

## Department of Planning and Budget 2015 Fiscal Impact Statement

**1. Bill Number:** HB1419

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled

**2. Patron:** Head

**3. Committee:** Education

**4. Title:** Standards of Learning assessments;

**5. Summary:** The proposed legislation would require all revisions of any Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment to be finalized by December 31 of the school year prior to the school year in which the revised assessment is to be administered.

**6. Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, Item 130.

**7. Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary. See Item 8.

**8. Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Education (DOE) annually develops and amends SOL test forms, finalizing the test forms in January for the assessments that will be administered in the spring. The development includes replenishing the test question pool bank, as well as implementing questions as part of the department's progress towards computer adaptive testing. It also includes field testing newly developed test items for use in later SOL assessments.

Under DOE's current timeline, the agency will finalize the Spring 2016 SOL test forms in January 2016. Since the legislation does not include an enactment clause delaying the effective date of the bill's provisions, when the proposed legislation becomes effective on July 1, 2015, it will require that any revisions to the Spring 2016 assessments needed to have been completed by December 31, 2014. As such, the bill appears to prohibit any changes to the SOL assessment for the 2015-2016 school year and students will take the same assessment that was given to students in the 2014-2015 school year. The administration of expedited retakes for eligible students would also be impacted, since new test forms would not be available.

Since the tests measuring the new SOL standards were implemented fairly recently, the item banks for many of these tests are still fairly small. Losing a year of field testing would have a detrimental impact on the number of available items for use in the development of new test forms or for the move to Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) or the use of technology enhanced items. DOE field tests approximately 200 new test items each year for each test, so the loss of field test items in 2015-2016 would be significant. In order to conduct a field test to maintain the current development process for SOL test items and stay within the requirements of the bill, DOE could conduct a separate "standalone" field test of the new

items. The standalone field test is estimated to cost \$2.8 million in general fund appropriation in FY2016. This stand-alone field test would be in addition to the regular SOL testing and local school divisions could experience a fiscal impact to administer the additional field test to students. Without the field test, implementation or expansion of computer adaptive testing, technology-enhanced items, and retakes at elementary grades would be delayed for one or more years.

The administration of identical SOL assessments in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years may increase the potential for a security breach. If a breach was to occur, DOE would need to remove the affected test form out of circulation, but would not have developed any additional test forms to replace it. DOE estimates that it would cost approximately \$5.1 million in general fund support to develop an extra test form to use in case of a security breach; however, the agency's ability to utilize the form may not be allowed under the provisions of the bill.

If the bill's effective date is amended to allow for DOE's current timeline for the 2015-2016 school year, DOE will need to develop two sets of tests in FY2016, one for the Spring 2016 administration and one for the Spring 2017 administration. The agency will incur significant costs to double the workload in FY2016. The fiscal impact in FY2017 will be minimal; that year's appropriation will be used for the development of test forms for use in Spring 2018. If DOE was to develop a second set of test forms during FY2016, the agency would incur costs of approximately \$10.6 million, which is the amount the agency currently expects to incur to develop the Spring 2016 test forms. The \$10.6 million general fund impact is comprised of developing the assessments for the five content areas, producing the test forms, and convening two special committees. The special test forms committees determine the revisions that must be made to items before they are used on Braille or large print test forms.

The range finding committees select student papers that are used to train readers to score the short papers written by students for the SOL writing tests.

Test Development-Reading	\$2,853,264.00
Test Development- Writing	\$874,888.00
Test Development -History	\$1,808,478.00
Test Development- Science	\$1,202,390.00
Test Development- Math	\$1,880,820.00
Range Finding Committees (Writing)	\$63,738.00
Specials Test Forms Committees	\$52,781.00
Test Form Production Costs	\$1,886,350.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,622,709.00</b>

**9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Education, local school divisions

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** None.

**11. Other Comments:** None.

**Date:** 1/28/2015 dpb/smc

**Document:** G:\GA\FIS 2015\HB1419.docx