SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}*

**Date Prepared:** 2/4/2025 *Check all that apply:*  
**Bill Number:** SB 242 Original  Correction   
 Amendment  Substitute

**Sponsor:** Senator Mimi Stewart **Agency Name and Code** University of New Mexico-952  
**Short Title:** Advancing the Science of Reading Act **Number:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT**

**APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)**

| Appropriation |      | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|---------------|------|---------------------------|---------------|
| FY25          | FY26 |                           |               |
|               |      |                           |               |
|               |      |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate expenditure decreases)

**REVENUE (dollars in thousands)**

| Estimated Revenue |      |      | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|-------------------|------|------|---------------------------|---------------|
| FY25              | FY26 | FY27 |                           |               |
|                   |      |      |                           |               |
|                   |      |      |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) indicate revenue decreases)

**ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)**

|              | FY25 | FY26 | FY27 | 3 Year Total Cost | Recurring or Nonrecurring | Fund Affected |
|--------------|------|------|------|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Total</b> |      |      |      |                   |                           |               |

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:  
Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

### **SECTION III: NARRATIVE**

#### **BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis: SB 242 enacts the “Advancing the Science of Reading Act”. The purpose of this bill is to update the state’s requirements around the Science of Reading, including requirements around the use of Structured Literacy in classrooms, the use of high-quality instructional materials for all student teaching and supervised field experiences, and parental notification of said classroom instruction. SB 242 also provides new requirements for educator preparation programs, including that each education preparation program hire a literacy coordinator. Additionally, SB 242 provides for the monitoring and enforcement of the Act.

#### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are a number of fiscal implications related to this bill, but from a Higher Education perspective, it would require the addition of faculty to support some of these efforts. For example, SB 242 requires the hiring of a Literacy Coordinator in all Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), which would reflect a minimum starting salary at UNM at \$75,000 plus fringe (~40% at UNM), based on one’s years of experience and the potential increases to teacher pay in the state. Eight of these will be required across the State of New Mexico to serve at each of the EPP’s.

There are also additional data requirements that may involve staffing either at EPP’s or at NMPED. UNM’s College of Education and Human Sciences (COEHS) believes that the data staff would be better placed at NMPED, since NMPED already tracks this type of information and knowing how hard it is for EPP’s to remain in touch with teachers once they are in the field (whereas NMPED already knows who has graduated from which EPP, and has ready access to the student data needed in this bill).

Fiscal implications not touching higher education include school districts that may still need to transition to High Quality Instructional Material (HQIM) in the Science of Reading (SOR). As well as support to NMPED to monitor and enforce the different requirements in this bill and funding to provide additional staff to NMPED since the current PED Division that works in this area is understaffed.

There is also additional training requirements for teachers once they have entered the teaching profession (e.g., within the first two years; Section 11, #6), it is unclear who is responsible for paying for this additional training (i.e., teacher, the district, or the state).

#### **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

Overall, SB 242 aligns with the national movement surrounding the Science of Reading, and the needs for students to be better prepared as literate members of society. The addition of parental notification is also important, to ensure their knowledge of, and ability to support, their children while in school.

The significant issues that UNM COEHS sees in this bill based on the current structure of UNM's EPP include:

-Addition of a Literacy Coordinator. UNM COEHS would need the appropriate funds (minimum of \$75,000 plus 40% fringe, based on years of experience and education) to hire a Literacy Coordinator to engage in the work of this bill. There will be 8 of these required for the EPP's across the State. The bill does not mention any certain hiring requirements (minimum qualifications) for this position that will be evaluated when NMPED engages its monitoring of programs.

*Section 3.A3 100 hours of field experience in classrooms implementing SOR and HQIM, (a) plan/teach reading lessons focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and (b) observe/apply scientifically based reading instruction techniques under the supervision of a teacher trained in SOR and using HQIM.*

UNM's Department of Special Education has expressed concerns that they may have a harder time finding qualified cooperating teachers (CTs), particularly in the upper grades, as there is already a shortage of qualified special education teachers to serve a CTs for their teacher candidates. UNM will also need to revise how it monitors the progress of teacher candidates in their field sites to ensure the 100 hours have been completed; this is relatively easy at UNM due to the purchase of the Student Licensure and Learning (SLL) software. Other programs in the State that don't have the same form of software and tracking mechanisms might struggle a bit more.

*Section 5.A.4 All reading instruction for PK-12 shall use HQIM approved as ELA core instructional material on the multiple lists adopted by PED.*

UNM's Department of Special Education has noted that this could be problematic for students with complex support needs (low-incidence disabilities), as many ELA core instructional materials are not researched/validated for this population. PED's HQIM website says that supplemental materials are not reviewed. It is unclear how this might change or remain constant for supplemental materials for this population following the passage of this bill.

-Section 7, #3: there is a discussion of faculty requirements and professional development in the science-based reading. What would these requirements be?

-In Section 7 #5, there is discussion of collection of data regarding UNM's graduates. As noted above, once students graduate, they can often be hard to keep in touch with and track. As UNM has a data sharing agreement with NMPED (as do other EPP's in the state), NMPED would have easy access to who our graduates are, and the performance outcomes of those professions in the classrooms where they are teaching. UNM COEHS proposes that the bill be revised to be clear that this form of data tracking occur at NMPED (to ensure consistency and accuracy of data across the State of New Mexico, and not dependent on the data staff availability at the 8 EPP's across the State).

Section 10, #3: This section requires the use of assessment examinations in the science of reading, as well as elementary licensure. Currently, the only praxis required is the reading praxis, and portfolios are used for the other evaluation mechanisms in elementary education. Would this return programs to use the praxis exams more fully across education tracks? Currently, only the reading praxis is required in elementary education, and the special education exam is required for

Special Education. All other assessments are completed through the portfolio, which has allowed us to provide more developmental support for teacher candidates, and ensures that more teacher candidates can enter the field of education (as many find the praxis exams to be a roadblock toward teacher licensure). If we delete the portfolios, we will need to shift our education programs across the state, and again may find greater issues in the teacher vacancy rates.

-Section 11A6 is confusing as written. It notes “*within two years of beginning teaching, has completed a minimum of twelve semester hours in the first twelve months of teaching.*” It is unclear if the requirement is within the first two years of teaching, or in the first 12 months (which is a single year).

-It is unclear how long EPP’s have to make relevant changes (including the hiring of a Literacy Coordinator).

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

The UNM EPP will need to hire a Literacy Coordinator, once funds are assigned, and will need to change how teacher candidates are tracked in field sites to ensure compliance with the 100 hour field experience specific to the SOR. There is a concern from faculty about the potential deletion of student portfolios, which have been used in the place of praxis (with the exception of the Reading praxis, as well as the Special Education praxis). We believe the elimination of the portfolio and return of each of the praxis exams might lead to barriers for future students entering the teaching profession.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

We will need to add a role to our EPP to monitor literacy. As our EPP’s are across multiple departments, we will need this person to work centrally in the College with oversight of each of the affected programs (early childhood, elementary and special education).

## **CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP**

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

When would the requirements of the bill be effective? Will there be a roll-out of the requirements, knowing that staff will need to be identified and hired?

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

## **ALTERNATIVES**

## **WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL**

## **AMENDMENTS**