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State Capitol North, 325 Don Gaspar, Suite 200
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
Phone: (505) 986-4591 Fax: (505) 986-4338
<http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lesc/lescdefault.aspx>

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September 26, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Travis Dulany

RE: STAFF REPORT: COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS UPDATE

In this interim, the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) has received two prior reports on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS):

- in June, the committee heard from staff from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), who discussed the background, timeline, and associated costs of the CCSS; and
- in August, the committee heard testimony from:
 - representatives from the Pecos Valley Education Alliance (PVEA), who reported on the collective efforts of the alliance to implement the CCSS; and
 - Ms. Sheryl White, who discussed the instructional shifts for English/language arts (ELA) in the new standards.

For the September meeting, LESL staff have arranged for the following presentations on the topic of CCSS:

- Dr. Cathy Kinzer, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, New Mexico State University, will discuss the instructional shifts in math standards, as well as efforts by higher education institutions to assist with the implementation of the CCSS; and
- Dr. Elizabeth Marrufo, Director of Elementary Instruction, Las Cruces Public Schools, will inform the committee on the district's progress in implementing the standards.

As informational items, this staff report includes:

- an overview of June 2012 testimony;
- an overview of August 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 ELA 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 ELA 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.

AN OVERVIEW OF AUGUST 2012 TESTIMONY

In August 2012, the committee heard testimony from Ms. Lena Trujillo-Chávez, Director, Regional Education Cooperative (REC) #8; Mr. David J. Chavez, Executive Director, Cooperative Educational Services (CES); Ms. Robin Jarvis, Program Director, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL); and Ms. Sheryl White, English Language Arts Chair of the New Mexico Educator Leader Cadre.

During her testimony, Ms. Trujillo-Chávez provided an overview of the PVEA, which is composed of five member districts:

- Carlsbad Municipal Schools;
- Dexter Consolidated Schools;
- Hagerman Municipal Schools;
- Lake Arthur Municipal Schools; and
- Loving Municipal Schools.

Ms. Trujillo-Chávez also noted that Artesia Public Schools has also joined the PVEA for professional development in reading.

According to Ms. Trujillo-Chávez, the PVEA is an informal partnership with a focus on implementing the CCSS, and has developed an implementation plan for its member districts with the support of CES and REC #8. The PVEA, according to Ms. Trujillo-Chávez, has pulled its fiscal resources together for school year 2012-2013 in order to implement the CCSS, and expects the total cost to implement the new standards in its member districts will be approximately \$500,000.

Mr. Chavez briefly explained the role of CES in obtaining resources for the implementation of the CCSS. More specifically, according to Mr. Chavez, CES submitted a request for proposals to various organizations, seven of which responded. Of those seven, three organizations were found to meet the criteria CES was seeking. Finally, one of those organizations, SEDL, was brought on board to provide professional development and support for the PVEA.

Ms. Jarvis explained SEDL's role with the alliance as it implements the CCSS. Among the several sessions throughout school year 2012-2013, according to Ms. Jarvis, SEDL will provide training and technical assistance tools and processes to support instructional leaders and cross-functional teams of teachers. In working with these leaders and team members, SEDL's role includes tasks such as:

- introducing the processes and protocols related to the Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC), which is a professional development process developed by SEDL in which teachers collaboratively plan and implement lessons;
- identifying and discussing the organizational structures necessary to implement the PTLC as a process to create instructional coherence;
- providing technical assistance to address the challenges arising from the initial PTLC, as well as practical examples of effective collaborative planning meetings focused on student learning needs; and
- facilitating conversations and provide guidance and technical assistance as needed.

SEDL's primary goal in its work with school districts in New Mexico, Ms. Jarvis concluded, is to build the capacity in districts and schools so that the professional development work necessary to implement the CCSS remains in place beyond school year 2012-2013.

The final presentation on CCSS during the August LESC meeting came from Ms. White, who informed the committee on the shifts in ELA standards. The CCSS, according to Ms. White, were developed with the intent to prepare students for higher education or the workplace and ensure that students are:

- meeting college and career expectations;
- provided a vision of what it means to be an academically literate person in the 21st Century;
- prepared to succeed in a global economy and society; and
- provided with rigorous content and application of the higher knowledge through higher order thinking skills.

Furthermore, Ms. White testified, in order to be college- and career-ready, students should be prepared for success in:

- entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses; and
- careers that offer competitive, livable salaries above the poverty line, as well as opportunities for career advancement in growing or sustainable industries.

Additionally, according to Ms. White, the CCSS apply to all students, and shift the focus from "what is taught" to "what a student needs to be able to do." Ms. White also provided an overview of the six major shifts in ELA and literacy, in which students:

- in grades kindergarten through 5 will balance informational and literary texts;
- in grades 6 through 12 will increase reading focus on literary nonfiction in ELA and across the curriculum;
- will read increasingly complex texts independently;
- will encounter high quality, text-dependent questions and tasks;
- will be asked to engage in evidence-based writing and an increased focus on argument and informative writing; and
- will develop an academic vocabulary.

The CCSS, Ms. White continued, will require professional development for teachers and school leaders, as well as changes in curriculum, instruction, and instructional materials. For the PARCC assessment in school year 2014-2015, Ms. White added, students will need access to adequate technology because the test will be computer-based.

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 ELA 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, as well as 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 ELA 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 ELA 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.