

## Department of Planning and Budget 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

**1. Bill Number:** SB525

**House of Origin**    ☒ Introduced    ☐ Substitute    ☐ Engrossed  
**Second House**    ☐ In Committee    ☐ Substitute    ☐ Enrolled

**2. Patron:**    McPike

**3. Committee:** Education and Health

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

**5. Summary:** Reduces the total number and type of required Standards of Learning assessments to the minimum requirements established by the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended.

**6. Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes, Item 133.

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

**8. Fiscal Implications:** Additional Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requirements regarding mathematics and writing may prohibit the elimination of certain mathematics and writing Standards of Learning (SOL) tests at this time. Consequently, the Department of Education (DOE) has provided two scenarios with estimated cost reductions as a result of SB 203.

The first scenario represents the elimination of 12 tests. This scenario reduces the total number of SOL tests from 29 to 17. Eliminated SOL tests would include the following:

- History Tests: Virginia Studies, Civics & Economics, World History to 1500, World History from 1500, World Geography, and Virginia & U.S. History
- Science Tests: Earth Science and Chemistry
- Mathematics Tests: Geometry and Algebra II
- Writing Tests: Grade 8 Writing and End-of-Course Writing

Under the first scenario, DOE estimates state savings of approximately \$3.07 million each year based on the volume of tests administered in the 2014-2015 school year and the 2016-2017 pricing schedule.

The second scenario represents the elimination of eight tests and accounts for additional ESEA requirements for mathematics and writing. Because the ESEA requires students to be assessed in mathematics annually in grades three through eight and once in high school, it may be necessary to retain all of the current SOL mathematics tests. Since Virginia permits

accelerated students to take the mathematics test that is associated with the instruction they are receiving (even if it is above grade level), all of the current tests are required to ensure that all students will have a mathematics test to take in high school. For example, many students take Algebra I and Geometry in middle school and this leaves Algebra II as the only remaining high school math test. Also, under recently released guidance from the United States Department of Education (USED), states that include writing within their English content standards will have to assess writing as well as reading to meet federal testing requirements. Consequently, it may be advisable to leave the writing tests at grade eight and high school intact until more complete information is available.

Based on the aforementioned information, the second scenario reduces the total number of SOL tests from 29 to 21 by eliminating all SOL history tests and two end-of-course science tests. Eliminated SOL tests would include the following:

- History Tests: Virginia Studies, Civics & Economics, World History to 1500, World History from 1500, World Geography, and Virginia & U.S. History
- Science Tests: Earth Science and Chemistry

The SOL grade eight and end-of-course writing tests would be maintained due to the recently announced guidance from the USED. Additionally, end-of-course mathematics tests in Geometry and Algebra II would be maintained to meet federal requirements indicating students must be assessed in mathematics once in high school. This allows for a high school mathematics assessment other than Algebra I and supports Virginia's current implementation of accelerated mathematics instruction.

Under the second scenario, DOE estimates state savings of approximately \$1.04 million per year based on the volume of tests administered in the 2014-2015 school year and the 2016-2017 pricing schedule.

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

**10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

**11. Other Comments:** This bill is similar to SB 498, SB 441, SB 203, and HB 1131.