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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/12/09

SPONSOR Barreras LAST UPDATED 02/16/09 HB 237/aHEC

SHORT TITLE Change Report Card Publication Date SB _____

ANALYST Haug

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY09	FY10		
	(\$450.0)	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Public Education Department (PED)

Department of Finance and Administration (DFA)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee Amendment replaces the requirement for publishing a school districts annual accountability report in electronic or print media with a requirement that the school district publish a notification of the availability of the report in a newspaper of general circulation that the report is available, including how and where copies of the report may be obtained. The notification must include a list of topics covered in the report.

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 237 22-2C-11 NMSA 1978 to change the publication date of school district report cards from November 15 of each calendar year to a date determined by the department using available electronic or print media.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

According to the PED, there would be no fiscal impact for PED of removing the publication date. Regarding the publication venue, there is probable cost savings on the part of local districts. The state produces the report, and school districts are responsible for dissemination. Most have utilized local web sites and print copies to schools, parents and community gathering spots. A

few publish in local newspapers, but it is unknown how many districts and to what extent. To estimate the potential savings of removing the requirement that all districts publish their report in the newspaper, estimates were taken from an average daily newspaper in New Mexico (Roswell), and applied to report sizes from *School District Report Cards* from 2006-2007. Assuming the information from six full pages of the School District Report Card will fit on a single newspaper page and a cost for a full-page legal notice of \$1,000, publication costs for the approximately 1,350 pages would total \$225,000 statewide. To duplicate reports in Spanish, as is currently the practice, would double the cost. Therefore districts in general could recover up to \$450,000 in publication expenditures, reflected in the table above.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The PED states:

The U.S. Department of Education (2003) mandates that District Report Cards be published annually; however, there is no requirement for the date of release. New Mexico has historically published the full *School District Report Card* in January or February of the following year due to these constraints:

- A. The New Mexico *School District Report Card* compiles data from multiple sources whose data collection windows vary:
 1. District Student Demographics (July)
 2. No Child Left Behind District Summary (October-November)
 3. Pre-Appeals No Child Left Behind Accountability by Subgroup (August)
 4. Assessment Results by Grade (October)
 5. School Board Member Participation (October)
 6. District Expenditures (August)
 7. Teacher Quality (August)
 8. Parent Survey on the Quality of Education (September)
 9. National Assessment of Educational Progress (October)

The verification of these disparate data sources is a time-consuming repetitious process that requires files to be updated several times before final production. Most information contained in the District Report Card coexists in other reports published earlier than November 15, including items 1, 2, 3 and 4. Therefore, a case may be made that New Mexico already utilizes two-part reporting, and that timely information is available to schools and parents early in the school year.

B. The New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, which forms the core of the report and requires the most processing time, is administered in the spring. According to CCSSO (2003) several states have elected to change to a fall testing window or moved their testing to earlier in the spring in order to provide a Report Card prior to the beginning of the school year. On the other hand, New Mexico has chosen to move the test window later, not earlier, in the school year, in order to maximize instruction time prior to testing. This late test window significantly compresses the time available to assure data quality and to proof the report prior to publication.

C. AYP accountability is reported in the Report Card for each school in the district, as well as for the district overall. The calendar for these events does not allow completion prior to November, as each is followed by district review, a 30-day appeal window, investigation and potential revision of results. The *School District Report Card* serves as the final summary of these assessments and cannot be completed until all AYP results are finalized.

F. New Mexico duplicates its *School District Report Card* in a Spanish version, which adds time required to verify interpretive changes.

It is important to note that while alternative fixed deadlines and alternative fixed media for dissemination could be substituted these would need continual revision as the PED renegotiates contracts with vendors and modifies assessment calendars.

Mandating a newspaper venue imposes an undue financial burden on the districts, and may serve as a disincentive to publish a complete and thorough report. The current practice is to utilize press releases to publicize web links and places to access printed reports.

The volume of detail in the *School District Report Card* is vast. For example Albuquerque Public Schools' most recent report was 73 pages and the report for Dulce Municipal Schools was 11 pages (8.5" X 11"). Efforts have been made to streamline reports for printing, so pages are densely packed and the fonts small. Beginning in 2009, additional information from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will further expand the report size.

New Mexico currently has newspapers linked to approximately 31 counties. For those counties without local coverage, the choice is to publish in alternative newspapers such as advertising weeklies. The quality and general circulation of these newspapers vary and may not reach the intended audience.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

PED notes that this is a PED supported bill.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

PED comments that it will continue to be unable to meet this time limit, which is unlikely to change with ever-increasing demand for report expansion and the postponement of the test window. Expectations of users of the report will not be met. Districts currently disseminate printed reports to parents and communities through multiple venues, sometimes through newspapers, and that will not change.

GH/svb