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District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblyman Eustace, Assemblywomen Sumter, Tucker, Assemblyman McKeon, Assemblywoman Stender, Assemblyman Johnson, Assemblywomen Pintor Marin, B.DeCroce and Assemblyman Caputo

SYNOPSIS
Requires school districts and charter schools to annually provide to parents or guardians of enrolled students information on certain tests to be administered during the school year.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning certain testing in public schools and supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Legislature finds and declares that parents are better able to help their children succeed in the K-12 public school system when fully informed about the policies and practices that impact their children's learning. The State Board of Education has adopted the Common Core State Standards that will require a new battery of State assessments to replace the existing State tests administered to public school students. It is therefore, the intent of the Legislature to assure that all parents and guardians of public school students enrolled in grades kindergarten through grade 12, are provided timely, clear, and accessible information regarding the purposes, costs, frequency, and length of the State assessment or commercially-developed standardized assessments that their children will be required to take during the school year, and the rules and policies associated with those assessments.

2. As used in this act:
   “Commercially-developed standardized assessment” means an assessment that is administered by the school district or charter school that requires all test takers to answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of questions, in the same manner, and is developed and scored by an entity under contract with a board of education.
   “State assessment” means an assessment required pursuant to State or federal law and administered to all students in a specific grade level or subject area and whose results are aggregated for analysis at the district, school, or student subgroup level.

3. a. No later than October 1 of each school year, a school district or charter school shall provide to the parents or guardians of a student enrolled in the district or charter school information on any State assessment or commercially-developed standardized assessment that will be administered to the student in that school year. The information shall include, but need not be limited to, the following:
   (1) the subject area of the assessment and grade levels covered by the assessment;
   (2) the date or dates of the administration of the assessment;
   (3) whether the assessment has been screened for bias;
   (4) the time in which a student is expected to take and complete the assessment;
(5) whether students are required to take the assessment online or have the option of using paper and pencil;
(6) the special accommodations available for qualifying students;
(7) how the assessment results will be used, including whether results will be used for placement in gifted and talented programs, placement in other programs or interventions, grade promotion, graduation, or in any other district or school decisions affecting students;
(8) information on how and when the student and his parent or guardian can access both the assessment and the results;
(9) the cost to the district associated with the purchase of the assessment from a commercial vendor, if applicable; and
(10) whether the assessment is required by the State, the federal government or both, or is required only by the district or charter school.

b. The commissioner shall provide to each school district and charter school a model document to provide to parents or guardians the information required pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

c. The information required pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall be provided, to the maximum extent feasible, in the native languages of the parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school district or charter school.

d. The information provided pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall also be available at the meeting of the board of education of the district or the meeting of the board of trustees of the charter school at which the annual School Performance Reports are presented to the public.

3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first be applicable to the 2015-2016 school year.

STATEMENT

This bill provides that no later than October 1 of every school year, a school district and a charter school must provide to the parents or guardians of a student enrolled in the district or school information on any State assessment or commercially-developed standardized assessment that will be administered to the student in that school year. The information will include, but need not be limited to, the following:
(1) the subject area of the assessment and grade levels covered by the assessment;
(2) the date or dates of the administration of the assessment;
(3) whether the assessment has been screened for bias;
(4) the time in which a student is expected to take and complete the assessment;
whether students are required to take the assessment online or have the option of using paper and pencil;
4   (6) the special accommodations available for qualifying students;
5   (7) how the assessment results will be used, including whether results will be used for placement in gifted and talented programs, placement in other programs or interventions, grade promotion, graduation, or in any other district or school decisions affecting students;
6   (8) information on how and when the student and his parent or guardian can access both the assessment and the results;
7   (9) the cost to the district associated with the purchase of the assessment from a commercial vendor, if applicable; and
8   (10) whether the assessment is required by the State, the federal government or both, or is required only by the district or charter school.

   The Commissioner of Education is to provide a model document to each school district and charter school to provide the required information to parents or guardians.

   The information provided annually to parents or guardians must also be available at the meeting of the board of education of the school district or the meeting of the board of trustees of the charter school at which the annual School Performance Reports are presented to the public.