

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill No: SB 146**

**49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009**

**Short Title: Change Mentorship Program Fund Distribution**

**Sponsor(s): Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Jane M. García**

**Analyst: Eilani Gerstner**

**Date: February 3, 2009**

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**Bill Summary:**

SB 146 amends the *School Personnel Act* to require the Public Education Department (PED) to:

- distribute at least 50 percent of available funds for beginning teacher mentorship programs to school districts on or before September 15 of each fiscal year according to the estimated number of beginning teachers on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the school year; and
- distribute the remainder of the funds to school districts on or before January 15 of each fiscal year based on the actual number of beginning teachers on the 40<sup>th</sup> day, adjusted for any over- or under-estimation made in the first allocation.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 146 contains no appropriation.

For FY 10, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and the Legislative Finance Committee recommendations for public school support include \$1.5 million for beginning teacher mentorship; the Executive recommendation is \$2.0 million.

**Fiscal Issues:**

On February 2, 2009, in response to an LESC staff request, PED reported that:

- school districts and charter schools have not yet received FY 09 funding awards for their mentorship programs; however,
- approximately \$1.95 million of the FY 09 funding is to be distributed to districts and charter schools for a total of 1,944 beginning teachers, a per-teacher allocation of \$1,003.09; and
- approximately \$50,000 from the available program funding will remain as an unexpended balance.

Since 2000, the Legislature has appropriated approximately \$10.1 million for beginning teacher mentorship, including \$2.0 million each for FY 08 and FY 09. Since 2001, these legislative appropriations have provided for per-teacher allocations to districts that ranged from a minimum of \$365 per teacher in FY 06 to a maximum of \$929 per teacher in FY 08.

## **Issues:**

SB 146 addresses funding issues identified in testimony to the LESC:

- Prior to 2007, PED had distributed mentorship funding to districts based upon the number of beginning teachers in the prior school year. However, during the 2006 interim, school districts reported to the LESC that this method provided insufficient funding for districts that experienced an influx of beginning teachers in the current school year.
- In 2007, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to amend the *School Personnel Act* to require PED to distribute available funds for beginning teacher mentorship programs to school districts according to the number of beginning teachers on the 40<sup>th</sup> day of the current school year.
- During the 2007 and 2008 interims, school districts reported to the LESC that, although funding mentorship programs in the current school year based on the 40<sup>th</sup> day data provided a more accurate count of beginning teachers, this method of funding was still problematic because the 40<sup>th</sup> day of school can occur as late as December.
- SB 146 would allow districts to receive partial funding for the estimated number of beginning teachers by September 15 of each fiscal year, allowing districts to fund mentorship programs at the beginning of the school year.

## **Background:**

- Since at least 1999, the LESC has studied beginning teacher mentorship programs.
- In 2001, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to establish a beginning teacher mentorship program in law for all new teachers with standard, alternative, or substandard licenses, in order “to provide an effective transition into the teaching field; ensure success in teaching; improve student achievement; and retain capable teachers in the classroom.”
- In 2007, LESC-endorsed legislation was enacted to (1) require that mentorship program funds be distributed according to 40<sup>th</sup> day data of the current school year, and (2) require that PED require teacher preparation programs to work with colleges of arts and sciences and high schools to develop a model to provide mentorship services to each of their graduates teaching in New Mexico public high schools and report their recommendations to the LESC.
- In 2008, the LESC formed the LESC Mentorship Model Work Group to address the 2007 requirement to create a mentorship model. Members of this work group were among those who expressed their concern to the LESC regarding the delay in the distribution of mentorship funds as a result of the requirement to distribute the funds to school districts according to 40<sup>th</sup> day data.

## **Related Bills:**

None as of 02-03-09.