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

Bill Number	<u>CS/SB62/aHEC</u>	Sponsor	<u>SFI</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.207044.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SEC/SPAC;HEC/HSIVC</u>
Short Title	<u>School Rating Grading Point System</u>		
Analyst	<u>Herz</u>	Original Date	<u>2/27/17</u>
		Last Updated	<u>3/7/17</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of HEC Amendment

The House Education Committee Amendment to Senate Floor Substitute for Senate Bill 62 (CS/SB62/aHEC) amends the A-B-C-D-F School Ratings Act, changing the points assigned to the factors that make up a public school's grade.

Synopsis of Original Bill

The Senate Floor Substitute for Senate Bill 62 amends the A-B-C-D-F School Ratings Act, changing the calculation of school grades and requiring additional detail for reporting student achievement and growth data. The bill also establishes a work group to study the school grading system during the next two interims.

FISCAL IMPACT

CS/SB62/aHEC does not appropriate funds. Depending on the location of work group meetings, members of the group may generate transportation costs, which could be paid by the member's organization.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

The current school grading system is a product of the 2011 A-B-C-D-F Schools Rating Act. The act assigns a grade to schools based on student academic proficiency, student growth, growth of the school as a whole, and other factors such as attendance and student and parent surveys. New Mexico meets federal accountability standards through the use of the school grading system.

In its application for a state flexibility waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Public Education Department (PED) cited the use of the A-F School Grading system as evidence of State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support. ESEA required that the state use a system that is designed to "improve student achievement and

school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.” In the application, PED explained how the system was built around student achievement and growth. Since the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed in 2015, states are required to adopt a Statewide Accountability System that complies with certain conditions. ESSA requires that accountability systems:

- “be the same for all public schools;
- include valid, reliable, and comparable measures that are disaggregated by subgroup; and
- measure each of the following: academic achievement; graduation rates for high schools and academic progress for elementary and middle schools; progress in attaining English language proficiency; and at least one state-selected indicator of school quality or student success (which may vary for schools in different grade spans).”

Often, the state’s school grading system is criticized for two issues: a heavy reliance on proficiency, which tends to be lower in schools with high rates of poverty, and the use of mathematically intensive value-added models to construct growth scores. This being the case, it may be reasonable to assemble a work group to examine issues in how school grades are calculated, and whether the system includes “valid, reliable, and comparable measures.” The findings of the work group could inform a system that accounts for the wide range of factors that affect students’ growth and performance.

In addition to establishing a work group, the bill changes the calculation and reporting of school grades by creating two categories, student achievement and school quality and opportunity. A breakdown of the bill’s point structure compared with the current model can be found in Attachment A.

In this bill, student achievement includes student academic proficiency, growth as measured by standardized test scores, and graduation rates. Compared with the current school grading system, CS/SB62/aHEC would increase the weight of student academic growth while decreasing the weight of proficiency. Overall, this bill decreases the weight given to elementary and middle school student achievement compared with the current system, while increasing it slightly for high school student achievement.

This bill increases the weight of parent and student input, attendance, and additional educational opportunities provided by elementary and middle schools. Surveys and attendance point totals are both more than doubled, while parent engagement and additional learning opportunities become required categories instead of bonus points. The combined weighting of these categories in CS/SB62/aHEC increases four-fold for elementary and middle schools. High school parent and student surveys, parent engagement, and learning opportunities remain unchanged from current school grades, while attendance increases slightly and college and career readiness measures decrease from 15 point to 10 points.

CS/SB62/aHEC also changes the school grade reporting by requiring additional detail for student demographic data. In addition to disaggregation categories included in current statute, this bill adds categories for migrant, homeless, and foster students, as well as students with parents on active duty in the armed forces.

