

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: April 29, 2009
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: AB 1435
AUTHOR: M. Perez

BILL SUMMARY: Public School Accountability

The bill would require the Superintendent and the State Board of Education (Board) to include California English Language Development Test (CELDT) results and English language proficiency levels into the Academic Performance Index (API) based on recommendations made to the Superintendent by the API advisory committee before July 1, 2010.

FISCAL SUMMARY

This bill would create one-time costs of \$100,000 non-Proposition 98 General Fund (assuming one Education Program Consultant to provide support to the API advisory committee when making their recommendations and to make changes to the API calculation). The API advisory committee recommends minor adjustments to the API calculation each year; however, the addition of the CELDT or other measures of English language proficiency would be a more complicated change and the workload would be an increase from normal committee operations.

The bill could result in costs in the millions of dollars of Proposition 98 General Fund to the extent that this bill would make the CELDT a high-stakes test that would need psychometric and security upgrades or require a new assessment of English proficiency to be included in the API (The current annual cost of administering the CELDT is \$12 million).

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance is opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

- The bill would inappropriately add CELDT scores (a diagnostic test used by practitioners to determine the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills of English learners) to the API (a measure of how student academic achievement compares to the state's content standards). Consequently, the direction this bill intends to go would diminish the usefulness of the API as an indicator of the success of schools and districts in improving student achievement.
The bill could infringe on the authority of the Board by requiring the Superintendent and the Board to add the results of the CELDT and other English language proficiency scores measures to the API.
The bill would create new non-Proposition 98 General Fund costs and, to the extent it leads to changes to the CELDT, could result in new costs in the millions of dollars of Proposition 98 General Fund. Creating new General Fund costs would be imprudent because the state does not have the resources to pay for new activities.

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

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**COMMENTS** (continued)

- The bill would unnecessarily alter the state’s API scoring scheme and double-count the performance of English learners when scoring schools and districts. The API already includes a measure of how well schools and districts serve English learners by reporting English learner subgroup performance data. Schools and districts are required to meet academic growth targets for this subgroup. Including English language proficiency, such as the CELDT, in the API would hold schools accountable for each English learner child twice, and change how scores are weighted in the API. Finance also believes that changing score weights would lead to an unnecessary rebench of API scores which would, at least in the short term, make it difficult for schools, districts, the state, and the public to determine if English learners are improving academically.
- The bill could unnecessarily penalize schools for simply having English learners. The CELDT is currently administered at the beginning of the school year in order to help place a child. CELDT scores for new students do not reflect any value added by the school. If these scores are used in the API, schools with high concentrations of new English learners would be penalized for scores they have no control over.

The API is the state’s accountability measure. API scores are currently calculated for schools and districts based on statewide assessment data. Schools and districts are expected to meet API growth targets on the aggregate and for specific subgroups, such as English learners, each year to ensure progress toward the statewide score goal of 800 or above.

The CELDT is a required component of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Specifically, a statewide English learner assessment is required for the annual receipt of approximately \$168 million federal Title III funds. The CELDT is used to identify English learner students and monitor their progress toward English proficiency. LEAs consider CELDT scores, teacher evaluations, parental consultation, and student performance on core curriculum when reclassifying English learner students to English proficiency. Currently, the CELDT is administered annually to English learner students at the beginning of the school year and to any new student with a home language other than English within 30 days of enrollment.

The STAR program is used to assess academic achievement in students in grades two through eleven. STAR includes the following assessments: (1) California Standards Tests, (2) California Achievement Tests, (3) California Alternate Performance Assessments, (4) California Modified Assessments, and (5) Standards Based Tests in Spanish. This collection of assessments allows California to test students on knowledge of statewide content standards and includes assessments addressing the needs of special education students and Spanish-speaking students.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							Fund Code
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)							
	CO RV	PROP 98	FC	2009-2010 FC	2010-2011 FC	2011-2012 FC			
6110/Dept of Educ	SO	No	C	\$100		--		--	0001
6110/Dept of Educ	LA	Yes		----- See Fiscal Summary -----					0001