

Legislative Analysis



GROWTH AND ASSESSMENT DATA IN PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

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Senate Bills 122 (S-2) and 202 (S-2) as reported from House committee

Sponsor: Sen. Kenneth Horn

1st House Committee: Education

(Enacted as Public Acts 5 and 6 of 2019)

2nd House Committee: Ways and Means

Senate Committee: Education and Career Readiness

Complete to 4-24-19

BRIEF SUMMARY: Senate Bills 122 and 202 would amend the Revised School Code to freeze the percentage of annual year-end teacher and administrator evaluations based on student growth and assessment data at 25% for the 2018-2019 school year.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bills would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILLS:

Senate Bill 122 would amend the Revised School Code to suspend for one year the scheduled increase in the percentage of annual year-end teacher evaluations based on student growth and assessment data from 25% to 40%.

Currently, the Code specifies that school district and intermediate school district (ISD) boards and public school academy (PSA, or charter school) boards of directors must ensure that student growth and assessment data account for 25% of year-end teacher evaluations for the school years 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018. That percentage is slated to increase to 40% of the evaluation beginning with the 2018-2019 school year.

Instead, the bill would delay the increase until 2019-2020.

MCL 380.1249

Senate Bill 202 would likewise reflect a delayed increase—from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020—for building-level school administrators and central-office-level school administrators who are regularly involved in instructional matters.

MCL 380.1249b

Each bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The House Ways and Means committee reported the Senate-passed versions of the bills without amendment.

account for other factors outside of a teacher's control, such as the student's home environment and school attendance. Some have also argued that teachers could be deterred from working with at-risk or remedial students, out of a concern that more challenging students may be less likely to show growth and thus, with more weight given to that growth, poorer teacher evaluations. Proponents believe that more discussion is needed in the next year before the weight is raised from 25% to 40%.

Supporters also pointed to the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness recommendations from 2013, which stated that "considerable scientific concern exists" regarding the instability and measurement error in using growth and assessment tools, as well as value-added models.

Furthermore, proponents argued that it is not even clear that the M-STEP provides an accurate representation of student growth. Perhaps the question should be not whether growth is important, or to what extent, but whether the test intended to test for that measure is doing so. These are questions that deserve further consideration, supporters say.

Against:

Opponents argued that limiting the impact of growth on evaluations discredits the impact of teachers on a child's learning. No other measure has as much influence on how much a student learns in a given year, they say, and so its impact on a teacher's evaluation should reflect as much. Additionally, opponents argued that student growth data provide the only objective measure available to gauge educator effectiveness.

Moreover, critics argued, if there is a concern that assessments will fail to take into account factors outside teachers' influence, or that teachers would be disadvantaged by evaluations based on objective criteria, the legislature should instead focus on instituting meaningful professional development and teacher preparation measures to better prepare them for the challenges faced in a classroom.

The stepped-up schedule of weighting growth was reached via broad compromise and consensus throughout the education community, opponents stated, and it should be allowed to take effect. It is impossible to make progress on educational issues when the same concepts are continuously re-litigated, they argued.

POSITIONS:

A representative of the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals testified in support of the bills. (4-23-19)

The following organizations indicated support for the bills:

- Michigan Department of Education (4-24-19)
- Michigan Association of School Boards (4-24-19)
- Michigan Association of Public School Academies (4-23-19)
- Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (4-24-19)
- Michigan Education Association (4-23-19)

Grand Rapids Public Schools (4-23-19)
West Michigan Talent Triangle (4-23-19)
Michigan Association of School Boards (4-23-19)
Oakland Schools (4-23-19)
Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, Lenawee, and Monroe ISDs (4-24-19)

The Grand Rapids Chamber indicated a neutral position on the bills. (4-23-19)

The Business Leaders of Michigan indicated a neutral position on the bills. (4-23-19)

A representative of the Education Trust-Midwest testified in opposition to the bills.
(4-23-19)

The Great Lakes Education Project (GLEP) indicated opposition to the bills. (4-24-19)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.