

Committee on Education

CS/SB 1642 — Education Accountability

by Appropriations Committee and Education Committee

School Grades

The bill makes substantial changes to Florida's public school statewide assessment and accountability system, including revisions to school grading and school improvement rating systems.

The bill re-focuses the school grading formula on student success measures of achievement, learning gains, graduation, and earning college credit or industry certifications. Specifically, the bill bases the grades on the percentage of total points earned, rather than the raw score of total points.

Provisions in the current grade calculation that may raise or lower a school's grade beyond what the percentage of points would indicate are not included in the revised grade model. There are no additional requirements, no additional weights or bonus points, and no automatic adjustments.

Transition

The bill provides for a one-year transition period to new statewide, standardized assessments. During the transition, the calculation of school grades and school improvement ratings for the 2013-2014 school year are based on the law and rules in effect on June 30, 2014. School grades are calculated based on new statewide, standardized assessments. The 2014-2015 school grades serve as a baseline for schools to work toward improved performance in future years.

The bill provides hold-harmless provisions during the transition for schools subject to a turnaround option, virtual schools or approved virtual instruction providers, and high performing charter school systems or school districts.

Exemptions

The bill provides for three exemptions from the statewide, standardized assessments for specific students with disabilities. The exemptions must be based on parental consent and appropriate medical documentation to support the individual education plan (IEP) team's determination that the child is a child with a medical complexity. A one-year exemption may be granted by the district school superintendent. The bill permits the Commissioner of Education to grant two additional types of exemptions. In granting either a one to three year exemption or a permanent exemption, the Commissioner must review the district school superintendent's recommendation for approval.

Educator Evaluations and Performance Pay

The bill allows district school boards to adopt teacher-selected or principal-selected local assessments that may be used for educator evaluations and provides bonus funding to school districts that made progress in improving educator effectiveness, including implementation of performance pay.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2014.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 76-42