

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 196

52nd Legislature, 1st Session, 2015

Tracking Number: .198927.1

Short Title: Discontinue Common Core Standards

Sponsor(s): Senator Linda M. Lopez

Analyst: Christina McCorquodale

Date: February 24, 2015

Bill Summary:

Until other requirements summarized below are met, SB 196:

- requires the Public Education Department (PED) to discontinue the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); and
- requires school districts to use New Mexico academic content and performance standards and the state standards-based assessments.

The bill further requires:

- PED to hold at least four public hearings in each congressional district by November 1, 2015 to explain the state's decision to change from the New Mexico academic content and performance standards and standards-based assessments, and the department's process for the change to CCSS with regard to these hearings:
 - public testimony must be taken;
 - a nonbinding vote of the audience must be held to demonstrate public sentiment on the topic;
 - the testimony must be recorded and made available to the public; and
 - continuing reports must be presented to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) at its regularly scheduled meetings; and
- the LESL to contract with an independent entity with expertise to conduct a fiscal analysis of the implementation of CCSS in New Mexico. The analysis shall include:
 - the projected cost of implementation of the CCSS and the development, administration, and grading assessments tied to CCSS; and
 - the cost of retaining the state's academic content and performance standards and the standards-based assessments.

SB 196 also requires PED, before adopting a system of curricular standards, and after July 1, 2016, to compare state standards with other nationally recognized standards, including the CCSS; to consult with school superintendents and local stake-holders; to report its findings to the Legislature.

Finally, SB 196:

- prohibits PED from entering into or renewing any agreement that cedes control over curricular standards or assessments to an entity not under the absolute control of the state; and
- requires the department to withdrawal from Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) while the requirements of the act are being conducted.

Fiscal Impact:

A total of \$100,000 is appropriated from the General Fund for expenditure in FY 16 as follows:

- \$50,000 for PED to fund public hearings; and
- \$50,000 for LESC to contract for a fiscal analysis of the adoption and implementation of the CCSS.

Any unexpended or unencumbered funds revert to the General Fund.

Fiscal Issues:

PED’s analysis, states that holding four public meetings in each of New Mexico’s three congressional districts (12 meetings total) will cost the state approximately \$84,000. This amount is based on an estimated cost of \$7,000 per public meeting, which does not include travel costs for PED employees. Therefore, it is estimated to cost \$34,000 more than the \$50,000 appropriation proposed in the bill.

The PED analysis also notes that SB 196 does not align with the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) waiver, thus jeopardizing the state’s eligibility for \$120 million in federal funding.

Technical Issues:

The PED’s analysis questions the term “curriculum standards,” (page 4, line 9) in that the CCSS is not a curriculum, but rather a set of grade-level expectations in English language arts and mathematics. Prior to the adoption of the CCSS, districts determined which curriculum they would use and districts still retain that authority since the adoption of CCSS.

Although the bill uses the term “common core standards,” it clearly addresses the set of standards generally known as “common core *state* standards” [emphasis added], which are the standards the state adopted in the May 2009 memorandum of agreement with the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (see page 2, lines 6-7).

Substantive Issues:

In August 2013, LESC staff, the Secretary of Public Education, and a representative from the Educational Issues Department of the Washington, DC office of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) provided the LESC with an update on the implementation of the CCSS in New Mexico.

The Secretary testified that PED was allocated \$1.0 million in FY 13 and \$1.5 million in FY 14 to support teachers and principals in efforts to implement the CCSS. The Secretary said that between January 2013 through June 2013, over 2,500 teachers and administrators had been trained. Speaking more specifically, the Secretary said that:

- 645 educators had taken online courses in English/language arts (ELA), math, and teaching reading to English language learners;
- 1,460 teachers and administrators had participated in in-person workshops;
- 289 educators had participated in webinars, which were recorded and continue to be available online; and
- CCSS experts had delivered regional mentoring sessions to 160 educators.

PED's analysis further notes that since 2012, over 4,400 educators statewide have participated in professional development of CCSS. Passage of SB 196 would undermine the significant time and financial investment by districts, schools, and teachers.

Finally, according to PED's analysis, SB 196 duplicates efforts in:

- conducting an alignment study between the CCSS and New Mexico Content Standards; and
- holding public meetings about the implementation of the CCSS across the state.

