

NEW MEXICO ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ARTS EDUCATION

As in any other profession, teachers are proponents of being held accountable for their work in a manner that is fair and provides valid feedback on their effectiveness. Our concern is that aspects of the various teacher evaluation bills under consideration (HB 249/SB 293 and HB 251/SB 315) do not provide this type of evaluation for teachers of non-tested subjects. Our specific concerns are:

- HB 249/SB 293 ties the evaluation of all teachers to their school's A-F letter grade which is partially determined by SBA scores in reading and math. For teachers of non-tested subjects HB 249/SB 293 requires that 25% of their evaluation is tied to their school's letter grade and therefore to their school's reading and math test scores. While student learning in the non-tested content areas clearly reinforce skills and knowledge tested on the SBA, current testing tools do not reflect this contribution in student scores for reading and math. Consequently, tying the evaluation for teachers of non-tested subjects to test scores for which they provide no direct instruction does not provide an accurate reflection of their effectiveness in teaching their content area.
- According to HB 249/SB 293, 50% of the evaluation of teachers of non-tested subjects will be decided by "multiple measures" as determined by each district and approved by PED. The bill language provides no specificity as to the preferred content of those measures or, more importantly, the criteria the PED would use for approval.
- HB 249/SB 293 contains numerous instances of measures that require PED determination, review and approval for various evaluation system components for each of New Mexico's 89 school districts. Since PED has a significantly reduced staff and no longer has content area specialists, what guarantee can be expected that the department can accurately and effectively provide the type of guidance to districts for teachers of non-tested subjects as stated in the language of the bills?
- Across the state many teachers of non-tested subjects teach at multiple schools on any given day, or are assigned to a different school each year. The evaluation system proposed by HB 249/SB 293 makes no provision for this type of exception.
- One of the merits of HB 251/SB 315 is that rather than emphasizing SBA scores in the evaluation of all teachers, these bills focus on student learning objectives defined by and relevant to specific content areas. In addition, these bills allow more time for thoughtful input by stakeholders with the potential for a more effective outcome.

As much as we support rigorous accountability for all teachers, we fear that the above concerns will be discouraging in the short term, and from a long term perspective could be perceived as a significant disincentive to teach at low performing schools or to pursue or continue a teaching career in the state of New Mexico.

Respectfully submitted by the New Mexico Advisory Council on Arts Education

The New Mexico Advisory Council on Arts Education has been in existence for 12 years as an organization representing school districts, institutions of higher education as well as arts-related advocates from around the state.