

SB 964 by Senator Montford

Common Sense in Testing and Accountability

Legislative Summary

A Return to Common Sense

Parents are demanding test relief for their students. Teachers want to teach and not have their classroom instruction interrupted for tests all spring. Teachers and administrators want a fair performance evaluation. This legislation infuses common sense into our assessment and accountability system without sacrificing high standards.

Fewer and Better Assessments

The legislation limits annual assessments to just what ESSA (new federal legislation) requires.

- Repeals all EOC requirements except Algebra I and Biology I. Geometry, Algebra II, U.S. History and Civics EOCs would no longer be administered or required.
- Authorizes the selection of a nationally recognized high school assessment (PSAT, SAT, ACT) in lieu of administering the tenth grade FSA.
- Repeals the requirement for a specific 9th grade ELA assessment. ESSA only requires the administration of one assessment for high school

Test Administration and Reporting

- Authorizes tests to be administered using paper/pencil or nonelectronically.
- Requires the FSA to be administered no earlier than the last four weeks of school.
- Requires the FSA, Algebra I, and Biology I EOC results to be available within 30 days of administration.
- Requires the Commissioner of Education to provide a detailed analysis of information relating to student achievement levels and learning gains on statewide, standardized assessments. Requires the analysis to be included in the department's annual report to the Governor and Legislature.

Performance Evaluations of Teachers and Administrators

The legislation repeals VAM or the Value Added Model and returns the teacher and administrator evaluation system to the local level thereby reducing unnecessary assessments that are only given to measure performance for the sake of a teacher or administrator evaluation. The state would no longer impose an incomprehensible and complex formula onto teachers and administrators. The performance evaluation would be composed of two components – the performance of students and instructional practice for teachers or instructional leadership for administrators.

School Grading and Accountability

- Modifies school grading system to incorporate the elimination of EOCs.
- Requires DOE to develop a model for retaining learning gains in the school grading system, particularly high schools, which incorporates the flexibility to adopt a nationally recognized high school assessment.

- Defines learning gain as maintaining achievement level 3, 4 or 5 or increasing such achievement level.
- Authorizes, for school grade purposes, the grades for high school courses taken in middle school to also be reflected in the school grade for the high school to which the student will transfer.
- Incorporates provisions for calculating the high school graduation rate authorized by ESSA to include the use of a five-year graduation rate.
- Requires that at least ten percent of the school grade must be based upon at least one measurable indicator of school quality or student access that may include, but not be limited to, student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety, student attendance, or student persistence.