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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
57th Legislature, 1st Session, 2025

Bill Number	<u>HB157/aHEC/aSFC</u>	Sponsor	<u>Garratt/Baca/Lara</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.229436.2</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HGEIC;SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>New School Licenses</u>		
Analyst	<u>Armatage</u>	Original Date	<u>1/30/2025</u>
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FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFC Amendment

The Senate Finance Committee amendment to HB157/aHEC (HB157/aHEC/aSFC) would grant all licensed school employees with a valid three-B license on July 1, 2029 both a professional site administrator license and a superintendent license. Prior versions of this bill would have granted a superintendent license only to those individuals with experience as a superintendent.

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee Amendment to HB157 (HB157/aHEC) moved all proposed deadlines for educator preparation programs (EPPs) and the Public Education Department (PED) forward by one year. The amended proposed deadlines in HB157/aHEC are:

- **January 15, 2027:** EPPs would be required to apply to PED with new or revised site administrator preparation programs;
- **July 1, 2027:** PED would be required to approve new or revised site administrator programs;
- **July 1, 2029:** 3B license holders would be granted a professional site administrator license;
- **July 1, 2029:** Superintendents holding a 3B license would be granted a superintendent license; and
- **July 1, 2029:** The existing 3B license would be repealed.

The amendment also added superintendent licensure reciprocity guidelines for superintendents from out-of-state.

Synopsis of Original Bill

The proposed bill would create the School Administrator Development Act, which would require school administrator preparation programs to meet national and state standards; require PED to

create a process for approving new and revised school administrator preparation programs; and establish new licenses for assistant principals, principals, charter school head administrators and superintendents.

The proposed bill would amend the School Personnel Act to add newly created site administrator and superintendent licenses to the list of licensure applicants required to undergo a criminal history record check.

The proposed bill would also modify reciprocity requirements for individuals with out-of-state school administrator licenses.

The proposed bill would repeal Section 22-10A-17.2 NMSA 1978 to remove principal licensure requirements specific to instructional support providers. Under the proposed bill, instructional support providers would have the same requirements for site administrator licensure as teachers and administrators.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill does not include an appropriation.

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee Substitute for House Bills 2 and 3 (HB2/HAFCS) contains an appropriation of \$2.28 million to the state equalization guarantee (SEG) for educator and administrator preparation, induction, and evaluation.

LESC staff estimate the FY26 costs to meet the requirements of the proposed bill—including additional full-time employees (FTE) at PED and education preparation programs (EPPs), planning and supports for aspiring superintendent academies and induction programs, and additional data collection for monitoring and improvement—would cost the state approximately \$2.2 in FY26. One new FTE at PED and seven new FTE at EPPs would create recurring costs of an estimated \$900 thousand annually.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Site Administrator Definition. State law currently has the same licensure requirements for all school administrators, which include local superintendents, school principals, central district administrators, business managers, charter school head administrators, and state agency education supervisors. HB157/aHEC/aSFC would add a definition for “site administrators” to the School Personnel Act. Site administrators include assistant principals, principals, and charter school head administrators. All these individuals would share the same licensure requirements under the proposed bill; other school administrator positions would have separate licensure requirements.

Principals, superintendents, and other school administrators have different responsibilities. By creating separate licensure requirements for these professions, EPPs would be able to focus their site administrator preparation programs solely on the needs and responsibilities of principals and charter school head administrators.

Site Administrator Preparation Program Requirements. Under HB157/aHEC/aSFC, all entities offering a site administrator preparation program would be required to be approved by PED under new criteria. The department would be required to establish criteria for programs to meet research-based features of effective leader preparation programs: comprehensive curriculum

aligned to national and state standards; deliberate candidate recruitment and selection; robust clinical experience; a cohort structure with trained coaches; and formal partnerships between the program and school districts and charter schools.

Site Administrator Licensure. HB157/aHEC/aSFC would create three new levels of site administrator licensure for assistant principals, principals, and charter school head administrators, including a provisional site administrator license, an initial site administrator license, and a professional site administrator license. The existing 3B license would be repealed on July 1, 2029.

