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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**53rd Legislature, 1st Session, 2017**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>HM85</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Adkins, Trujillo CH, &amp; Roybal Caballero</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.207452.2</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>HEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>APS Meetings with Legislators</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Macdonald</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>3/7/17</u>
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**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 85 (HM85) requests the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) school board, local APS superintendent, local legislators, and other public officials to meet quarterly to discuss education issues facing the school district.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

HM85 does not contain an appropriation.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

HM85 states the quarterly meetings could include discussions on what strides APS has made in: improving graduation rates; truancy and drop-out rates; test scores, including third-grade reading scores; progress toward closing the achievement gap between students of different races and incomes; improvements in other markers of sustained academic growth of its students; efforts to improve community engagement and relations; and gains made in improving school personnel job satisfaction and morale.

**Graduation.** According to the Public Education Department (PED), the graduation rate for the 2016 APS four-year cohort includes the following: all students – 66 percent; female students – 71 percent; male students – 61 percent; Caucasian – 72 percent; African American – 54 percent; Hispanic – 66 percent; Asian – 80 percent; American Indian – 47 percent; economically disadvantaged – 61 percent; students with disabilities – 62 percent; English learner – 61 percent; and non-Hispanic 67 percent. Additionally, during the 2014-2015 school year (the most recent data available from PED), 6.1 percent of APS students dropped out of school.

Research has shown that students who graduate from high school earn higher wages than students who drop out of school. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, these higher wages can amount to a difference of over half a million dollars in earnings over a lifetime.

Additionally, high school graduates go on to obtain more postsecondary education, which has shown to be a key predictor of health, mortality, teen pregnancy, marital outcomes, and crime.

**Habitual Truancy.** Under the Compulsory School Attendance Law, “habitual truant” means a student who has accumulated the equivalent of 10 days or more of unexcused absences with a school year. During the 2014-2015 school year (the most recent data available from PED) at APS, 6,356 elementary school students, or 12.2 percent, were habitually truant; 1,699 middle school students, or 8 percent, were habitually truant; and 5,358 high school students, or 14.7 percent, were habitually truant.

Habitually truant students often come from impoverished families and other at-risk populations; further, research consistently links habitual truancy to the risk of permanently dropping out of schools, which in turn leads to a wide array of problems that affect students long after leaving school, such as reduced earning potential and increased likelihood of health problems, substance abuse, and incarceration.

According to research from the Education Commission of the States, each day that a student misses school – whether because of sickness, suspension, truancy, or some other reason – is a day lost to learning. For students who are chronically absent, this pattern is detrimental. Studies have shown that students missing at least 10 days of the school year are much less likely to be proficient. The collective impact of these individual absences on the system as a whole is considerable. For example, an analysis by the Georgia Department of Education found that just a 3 percent improvement in attendance across the state – five additional days for each individual student, on average – would have enabled over 10 thousand more students to pass the state reading test and over 30 thousand more to pass the state mathematics assessment. The biggest impact was for students who missed between five and 10 days of school. Another study suggested that chronic absenteeism is actually one of the main causes of the achievement gap.

**Achievement Gap.** The following table shows the percent of APS students proficient or higher in reading, math, and science based on data from PED for the 2015-2016 school year.

2015-2016 School Year Achievement Gap at APS (All Assessments)			
Students	Reading	Math	Science
All Students	36.6	20.7	45.2
Female	41.4	21.0	44.0
Male	32.0	20.4	46.3
Caucasian	54.7	38.6	69.9
African American	31.6	11.7	35.1
Hispanic	30.6	14.9	37.9
Asian	56.9	46.3	59.4
American Indian	26.7	10.7	26.8
Economically Disadvantaged	28.1	12.4	34.5
Students with Disabilities	7.7	4.9	15.4
English Learners	18.9	6.5	12.4

Source: PED

Research on the achievement gap examines potential causes as wide ranging and complex as the role of poverty, peer pressure, parenting, teacher quality, inadequate school resources, and test bias. Interventions to close the achievement gap range from curricular reform, raising teacher expectations, smaller classroom sizes, and replication of successful schools.

The report, *Closing the Achievement Gap: Lessons from Successful Schools*, provides examples of four public schools that closed the achievement gap between student groups, see [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hs/factsh/ctag\\_rpt.pdf](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hs/factsh/ctag_rpt.pdf).

A 2014 Legislative Finance Committee evaluation of high- and low-performing elementary schools showed a disparity between APS elementary schools below the Interstate-40 boundary in Albuquerque and above the same boundary line. APS elementary schools south of Interstate-40 were generally high poverty and low performing. In addition, the evaluation concluded that poverty continues to play a factor in school achievement.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The memorial requires the APS school board and superintendent to meet at least quarterly with legislators whose districts are located wholly or partially within APS school boundaries and other public officials to discuss education issues facing APS.

### **OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to the APS website, the school district is New Mexico's largest school district, serving more than a fourth of the state's students. Two-thirds of the students are Hispanic and nearly two out of 10 students are English learners. Two-thirds of the students qualify for the federal school lunch program and more than 70 of the schools have been identified as high-poverty Title I schools that qualify for federal funding. Additionally, APS is governed by a seven member, elected school board that sets policy, approves the annual budget, and hires the school district superintendent.

### **RELATED BILLS**

Relates to HB298, School District Reorganization Act  
Relates to SB89, School District Size Limits

### **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files
- LFC Files

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