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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Sanchez, B. DATE TYPED: 2/20/03 HB _____

SHORT TITLE: Cultural Diversity Training for Teachers SB 399

ANALYST: L. Baca

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	NFI				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From

State Department of Education (SDE)
Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 399 requires that, in addition to other requirements for certification in elementary or secondary education, candidates seeking standard or alternative certification after January 1, 2005 shall have completed three credit hours in cultural diversity education; that a person who holds a license on the effective date of the act or who applies for a license before January 1, 2005, shall also complete three hours of cultural diversity education by January 1, 2006; and that colleges of education shall develop and offer one or more courses in cultural diversity that focus on teaching future teachers the importance of cultural identity in learning and teaching strategies to improve learning skills of minority students.

Significant Issues

The CHE and SDE stress that the 128-hour B.A. degree in teacher education is presently among the most highly prescribed of undergraduate curricula with virtually no room for electives. In 2001, the Legislature required an additional six semester hours in reading for elementary teachers and three semester hours for secondary teachers. This bill proposes the addition of three more semester hours in cultural diversity. This prescriptive program required of prospective

teachers allows little room for electives, and any delay or misstep in making a career choice can add one or more semesters to a student completing a degree program. And, as the SDE points out, even the current requirements can require a five-year degree plan.

The bill addresses colleges of education at four-year institutions and makes no reference to two-year institutions, some of which are presently administering alternative licensure programs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no fiscal impact on the general fund or on school districts. Rather, the impact will be on teacher candidates who must take and colleges of education that must develop and offer courses in cultural diversity – if the courses aren't presently offered in some form.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There appears to be no impact on SDE, CHE, or public school districts, but there is a potential impact on colleges of education.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The SDE analysis raises an issue related to the time requirements in the bill:

“Subsection B requires that those who apply for licensure before January 1, 2005, must complete the requirement by January 1, 2006. If the act became effective on July 1, 2003, would this mean that the SDE’s Professional Licensure Unit would not act on an application for licensure until the cultural diversity coursework requirement was met, potentially as much as two years?”

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Analysis prepared by SDE and CHE raise two substantive issues:

1. The bill does not specify consequence accruing to current license holders who fail to meet the January 1, 2006, deadline
2. Representatives from colleges of education see an inconsistency in statutory provisions that, on the one hand, minimize requirements for alternative licensure while, on the other hand, seek to increase specific course requirements for alternative and standard licensure.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Don't colleges presently offer courses, or units, on cultural diversity?
2. What kinds of information would be covered in cultural diversity courses?
3. Will these bill “heavily” impact colleges of education?
4. What will adding this requirement do to requirements in the overall teacher education program?
5. Is it time to revisit the requirements for prospective teachers?