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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/05/11
LAST UPDATED 02/24/11 **HB** _____

SPONSOR Beffort

SHORT TITLE 3rd and 4th Grade Added to PED Grading System **SB** 272/aSEC/aSPAC

ANALYST Gudgel

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
 Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SPAC Amendment

SPAC Amendment to Senate Bill 272 as amended by SEC includes language requiring the standardized alphabetic or numeric grading system to be aligned to New Mexico academic content standards and benchmarks and performance standards. Current language only requires alignment with academic content and performance. This change was suggested by LESC.

This language appears to align Section 22-2-8.13 with current language throughout the Public School Code.

Synopsis of SEC Amendment

SEC Amendment to Senate Bill 272 clarifies that the requirements of the bill apply to both charter schools and traditional public schools.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 272 amends the Public School Code to require PED to adopt rules to establish a standardized alphabetic or numeric grading system for grades three and four. The Department currently has rules for standardized grading systems for grades 5 through 12.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The bill will require minimal resources from the Public Education Department to revise the current standardized grading system rule.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Currently, under department rules, schools are required have a standardized grading system that includes a written report to parents regarding the performance of their child tested with the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment. Report card grades must reflect standards-based academic performance. Report cards for third and fourth graders appear to have broad proficiency ratings, such as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, and progressing. The department indicates that requiring grades to be given for third and fourth graders will increase accountability and informant about student performance.

The department did a brief review of grading practices and found that some elementary schools are giving letter grades to students as early as second grade. It is unclear if these elementary schools are doing so pursuant to a state mandate, or if the local school board has required letter grades for these students.

State Statute currently requires third and fourth graders to take the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment in math, reading and language arts, social studies and writing assessment with the writing assessment scoring criteria applied to the extended response writing portions of the language arts standards-based assessments. This amendment would require letter grades for all students required to take the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Senate Bill 272 supports the Public Education Department's performance measure for public schools related to percentage of fourth grade students meeting reading and math proficiency on the New Mexico Standards-Based Assessment.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Public Education Department will be required to adopt rules to establish a standardized alphabetic or numeric grading system for third and fourth grades. It is also possible that district and charter schools would have to amend their policies to conform to the changes.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

A number of school districts nationally are using standards-based report cards for elementary students. A standards-based report card lists the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. The report card measures each student against a set of standard criteria rather than on a set of subjective criteria or grading the student on a curve. Rather than receiving letter grades, students receive marks that show whether they are above proficiency, nearing proficiency, or below proficiency on each skill set required for each subject. These report cards generally provide more useable information to parents, teachers, and students by generally highlighting specific areas where a student is succeeding and specific areas where a student needs more work.

RSG/mew