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

Bill Number	<u>SM145</u>	Sponsor	<u>Stewart</u>
Tracking Number	<u>.208006.1</u>	Committee Referrals	<u>SEC</u>
Short Title	<u>School Grades Work Group</u>		
Analyst	<u>Herz</u>	Original Date	<u>3/14/17</u>
		Last Updated	<u>3/16/17</u>

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Memorial 145 (SM145) requests the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC), in consultation with the Public Education Department (PED), to convene a work group to study the school grading system during the next two interims.

FISCAL IMPACT

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations. 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), 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 federal 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.

RELATED BILLS

Related to SB40, State School Grades Council

Related to CS/SB62/aHEC, School Rating Grading Point System

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- PED
- LESC Files

MPH/th