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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
53rd Legislature, 1st Session, 2017

Bill Number	<u>HB279</u>	Sponsor	<u>Representative Smith & Senator Ivey-Soto</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.205337.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>HEC/HSIVC</u>
Short Title	<u>Publish School District Report Cards Online</u>		
Analyst	<u>Bedeaux</u>	Original Date	<u>2/7/17</u>
		Last Updated	<u></u>

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 279 (HB279) eliminates the requirement for school districts and state-chartered charter schools to publish their annual report card in a local newspaper, and substitutes the requirement that the report card be published on both the Public Education Department's (PED) website and the website of the school district or state-chartered charter school.

FISCAL IMPACT

HB279 does not contain an appropriation.

Removing the requirement that school districts and state-chartered charter schools purchase space in their local newspaper will save them a small portion of their funds. The exact amount saved will vary by the newspaper space the district or state-chartered charter school is required to purchase and the rate charged by the local paper.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

As part of the effort for increased school accountability, current statute requires school districts and state-chartered charter schools to publish their annual report card in their local newspaper. The annual report card is a succinct way to communicate the school district or state-chartered charter school's performance, demographics, and other information to parents and the community. Report cards offer a snapshot of relevant information from every school in the district, or from the state-chartered charter school.

However, most modern households, the newspaper is an outdated and ineffective form of communication. Families tend to rely on the Internet for information more than any other medium. When parents are looking for news relevant to their district, the best place for them to

start is on the school district's website. Publishing the report card in a newspaper is no longer the most transparent or accessible way to reach parents.

A simple Google search can bring up a list of every charter school and school district report card on PED's website. However, at the core of the concept of accountability is the understanding that the school district or state-chartered charter school should be ready and willing to share this information with parents. HB279 maintains the spirit of accountability by requiring school districts and charter schools to publish the report card, and awards access to this information to an even larger audience.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There is no reason to expect that the bill will burden school districts or state-chartered charter schools. Every school district in New Mexico has a website. Adding a page or publishing a post to that website is as easy as performing regular website maintenance; doing so is likely easier and more cost-effective than arranging for the publishing of the report card in a newspaper.

PED already publishes all school district and charter school report cards online; adding the requirement to do so in statute will not change their current practice.

ALTERNATIVES

There is some question of whether eliminating the requirement to publish school district and charter school report cards in a newspaper will impede access to school performance information. Since New Mexico is challenged by internet connectivity issues, especially in rural areas of the state, removing the requirement to publish the report card in a newspaper may make it harder for parents in these areas to find the information. The Legislature may consider requiring school districts and state-chartered charter schools to also have the information available in print at the district office or by request, which would increase access for those families with limited internet access.

RELATED BILLS

Related to HB60, Broadband Infrastructure Development, which amends the local economic development act to provide for broadband infrastructure development.

Related to HB113, Statewide Broadband Network, which would create a statewide broadband network.

Related to SB308, PRC to Facilitate Rural Broadband Service, which would expand broadband services in rural areas of the state.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files

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