

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill No: SB 123

49th Legislature, 1st Session, 2009

Short Title: Administrators in Accountability Reporting

Sponsor(s): Senators Gay G. Kernan and Cynthia Nava and Others

Analyst: David Harrell

Date: January 29, 2009

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

In brief, SB 123 amends the *School Personnel Act* to require that the uniform statewide Teacher Education Accountability Reporting System already in law (known by the acronym TEARS) be expanded to include school administrators as well as teachers, including those pursuing provisional administrative licensure.

More specifically, SB 123 requires that:

- candidates for school administrator positions be measured and tracked from pre-entry to post-graduation;
- administrator preparation programs submit data to the Public Education Department (PED), to be included in PED's Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS);
- the same measures and indicators of program success (eight altogether) applicable to teacher preparation programs be applied to administrator preparation programs; and
- data on administrator preparation programs be included in the annual statewide educator accountability report.

Fiscal Impact:

SB 123 makes no appropriation.

Issues:

Like SB 124 and SB 133, also endorsed by the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) and introduced during the 2009 legislative session, SB 123 addresses needs identified in testimony before the LESC during the 2008 interim. At that time, the LESC received a report from the Office of Education Accountability (OEA), in collaboration with PED and the Higher Education Department (HED), that described these agencies' study, in collaboration with school districts and institutions of higher education, in response to Senate Joint Memorial 3 (2008).

- Endorsed by the LESC, SJM 3 requested that these agencies develop a plan to enhance the recruitment, preparation, mentoring, evaluation, professional development, and support for school principals and other school leaders.

- Through a series of statewide meetings, focus groups, and surveys during the 2008 interim, school district superintendents, principals, teachers, college deans, university faculty, staff from state and legislative agencies, members of the business community, and a variety of other interested parties examined school leadership issues and concerns in New Mexico; studied national research; consulted with representatives of successful programs in other states; and reviewed federal, state, and district policies affecting school leadership.
- The report in response to SJM 3 made several recommendations to address the issues identified in the joint memorial, to strengthen New Mexico's capacity to attract and retain strong school leaders.
- SB 123 implements one of the report's recommendations: to develop a database that, among other features, links higher education and public school data to track supply and demand for school leaders and that captures demographic and academic data on leadership candidates.

As the report on SJM 3 explains:

Accurate longitudinal data is a basic requirement for effective accountability systems. PED and HED have made progress in developing databases that track teachers, student achievement, and other important elements of New Mexico's systemic approach to education reform. These same kinds of data about principals and other school leaders should be gathered and used as the basis for informed decision-making about educational policy.

Such data are important, the report illustrates, because of the shift during the last several years, both in New Mexico and across the country, in the roles of and expectations for principals.

- Formerly seen almost exclusively in traditional administrative and managerial roles, principals are now regarded as a major influence on school effectiveness and student learning.
- Testifying before the LESC during the 2008 interim, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) cited research showing that, especially in high-need schools, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student learning."
- Furthermore, this excerpt from the report on SJM 3 describes the significance of the role of the school principal:

It is the school principal who sets the climate for professionalism and support within the school; influences which teachers are hired and whether they stay; holds teachers accountable for student learning; determines resource allocation to support learning; and builds relationships with parents and the greater community.

HED's analysis of SB 123 notes that the department "contributed to and supports the recommendations and priorities outlined in the SJM 3 report"; and that, although "data matching

efforts are underway, New Mexico does not currently have a P-20 educational data system or a defined way to match between secondary and postsecondary data. Finally, the provisional administrator license noted under Bill Summary, above, is a recommendation of a related bill, SB 133, *Teacher Licensure Changes*.

Background:

Realizing that reliable data are critical to educational research and policy development, the 2005 Legislature included language in the *General Appropriation Act* to establish a comprehensive data warehouse at PED to begin to collect and store student, teacher, course, testing, and financial data in one comprehensive system. Legislation enacted two years later:

- required HED to use the PED student ID number for students enrolled in higher education in order to facilitate longitudinal research; and
- required PED to collaborate with public teacher preparation programs and HED to create a uniform statewide teacher education accountability reporting system – the TEARS legislation noted above.

In addition, the Legislature has supported the implementation of this comprehensive data warehouse, known as STARS, with appropriations to PED of approximately \$14.0 million (including \$2.9 million for FY 09).

The purpose of the current TEARS legislation is to measure and track teacher candidates from pre-entry to post-graduation in order to benchmark the productivity and accountability of New Mexico's teacher work force.

- During the 2008 interim, the LESC received the first TEARS report, which consists of a separate report for each teacher preparation program and a summary state report. Available both in hard copy and on CD-ROM, this report is also posted on the OEA webpage.
- The committee also heard testimony about the statutorily mandated data in the report regarding preparation of candidates in the high needs areas of mathematics, science and technology; and certain issues that must be resolved to ensure that future TEARS reports are complete and accurate.

Finally, SJM 3 was itself a response to needs identified in a joint study during the 2007 interim of the three-tiered licensure, evaluation, and salary system by OEA, the LESC, and the Legislative Finance Committee. As presented to the LESC, this study found, among other points, that school leaders in New Mexico face a number of challenges – some as a result of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, others related to the diverse student body that characterizes public schools today, and still others related to the growing importance of data-driven decision-making.

Related Bills:

SB 124 *Create School Leadership Institute*
SB 133 *Teacher Licensure Changes*