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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
55th Legislature, 1st Session, 2021

Bill Number	<u>HB120/aHSEIC</u>	Sponsor	<u>Alcon</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.218365.3</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HLVMC/HSEIC; SHPAC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>Military Spouse Expedited Licensure</u>		
Analyst	<u>Hathaway, Canada</u>	Original Date	<u>2/19/2021</u>
		Last Updated	<u>3/12/2021</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of HSEIC Amendment

The House State Government, Elections and Indian Affairs Committee amendment to House Bill 120 (HB120/aHSEIC) excludes civil service occupations when defining military service members and providing access to benefits in the bill.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 120 (HB120) proposes to amend sections of the Public School Code that currently provide a waiver of licensure fees and expedited issuing of licenses for military service members, their spouses, their dependent children, and veterans. HB120 proposes amending the School Personnel Act to allow the Public Education Department (PED) to waive fees and expedite “substitute certificates” as well. The bill also requires PED to provide a report to the director of the Office of Military Base Planning and Support including the number and type of licenses or certificates that were issued during the fiscal year. HB120 amends other statutes related to occupations licensed in the state, outside of the public school system, to waive fees and expedite licenses.

There is no effective date of this bill. It is assumed the effective date is 90 days following adjournment of the Legislature.

This analysis is specific to the impact on public schools.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill does not include an appropriation.

Currently, PED licenses substitute teachers and individuals must pay \$50 for the initial license and licensure renewal. According to PED, they already provide waiver fees for the individuals targeted in HB120/aHSEIC.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

HB120 enables a number of licensing entities to accommodate military service members and members of their family, during times of transition when they are seeking new employment.

Teacher Supply and Demand in New Mexico. The *Martinez* and *Yazzie* consolidated lawsuit identified well-trained staff as essential to ensuring all students have access to a high-quality education, and the Legislature has been focused on supporting an improved workforce. Still, there is a teacher shortage in New Mexico, which is also noted in the PED analysis of HB120.

According to the 2020 Educator Vacancy Report, a publication of New Mexico State University's Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center, teacher vacancies decreased by 11 percent between FY20 and FY21 from 644 teacher vacancies to 571 teacher vacancies; current vacancies represent 2.74 percent of the current teacher workforce. Of those vacancies, the largest unfilled job posting was for elementary school teachers at 29 percent, representing 163 vacancies, and special education teachers at 27 percent, which had 153 vacancies. Educational or instructional assistant vacancies decreased by 33 percent from 258 vacancies last year to 173 vacancies this year. Although this data source is cited throughout the state as a metric to measure the teaching shortage, the report only represents publicly posted job postings.

In New Mexico, teacher demand outpaces the number of teachers prepared each year and not all teachers who are prepared in New Mexico commit to teaching in the state following graduation. According to the most recent data available, on average, 63 percent of graduates teach in New Mexico following graduation.

In FY20, a total of 1,287 students were admitted to New Mexico educator preparation programs, 193 students more than FY19. 927 students completed a program, a 24 percent increase from FY19. Graduation rates had declined year-over-year since 2015, and during the 2017-2018 school year, completion rates were down 20 percent from two years prior. Of those who completed a program during the last academic year, 60 percent finished an alternative license program, larger share than in the previous year, when alternative program students were 51 percent of total program completers.

According to U.S. Census Bureau, there were approximately 157,413 veterans living in New Mexico in July 2017. PED's analysis of HB120 notes that while the department already waives licensing fees and expedites licenses for these applicants, HB120 could incentivize eligible New Mexico veterans, military service members, their spouses, and dependent children with a fee waiver to pursue a career in education in the state.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED reported the addition of "substitute certificates" language is potentially extraneous because the department does not issue certificates. Instead, all "substitute teachers" receive licenses, making them already eligible for these types of benefits. HB120/aHSEIC may use the term "substitute certificates" because that is how they are currently referred to in statute, even though PED's current practice is to call them something different.

HB120 would require annual reporting from PED to the Office of Military Base Planning from boards, commissions, and other oversight entities regarding the number of fee waivers provided to military service members, their spouses, children, and veterans.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

As noted by PED in its analysis of HB120, New Mexico is experiencing a teacher shortage. While the department already waives fees and expedites licenses for teachers, the bill may incentivize New Mexico veterans, military service members, spouses, and children with a fee waiver to pursue a career in education.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)
- Veterans' Services Department (VSD)
- Department of Military Affairs (DMA)
- Public Education Department (PED)

JKH/CC/mb