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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/12/11
 LAST UPDATED 03/17/11 **HB** _____

SPONSOR Nava

SHORT TITLE Level One Teacher Licensure Alternatives **SB** 361/aSEC/aHEC

ANALYST Haug

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)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee amendment to Senate Bill 361 removes Senate Education Committee Amendment #4 which would have required within two years of beginning teaching under alternative licensing, completion of a minimum of twelve semester hours of instruction in teaching principles in a program approved by the PED.

Synopsis of SEC Amendment

The Senate Education Committee amendment to Senate Bill 361 clarifies that an applicant for alternative licensure must have at least a baccalaureate degree and have completed, within two years of beginning teaching, a minimum of 12 semester hours of instruction in teaching principles.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 361 would amend 22-10A-8 NMSA 1978 to allow level one teacher licensure applicants to take a subject area examination for licensure as an alternate to 30 credit hours of subject area courses. This would apply to those who completed baccalaureate degrees who are seeking alternative teacher licensure.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Senate Bill 361 contains no appropriation and has no fiscal implications.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The PED is convinced that the language of the proposed amendment to 22-10A-8 NMSA 1978 is 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 thirty 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.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

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 SB361 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.

GH/mew:bym:svb