Background:

Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) 2014 Interim: Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Update

The CCSS are designed to emphasize critical thinking skills in ELA and mathematics for grades K-12 and to ensure that students leave high school with the necessary skills for college and/or a career. The CCSS initiative began in December 2008, when the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) formed a collaborative effort and published the document *Benchmarking for Success*. New Mexico joined the effort in 2009, when the Governor signed a memorandum of agreement with the NGA and the CCSSO.

The LESC has heard testimony on the CCSS since the 2009 interim. Staff testimony during the 2014 interim reviewed presentations on the CCSS during previous interims and noted that the CCSS have become a controversial issue, with states such as Indiana, Oklahoma, and South Carolina opting out of the CCSS initiative and with other states, like Florida, rebranding the standards and creating their own standards-based assessments. One concern, this testimony continued, has been that the CCSS could result in a loss of state educational autonomy, unrealistic expectations of students, and/or the overloading of educators as they simultaneously work to implement other educational reforms. These concerns notwithstanding, however, 43 states continue to implement the standards in their public schools, New Mexico among them; and several groups, including over 200 college presidents, have continued to voice support for the CCSS initiative.

Testimony from the Policy Program Manager, PED, noted that, in addition to the standards for math and ELA, the CCSS also include reading and writing standards for science, social studies, and technical subjects. In reading and writing, the PED testimony continued, the CCSS require students to show that they can:

- read and understand complex passages;
- write persuasively;
- conduct research and present findings; and
- demonstrate speaking and listening skills.

For mathematics, according to PED testimony, students must show their work and demonstrate an understanding of concepts, compute quickly and accurately, and apply mathematical knowledge to solve real-world problems. The PED testimony concluded with an outline of what parents can do to support the implementation of the CCSS.

Testimony to the LESC 2014 Interim: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers

Since 2011, New Mexico has been a governing member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which is one of two assessment consortia that receive federal funds to design computer-based tests aligned to the CCSS. During the July 2014 meeting, the Deputy Secretary for Policy, PED, provided an update on developments with the new PARCC assessments. This testimony focused on what the Deputy Secretary called certain “facts” that New Mexicans need to know about the PARCC assessments, among them:

- in school year 2014-2015, PARCC, which is a New Mexico-specific version of the test, will replace the math, reading, and writing portions of the current standards-based assessment and the high school graduation assessment;
- the average testing time will not increase from what students have experienced taking the standards-based assessment, with the testing time taking less than 1.0 percent of the school year;
- New Mexicans are among those building PARCC assessments (reviewed by over 60 educators);
- New Mexico students will take PARCC tests online;
- PARCC is designed to be accessible to students with disabilities and English language learners; and
- like the current standards-based assessment, PARCC high school scores will be used for multiple purposes such as graduation, accountability, and educator effectiveness.

The Deputy Secretary also outlined the expectations of the PARCC assessments. In reading and writing, students will have to:

- show they can read and understand complex passages;
- write persuasively;
- conduct research and present findings; and
- demonstrate speaking and listening skills.

In math, students will have to:

- show their work and demonstrate that they understand a concept rather than simply memorize a formula;
- compute quickly and accurately; and
- apply their mathematical knowledge to solve real-world problems.

Additional testimony on PARCC came from the PARCC Liaison for New Mexico, who explained the higher education connection. According to this testimony, the CCSS, which are the standards the PARCC test was designed upon, have implications for higher education as well as for K-12 education; therefore, the PARCC liaison works with the deans at the various institutions of higher education (IHEs) to aid in the transition to these standards. The liaison further testified that PARCC offers four suggestions for IHEs:

1. integrate the CCSS and PARCC into teacher preparation programs, which may include preparing teachers for the content and pedagogy of the CCSS and preparing future teachers to use PARCC test results to improve teaching and learning;
2. work with high schools to make sure more students are “college ready,” including support for senior-year students who are ready, other high school experiences for students who are not ready, and state-funded dual credit;
3. reconsider first-year college courses based on the impact of the CCSS by assuming that future students will be different in what they know and how they can learn; and
4. use PARCC test results for first-year student course placement.

Committee Referrals:

SEC/SFC

Related Bills:

SB 205 *Delay Use of Certain Test in Teacher Evals*

SB 217 *Individual Choice on Some School Tests*

HB 15 *Limit School Days for Statewide Tests*

HB 82 *School Academic Enrichment Programs*

HB 129 *Clarify School Test Individual Choice*

HB 177 *Common Core Implementation Standards*