



**ARIZONA STATE SENATE**  
*Fifty-Second Legislature, Second Regular Session*

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1455

educational certification applicants; restrictions  
(NOW: parental opt-out; statewide assessments)

Purpose

Permits a parent, on behalf of the student, to opt-out of the statewide student assessment system.

Background

The State Board of Education (SBE) is required to adopt and implement a statewide Arizona instrument to measure standards to assess student achievement of SBE adopted academic standards in reading, writing and math. SBE is directed to ensure that adopted statewide assessments are uniform and able to be scored in an objective manner. Local school district governing boards are charged with administering the assessment (A.R.S. § 15-741). Laws 2010, Chapter 296 added that beginning in the 2013-2014 school year, a pupil may not be promoted from the third grade if the pupil falls far below a passing score on the reading portion of the statewide achievement assessment. A pupil may be exempted from this requirement if the pupil is an English learner with fewer than two years of English instruction or a pupil with a disability and the pupil's individualized education program team agrees that promotion is appropriate. Pupils that are retained are provided with intervention and remedial strategies developed by SBE.

School districts receive an annual achievement profile and letter grade classification of A through F. Achievement profiles must be compiled using academic performance indicators, which include: the statewide achievement assessment, measures of academic progress and results from the English language learner proficiency tests, as well as dropout and graduation rates for high schools (A.R.S. § 15-241). SBE is required to establish a model framework for teacher and principal evaluations that utilizes quantitative data on student academic progress that accounts for between 33 percent and 50 percent of the evaluation. School districts and charter schools are required to adopt SBE's performance classifications in their evaluation instruments in a manner designed to improve teacher and principal performance (A.R.S. § 15-203).

Laws 2015, Chapter 1 directs SBE to include a requirement for Arizona students to pass a civics test that is identical to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in the high school competency requirements for graduation.

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Permits a parent, on behalf of the student, to opt-out of the statewide student assessment system and requires SBE to develop a form for a parental opt-out.
2. Stipulates that a parent must submit a signed opt-out form to the school principal or head teacher.
3. Prohibits SBE or the Department of Education (ADE) from withholding any monies from a school or local education agency that did not test at least 95 percent of its students.
4. Specifies the lack of assessment results for a student that has been opted-out of the statewide student assessment system may not:
  - a) be factored in the school district or school achievement profile;
  - b) be contained in the school report card; and
  - c) be factored into teacher performance classifications or performance based pay systems.
5. Exempts a student from the third grade reading retention requirement if that student's parent has opted-out of the statewide student assessment system.
6. Requires a school district or charter school to use an alternative method to determine whether a third grade student's reading ability is sufficient to promote that student from the third grade if the parent has opted-out from the statewide student assessment system.
7. Requires, if the school district or charter school requires a passing score on a statewide assessment to graduate from high school, an alternative method for determining whether that student has satisfied that portion of the graduation requirements.
8. Exempts the civics portion of the naturalization test required to graduate from high school.
9. Requires school districts to inform parents of the right to opt-out of the statewide student assessment system.
10. Makes technical and conforming changes.
11. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Amendments Adopted by Committee

1. Adopted the strike everything amendment.
2. Allows a parent to opt into an alternative local assessment, instead of opting out of the statewide student assessment system.
3. Directs LEAs to use the results of the alternative local assessment for accountability and promotion purposes as specified.

4. Removes the direction for schools to use an alternative method for determining whether a student has satisfied graduation requirements if necessary.

Amendments Adopted by Committee of the Whole

1. Adopted the strike everything amendment.
2. Restores the ability to opt-out of statewide assessments and related provisions.
3. Removes the ability to opt into an alternative local assessment and related provisions.
4. Prohibits SBE or ADE from withholding money from a school that did not test at least 95 percent of students.

Senate Action

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Prepared by Senate Research

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