

## 14 NE Colorado districts could see relief from education reporting

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Small rural school districts, and their staff, could be in for some relief from state education reporting requirements under a bill moving through the Legislature this month.

House Bill 14-1204 is sponsored by Rep. Jim Wilson (R-Salida). Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg (R-Sterling) is a co-sponsor.

Wilson, who served as a school superintendent in Salida, Ellicott and Mancos, said that the smaller the district, the more that falls to the superintendent to handle. Districts that meet or exceed state accreditation requirements are doing everything that's demanded of them, but they still must turn in every report, he said this week.

HB 1204 applies to districts that are defined by the Department of Education as "small rural," based on geographic size of the district, its distance from a large, urbanized area and with less than 1,000 students.

A fact sheet from the Department of Education notes that 148 out of 178 districts are rural but have just 20 percent of the student population. Of those 148, about five dozen qualify as small rural. There are 18 small rural districts in the six counties of Northeastern Colorado.

Under the bill, small rural districts accredited or accredited with distinction could file certain reports every two years instead of every year. This would include the unified improvement plan, end-of-year enrollment reports and certain human resources reports. Estimates vary on the number of reports required, somewhere between 160 and 500 every year.

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