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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
54th Legislature, 1st Session, 2019

Bill Number	<u>SB615</u>	Sponsor	<u>Lopez</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.213243.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SEC/SFC</u>
Short Title	<u>At-Risk Student Equity Assessments</u>		
Analyst	<u>Terrazas</u>	Original Date	<u>2/21/19</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 615 (SB615) would amend the Assessment and Accountability Act to require the Public Education Department (PED) to conduct or cause to conduct a pilot implementation of external equity assessments of 10 public schools and school districts within three years of the effective date of the act, June 14, 2019, to assess how well public schools and school districts address at-risk student needs. The bill would require the equity assessment of each public school to identify obstacles to, and opportunities for, improvements in educating at-risk students. The bill defines an “at-risk student” as a student who is an English language learner; has adverse childhood experiences; requires special education; is highly mobile, chronically truant, or at risk of dropping out of school; is illiterate and innumerate despite being old enough to have been taught to read and do arithmetic; or is associated with other factors or falls under other categories that contribute to a student’s risk of academic failure.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill does not contain an appropriation.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

SB615 would require the equity assessment of each public school to assess the feasibility of mitigating obstacles and enacting opportunities by ranking feasibility in terms of communication for family and community engagement; ease and speed of implementation; cost; availability of expertise in the school district or community or strategies for providing required expertise; cultural competency of teaching and other school and school district staff; linguistic and cultural relevance of curriculum, instructional materials, and other educational resources and appropriate relevance for students with disabilities; required or desired staff training and professional development; and other factors determined by PED and the Children’s Cabinet. SB615 defines an “equity assessment” as the collection of baseline data on student and community demographics; student achievement and grade promotion; school- and school district-level and community resources available to students; and data collected by external evaluators, along with data collected by

evaluator-led discussions, interviews, or forums with individual and groups of students, school staff, families, and community members. The baseline data would be used to assess a school's or school district's equity rank in how well it responds to and educates at-risk students.

The bill would require schools to use their assessment and rankings for the feasibility of mitigating obstacles and enacting opportunities for at-risk students to develop an equity plan. An "equity plan," as defined in the bill, means the use of baseline data at the school site to identify goals and objectives to better meet student needs and eliminate the obstacles that prevent full student participation.

Each school and school district would be required to appoint a family advisory council to assist in developing the equity and implementation plans. The family advisory council would consist of school employees, students, family members of students, community leaders, child advocates, and experts who work with children and adults in the at-risk categories.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

PED would be required to conduct or cause to conduct the pilot implementation of the equity assessments. The bill allows the department to choose how it wants to schedule the assessments within the three years of the effective date of the act, June 14, 2019.

PED would be required to work with the Children's Cabinet to carry out the provisions of the bill.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

On page two, line 1, the bill considers an "at risk student" as a student who fall under a "cultural diversity" category. It appears the language should read "culturally diverse" instead of "cultural diversity".

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The purpose of the Children's Cabinet is to study and make recommendations for the design of a coordinated system to maximize outcomes among children and youth under age 21, particularly in disadvantaged situations in five areas – physical and mental health fitness, family and community safety and support, preparedness for and success in school, successful transition to meaningful and purposeful adulthood and employment; and valued contributions to and active participation in communities. The cabinet is made up of the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the heads of the Children, Youth and Families Department; Corrections Department; Human Services Department; Department of Workforce Solutions; Department of Health, Department of Finance and Administration; Economic Development Department; Department of Public Safety; Aging and Long-Term Services Department; Indian Affairs Department; and PED.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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