

## Department of Planning and Budget 2014 Fiscal Impact Statement

**1. Bill Number:** SB144

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

**2. Patron:** Edwards

**3. Committee:** Education

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

**5. Summary:** The proposed legislation would require that all revisions to any Standards of Learning (SOL) assessment are finalized by December 31 of the school year prior to the school year in which the revised assessment is 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 2015 SOL test forms in January 2015. 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, 2014, it will require that any revisions to the Spring 2015 assessments needed to have been completed by December 31, 2013. As such, the bill appears to prohibit any changes to the SOL assessment for the 2014-2015 school year and students will take the same assessment that was given to students in the 2013-2014 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 2014-2015 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 FY 2015. 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 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 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 2014-2015 school year, DOE will need to develop two sets of tests in FY2015, one for the Spring 2015 administration and one for the Spring 2016 administration. The agency will incur significant costs to double the workload in FY2015. The fiscal impact in FY2016 will be minimal; that year’s appropriation will be used for the development of test forms for use in Spring 2017. If DOE was to develop a second set of test forms during FY2015, the agency would incur costs of approximately \$12.4 million, which is the amount the agency currently expects to incur to develop the Spring 2015 test forms. The \$12.4 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	\$2,033,992
Test Development- Writing	\$ 932,330
Test Development -History	\$2,122,877
Test Development- Science	\$2,338,359
Test Development- Math	\$2,908,440
Range Finding Committees (Writing)	\$70,872
Specials Test Forms Committees	\$47,412
Test Form Production Costs	\$1,959,603
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,413,885</b>

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

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

**11. Other Comments:** Because the bill prohibits changes in test format after December 31 of the previous school year, it would appear to prevent administering SOL tests in Computer Adaptive Testing format in fall 2014 and spring 2015. The Department of Education is working towards beginning administration of some SOL tests in Computer Adaptive Testing format during the 2014-2015 school year.

The bill is identical to SB144.

**Date:** 2/18/2014 dpb/smc

**Document:** G:\GA\FIS 2014\HB365.doc