Table 1: Overview of Proposed Site Administrator Licenses for Assistant Principals, Principals, and Charter School Head Administrators

	Provisional Site Administrator License	Initial Site Administrator License	Professional Site Administrator License
Description	For cases when staffing shortages require an individual to serve as a site administrator while completing their preparation program.	The first level of licensure for individuals who have met the basic requirements to serve as a site administrator.	The final level of site administrator licensure for experienced site administrators.
Requirements for licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds a level 2 or 3A teaching license; • Enrolled in a site administrator preparation program; and • Enrolled in site administrator induction and mentoring programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed their site administrator preparation program; • Has at least three years of experience as a teacher or instructional support provider; • Holds a post-baccalaureate degree or national board for professional teaching standards certification; and • Enrolled in a site administrator induction and mentoring program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed their site administrator preparation program; • Completed their site administrator induction program; • Holds a post-baccalaureate degree or national board for professional teaching standards certification; • Has at least one year of experience as a school administrator; and • Has received satisfactory performance evaluations.
Length of license	One year	Three years	Five years
Renewable	Three times	Two one-year renewals	Unlimited
Requirements for renewal	Proof of enrollment in a site administration preparation program and satisfactory evaluations from the mentoring program.	Upon request of the local superintendent.	Completion of PED-required professional development and satisfactory annual performance evaluations.

Superintendent Licensure. HB157/aHEC/aSFC would create separate licenses for superintendents, including a provisional superintendent license and a superintendent license. Specific licenses for superintendents would ensure aspiring superintendents receive training targeted to their needs that is experienced closer to the time they become a superintendent.

Table 2: Overview of Proposed Superintendent Licenses

	Provisional Superintendent License	Superintendent License
Description	For cases when staffing shortages require an individual to serve as a superintendent while completing the requirements for licensure.	For individuals who have met the requirements of superintendent licensure.
Requirements for licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has at least one year of experience as a school administrator; and • Is enrolled in a superintendent induction program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has at least one year of experience as a school administrator; and • Completed an aspiring superintendent academy.
Length of license	One year	Five years
Renewable	Three times	Unlimited
Requirements for renewal	Proof of enrollment in an aspiring superintendent academy and recommendation of an induction coach.	Superintendent induction program must be completed prior to first renewal. Completion of PED-required professional development.

Grandfathering. All licensed school employees who hold valid level 3B licenses on July 1, 2029, would be granted a professional site administrator license and a superintendent license if HB157/aHEC/aSFC passes. This means all current site administrators (assistant principals, principals, and charter school head administrators) and school superintendents would not be impacted by the proposed bill.

Emergency Waivers. Under the proposed legislation, emergency certificates of principalship waivers could be issued by PED if a local superintendent or governing authority of public school were to certify an emergency in hiring a qualified site administrator. The waivers would be one-year, nonrenewable waivers that could be issued to a level 2 or level 3A licensed teacher who does not meet the other requirements for a site administrator license. Emergency waivers allow school districts unable to fill unexpected site administrator vacancies with a qualified individual to temporarily fill the position. However, the one-year length of the waiver would require school districts to proactively identify teachers to pursue site administrator licensure.

Similarly, under the proposed legislation, if a school board were to certify to PED that an emergency existed in the hiring of a qualified superintendent, PED could issue a certificate of superintendency waiver to a person who holds a professional site administrator license but does not meet the other requirements for a superintendent's license. These waivers would be valid for one year and nonrenewable.

Reciprocity. Currently, state law allows PED to grant a school administrator license to an individual with an out-of-state administrator license if the candidate has worked as a school administrator in good standing for at least six years.

The proposed bill would allow PED to grant an initial site administrator license to an individual with a valid school administrator license from another state, if the individual:

- Has worked as a site administrator for at least three years;
- Has a recent satisfactory performance evaluation; and
- Is enrolled in a department-approved site administrator induction program.

HB157/aHEC/aSFC would allow PED to grant a superintendent's license to an out-of-state candidate who:

- Has a standard, valid, unencumbered school administrator license from another state;
- Has worked as a superintendent for at least three years;
- Is enrolled in a department-approved superintendent induction program; and
- Meets other requirements of the department.

Other School Administrators. All school administrators are currently required to attain the same license, including superintendents, school principals, central district administrators, business managers, charter school head administrators and state agency education supervisors. The proposed bill would create new licenses for site administrators (assistant principals, principals, and charter school head administrators) and for superintendents. When the existing 3B administrator license would be repealed in 2029, no licensure requirements would exist in statute for the remaining school administrators (central district administrators, business managers, and state agency education supervisors). The proposed bill would task PED with creating new licensure requirements for these professions through promulgating rule. PED intends to require endorsements on teacher or instructional support provider licenses for these positions. These

positions require different training than principals and superintendents. For example, a special education director could be better served by training more targeted to their responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be required to, in consultation with the Professional Practices and Standards Committee, publish a manual outlining the requirements for site administrator program approval. PED would also be required to:

- Approve site administrator program applications by July 1, 2027;
- Develop site administrator and superintendent induction programs and approve superintendent academies, which could be delivered by PED, EPPs, or contracted to other service providers;
- Establish licensure requirements for school administrators that are not assistant principals, principals, or superintendents; and
- Continue monitoring program success and candidate outcomes through the educator accountability report, including new reporting measures.

