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August 22, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Travis Dulany

RE: STAFF BRIEF: COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: UPDATE

During its June 2012 interim meeting, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) heard a National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) report on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative nationwide, including the background, timeline, and associated costs. During committee discussion, the members agreed that the CCSS should become a focus area of the LESC throughout the 2012 interim.

For the August meeting, LESC staff have arranged for the following presentations on the topic of CCSS:

- Ms. Sheryl White, an educational consultant and English Language Arts Chair of the New Mexico Educator Leader Cadre, will discuss the instructional shifts in English/language arts standards; and
- in order to provide a sample of regional efforts to implement CCSS, representatives from the Pecos Valley Education Alliance will present information about their implementation plan, as adopted from the *New Mexico Common Core State Standards Implementation Plan*.

As informational items, this staff brief includes:

- an overview of June 2012 testimony; and
- background.

AN OVERVIEW OF JUNE 2012 TESTIMONY

As mentioned above, Mr. Daniel G. Thatcher, Policy Specialist/Education Program, NCSL, presented a national overview of the CCSS during the June meeting of the LESC. Among the information provided, Mr. Thatcher:

- summarized the criteria used to develop the CCSS, which include alignment with college and career expectations, realistic and effective classroom use, and both content and application knowledge through high order skills;
- emphasized that the CCSS are:
 - not a federal mandate, but rather a common effort among the states;
 - focused on the core areas of English/language arts and mathematics;
 - state-led; and
 - not a curriculum or a national assessment, but rather a set of standards; and
- provided the committee with an example of the mathematics and English/language arts standards in order to better show what the standards might cover in the classroom.

Mr. Thatcher also informed the committee of the timeline for implementation of the standards, along with the efforts to develop assessments that align with the CCSS. The process for implementation of CCSS, according to Mr. Thatcher, continues through 2015 and includes several years of pilot programs in various districts and states. Furthermore, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortium, of which New Mexico is a governing state, will administer its first summative assessment in 2015.

Finally, Mr. Thatcher addressed the cost of implementing the CCSS across the country, highlighting two estimates from two different institutes – the Pioneer Institute and the Fordham Institute:

- Estimates from the Pioneer Institute, a more conservative organization according to Mr. Thatcher, place the cost of implementing the CCSS at approximately \$16.0 billion. He cautioned that the Pioneer Institute has expressed opposition to the CCSS in the past.
- The Fordham Institute, Mr. Thatcher continued, provides three estimated costs for implementing the CCSS: the “business as usual model” at \$12.0 billion, the “bare bones model” at \$3.0 billion, and the “balanced implementation model” at \$5.0 billion. He cautioned that the Fordham Institute did not have specific data when estimating these costs.

BACKGROUND

In 1967, legislation was enacted requiring the State Board of Education (now the Public Education Department, or PED) to prescribe standards for all public schools in the state, including curriculum, academic content, and performance standards.

In 2001, in order to receive Title I funds, each state was required to:

- adopt rigorous content and academic achievement standards; and
- implement an accountability system based on a system of annual assessments aligned with those standards and approved by the US Department of Education for all students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in reading/language arts and mathematics.

In 2007 and 2008, in connection with the LESC's study of high school redesign, and supported by an appropriation to the LESC, New Mexico joined the American Diploma Project. This effort, spearheaded by Achieve, Inc., provided states with a formal process to revise their mathematics and English/language arts standards so they aligned with the expectations of college and careers. A state team that included staff from the LESC, PED, and the Higher Education Department, and faculty from state public secondary and postsecondary institutions spent 18 months reviewing and revising the state standards. The revised math standards were adopted in PED rule in June 2009, and the English/language arts standards in September 2009.

Meanwhile, in June 2009, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) announced the launch of the nationwide, state-led CCSS initiative to give educators direction about what all children need to succeed in college and the workplace, and to allow states to share best practices that, it is hoped, will dramatically improve teaching and learning.

In June 2010, LESC staff reported to the committee that the Governor and the Secretary-designate of Public Education had signed a memorandum of agreement in May 2009 with the NGA and the CCSSO, along with other states and the District of Columbia, to develop common standards in English/language arts and mathematics for grades K-12.

According to the NGA, the standards were designed to be:

- aligned with college and work expectations;
- clear, understandable, and consistent;
- based on rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- internationally benchmarked; that is, informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- evidence-based.