

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HJM 21

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: .183650.1

Short Title: Improve Teacher Preparation Programs

Sponsor(s): Representatives Jimmie C. Hall, Mimi Stewart, and Others

Analyst: Pamela Herman

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Bill Summary:

HJM 21 urges the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and its partners – including the Association for Childhood Education International, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the International Reading Association – to improve curricular specifications for teacher preparation programs, particularly for teachers who will be teaching children how to read.

Among its other points, HJM 21 resolves:

- that accreditation of teacher preparation programs be more stringent, be research-based, and delineate competencies tied to licensure; and
- that, to be accredited, a teacher preparation program's core reading curriculum should prepare teachers by focusing on:
 - knowledge of language structure;
 - the importance of aligning instruction with student characteristics; and
 - the importance of skilled teaching behavior in domains validated by research.

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not contain an appropriation.

Substantive Issues:

As a number of the clauses in the memorial suggest, HJM 21 is intended to address what is widely perceived as shortcomings in training that teachers receive in the teaching of reading.

As an example of that concern, in the 2010 regular session, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) endorsed and the Legislature passed HJM 16, *Study Reading Curricula in Teacher Education*, in response to ongoing legislative interest in and concern about the adequacy of preparation of new teachers to teach reading in the state's public schools. The memorial requested that the New Mexico Deans and Directors of Colleges of Education form a work group to:

- examine the curricula and assigned text materials of all required reading courses in programs that prepare teachers for state licensure;
- determine if those courses meet the statutory requirement that they be based on current scientifically based research; and
- report the results of its study to the LESC in the 2010 interim, with findings and recommendations.

The HJM 16 Work Group report stated that, based on a review by six reading experts of syllabi and materials for each required reading course offered by the nine public (as well as two private) elementary education teacher licensure programs in New Mexico, the report's findings included the following:

- while the reviewers' assessments pointed to a wide variance among the programs in the degree to which their required reading courses for elementary teachers prepared candidates in the science of reading instruction, every program showed room for improvement on one or more of the criteria used in the reviews; and
- on the whole, New Mexico teacher education programs "missed the target" in addressing the science of reading instruction to a disappointing degree.

The work group report made five specific recommendations:

1. Rigorously assess candidate knowledge of how to teach reading based on the scientific research as a condition for elementary licensure, either through the New Mexico Teacher Content Knowledge Assessment in Elementary Education or through a separate exam. Request that the LESC sponsor legislation to make the new assessment requirement explicit in statutory licensure requirements during the 2011 legislative session.
2. Convene a statewide gathering of programs in early spring 2011 for faculty to review the issues raised in the report, to share texts, supplemental resources, syllabi, instructional activities and assessments, and other resources and approaches, for the purpose of strengthening reading instruction statewide.
3. Develop a list of recommended texts that address the five essential elements of literacy instruction, among which programs would be encouraged but not required to select for coursework beginning in the 2011-2012 academic year.
4. During the 2011 legislative interim, convene the Deans and Directors at an LESC meeting to present the approaches and solutions developed at the spring gathering.
5. Include review of required reading courses based on alignment with scientific research as part of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education accreditation review process.

Another example of concern about the quality of teacher education programs is evidenced by a plan announced in January 2011 by the National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ)¹, and *U.S.*

¹ NCTQ is a nonprofit organization that advocates for "reforms in a broad range of policies on the local, state and national level to increase the number of effective teachers"

News and World Report to study and rank approximately 1,400 teacher preparation programs nationwide. That report is scheduled to be released in 2012.

Background:

In 2007, legislation endorsed by the LESC was enacted to amend the *School Personnel Act* to establish a uniform statewide teacher education accountability reporting system (TEARS) to measure and track teacher education candidates from pre-entry to post-graduation in order to benchmark the productivity and accountability of New Mexico's teacher work force. In 2008, the act was amended again to add candidates for administrative licensure to the system, changing the name of the reporting system to the educator accountability reporting system (EARS).

Among its provisions, the act requires that:

- each teacher preparation program produce an annual Educator Accountability Report that includes student demographic and outcome data, information about program characteristics and student qualifications, itemized information on program revenues and expenditures, and an evaluation plan;
- PED, in collaboration with higher education representatives, design the reporting system; require the data to be reported through the PED Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System; use EARS to assess the status of the pre-kindergarten through post-graduate (P-20) system of education; and issue an annual statewide Educator Accountability Report to the Governor and the Legislature; and
- each public postsecondary educational institution adopt the annual report for its teacher education programs.

During each interim since 2008, the LESC has heard a presentation from the New Mexico Deans and Directors of Colleges of Education regarding the implementation of the EARS and a report of the required annual data. The 2010 report indicated that, although statute requires that data from EARS be reported into STARS, that goal has not yet been accomplished because additional funding will be required to make the necessary modifications to the STARS database. As such, the 2010 EARS report indicates that "implementation [of this statutory requirement] will occur when technically feasible." When that occurs, it will be possible to link the performance of completers of teacher preparation programs with the success of students in their classrooms, an approach to accountability that education reform advocates have identified as the true best measure of the effectiveness of the programs.

Related Bills:

HB 70 *No Funds for Certain School Education Pgms.*

HB 74 *Science of Teaching Reading Requirement*