All EPPs with site administrator preparation programs would have to ensure their programs meet the proposed program requirements and apply for department approval by January 15, 2027.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Educator Leadership Preparation Programs in New Mexico. In New Mexico, six universities and the Cooperative Education Services offer educational leadership programs.

Table 3: FY24 Enrollment in New Mexico School Leadership Preparation Programs

Institution	SY23 School Leadership Program Enrollment
Cooperative Educational Services	115
Eastern New Mexico University	90
New Mexico Highlands University	52
New Mexico State University	50
University of New Mexico	36
University of the Southwest	9
Western New Mexico University	40
Statewide Total	392

Source: LESC Files

Task Force and Working Group. In 2023, the New Mexico Association of Colleges and Teacher Education (NMACTE) established a principal preparation task force to make recommendations for revising the state’s requirements for school leader preparation. Over the 2023 interim, the task force brought together a variety of stakeholders, including deans and directors of colleges of education, Cooperative Educational Services, PED, LESC, LFC, legislators, and experts from Education Research and Development, a [consultancy](#) focused on developing effective educational leadership. This collaborative effort resulted in recommendations to define school leader preparation program criteria based on national best practices in statute, which were proposed in House Bill 22 (HB22) during the 2024 legislative session. HB22 was introduced but not heard in the 2024 legislative session.

The task force also recommended separate licensure requirements for principals and superintendents. In 2024, the NMACTE established a school leadership working group to study this issue, including the same stakeholders included in the prior task force with the addition of school and district administrators. The working group produced a comprehensive set of

recommendations for school administrator licensure changes, including recommendations for statutory and department rule changes.

The recommendations from the principal preparation task force and school leadership working group shaped the proposed legislation.

Impact of Effective Principals. The proposed bill is aligned with national research on effective school administrator preparation programs. [Research](#) demonstrates school leadership is second only to teaching among school-based factors influencing student success. Effective principals create an environment that fosters learning and achievement, improve instruction on a schoolwide level, analyze data to inform decision-making, nurture talent, and attract and retain effective teachers. The dramatic [impact](#) of school administrators is considerably greater in schools with low academic outcomes. There are virtually no documented instances of struggling schools turned around without an effective school leader. Consequently, adequately preparing principals who can dramatically improve teaching and learning is essential to increasing student achievement. National [research](#) suggests high-quality principal preparation programs can improve principals' feelings of preparedness, teacher satisfaction and retention, and student achievement. Elements of successful programs include rigorous recruitment, close district-university partnerships, a cohort structure, a focus on critical content, and clinical experiences.

In New Mexico, administrative rule requires candidates for school administrative licensure to complete at least 18 semester hours of graduate credit in a state-approved educational administrative program, a department-approved apprenticeship of at least 180 hours over one calendar year, and a passing score on the state licensure test for administration.

Vacancies and Turnover. According to the 2024 New Mexico Educator Vacancy [Report](#) by New Mexico State University's Southwest Outreach Academic Research Evaluation and Policy Center, the state had an estimated 25 principal and assistant principal vacancies. [According](#) to the Learning Policy Institute, a nonprofit research organization, principal turnover can be disruptive to schools, increase teacher turnover, and ultimately negatively impact student achievement. Principal turnover is costly, with conservative [estimates](#) of \$75 thousand to replace a principal. [Research](#) also indicates better prepared principals reduce teacher turnover, resulting in significant savings, as research estimates turnover costs at \$20 thousand per teacher. One of the key [reasons](#) principals leave their positions is inadequate preparation and professional development.

In SY24, just under two-thirds of New Mexico's superintendents had held their position for four years or less or were serving on an interim basis. Nearly half had been a superintendent for two years or less. [According](#) to the New Mexico Coalition of Educational Leaders, a professional [association](#) of state school administrators, the average superintendent tenure in New Mexico is about two years. The Broad Center, a research [organization](#) within Yale University's School of Management, [found](#) the national average tenure for a superintendent is six years. [Research](#) has found positive associations between superintendent longevity and experience with measures of student achievement.

Background Checks. The proposed bill would add the newly proposed site administrator and superintendent licenses to the licenses the School Personnel Act requires applicants to undergo a criminal history check for. An existing exception for practice teachers and teaching interns would be removed from the law. Effective July 1, 2023, PED began requiring teacher residents to hold a teacher resident license, which requires a background check. State law requires all individuals who commit to serving in schools on a regular basis to undergo a background check.

Principal Salary Requirements. The proposed bill would not change principal salary requirements but would move principal salary requirements from the definitions section of the School Personnel Act to the newly proposed site administrator licensure requirements, which could allow these to be easier to find.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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