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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/5/2008

SPONSOR Nava LAST UPDATED _____ HJM _____

SHORT TITLE Study Education Accountability Targets SJM 43

ANALYST Aguilar

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial requests that a study group made up of staff from LESC, LCS, PED and other educators discuss the possible use of short-cycle assessments as an indicator of student progress and to recommend an accountability mechanism for specific subpopulations based on a growth model.

The group is also requested to study the impact of using special education targets in lieu of New Mexico accountability targets and to examine opportunity-to-learn factors as a companion to New Mexico accountability targets.

A report is required by December 1, 2008.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The agencies involved are expected to participate with some costs involved. It appears that each agency can support its staff within existing budgets.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PED reports the following:

The memorial directs the LESC and PED to study and develop recommendations about an accountability mechanism for specific subpopulations. Although the different accountability mechanism(s) may not be in concert with the same mechanism as for the general population, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as currently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will be up for reauthorization and a strongly presented case may be accepted by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). A caution to address through the study is the possibility of setting accountability targets for specific subpopulations that are lower than the general population and raising questions about the state's commitment to equity in educational expectations and outcomes.

PED is currently studying and will be presenting to the ED an accountability model based on academic growth for all students. Since NCLB accountability uses schools and school districts as units of analysis and is based on a status, point-in-time model, growth is defined as moving a whole school, and all its subpopulations, toward a singular target. Growth for specific subpopulations can be demonstrated by increasing the number of students into the proficient category by 10% from the previous year. Other growth models have been allowed in pilot programs in eight select states that had a complete and vertically equated assessment system. The accountability benefits have been limited for these states. An increase in the number of schools that have met adequate yearly progress targets has not been substantial (Education Week, 12/12/2007). If schools do not meet the accountability targets under a static model, the probability of meeting a statistically significant growth target is not much better.

Another area of the memorial addresses short-cycle assessments. Short-cycle assessments are formative in nature, their use in accountability assumes a summative role that strains their validity for that purpose. The study group will need to closely examine the state-of-the-art of short-cycle assessment and the degree of its implementation in New Mexico versus the technical rigor required to serve as an accountability mechanism. The most widely used short-cycle assessment by New Mexico school districts, the NWEA-MAP, is not aligned (only partially linked) to State Content Standards, has no Spanish version in reading, has no constructed responses and adapts to the individual student placement rather than to the expected Content and Performance standards (PED Consumer Guide to Formative Assessments, April 2006). There are 29 school districts, charter schools and state-supported schools that will need to purchase and implement short-cycle assessments.

A third area of the Memorial identifies the consideration of opportunity-to-learn factors that will help bring balance to an accountability system. Opportunity-to-learn factors include teacher qualifications, level of licensure (1, 2 or 3), use of substitutes, teacher absenteeism, student absenteeism, and access to technology, to name a few. Currently, the accountability system focuses only on outcomes (test results), but should also consider the quality of inputs to student learning.