

Department of Planning and Budget 2017 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1089

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: Sturtevant

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, P.L. 89-10, 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 this bill. The two estimates differ based on possible interpretations of which SOL tests are required for federal accountability under the current version of the ESEA, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA).

The first scenario represents the elimination of 12 tests, reducing the total number of SOL tests from 29 to 17. Under the first scenario, DOE estimates state savings of approximately \$2.6 million general fund in FY 2018 based on the volume of tests administered in the 2015-2016 school year. Eliminated SOL tests would include the following:

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

The second scenario represents the elimination of eight tests, reducing the total number of SOL tests from 29 to 21, and accounts for additional ESEA requirements for mathematics and writing. Under the second scenario, DOE estimates state savings of approximately \$1.0 million general fund in FY 2018 based on the volume of tests administered in the 2015-2016 school year.

In this scenario, all mathematics tests are retained. ESSA requires mathematics assessments annually in grades three through eight and once in high school, so it may be necessary to retain all of the current mathematics tests. Since Virginia permits accelerated students to take the math test that is associated with the instruction they are receiving, even if it is above grade level, all of the current mathematics tests are needed 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, which leaves Algebra II as the only remaining high school mathematics test.

Additionally, all writing assessments are retained in this scenario. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has indicated that if a state's English/Language Arts standards address reading and writing, both content areas must be assessed. Because the English SOLs include both reading and writing in grades three through eight and high school, this guidance is likely to apply to the tests used by Virginia to meet the requirements of ESSA. Virginia DOE staff submitted evidence to USED for the peer review of Virginia's assessment system for federal accountability in Summer 2016. While DOE has not yet received the results of Virginia's peer review, peer review letters for other states suggest that writing tests will be required for states with English standards that include both reading and writing. Until more information is available and DOE receives Virginia's peer review response from USED, DOE recommends retaining the remaining SOL writing tests.

In the second scenario, eliminated SOL tests would include the following:

- History Tests: Virginia Studies, Civics & Economics, End-of-Course (EOC) World History to 1500, EOC World History from 1500, EOC World Geography, and EOC Virginia & U.S. History
- Science Tests: EOC Earth Science and EOC Chemistry

Any savings to localities is indeterminate.

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

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: None