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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: King DATE TYPED: 02/20/01 HB 281/aHEC
 SHORT TITLE: Teacher Certification Reading Courses SB _____
 ANALYST: Gilbert

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY01	FY02	FY01	FY02		
		NFI			

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to: House Bill 24, House Bill 39, House Bill 74, House Bill 81, Senate Bill 4, Senate Bill 10, Senate Bill 34, Senate Bill 53, & House Joint Memorial 5.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files
 State Department of Education (SDE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of the HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment to House Bill 281 adds language that allows the State Board of Education to establish requirements allowing a reasonable period of time before requiring that a person seeking standard or alternative elementary certification shall have completed six hours of SDE approved reading courses, and a person seeking standard or alternative secondary certification shall have completed three hours of SDE approved reading courses in subject matter content.

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 281 amends Section 22-2-8.7 NMSA 1978, to increase teacher certification requirements by mandating applicants seeking elementary licensure to have completed 6 semester hours in reading courses and applicants seeking secondary licensure to have complete 3 semester hours in reading courses. This bill would apply to applicants seeking standard and alternative licensure.

Significant Issues

According to the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 48% of New Mexico's fourth graders scored "below basic" in reading compared with 39% of students nationally. This bill appears to acknowledge this problem by implementing more stringent teacher licensure standards.

Currently however, the State Board of Education's (SBE) competencies for teacher preparation in elementary education, secondary education, and special education include the areas of reading and literacy. Institutions of higher education, therefore, must include SBE approved reading and literacy courses. Additionally, the SBE's current competencies for all licensure areas are based on New Mexico's K-12 content standards and benchmarks and upon other national standards. All applicants for New Mexico licensure who complete a teacher preparation program at a New Mexico institution of higher education are required to complete coursework in reading and literacy.

According to the State Department of Education (SDE), a similar initiative was implemented by the SBE in the early 1980's where all applicants for initial or renewed certification were required to complete specific reading courses. This requirement was abolished in 1989 with no evaluative data to indicate the effectiveness of the requirement. With the SBE's current initiative to implement standardized testing in reading for reading teachers and for elementary teachers, evaluation of reading courses will be conducted.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no appropriation in House Bill 281 and it does not appear to have any fiscal impact on the general fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

According to the SDE, a more in-depth analysis of transcripts to identify the appropriate reading courses would need to be accomplished by Professional Licensure Unit evaluators. The SBE must also determine the acceptability of the reading courses mandated by this bill to ensure that they meet the SBE's reading goals and content standards.

CONFLICT/DUPLICATION/COMPANIONSHIP/RELATIONSHIP

Senate Bill 53 appropriates \$500.0 to New Mexico State University (NMSU) for the College of Education's teacher preparation initiative.

Senate Bill 10 requires that all students in New Mexico public schools who fail to read independently by the end of the third grade shall not be promoted to the fourth grade until the student reads independently.

Senate Bill 4 appropriates \$250.0 to library the division of the Office of Cultural Affairs to expand family literacy services in underserved areas of the state.

Senate Bill 34 appropriates \$4.0 million to implement intensive summer education programs for grades 1-3 and specifies improving literacy as a major priority.

House Bill 74 appropriates \$1.0 million to the public school reading proficiency fund for FY02 and subsequent fiscal years, to continue the statewide reading initiative to improve student reading proficiencies.

House Bill 39 provides for the State Board of Education to assess teacher preparation programs. This bill amends Section 22-2-2 NMSA 1978, duties of the State Board of Education (SBE), by mandating

that the SBE disapprove all college teacher education programs that fail to seek input from experts in the field when designing teacher of reading courses, disapprove all programs that fail to offer teaching of reading courses that are based on the most current research, disapprove all programs not aligned to the SBE's reading standards, and disapprove all programs that do not include strategies and assessment measures to ensure that all beginning teachers are proficient in teaching of reading.

House Bill 81 enacts public school reforms providing for more stringent competency requirements for teachers and school principals and providing for licensure of certain school employees.

House Bill 24 implements statewide early childhood programs stressing reading.

House Bill 33 implements an Even Start Family Literacy Program

House Joint Memorial 5 - Monitor Statewide Reading Initiative

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

This bill appear to require out-of-state applicants to show proof of completion of New Mexico's required reading courses in order to be eligible for licensure. This may create a barrier to attracting out-of-state applicants to New Mexico. According to the SBE, between January 1, 2000 and January 1, 2001, approximately 50% of all initial licenses issued by the Professional Licensure Unit were to applicants who received their degrees from other states.

The 2000 Legislature passed a reading initiative and created the public school reading proficiency fund. The Legislature also appropriated \$1.0 million to the fund which was then allocated by the State Department of Education (SDE) to school districts in the form of New Mexico Reading Improvement Initiative grants. Fourteen school districts received funding under this program. The SDE awarded such grants on a competitive basis, with preference given to school districts with more than 50% of students living in poverty. The LFC and the LESC recommend that \$1.0 million be appropriated to continue this program.

LG/ar