

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SB 85

**49th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2010**

**Tracking Number:** .180287.1

**Short Title:** School Leadership Institute

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Gay G. Kernan and Others

**Analyst:** David Harrell

**Date:** January 31, 2010

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**Bill Summary:**

SB 85 adds a new section to the higher education statutes to create the School Leadership Institute, administratively attached to the Higher Education Department (HED), and requires HED to provide administrative services for the institute.

The bill also requires the School Leadership Institute to:

- provide “a comprehensive and cohesive framework” for preparing, mentoring, and providing professional development for principals and other leaders in public schools.
- offer at least the following programs:
  - licensure preparation for aspiring principals;
  - mentoring for new principals and other public school leaders;
  - intensive support for principals at schools in need of improvement;
  - professional development for aspiring superintendents; and
  - mentoring for new superintendents; and
- partner with state agencies, institutions of higher education, and professional associations to identify and recruit candidates for the institute.

Finally, SB 85 is the subject of Senate Executive Message 42.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 85 makes no appropriation.

For FY 10, the Legislature appropriated \$200,000 from the General Fund to HED to establish the School Leadership Institute (see “Substantive Issues,” below).

**Substantive Issues:**

SB 85 addresses needs identified in testimony before the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) during the 2008 interim. At that time, the LESL received a report from the Office of

Education Accountability (OEA), in collaboration with the Public Education Department (PED) and HED, that described these agencies' study, in collaboration with school districts and institutions of higher education, in response to Senate Joint Memorial (SJM) 3 (2008). Endorsed by the LESC, SJM 3 requested that these agencies develop a plan to enhance the recruitment, preparation, mentoring, evaluation, professional development, and support for school principals and other school leaders.

The report in response to SJM 3 made six recommendations to address the issues identified in the joint memorial, to strengthen "New Mexico's capacity to attract and retain strong school leaders." SB 85 implements one of the report's recommendations: to develop and implement the School Leadership Institute.

As the report on SJM 3 explains:

Across the country, the states that are making the most progress in strengthening their school leadership systems have developed statewide leadership institutes. These state-level programs are designed to recruit, prepare, and support school principals. They share several common characteristics:

1. Leadership initiatives are developed through partnerships with state agencies, professional associations, and institutions of higher education.
2. Training for prospective principals addresses specific statewide needs and is accompanied by mentoring and coaching.
3. Learning activities for new principals are experiential, including extended internships, on-the-job-training, professional learning communities, and networking with peers.
4. Finally, strong principal leadership programs have shifted the emphasis from traditional administrative and managerial roles to a focus on the school principal's influence on school effectiveness and student learning.

This testimony led the LESC to endorse legislation in the 2009 session virtually identical to SB 85. Although the bill itself did not pass, the appropriation of \$200,000 was included in the *General Appropriation Act of 2009*, as noted under "Fiscal Impact," above. Despite the absence of legislation, in response to letters from the Chair of the Senate Education Committee and the Chair of the House Education Committee, the then-Interim Cabinet Secretary of Higher Education said that HED was working closely with OEA "to carry out the intent" of the legislation.

Then during the 2009 interim, the LESC heard testimony about the establishment of the School Leadership Institute. With the appropriation of \$200,000 noted above, together with an additional \$210,000 from the Wallace Foundation, the School Leadership Institute was established at the University of New Mexico, which agreed to provide office space as well as research assistance by a doctoral student in the College of Education. In addition, a director has been hired; and, on November 20, 2009, the institute held its inaugural event. Among other activities, this event featured the screening of a video supported by the Wallace Foundation called *Roundhouse to Schoolhouse: Policy to Practice*, which highlights the school leadership policies in New Mexico and which will be shown on the *New York Times* Knowledge Network website.

The testimony to the LESC during 2009 noted that, under its new director, the institute will collaborate with school districts, postsecondary educational institutions, regional education cooperatives, professional organizations, and other parties to develop several specific programs for school leaders. Progress toward these goals has included work toward a common core curriculum for principal preparation; the development of two kinds of mentoring – one for new principals and the other for principals with provisional licenses; the development of the Principal Mentor Network and its website; and the Aspiring Superintendent’s Program, developed by the New Mexico School Superintendent’s Association.

The PED analysis of SB 85 describes some additional work in conjunction with the School Leadership Institute. To revitalize principal standards, PED has collaborated with OEA to convene an entry-level competencies review committee comprising college faculty and deans, superintendents, principals, and others. The committee first met in October 2009, and it expects to finalize its recommendations for strengthening school principal standards in the spring of 2010.

Even though the School Leadership Institute has been established and its work has begun, the LESC has endorsed SB 85 to codify the institute in statute. The committee’s interest, given the importance of school leadership, is in ensuring that the institute can be sustained from one executive administration to the next.

Another benefit to codifying the institute appears in the OEA analysis of SB 85. As this analysis notes, in January 2010, New Mexico submitted a \$160 million application to the US Department of Education for a grant under the Race to the Top program. The School Leadership Institute plays a substantive role in this application as a recruitment and training vehicle for high-quality school leaders, including those leaders working in New Mexico’s schools in need of improvement. “In order for that application to be successful,” the OEA analysis continues, “New Mexico needs to ensure that initiatives will be sustained after the funding period ends in four years. One method of doing that is to establish the Leadership Institute in law.”

### **Background:**

One of the central publications to document the value of and need for effective school leadership is *Strong Leaders, Strong Schools*, by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

- “More than ever,” this report says, “states need to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to ensure that today’s leaders have the skills, knowledge and support required to guide the transformation of schools to meet higher standards and new requirements for progress.”
- Responding to this need, the NCSL report continues, during 2007 alone at least 25 states, New Mexico among them, enacted 42 laws “to support school leader initiatives.”
- In addition, during the 2008 interim a representative of NCSL testified before the LESC in support of the recommendations in the SJM 3 report.

Among the other organizations that have recently developed similar themes are the Southern Regional Education Board (*Schools Can’t Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs*); and *Good Principals Aren’t Born – They’re Mentored*) and the

Education Commission of the States (*Strong Leaders, Strong Achievement: Model Policy for Producing the Leaders to Drive Student Success*).

**Related Bills:**

None as of 01-31-10.