

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: Original
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: SB 1111
AUTHOR: J. Scott

BILL SUMMARY: Pupil Testing

This bill would allow students to satisfy the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act science testing requirement by either taking a life science achievement test or an end-of-course biology test by the end of grade 12. The State Board of Education (Board) requires all grade 10 students to take the life science California Standards Test (CST) during that year.

FISCAL SUMMARY

This bill would be cost neutral. The state provides school districts \$2.52 per student (a combination of Proposition 98 General Fund and Federal Trust Fund sources) to offset the costs of administering the CSTs, regardless of the combination of CSTs a student takes. Although this bill would eliminate approximately 340,000 statewide administrations of the life science CSTs, the state would continue to reimburse school districts a flat rate of \$2.52 per student for other typical CSTs (English Language Arts, mathematics, social sciences, etc.).

With fewer life science CST administrations, the bill would reduce the scoring and reporting burden of the testing contractor, which would generate state savings. This is because approximately 340,000 students in a given year would not have the life sciences test in their testing booklet. However, because the bill would shift the NCLB science testing requirement from one test and one grade to two tests and several grades, the bill would create new state operations costs for the State Department of Education (SDE) to collect, compile, and report data on the science CSTs. We note that these new data costs would likely diminish when the SDE is able to compile the data from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), which, according to the SDE, is estimated to be fully implemented in June 2010.

COMMENTS

Finance is opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

- In general, the Administration opposes measures that require Administration-appointed boards and commissions to reverse their actions. The Board, the designated state educational agency under NCLB, took action to require all grade 10 students to take the life sciences CST for NCLB accountability purposes. The bill would require the Board to reverse its action.
The bill is premature because CALPADS will not be fully implemented until June 2010. Also, in order to meet the requirements of the bill, the SDE would be required to collect two or more years of data to determine if the participation rate has been met, which could complicate reporting to the federal government. In the interim, until CALPADS is available to track these students, the SDE would be required to use a complicated calculation to determine a participation rate from the life science and biology CSTs taken by grade and cohort of students.

Analyst/Principal Date Program Budget Manager Date
(0363) R. Storm Jeannie Oropeza

Department Deputy Director Date

Governor's Office: By: Date: Position Approved
Position Disapproved

BILL ANALYSIS Form DF-43 (Rev 03/95 Buff)

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**COMMENTS** (continued)

- It is unclear whether the testing scheme required under the bill would meet NCLB requirements. The federal guidelines for state assessments allow for the secondary science assessment to be an end-of-course test if all students must take that course and the test is aligned with state content standards. Allowing students to take either of two tests may conflict with these requirements.
- The bill would not require that the end-of-course test be a standardized test aligned with state content standards, which could create a potential for NCLB non-compliance. Also, because the definition is vague, it could allow local educational agencies to administer a test aligned or not aligned with state content standards.

Currently all students take the life science CST in grade 10 and end-of-course CSTs for other science courses taken in grades 9 through 11, such as biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, and integrated science. The CSTs are aligned to the academic standards adopted by California. All high school students are required to take biological and physical science courses in order to graduate.

Under NCLB, all states were required to adopt academic content standards for science by the end of 2005-06. Beginning in 2007-08, NCLB requires annual science assessments in at least one grade in the grade range of 10 through 12. NCLB also requires that the assessment system must provide for the participation of all students in the grades being assessed. Scores on science assessments are used for calculating participation rates to determine compliance with NCLB accountability requirements. Beginning in 2005-06, the Board required all grade 10 students to take the life science CST to satisfy participation rate requirements because most students will have been taught the life science curriculum by grade 10.

The purpose of the bill is to minimize student testing time. The bill would result in time savings of 2 hours per student for approximately 340,000 students who would no longer take the life sciences CST. Instead, these students would satisfy the NCLB science requirement by way of the end-of-course biology test.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO	PROP	FC	2007-2008	FC	2008-2009	FC	2009-2010	
	RV	98	FC						
6110/Dept of Educ	LA	Yes		-----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	-----			0001
6110/Dept of Educ	LA	No		-----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	-----			0890
6110/Dept of Educ	SO	No		-----	No/Minor Fiscal Impact	-----			0001
<u>Fund Code</u>	<u>Title</u>								
0001	General Fund								
0890	Trust Fund, Federal								