

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HB 286

49th Legislature, 2nd Session, 2010

Tracking Number: .181399.1

Short Title: School District Accountability Reporting Dates

Sponsor(s): Representative Rhonda S. King

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Date: February 6, 2010

Bill Summary:

HB 286 amends the *Assessment and Accountability Act* of the *Public School Code* to change to March 15 (from November 15) the date by which a public school district must publish its annual accountability report (*School District Report Card*).

Fiscal Impact:

HB 286 does not make an appropriation.

The Public Education Department (PED) reports that moving the publication deadline would have no fiscal impact.

Substantive Issues:

PED reports that the change of the publication deadline would not significantly impact the current production of the *School District Report Card*, which is always completed as rapidly as possible. PED adds, however, that HB 286 would allow PED to continue to meet that obligation lawfully, and that the state will continue to produce the report in a camera-ready format for all districts and will continue posting reports on the PED website.

State law currently requires that a school district's annual accountability report be issued by November 15 of each year. However, PED reports that it has historically published the full *School District Report Card* in March of the following year due to the following constraints:

- Disparate Data Sources: New Mexico *School District Report Cards* compile data from multiple sources whose data collection windows vary:
 - District Student Demographics (July);
 - No Child Left Behind District Summary (October-November);
 - Pre-Appeals No Child Left Behind Accountability by Subgroup (August);
 - Assessment Results by Grade (October);
 - School Board Member Participation (October);
 - District Expenditures (August);
 - Teacher Quality (August);
 - Parent Survey on the Quality of Education (January);
 - National Assessment of Educational Progress (October); and

➤ Transition to, and Success in, Higher Education (December).

The reconciliation and verification of these disparate data sources is a time-consuming repetitious process that requires files to be updated several times before final production.

- Assessment Timing: The New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, which forms the core of the report and requires the most processing time, is administered in the spring. According to Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO) (2003) several states have elected to change to a fall testing window or moved their testing to earlier in the spring in order to provide a report card prior to the beginning of the school year. On the other hand, New Mexico has chosen to move the test window later, not earlier, in the school year, in order to maximize instruction time prior to testing. This late test window significantly compresses the time available to assure data quality and to proof the report prior to publication. In addition, production calendars are sometimes influenced by uncontrollable events with assessment vendors.
- Late Changes in AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability is reported in the report card for each school in the district, as well as for the district overall. The calendar for these events does not allow completion prior to November, as each is followed by district review, a 15-day appeal window and investigation and potential revision of results. The *School District Report Card* serves as the final summary of these assessments and cannot be completed until all AYP results are finalized.
- Spanish Translation: PED duplicates *School District Report Cards* in a Spanish version, which requires additional time to verify interpretive changes; and
- Report Card Revisions: The report card is growing annually in scope with National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) information being added in 2008-09, and the introduction of two new higher education indicators in 2010-1011. Should PED receive federal Race to the Top funding, additional reporting may also be required in 2010-2011 or 2011-2012. Each new requirement means additional time to put data collection in place, verify the accuracy and reformat the report.

Finally, HB 286 is the subject of House Executive Message 115.

Background:

Current state law requires a school district's accountability report to be published no later than November 15 of each year in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the district is located. The federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) also requires that school districts provide public annual accountability reports.

Regarding federal requirements for the means of communicating school district report cards:

- Federal guidance says that states are encouraged to disseminate state report cards in multiple ways. The document indicates that school districts must disseminate district and school report cards "to all schools that are part of the district, all parents of students in those schools, and the community through public means, such as posting on the Internet, distribution through the media, and distribution through public agencies, public libraries, etc."

- The guidance further states that school districts “may use their regular method of communicating with parents to meet the dissemination requirement so long as it provides information to *all* parents” [emphasis added].
- The guidance document refers to *A Guide to Effective Accountability Reporting* from the CCSSO, which states that an effective accountability report is accessible and useful to its intended audience.

Regarding federal requirements for the timing of report card dissemination:

- Federal guidance on complying with the NCLB report card requirement states that a school district’s report card must be “prepared and disseminated” annually, but it does not specify when the report card must be produced.
- However, federal law does require that, no later than 14 days prior to the start of the school year, parents must be notified if a Title I school has been identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, or if it has been identified as persistently dangerous, so they can exercise their right of school choice for their student. The guidance document suggests that, since some information required in district report cards may not be available before the beginning of the school year, districts may want to consider issuing a “two-part report card” with some data elements available earlier than others.

Related Bills:

None as of February 6, 2010.