

1 SENATE BILL 615

2 **54TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2019**

3 INTRODUCED BY

4 Linda M. Lopez

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10 AN ACT

11 RELATING TO PUBLIC EDUCATION; PROVIDING FOR EXTERNAL EQUITY  
12 ASSESSMENTS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS REGARDING  
13 THE EDUCATION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS.

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15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

16 SECTION 1. A new section of the Assessment and  
17 Accountability Act is enacted to read:

18 "[NEW MATERIAL] AT-RISK STUDENTS--EQUITABLE EDUCATION--  
19 EXTERNAL EQUITY ASSESSMENTS--DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS THAT INCLUDE  
20 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF AT-RISK  
21 STUDENTS.--

22 A. As used in this section:

23 (1) "at-risk student" means a student who is  
24 in one or more of the following categories:

25 (a) English language learner and

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1 cultural diversity;

2 (b) adverse childhood experiences,  
3 including physical, emotional or mental trauma, abuse or  
4 neglect, poverty and homelessness;

5 (c) special education;

6 (d) high mobility, chronic truancy or at  
7 risk of dropping out of school;

8 (e) illiteracy and innumeracy in  
9 students old enough to have been taught to read and do  
10 arithmetic; and

11 (f) other factors or categories that  
12 contribute to a student's risk of academic failure;

13 (2) "equity assessment" means the collection  
14 of baseline data on student and community demographics, student  
15 achievement and grade promotion; school- and district-level and  
16 community resources and services available to at-risk students;  
17 and data collected by external evaluators, along with data  
18 collected by evaluator-led discussions, interviews or forums  
19 with individual and groups of students, school staff, families  
20 and community members, which baseline and other data are  
21 analyzed to assess a public school's or school district's  
22 equity rank in how well it responds to and educates at-risk  
23 students; and

24 (3) "equity plan" means the use of baseline  
25 data at the school site to identify goals and objectives to

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1 better meet student needs and eliminate the obstacles that  
2 prevent full student participation.

3 B. The department shall conduct or cause to be  
4 conducted a pilot implementation of external equity assessments  
5 of ten public schools and school districts within three years  
6 of the effective date of this act. The department shall choose  
7 how it wants to schedule the assessments over the time allowed.

8 C. The equity assessment for each public school  
9 shall identify obstacles to and opportunities for improvements  
10 in educating at-risk students and assess the feasibility of  
11 mitigating obstacles and enacting opportunities in a matrix  
12 that ranks feasibility in terms of:

13 (1) communication for family and community  
14 engagement;

15 (2) ease and speed of implementation;

16 (3) cost;

17 (4) availability of expertise in the school  
18 district or community and, if not available, strategies for  
19 providing required expertise;

20 (5) cultural competency of teaching and other  
21 public school and school district staff;

22 (6) linguistic and cultural relevance of  
23 curriculum, instructional materials and other educational  
24 resources and appropriate relevance for students with  
25 disabilities;

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(7) required or desired staff training and professional development; and

(8) other factors determined by the department and the children's cabinet.

D. As equity assessments are completed in public schools, the public schools shall use their assessment and matrix to develop an equity plan that includes objectives and timed goals to meet those objectives in improving the educational outcomes for at-risk students. Each public school and school district shall appoint a family advisory council to assist it in developing its equity and implementation plans. A family advisory council shall 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.

E. The department shall work with the children's cabinet to help the department carry out the provisions of this section."