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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
55th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2022

Bill Number	<u>HB184</u>	Sponsor	<u>Romero, GA</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.222131.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HAFC</u>
Short Title	<u>School Micro-Credential Project</u>		
Analyst	<u>Hoxie</u>	Original Date	<u>2/7/2022</u>
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BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 184 (HB184) creates a two-year micro-credential pilot project for educators in New Mexico. The two-year micro-credential pilot project provides licensed teacher from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade additional targeted professional development through micro-credentials. The two-year micro-credential pilot project will be administered by the Public Education Department (PED).

HB184 requires PED to convene a working group of experts in micro-credential to: design the pilot project; determine pilot project eligibility standards; and determine the type of micro-credentials that will be offered to teachers during the pilot project.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$1 million from the general fund to PED for expenditure in FY23 and FY24. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY24 shall revert to the general fund.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Micro-credentials. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, there is growing recognition of the value of non-degree credentials attained through demonstration of skills and mastery. Credentials cover a wide range of programs and certificates, but are generally targeted to a specific job-relevant skill, shorter and cheaper than a traditional degree program, and are offered by a variety of providers. Micro-credentials are similar to certificates and offer highly specific courses to develop specific skills. HB184 defines micro-credential as an “approach to professional learning that provides teachers with the opportunity to learn and demonstrate competency in new skills while also getting outside evaluation and earning recognition for mastery by earning the micro-credential.”

Micro-credentials are a rapidly expanding element of teacher professional development. Micro-credentials are different from traditional teacher professional development because they allow teachers to receive credit for professional development and focus on the specific skills or competencies individual teachers most need. National research appears to suggest micro-credentials are a promising approach to teacher professional development while noting further research is needed to examine the impact and effectiveness of micro-credentials. The two-year micro-credential pilot created by HB184 includes a research component by requiring PED to create evaluation requirements and follow participating schools through the two-year project to determine how many participating licensed teachers:

- Received one or more micro-credentials;
- Achieved individual professional development goals;
- Expressed an interest in receiving more micro-credentials after the pilot project ends;
- Felt that the micro-credential pilot project helped in their daily classroom teaching; and
- Continued in the profession of teaching.

Approaches to Micro-Credentialing for Teachers. According to the American Institute of Research (AIR), a nonprofit nonpartisan research organization, states and public school districts use micro-credentials as a resource to supplement traditional professional development and as a way for teachers to demonstrate competency in instructional skills. In some states, the micro-credentials can count as professional development credit toward requirements for retaining a teaching license. For example, North Carolina and Wisconsin allow districts to decide whether to use micro-credentials for the purpose of maintain a teaching license. [Illinois](#) allows teachers to use micro-credentials as part of professional development.

AIR notes that teachers in states allowing micro-credentials to count towards professional development requirements require teachers to choose from a selection of state education agency preapproved micro-credentials to personalize their own professional learning. HB184 requires PED to work in collaboration with the LESC to convene a working group of experts in micro-credentials to design the project and to determine the type of micro-credentials that will be offered to teachers during the pilot project. Pulling on data from states who implemented micro-credentials for teacher professional development, the [AIR study](#) noted the importance of:

- Deciding on the purpose of the micro-credentials and selecting appropriate micro-credentials that will help to guide the initial program design;
- Launching a focused pilot-program with a small number of educators that can provide the state with feedback to help meet the professional development needs of teachers;
- Providing choice that allows teachers to personalize their professional learning;
- Understanding the scoring component of micro-credentials to ensure validity and quality and;
- Ensuring communication with all relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation, and evaluation components of micro-credentials.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB184 requires PED to establish reporting and evaluation requirements.

HB184 requires PED to track participating schools through the two-year project to determine the outcomes of the two-year pilot project.

PED agency analysis notes micro-credentials could be aligned with specific professional development to “meet the requirements of the *Martinez-Yazzie* lawsuit, or align with the department’s strategic literacy initiatives.”

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Cost of Micro-Credentialing. University of New Mexico (UNM) noted a cost of \$10 thousand per micro-credential course developed and also noted micro-credentials usually include between two and six courses to complete. UNM noted additional costs in the development of the courses and for the learning management system.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- PED
- UNM
- NMSU
- Central New Mexico Community College

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