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SENATE BILL 158

57TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2026

INTRODUCED BY

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AN ACT

RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS; CREATING THE MICRO-CREDENTIAL PILOT
PROJECT IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT; PROVIDING
REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT;
ASSIGNING DUTIES; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. A new section of the Public School Code is
enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] MICRO-CREDENTIAL PILOT PROJECT--
ELIGIBILITY--APPLICATION--REPORTING AND EVALUATION.--

A. As used in this section:

(1) "equity-centered instruction" means
instruction aligned with the Martinez-Yazzie decision and
includes culturally and linguistically responsive practices,
equity literacy and strengths-based approaches in serving

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1 bilingual students, English language learners, Native American
2 students and other historically underserved student groups;

3 (2) "equity-centered leadership" means school
4 leadership that aligns with the Martinez-Yazzie decision and
5 includes culturally and linguistically responsive practices,
6 bilingual and multicultural program implementation, family and
7 tribal engagement, data-informed and equitable decision making
8 and supporting equity-centered instruction;

9 (3) "Martinez-Yazzie decision" means the final
10 judgment issued in the *Martinez and Yazzie, et al., v. the*
11 *State of New Mexico* consolidated lawsuit;

12 (4) "micro-credential" means a certification
13 that recognizes a person's competency in a particular topic
14 based on the person's completion of short performance-based
15 professional development courses; and

16 (5) "project" means the micro-credential pilot
17 project.

18 B. The "micro-credential pilot project" is created
19 as a five-year pilot project in the department to demonstrate
20 that expanding the issuance of micro-credentials aligned with
21 the Martinez-Yazzie decision to site administrators and
22 teachers through targeted professional development will improve
23 administrator and teacher retention and student outcomes by
24 advancing culturally and linguistically responsive education
25 and by strengthening equity-centered leadership and

1 instruction.

2 C. The project shall be implemented in the
3 following three phases:

4 (1) phase one of the project is the
5 department's development of micro-credential pathways for site
6 administrators and teachers; provided that:

7 (a) each pathway shall require
8 competency of each micro-credential in an appropriate sequence;

9 (b) the site administrator pathway shall
10 focus on equity-centered leadership and be delivered through a
11 cohort model that supports collaborative learning and practice;
12 and

13 (c) the teacher pathway shall focus on
14 equity-centered instruction;

15 (2) phase two of the project is the
16 department's validation of the developed pathways, which shall
17 include testing the micro-credential pathways with and
18 gathering feedback from representative cohorts of at least
19 fifty site administrators and at least fifty teachers; and

20 (3) phase three of the project shall be
21 statewide implementation of the project.

22 D. Statewide implementation of the project shall
23 begin in the 2028-2029 school year. During the first year of
24 statewide implementation, up to eighty site administrators may
25 enroll in the site administrator pathway and up to four hundred

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1 licensed teachers may enroll in the teacher pathway. During
2 the second year of statewide implementation, up to eighty site
3 administrators may enroll in the site administrator pathway and
4 up to seven hundred licensed teachers may enroll in the teacher
5 pathway. During the third year of statewide implementation, up
6 to eighty site administrators may enroll in the site
7 administrator pathway and up to one thousand one hundred
8 teachers may enroll in the teacher pathway.

9 E. A site administrator or teacher shall
10 demonstrate competency in each micro-credential before
11 progressing to the next micro-credential in the sequence for a
12 pathway. Competency shall be determined by successful
13 completion of performance tasks and evidence of practical
14 application and demonstrated growth in a pathway's focus area.
15 Completion of performance tasks shall be measured on a pass-
16 fail basis.

17 F. The department shall:

18 (1) adopt the curriculum and performance tasks
19 for each micro-credential in the site administrator and teacher
20 pathways that are aligned with the Martinez-Yazzie decision;

21 (2) determine the criteria for enrollment in
22 the site administrator and teacher pathways and a time line for
23 the completion of each pathway;

24 (3) determine reporting and evaluation
25 procedures;

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1 (4) give interim reports on the progress of
2 the project to the legislative education study committee and a
3 final report with recommendations to the governor and the
4 legislature that shall include an analysis of the project's
5 effect on equity-centered leadership and instruction and on
6 outcomes for historically underserved student groups, the
7 challenges with implementing the project, the experiences of
8 participants and the department's recommendations for
9 expansion; and

10 (5) collaborate in the development and
11 validation phases of the project with New Mexico-based
12 nonprofit organizations with expertise in providing
13 professional development in equity-centered leadership and
14 instruction, providing culturally and linguistically responsive
15 education and serving historically underserved student groups."

16 SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION.--Three million dollars
17 (\$3,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the
18 public education department for expenditure in fiscal years
19 2027 through 2031 to implement and administer the micro-
20 credential pilot project. Any unexpended balance remaining at
21 the end of fiscal year 2031 shall revert to the general fund.