

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

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July 21, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Leah Montaña

RE: **STAFF BRIEF: TEACHER PREPARATION: SB 329aa, SCHOOL LICENSURE RECIPROCITY REQUIREMENTS (LAWS 2015, CH. 97): IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

During the 2015 regular legislative session, legislation¹ was enacted to amend the *School Personnel Act*, effective July 1, 2016, to:

- change the minimum educational requirements for persons seeking licensure or reciprocity in elementary, special, early childhood, or secondary education; and
- increase the student teaching requirement.

For the committee's review, this staff brief outlines the:

- changes to the educational and student teaching requirements;
- substantive points from agency bill analyses; and
- background.

¹ SB 329aa, *School Licensure Reciprocity Requirements*; Laws 2015, Ch. 97

This brief also includes an **Attachment, SB 329aa, *School Licensure Reciprocity Requirements***.

CHANGES TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND STUDENT TEACHING REQUIREMENTS

Among its provisions, SB 329aa reduced the arts and sciences semester credit hour requirement to 41 (from 57) as outlined in the table below.

Prior Course Requirements	Course Requirements Effective July 1, 2016
12 hours: English	9 hours: communication
12 hours: history, including American history and western civilization	6 hours: mathematics
9 hours: mathematics for elementary education and 6 hours in mathematics for secondary education	8 hours: laboratory science
6 hours: government, economics, or sociology	9 hours: social and behavioral science
12 hours: science, including biology, chemistry, physics, geology, zoology, and botany	9 hours: humanities and fine arts
6 hours: fine arts	
Total: 54-57 semester hours	Total: 41 semester hours

Other provisions increased the pre-licensure supervised student teaching requirement to 16 weeks (from 14 weeks), except for licensure by reciprocity.

SUBSTANTIVE POINTS FROM AGENCY BILL ANALYSES

University of New Mexico (UNM)

According to the UNM bill analysis, the reduction of semester hours is beneficial because it gives colleges of education in New Mexico more latitude in how teachers are prepared. Moreover, it would permit students to obtain an additional minor, which could be in another content teaching area. The proposed changes will also permit students to possibly obtain a dual license in special education without having to take more hours.

Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU)

ENMU suggested that SB 329aa may expand the teaching pool of highly qualified educators by removing unnecessary and unproven barriers existing in the current credit hour requirements. Teacher education students now must attend institutions of higher education on the average of two additional semesters to satisfy the extra general education requirements currently in statute.

According to ENMU, this requirement is an ever increasing financial burden and disincentive to joining the teaching profession.

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)

According to the CNM analysis, the reduction in required student credit has recently been urged by the Higher Education Department (HED) and is a performance measure tracked by HED on its institutional performance dashboard. In addition, a reduction in required student credit hours could result in a slight decrease in an institution's General Fund appropriation as the current HED funding formula factors an institution's completed credit hours into its performance funding recommendation.

Additionally, the bill will increase the field experience requirement for all candidates from 14 weeks to 16 weeks. CNM notes by increasing the pre-licensure supervised student teaching requirement the bill is attempting to align public school year periods with New Mexico public postsecondary institution semester lengths.

Public Education Department (PED)

The PED analysis for the original bills stated:

- the federal government is considering grading education preparation programs based on a link of graduate performance in the classroom;
- by allowing teacher preparation programs the flexibility to address training needs to make teachers more effective, they are more likely to succeed under new federal requirements;
- reducing the number of required credit hours eliminates unnecessary barriers for individuals interested in teaching and may expand the teaching pool, as many teaching candidates are currently required to spend more than four years in college to meet the credit requirements in statute; and
- quality student teaching integral to any teacher preparation program and the extension of this requirement can help new licensees be more prepared.

New Mexico Deans and Directors of Education (NMDDE)

According to the NMDDE analysis for the original bill:

- teacher education students now must attend an institute of higher education on average of two additional semesters to satisfy the extra general education requirements as currently in statute; and
- this is an ever increasing financial burden and disincentive to joining the teaching profession.

BACKGROUND

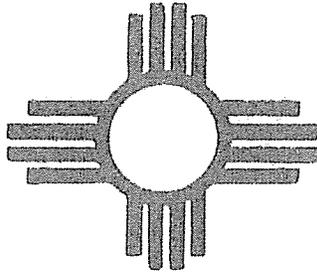
During the 2014 interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee heard testimony from Associate Provost for Curriculum, Office of Academic Affairs, UNM, regarding credit requirements for degree completion. In that testimony, he stated that:

- for most universities, the minimum credit hours needed for baccalaureate degree completion is 120;
- however, the minimum number of credit hours needed for degree completion is 128 at UNM and other New Mexico universities, including:
 - ENMU;
 - New Mexico Highlands University;
 - New Mexico State University; and
 - Northern New Mexico College.