Applying the bill’s school grade calculation changes to the 2015-2016 school year grades using the current grading point scale shifts the overall grade distribution significantly upward. As shown in Attachment B, just over 65 percent of schools would earn an A or B (currently defined

as a high school scoring 65 or more points or an elementary or middle school scoring 60 or more points), compared with fewer than 40 percent of schools using the current school grade calculations. In future years, PED could choose to recalculate the cutoff points for grading levels to produce a more even distribution of grades. As seen in Attachment C, the distribution of total points remains similar to the current school grading system, but the schools are earning more points overall. The impact of using the categories outlined in CS/SB62/aHEC was calculated without including progress toward English language proficiency, which accounts for 10 percent of school grades in the bill but is not included in the current school grading system.

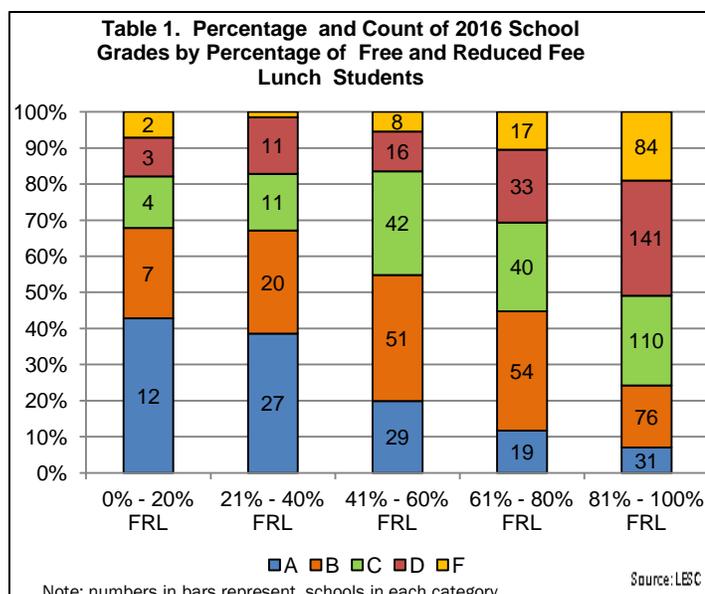
Much of the projected rise in school grades can be attributed to the school quality and opportunity categories. As shown in Attachment D, many schools perform well in this category, as about 99 percent of schools would earn an A or B in this section (equivalent to scoring 60 percent of total possible points in the category). Meanwhile, scores in the student achievement section show more disparity, with many schools scoring in the middle of the scale. With the new calculation’s emphasis on growth within the student achievement section, there are approximately the same number of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, and Fs as under the current system. However, the individual grades for schools shift up and down due to the increased weight of student academic growth rather than proficiency.

Currently, the tools used to measure the school quality and opportunity categories do not provide much differentiation between the highest- and lowest-performing schools. These tools would likely remain in place for the 2017-2018 school year when this bill would take effect. The work group could focus on evaluating the tools used to measure the school quality and opportunity categories in order to better differentiate between schools.

Many of the categories in the school quality and opportunity section attempt to measure school climate, which the National School Climate Center defines as “the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students’, parents’, and school personnel’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.” According to the Education Commission of the States, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and New Mexico are the only states that explicitly include measures of school climate in school accountability systems, and New Mexico is the only state that includes parent and student surveys. Though these states attempt to gauge school climate, the measurements often involve proxies for school climate (for example, dropout rate) and not actual measures of school climate. However, education researchers have developed multiple school climate inventories in the past 10 years that have been vetted in peer-reviewed academic studies and used in school climate research. This bill could present an opportunity for the state to adapt school climate inventories to better measure school environments.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

CS/SB62/aHEC includes a significant shift in the number of points attributed to growth rather than proficiency. The



federal No Child Left Behind Act focused on adequate yearly progress toward proficiency to promote accountability. This framework persists in the New Mexico school grade report card in the form of current standing. For the 2015-2015 school year, of the 40 points available in current standing, 20 points are tied to growth in proficiency and 20 points are tied to the proportion of students who are currently proficient in reading and mathematics.

