

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: HM 71

51st Legislature, 2nd Session, 2014

Tracking Number: .196410.1

Short Title: Study Common Core Standards

Sponsor(s): Representative Mimi Stewart and Others

Analyst: Travis Dulany

Date: February 14, 2014

Bill Summary:

HM 71 requests that the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) examine the cost, benefits, disadvantages, and efficacy of New Mexico's participation in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment and report its findings to the Legislature no later than November 1, 2014.

Fiscal Impact:

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

Substantive Issues:

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) notes certain benefits and challenges for the CCSS:

- standards proponents have argued that the CCSS would further states' educational goals and objectives by allowing them to:
 - articulate to parents, teachers, and the general public expectations for students, regardless of where the student lives;
 - align textbooks, digital media, and curricula to international standards;
 - base professional development for educators on identified needs and best practices;
 - develop and implement an assessment system to measure student performance against the CCSS; and
 - evaluate policy changes needed to help students and educators meet the CCSS;
- proponents also report the following benefits:
 - **rigor:** many states consider the CCSS to be at least as rigorous, if not more so, than their current standards;
 - **state-driven:** states, not the federal government, voluntarily developed and adopted the CCSS;
 - **cross-state comparability:** the CCSS will become a common metric across 45 states and will allow for easy comparison between schools, districts, and states; and
 - **portability:** students and parents will have common expectations in the classroom regardless of location;

- conversely, opponents to the CCSS point out some challenges faced by states:
 - **federal involvement:** at least three federal activities that may dilute state authority over education policy are cited by opponents, specifically that the US Department of Education (USDE):
 1. included adoption and implementation of “common standards” as a weighted criterion in awarding states Race to the Top Phase 1 grants;
 2. required statewide adoption of “college- and career-ready standards” as a condition precedent before granting *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) flexibility; and
 3. has provided \$350 million to aid in the development of the assessment systems aligned to the CCSS (including PARCC);
 - **unknown policy consequences:** implementation of the CCSS may have unforeseen or unintended consequences (e.g., a student in a certain grade receiving instruction based on one set of standards and then being tested the following year on the new CCSS);
 - **cost:** states stand to endure a net loss of time, money, and effort in their adoption of the CCSS, along with costs associated with aligning instructional materials, curricula, and teacher professional development; and
 - **standards are only one component in an education system:** standards should be accompanied by rigorous curricula and formative tests that provide teachers with useful information about each student’s growth toward meeting the standards; and
- additional challenges or drawbacks cited by opponents are included in the memoranda of understanding (MOU; see “Background,” below) signed between states and testing consortia when the CCSS were adopted:
 - **loss of autonomy** over core content area assessments (all MOU require that, by 2014-2015, each state must employ the consortia’s assessment for federal accountability purposes under the ESEA); and
 - **potentially costly implementation:** both testing consortia (PARCC and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) require computer-based assessments, which may result in additional costs to purchase or upgrade the needed technology infrastructure to deliver the assessments.

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 USDE 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.

During the 2012 interim, the LESC heard testimony from NCSL staff regarding the CCSS. Among the information provided, NCSL staff:

- 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.

NCSL staff 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 continues through 2015 and includes several years of pilot programs in

various districts and states. Furthermore, the PARCC assessment consortium, of which New Mexico is a governing state, will administer its first summative assessment in 2015.

Committee Referrals:

HEC

Related Bills:

SB 45 *Academic Success Through Remediation Act*

*SB 197 *School Teacher Evaluation Moratorium*

SB 296 *Implementation of Common Core Standards*

SJM 18 *Standardized Test Funds Report*

SM 61 *Study Common Core Standards*