

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill No:** SB 193

**49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009**

**Short Title:** School Personnel Reports to Legislature

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Mary Jane García and Others

**Analyst:** Pamela Herman

**Date:** January 26, 2009

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**FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**

**Bill Summary:**

- SB 193 amends the *School Personnel Act* to require the Public Education Department (PED), in conjunction with school districts and charter schools, to compile and report statewide professional development activities related to the prior school year to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) no later than December 15 of each year.
- SB 193 requires the report to include all professional development activities provided to teachers, school administrators, instructional support providers and department staff from all state and federal funding sources, including:
  - a summary of the professional development activities provided and by whom;
  - evaluations showing to what degree the activities satisfied the guidelines established by PED under its obligation to develop a systemic professional development framework; and
  - a summary of funds expended for professional development from each funding source by school districts, charter schools, and PED.
- SB 193 requires PED to make any changes to its system of accounting and budgeting for all public schools and school districts that are necessary to fulfill this requirement.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 193 makes no appropriation.

**Fiscal Issues:**

According to testimony presented to the LESL in the 2007 interim:

- between FY 99 and FY 02, the Legislature appropriated approximately \$10.5 million for statewide professional development which remains in the base program cost of the Public School Funding Formula.
  - These funds are distributed through the unit value to all public school districts;
  - statute gives responsibility to local school boards to determine priorities when reviewing and approving annual district budgets, and they are free to spend funds in the base as they choose; and

- PED states that evaluation of professional development activities, if any, is the responsibility of school districts.
- At least \$45.5 million in identifiable state and federal funds was budgeted for teacher professional development activities for FY 08, including approximately \$9.0 million in General Fund dollars by PED and at least \$7.8 million by school districts.
- It is difficult to determine how much school districts spend on professional development because those expenditures are categorized in more than one way for accounting purposes. In the PED chart of accounts, professional development expenses may be identified in a category named “employee training” or included among contractual services, professional services, travel, or, in the case of reading and math coaches, personnel costs.

**Issues:**

A growing body of research evidence, reported by the Education Commission of the States and other sources, shows that, regardless of socioeconomic factors, students who have effective teachers make significantly more progress than those with less effective teachers, and that these outcomes are cumulative over time. Career-long high-quality educator professional development has emerged as a key strategy to address quality issues once teachers are licensed and hired, and assumes an increasingly important role as schools implement structural reforms, new curricula and new methodologies to address the school improvement mandates of state and federal law.

In the 2007 interim, the LESC heard a presentation regarding teacher professional development in schools, school districts and at the state level aimed at raising student achievement through improved teacher practice. The committee heard testimony that:

- a review of research on the affect of professional development on teachers’ skills and student learning is mixed, with results dependent on the quality, focus, and intensity of the activities and on how well they align with teachers’ daily classroom needs;
- current statute and PED rule mandates that all statewide, PED, charter school, and public school district professional development programs be evaluated at least once every three years to determine their effectiveness based on evidence of improved educator practice and student learning.
  - district professional development plans must be included as a component of the comprehensive Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) provided by each district to PED; however,
  - PED states that it does not require districts to provide the department with the evaluation results of professional development activities.
- The LESC staff report concluded that, given the variability in quality and impact of professional development activities and the large investments being made in professional development statewide, the committee should consider the following options:
  - to make it easier both to identify the amount spent on professional development each year, to see trends in spending over time, to compare per pupil spending among districts and to see relationships between spending on professional development and student achievement, PED should be required to develop a mechanism in its chart of accounts to capture professional development expenses that currently cannot be identified; and

- to encourage greater accountability for outcomes, the professional development framework statute (see below) should be amended to clarify that school districts and other entities, including bureaus within PED, must provide the department with the evaluations of their professional development activities for review and recommendations.
- Likewise, a November 2007 LFC program evaluation of the three-tiered teacher licensure system recommended that PED amend the state’s chart of accounts to require local districts to report contracted professional development across functions, and consider convening a task force to create a streamlined reporting requirement for districts to annually identify professional development spending, including, at a minimum, reimbursement costs for training and coursework (with associated travel), outside contractors, costs for in-service days, mentorship costs, in-house staff trainers and overhead, and instructional coaching costs.

**Technical Issues:**

SB 193 does not require reports on professional development activities provided from private sources such as foundation grants.

**Background:**

In 1999, the LESC endorsed legislation that was enacted to require PED to develop a Professional Development Framework “that provides training to ensure quality teachers and principals and that improves and enhances student achievement.” In 2003, the statute creating the framework was amended to require that it include:

- criteria for school districts to apply for professional development funds, including an evaluation component that will be used by the department in approving school district professional development plans; and
- guidelines for developing extensive professional development activities for districts that:
  - improve teachers’ knowledge of the subjects they teach and the ability to teach those subjects to all of their students;
  - are an integral part of plans for improving student achievement;
  - provide teachers, administrators, and instructional support providers with the strategies, support, knowledge, and skills to help all students meet New Mexico academic standards;
  - are high quality, sustained, intensive, and focused on the classroom; and
  - are developed and evaluated regularly with extensive participation of school employees and parents.

The PED rule implementing the framework was effective July 30, 2006.

**Related Bills:**

- SB 273 *Teacher Reading, Math & Science Training*
- SB 287 *Continue Re: Learning Program*
- SB 290 *Strengthening Quality in Schools Initiative*
- SB 292 *Regional Educational Technology Assistance*
- SB 293 *Expand Community Service Learning Opportunity*
- SB 397 *New Mexico Golden Apple Program*