Referencing other states that enacted legislation to lower minimum credit hour requirements, including Florida and Wisconsin, the provost stated that a reduction in credit hours allowed the University of Wisconsin to accommodate an additional 15,000 students and UNM could see similar results.

Using the aforementioned examples and citing peer institutions, he stated that on January 28, 2014 the UNM Faculty Senate reduced the minimum number of credit hours required for a baccalaureate degree from 128 to 120. He informed the committee that UNM was currently working with the academic departments to review all degree programs to match the 120 credit hour minimum while also maintaining the integrity of the program. In order to help students graduate in a four-year time frame, he stated, UNM created:

- four-year semester-by-semester online road maps for all degree programs;
- degree road maps that are customizable to each student's needs; and
- mechanisms for tracking the student progress as well as intervention methods for off-track students.



The Legislature
of the
State of New Mexico

52nd Legislature, 1st Session

LAWS 2015

CHAPTER 97

SENATE BILL 329, as amended

Introduced by

SENATOR GAY G. KERNAN



CHAPTER 97

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; AMENDING THE SCHOOL PERSONNEL ACT TO CHANGE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONS SEEKING LICENSURE OR RECIPROCITY IN ELEMENTARY, SPECIAL, EARLY CHILDHOOD OR SECONDARY EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 22-10A-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1986, Chapter 33, Section 8, as amended) is amended to read:

"22-10A-6. EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE.--

A. The department shall require a person seeking licensure or reciprocity in elementary, special, early childhood or secondary education to have completed the following minimum requirements in the college of arts and sciences:

- (1) nine semester hours in communication;
- (2) six semester hours in mathematics;
- (3) eight semester hours in laboratory science;
- (4) nine semester hours in social and behavioral science; and
- (5) nine semester hours in humanities and fine arts.

B. In addition to the requirements specified in Subsections A and C of this section, the department shall

1 require that a person seeking standard or alternative
2 elementary licensure shall have completed six hours of
3 reading courses, and a person seeking standard or alternative
4 secondary licensure shall have completed three hours of
5 reading courses in subject matter content. The department
6 shall establish requirements that provide a reasonable period
7 of time to comply with the provisions of this subsection.

8 C. Except for licensure by reciprocity, the
9 department shall require, prior to initial licensure, no less
10 than sixteen weeks of student teaching, a portion of which
11 shall occur in the first thirty credit hours taken in the
12 college of education and shall be under the direct
13 supervision of a teacher and a portion of which shall occur
14 in the student's senior year with the student teacher being
15 directly responsible for the classroom.

16 D. Nothing in this section shall preclude the
17 department from establishing or accepting equivalent
18 requirements for purposes of reciprocal licensure or minimum
19 requirements for alternative licensure.

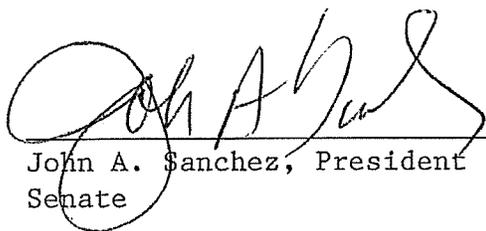
20 E. Vocational teacher preparatory programs may be
21 exempt from Subsections A through C of this section upon a
22 determination by the department that other licensure
23 requirements are more appropriate for vocational teacher
24 preparatory programs."

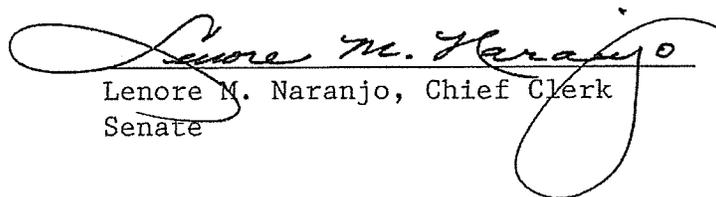
25 SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the

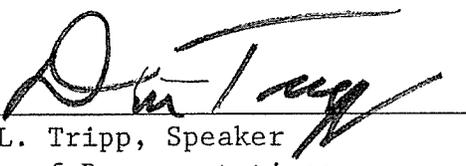
1 provisions of this act is July 1, 2016. _____

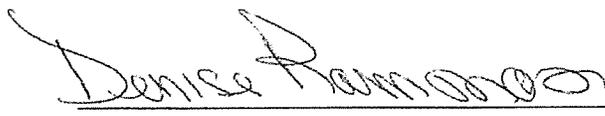
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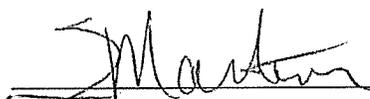

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Senate


Lenore M. Naranjo, Chief Clerk
Senate


Don L. Tripp, Speaker
House of Representatives


Denise Ramonas, Chief Clerk
House of Representatives

Approved by me this 8th day of April, 2015


Governor Susana Martinez
State of New Mexico