There is a strong correlation between socioeconomic status and proficiency in reading and mathematics nationwide. In a LESC analysis of school grade distributions, the distribution of grades is related to the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-fee lunch (FRL). As seen in Table 1, the distribution of grades for those schools between 81 percent and 100 percent FRL is different than schools with more affluent students.

RELATED BILLS

Conflicts with SB40, State School Grades Council

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- PED
- LESC Files

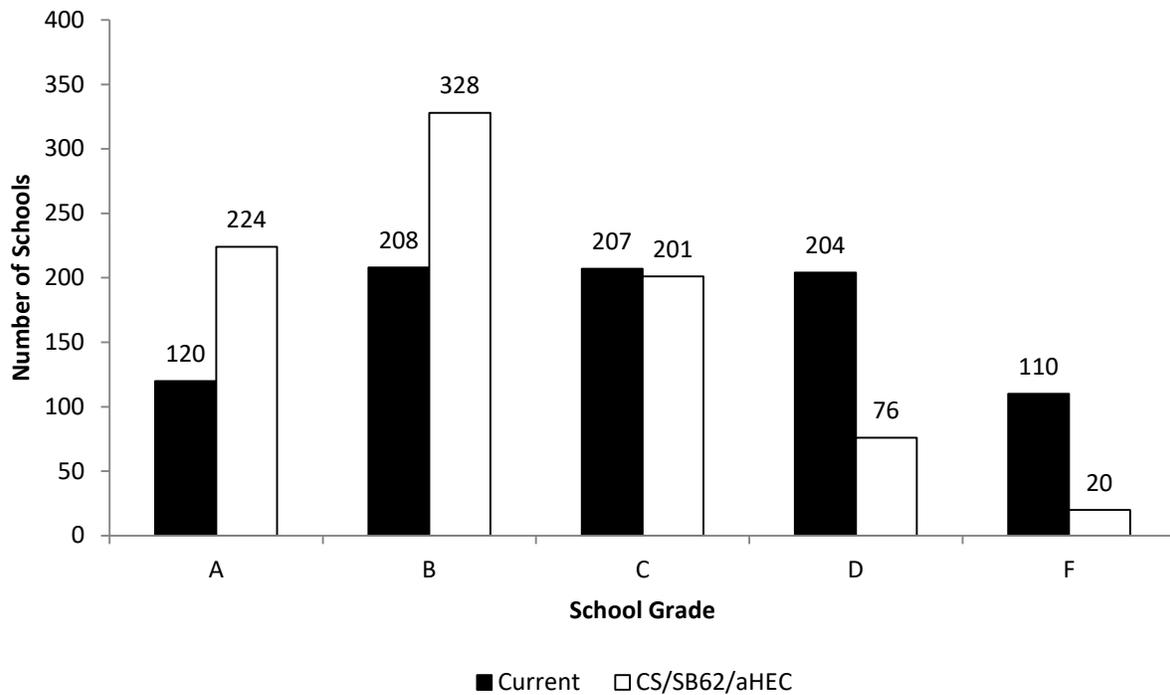
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**School Grade Point Category Comparison
Current System & CS/SB62/aHEC System**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Elementary/Middle Schools</i>			<i>High Schools</i>		
	<i>Current</i>	<i>CS/ SB62/ aHEC</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>CS/ SB62/ aHEC</i>	<i>Change</i>
Current Standing	40	10	-30	30	15	-15
School Growth	10	10	0	10	10	0
Growth of Highest 25%		5			5	
Growth of Middle 50%	20	10	-5	10	10	+5
Growth of Lowest 25%	20	15	-5	10	15	+5
Progress toward English Language Proficiency	0	10	+10	0	10	+10
Graduation Rate	-	-	-	17	15	-2
<i>Student Achievement Subtotal</i>	90	60	-30	77	80	+3
Parent & Student Surveys	5	10	+5	5	5	0
Attendance	5	15	+10	3	5	+2
College & Career Readiness	-	-	-	15	10	-5
Parent Engagement	Bonus	10	+10	Bonus	Bonus	0
Learning Opportunities	Bonus	5	+5	Bonus	Bonus	0
<i>School Quality & Opportunity Subtotal</i>	10	40	+30	23	20	-3
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0</i>

