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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sapient **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/7/15 **LAST UPDATED** 3/6/15 **HB** _____
SHORT TITLE Certain Students Tested In Native Language **SB** 203/aSPAC
ANALYST Chavez

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total		See Fiscal Implications				

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Information Technology (DoIT)

Public Education Department (PED)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SPAC Amendment

The Senate Public Affairs Committee amendment to Senate Bill 203 allows students who are limited in English language proficiency to take standards-based assessments in their primary language, if one is available. This amendment clarifies that the department is only required to provide assessments in other languages when already available.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 203 amends the Assessment and Accountability Act (Section 22-2C NMSA 1978) to require students who are limited in English language proficiency, and who have attended school in the U.S. for less than three consecutive years, be allowed to take standards-based assessments in their primary language.

Additionally, the bill allows for paper-based assessment as an alternative to a computer based assessment under the following conditions: documented disability within the student's individualized education program (IEP); a students' lack of experience or familiarity with technology; the public school has documented that it does not meet the technology requirements

to provide a computer-based assessment and has a technology readiness survey on file with the department; or the student is not allowed by religious or other beliefs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This bill does not contain an appropriation.

PED notes that the translation of accountability assessments into languages other than English and Spanish would have significant cost, at around \$6 million per language arts assessment per language (which requires a language version, not a strict translation), and \$1 per word for translation of other assessments. More research would be needed to determine the demand for assessments in languages other than Spanish to determine the full cost of implementing assessments. If required to develop additional assessments, PED may need to request additional operating budget to meet the requirement. **The SPAC clarifies that PED only need provide assessments for languages that are already available. Therefore, this cost is no longer applicable.**

The other change to the bill allowing more conditions under which a student may take an assessment on paper could increase testing costs, as computer-based testing is significantly less expensive to administer. However, PED analysis notes that many of these students already have the flexibility to take paper-based assessments.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The change in the bill to the Assessment and Accountability Act giving additional allowances under which a student may take a computer-based test could cause complications as New Mexico switches to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) this spring. PED notes there is already flexibility related to allowing ELL students and students with disabilities to use paper-based assessments. Additionally, IEPs often require such accommodations, so SB 203 would not extend any flexibility that is not already allowed. Accommodations for ELL students also already allow paper-based testing. Even if SB 203 is not passed, these students will continue to have the option to utilize a paper-based assessment.

For spring 2015 PED allowed districts to request for up to 20 percent of their students to take the assessment on paper in addition to students with disabilities and ELL students. This flexibility was extended to ensure that all New Mexico students are prepared to be successful on the spring accountability assessment. PED testified at their HAFC hearing that districts have not requested the full 20 percent, indicating the demand for paper-based testing is lower than expected.

PED also testified that the department expects all schools to be technology-ready for testing by spring 2015. If this is the case, the provision for public schools that are not technology-ready may be unnecessary. PED analysis states that allowing schools to administer paper tests instead of increasing their technology readiness removes the necessity for schools to offer students appropriate technology resources for college and career readiness.

PED analysis also notes extending allowances for paper-based testing permanently is not in the best interest of students. Allowing students to test on paper because of limited technology experience could remove accountability for schools to ensure that students have technology skills that are necessary for college and career readiness. PED adds students who transfer to New

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Mexico schools may be allowed to test on paper for this reason, but students who have been in NM schools for longer than a semester should utilize computer testing.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Page 4, line 12 of the bill should replace “or” for “and”, as the four options for a student taking paper-based assessments do not require that all four be met.

KC/bb/je