

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE  
BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill Number:** SB 526

**52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015**

**Tracking Number:** .198749.4

**Short Title:** School District Family Engagement Programs

**Sponsor(s):** Senator Linda M. Lopez and Others

**Analyst:** James Ball

**Date:** March 10, 2015

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**Bill Summary:**

SB 526 creates a new section of the *Public School Code* called the *Family and Community Engagement Act* to:

- ensure that family and community engagement programs in public schools are properly designed and implemented;
- provide focus and structure for programs;
- prescribe goals of the programs;
- require local school boards, in conjunction with parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners, to establish family and community engagement programs for each school in the district;
- review and report annually to families and the community on the program's progress;
- require the Public Education Department (PED) to establish structures and positions to promote genuine family and community engagement; and
- prescribe the following standards for family-school partnerships:
  - welcome all families;
  - communicate effectively;
  - support student success;
  - speak up for every child;
  - share power; and
  - collaborate with the community.

**Fiscal Impact:**

SB 526 does not carry an appropriation.

**Substantive Issues:**

***Joint SEDL and US Department of Education Publication***

In a publication, *A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*, issued by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in collaboration with the US Department of Education (USDE), it is noted that family engagement has long been enshrined in policy at the federal level through Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), which requires that Title I schools develop parental involvement policies and

“school-family compacts” that outline how the two stakeholder groups will work together to boost student achievement. According to the publication, these policies are rooted in a wide body of research demonstrating the beneficial effects of parental involvement and family-school partnerships. Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child’s education – as supporters of (1) learning; (2) encouragers of grit and determination; (3) models of lifelong learning; and (4) advocates of proper programming and placements for their child – with indicators of student achievement, including:

- student grades;
- achievement test scores;
- lower drop-out rates;
- students’ sense of personal competence and efficacy for learning; and
- student’s beliefs about the importance of education.

### ***Department of Health Bill Analysis***

The Department of Health notes that approximately 650 New Mexico schools currently receive funding through the Title I program. Title I of the 1965 federal ESEA includes a requirement that each school in the program develop a parent involvement policy that identifies expectations for the involvement of parents in their children’s education. The underlying themes of the family and community engagement program as defined in SB 526 appear already to be incorporated in the expectations of Title I schools.

### ***PED Toolkit***

The PED website contains, as a resource, *Working Together: School, Family & Community Partnerships/A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities*, which is designed to provide educators with tools and resources for strengthening partnerships between schools and diverse families and communities.

### ***US Department of Education Announcement***

In April 2014, the USDE announced the release of a framework for schools and the broader communities they serve to build parent and community engagement. According to the press release, across the country, less than a quarter of residents are 18 years old or younger, and all of us have a responsibility for helping our schools succeed. The Dual Capacity framework, a process used to teach school and district staff to effectively engage parents and for parents to work successfully with the schools to increase student achievement, provides a model that schools and districts can use to build the type of effective community engagement that will make schools the center of our communities.

As an example of how the elements of the framework can lead to improved engagement the press release stated that Baltimore City Public Schools worked to support 12,000 pre-kindergarten and kindergarten homes, and to engage families in home-based literacy practices. Each week students received a different bag filled with award-winning children’s books, exposing children, on average, to more than 100 books per year. The book rotation also includes parent training and information on how to share books effectively to promote children’s early literacy skills and nurture a love of learning. Through the program, families are also connected with their local public and school libraries. At the culmination of the program, children receive a permanent bag to keep and continue the practice of borrowing books and building a lifelong habit of reading.

**Committee Referrals:**

SEC/SPAC

**Related Bills:**

SB 532 *Win with Wellness School Project*