

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Update on the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability

Type of Executive Summary:

- Action
- Action on First Reading
- Discussion
- Information

Policy Implications:

- Constitution _____
- General Statute # _____
- SBE Policy # _____
- SBE Policy Amendment
- SBE Policy (New)
- APA # _____
- APA Amendment
- APA (New)
- Other Senate Bill 1463 (2007 Session)

Presenter(s): Dr. Kathy Sullivan (Senior Policy Analyst, SBE Office)

Description:

In May, the Board convened an independent Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability to provide a comprehensive review of the state's accountability system including student testing. The Commission is exploring a number of issues including: testing requirements in state and federal law and potential modifications; the value of state-developed tests versus commercially available nationally-normed tests; and potential modifications to the state's high school, middle school, and elementary school accountability systems. An overview of and update on the Commission's work will be presented.

Resources:

N/A The update is presented for information.

Input Process:

The 26 member Commission includes legislators, teachers, principals, superintendents, central office staff, college and university faculty and administrators, and business leaders

Stakeholders:

Students, Parents, Teachers, School Administrators, LEAs

Timeline For Action:

The update is presented for information. It is anticipated that recommendations from the Commission will come to the Board later this fall.

Recommendations:

N/A The update is presented for information.

Audiovisual equipment requested for the presentation:

- Data Projector/Video (Videotape/DVD and/or Computer Data, Internet, Presentations-PowerPoint preferred)
Specify: Data Projector (Powerpoint)
- Audio Requirements (computer or other, except for PA system which is provided)
Specify: _____
- Document Camera (for transparencies or paper documents – white paper preferred)

Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____

Vote: Yes _____ No _____ Abstain _____

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Postponed _____ Revised _____

*Person responsible for SBE agenda materials and SBE policy updates: Kathy Sullivan, 807-3608

Excerpts from Senate Bill 1463

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly finds that, just a few years ago, North Carolina had one of the leading testing and accountability programs in the nation. The ABCs of Public Education were simple, fair, and equitable, and both educators and the public had a high degree of confidence in the annual results generated by this testing and accountability program. Today, however, there are serious concerns about the validity and reliability of the data that are produced. The data from the Accountability Services Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are so important to the success of children, teachers, and schools that any questioning of the validity and reliability of the data must be taken very seriously. For these reasons, the Department of Public Instruction is hereby directed to:

- (1) Study the need to make the following changes to the ABCs of Public Education:
 - a. Count as proficient for the school's and local school administrative units' ABCs performance composite and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes any student who scores within the standard error of measure (SEM) of Level 3 on an end-of-grade test (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) test or any retest of an EOG or EOC.
 - b. Count only those students who have been enrolled in the school for 140 days or more when calculating the schools' performance composite.
 - c. Use an EOC or EOG test for field testing purposes only and not for the ABCs performance composite or AYP if the cut scores for those tests were not determined prior to their administration.
 - d. Convene a group of school accountability experts to review the data collection procedures used for the 2006-2007 school year and make any needed changes to those procedures prior to any further data collection. This group shall make recommendations regarding the capacity of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to perform this data collection including whether or not DPI needs additional personnel for this work.
 - e. Use fourth, seventh, and tenth grade writing test results for instructional purposes only and remove them from the ABCs.
 - f. Provide the scale scores and proficiency in both the old standard and the new standard for a one-year transition period when a test is rescaled to meet higher standards.
 - g. Provide goal summary reports for all administrations of the Online Computer Skills Test.
 - h. Provide student level diagnostic information on all State assessments.
 - i. Before students are subjected to new assessments, provide sample tests and questions so teachers will be knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments. Regular release of forms of assessments should be provided to local school administrative units for use as benchmark assessments. Provide sample tests and questions so teachers are knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments before students are subjected to new assessments. Regularly release forms of assessments to local school administrative units to use as benchmarks.
 - j. Provide an electronic system of tracking students during their enrollment in North Carolina public schools. This system should provide all the rules and nuances of tracking students for graduation purposes, including who is counted, who is not counted, diploma students, certificate students, and a process for when a school closes or a new school opens.

Excerpts from Senate Bill 1463

- k. Define the High School Cohort Graduation Rate so that it includes students who complete their graduation requirements in five years or less and also includes those students who choose to complete their high school diploma or GED at a community college within this five years.
 - l. Develop a new formula for the ABCs growth calculation and the payment of bonuses. Consider using outside experts to develop the formula or issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).
 - m. Fund an accountability director for each local school administrative unit.
 - n. Fund testing coordinator positions in the schools based on one testing coordinator for each 2,000 students.
- (2) Develop a proposal for a new testing and accountability plan for implementation no later than the 2009-2010 school year as follows:
- a. Develop a new curriculum which limits learning objectives at each grade level to only those that are of undisputable importance and can be successfully taught and accurately assessed in the time available, and that measure cognitive skill mastery rather than memorized facts.
 - b. Construct all assessment tasks, such as selected response or constructed response to require the students to employ:
 - 1. Cognitive skills;
 - 2. The evaluative criteria that will be used to judge their response; or
 - 3. Both of these.
 - c. Require that the construction of assessment items be done by experts in the field. The number of items per learning outcome should be sufficient to provide instructional information back to the school and the teacher. The number of test items should be limited to that number that can reasonably be completed in a 90-minute setting or less depending on the grade level of the student.
 - d. Create companion assessment descriptions that spell out the essence of what is measured by State test items or tasks. The teacher would be able to ensure alignment of instruction to assessment, and students would have a depth of cognitive skills rather than a surface knowledge of memorized facts.
 - e. Establish an expert review panel of teachers and specialists for each test developed. The test items and descriptions should receive a review at a level of difficulty commensurate with the intended use of the test.