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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 03/02/11

SPONSOR Smith, J. LAST UPDATED _____ HB 592

SHORT TITLE School Personnel License Exam SB _____

ANALYST Gudgel

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY11	FY12	FY13	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
Total		NFI	NFI			

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12	FY13		
	See Fiscal Implications	See Fiscal Implications	Recurring	Educator Licensure Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Revenue Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 592 amends Section 22-10A-8 of School Personnel Act that allows PED to issue an alternative level one license to a person who is at least 18 years old who has received a passing score on a state-approved subject-area examination in the subject area of instruction for which the person is applying for a license. The way the bill is drafted, it is unclear whether the applicant would be required to have a baccalaureate degree.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

House Bill 592 contains no appropriation. PED collects \$125 per teacher license issued that generates revenues for the Educator Licensure Fund. For FY11, the department issued 899 alternative level one licenses. If the number of applications for alternative level one licenses increases pursuant to this bill, there will be an increase in revenues collected by the PED.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The PED is convinced that the language changes of the bill are at best ambiguous with respect to permitting initial licensure without requiring a baccalaureate degree. The PED's entire comments regarding the bill rest on the assumption that the proposed amendment would permit licensure without an undergraduate degree which seems on the face of it, not the intention of the bill. Assuming that either the current language of the bill does require a degree or that the bill were amended to achieve this effect, the PED states that the effect of the bill would be to allow a candidate to demonstrate content knowledge through assessment instead of obtaining the semester credits. Further, there will not be an issue regarding non-compliance with federal law and the 18 years of age requirement.

Alternative routes to teacher certification are state-defined routes through which an individual who already has at least a bachelor's degree can obtain certification to teach without necessarily having to go back to college and complete a college, campus-based teacher education program. Currently, New Mexico requires someone who has completed a baccalaureate degree at an accredited institution of higher education to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours at either the undergraduate or graduate level in the subject area for which the person is applying for a license. This is in addition to passing the New Mexico teacher assessments examination and completing a minimum of twelve semester hours of instruction in teaching principles.

In 2010, 48 states and the District of Columbia reported they have at least some type of alternate route to teacher certification, with only Alaska and Oregon not having alternative routes to teacher certification. Preliminary research conducted by the HED indicates 136 state-defined alternate routes to teacher certification now exist in the states and the District of Columbia. In addition, states report that nearly 600 alternate route programs are implementing the alternative routes to teacher certification they have established.

Based on data submitted by the various states to the National Center for Education Information (NCEI), it is estimated that 59,000 individuals were issued certificates to teach through alternative routes in 2008-09. Nationally, approximately one-third of new teachers being hired are coming through alternative routes to teacher certification. Since the mid-1980s, approximately 500,000 teachers have entered the profession through alternative routes according to the National Center for Alternative Education. New Jersey, an early adapter of alternative licensure reports that about 40 percent of its new hires come through alternate routes.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HB 592 relates to public school performance measures regarding student proficiency.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Enactment of HB 592 would require the PED to revise existing rules.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

PED’s analysis notes the following issues:

Does the “or” mean a bachelor’s degree *AND* 30 semester credits or passage of the content exam or does the “or” mean a bachelor’s degree or 30 semester credits or passage of the content exam.

To eliminate this confusion the bill could read: “(1) completed a baccalaureate degree at an accredited institution of higher education, and either, completion of a minimum of thirty credit hours at either the undergraduate or graduate level in the subject area of instruction for which the person is applying for a license or a passing score on a state-approved subject-area examination in the subject area of instruction for which the person is applying for a license; or”

Further, on page 2, line 22 the bill adds text “or examination” as follows: “B. A degree or examination referred to in Subsection A of this section shall correspond to the subject area of instruction and the particular grade level that will enable the applicant to teach in a competent manner as determined by the department.”

Given the language on page 2, line 22, it appears that a degree or an exam is acceptable as meeting the requirements.

The sponsor may wish to clarify these issues.

With the technical issues resolved, there would not be an issue with the master’s degree requirement (below) for advancement to level 3. The effect of the bill would be to allow a candidate to demonstrate content knowledge through assessment instead of obtaining the semester credits. Further, there will not be an issue regarding non-compliance with federal law and the 18 years of age requirement.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

Senate Bill 361 as introduced was a Duplicate. SB361 has been amended to address issues noted by OEA and PED, requiring completion of a baccalaureate degree and receipt of a passing score on a state-approved subject area examination, and completion of 12 hours of instruction in teaching principles and programs approved by PED.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

OEA notes the proposed amendment could have an unintended consequence of allowing individuals who are inadequately prepared in various subject areas to be in classrooms, thus diluting the quality of education for public school students across the state. This concern was expressed in email correspondence to HED staff by the College of Education Deans of the University of New Mexico and Northern New Mexico College, and which the Office of Education Accountability was included as a recipient.

As detailed in 6.60.7.H.(5) NMAC, the alternative licensure program currently allows licensure to be achieved, for example, via completing a minimum of 9 credit hours per school year in an

alternative licensure program over a three-year period, successfully demonstrating competency by way of portfolio assessment or by way of local evaluations for two full school years in an approved school district alternative program. These other “paths” are nonetheless predicated on a significant investment of time gaining credit hours or actual practice in an educational setting, experiences that are not duplicated by achieving a passing-score on a state-approved subject-area examination.

The HED consulted alternative licensure program directors and Deans of the Colleges of Education. Opinions varied. The director of the state’s largest alternative licensure program at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) notes that CNM has many individuals that have a deep understanding of content that comes from life experience rather than from their degree. An example of this is individuals who are native speakers of a language other than English that want to teach their native language. The content exams required for secondary licensure are sufficiently rigorous to ensure an individual has the knowledge of the content they will be teaching. CNM currently allows individuals to add a second endorsement by demonstrating they either have 24 credits in the content area OR take and pass the appropriate content area exam. CNM notes that they already allow for a route in which endorsements can be added by test only (for any teacher--not just those pursuing alternative licensure).

The Dean of the College of Education at the University of New Mexico (UNM) notes that although UNM does not have many alternative licensure candidates, they do not feel that a subject area examination could substitute for the 30 credit hours of course work since many of these courses are “method” courses designed for “hands-on” or practical experience. UNM expresses concern that HB592 would lead to dramatically unprepared persons in the classroom who may be able to pass a one-dimensional test, but unable to translate information into instruction.

RSG/mew