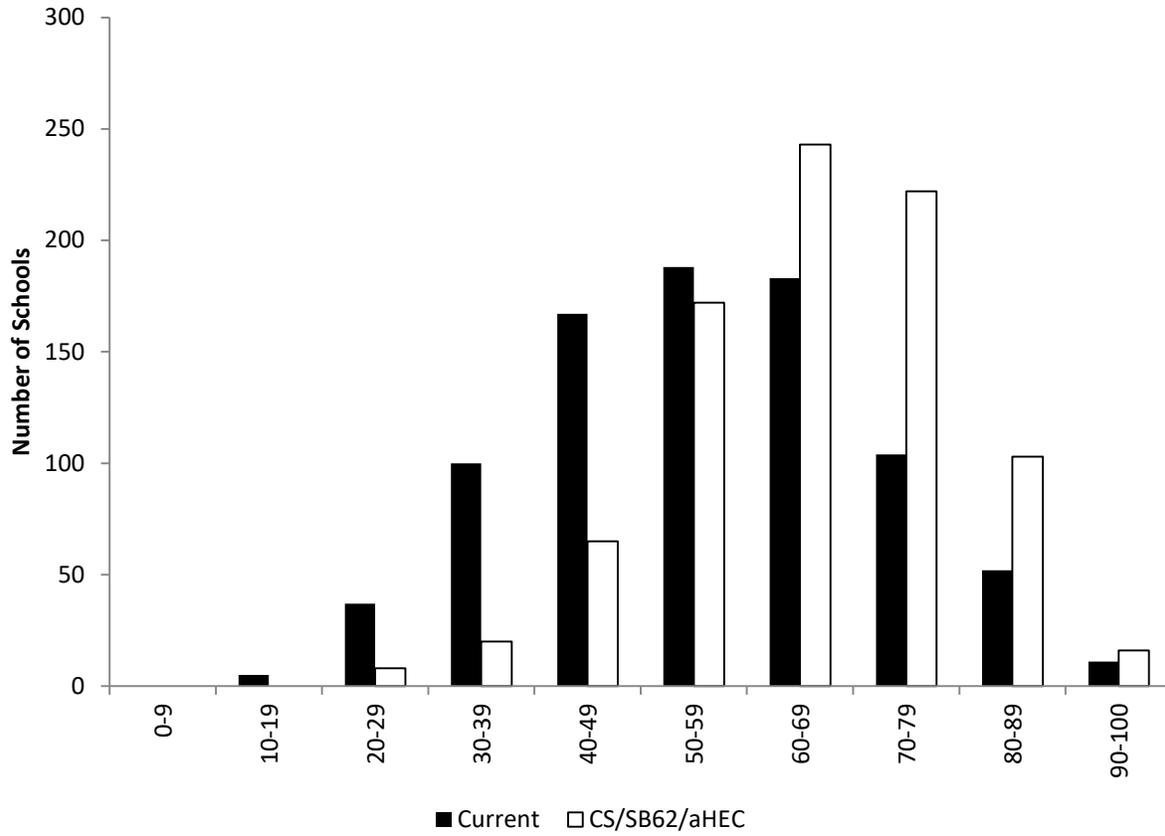
Source: LESC Files

Comparison of Current School Grades to CS/SB62/aHEC



Note: The calculations above assume the same grading scale used for the 2015-2016 school grades. PED could recalculate the cutoff points for grading levels to produce a more normal distribution of school grades.

Overall School Grade Points Current vs. CS/SB62/aHEC



CS/SB62/aHEC Points by Component

Student Achievement vs. School Quality & Opportunity

