

**From:** Leather, Paul  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 10, 2015 1:56 PM  
**To:** '[Senators@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:Senators@leg.state.nh.us)'  
**Subject:** HB 323

Hello Senators – Hope you are all having a happy Mother’s Day! Knowing that HB 323 is likely coming to the Senate floor on Thursday and that you have probably been hearing from many quarters, we wanted to share some clarifying information regarding HB 323 to you. Thanks, Paul

### **FAQs Regarding HB 323**

#### **PACE does NOT regionalize Public Schools under the Commissioner of Education:**

The source of this assertion is unclear. There are no “regions” in PACE and there will not be in the future. Professional development and other forms of training have always been offered on a regional basis for the convenience of attendees. PACE workshops are done that way as well. However, school district leaders and local school boards continue to oversee educational delivery for districts that have chosen to implement PACE.

New Hampshire schools have been implementing competency based education for 10 years, with no change in how they are organized. The PACE assessment strategy is merely the next step. Neither PACE nor HB 323 will have any impact on how New Hampshire schools are organized.

#### **PACE will NOT be required in all districts:**

The PACE design is entirely based on districts volunteering to participate. The current pilot is limited to four districts this year and four additional districts next year. The state will evaluate the pilot at the end of two years. Only if it is successful, and this determination is agreed to by the NH Legislative Oversight Committee for Assessment and Accountability, will the PACE pilot continue and expand to other districts.

Districts from Manchester to Fall Mountain have expressed a desire to participate in PACE if the project does continue, but no district will be required to participate. The reference in the USED waiver letter to “Statewide system” means a single system that includes competency based performance assessments and an annual statewide assessment. It does not mean that every district will be required to participate in PACE. The current accountability system, Smarter Balance Assessments in grades 3-8 and one high school assessment, will continue to be available and supported for district use .

#### **PACE will NOT “destroy” Charter Schools:**

In fact, PACE will support the charter schools that choose to participate. Since charter schools are required to meet accountability expectations of other public schools, PACE has been made available to charter schools. The Seacoast Charter School is planning to use PACE next year.

PACE has been developed for schools that have begun to implement competency education and use performance assessments. Many Charter Schools have done this. The hope is that the PACE assessments will be a better fit for these schools as they will more closely predict school and student success.

**NH Statutes and The NH DOE’s Role in developing PACE:**

Currently the NH State Board and the DOE are charged with adopting curriculum frameworks and developing state assessments for purposes of determining whether NH schools are providing the opportunity for an adequate education. PACE was developed to meet this same expectation with more direct involvement of local leaders and educators.

**PACE does NOT require weekly assessments:**

PACE assessments are done yearly, not weekly. Unlike traditional annual assessments, they can be made part of the classroom activity.

The PACE districts administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment once in elementary, once in middle, and once in high school. In addition, they administer classroom based performance tasks in the off years. There is no requirement or expectation in PACE for weekly assessments. Here is a table showing the annual assessments:

| Grade | ELA                    | MATH                   | SCIENCE     |
|-------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| K-2   | Local PA               | Local PA               | Local PA    |
| 3     | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>PACE</b>            | Local PA    |
| 4     | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>PACE</b> |
| 5     | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b>            | Local PBA   |
| 6     | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b>            | Local PBA   |
| 7     | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b>            | Local PBA   |
| 8     | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>PACE</b> |
| 9     | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b> |
| 10    | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b>            | <b>PACE</b> |
| 11    | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>Smarter Balance</b> | <b>PACE</b> |
| 12    | Local PA               | Local PA               | Local PA    |

**Table 1. General assessment requirements for the PACE pilot accountability system. The only state expectations are the Smarter Balanced assessments in grade spans and the Common PACE Performance based Assessments. Local performance based assessments are entirely at the local district’s discretion.**

**Federal funding and PACE:**

The federal department of education has approved the two year pilot in four districts the first year and eight the second year, with the understanding that other districts will continue to administer Smarter Balanced. No federal funds are in jeopardy. One of the US Department's questions was whether the NH DOE intends to implement state-wide. The answer is yes, over many years, as a voluntary program that districts can choose to participate in. The new model is based on local determination and leadership. It can't be done as a mandate from the state level.

**Why is SAT in HB 323:**

The NH DOE included the SAT in the recent submission of a Waiver to take the place of Smarter Balanced as the high school assessment. HB 323 explicitly allows for this inclusion.

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