



**HB 555**  
**Senate Amendment Requests**  
**Nov. 30, 2012**

1. While the bill includes a small transition period (attempting to allow for the implementation of the Common Core Standards) it begins to make changes within the current school year – changing the rules in the middle of the game and before the implementation of the new Common Core Standards and testing protocols. **We believe changes to the report card system should not begin until the next school year (2013-2014).**
2. Some items on the proposed dashboard are beyond the control of the school district, or some districts may not have the necessary resources to excel in those areas. These items should be for information-only purposes. The information may be valuable for the district, parents and even state policymakers, but **districts should not be penalized through a letter grade for the following components:**
  - Advanced Placement participation rate and test scores
  - Dual Enrollment Program participation rate
  - National standardized test for college admission -- participation rate and average score
  - K through 3 literacy rate
3. The bill postpones the implementation of a “composite” or “overall” score for the dashboard, but only for two years. **We oppose the use of a composite score both during the transition and in the future.**
  - Using a composite score – especially with an increasing number of components on the “dashboard” – gives the casual observer an unrealistic and distorted view of what is really happening in the school district or building and diminishes the importance of each variable in the dashboard.
  - All of the different measures or “dashboard” components may be important and they may have value from an informational perspective, allowing districts to target areas where improvements are needed.
  - Each component of the “dashboard” may have different significance among districts and communities. It would be impossible to determine an appropriate “weight” for each component in a composite score calculation that satisfies the needs and preferences in every community across the state.

- Blending the scores into one overall score fails to demonstrate any link between one component and another, thereby rendering an “average” of all the components irrelevant and misleading.
4. The bill makes changes to the report card related to proficiency tests and districts’ rate of success for students passing the tests. Movement to the Common Core Standards and the anticipated implementation of correlating PARCC assessments are expected to result in an increase in the “cut score” for students to pass the tests. HB 555 raises the benchmark standard that districts must meet to be considered successful from 75% to 80%.

These changes would occur at a time when the Common Core Standards are being implemented, and the more rigorous content will definitely increase the difficulty of the tests. We understand the need to set high expectations. However, the convergence of these three factors (i.e. **more rigorous curriculum, new and more challenging assessments, and higher cut scores**) at once has the potential to devastate students and districts unnecessarily. **The movement of the 75% standard to 80% should be removed from the bill.**

Additionally, raising the “cut score” and the benchmark standard for percentage of students passing at the same time will undermine the ability to make comparisons about the results of the increased rigor that will come with the Common Core and the current curriculum. Apples to apples comparisons year-over-year will be impossible.

5. Because of the report card reform provisions in the bill, some described in # 4 above, school districts are very likely to see diminished results in their report card ratings. This could lead to an increase in the number of buildings and the number of districts that fall under the provisions for students to qualify for the EdChoice voucher program and charter school eligibility (challenged school district designation). **School districts performing at Continuous Improvement status or above in the current school year should not be subject to losing students to the EdChoice Voucher Program or new charter school start-ups for three years.**