

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 1602 (O'Donnell) – As Amended April 17, 2017

SUBJECT: Alternative Grade 11 Assessment Pilot Program

SUMMARY: Establishes the Alternative Grade 11 Assessment Pilot Program to allow participating districts to administer an assessment other than the one required by the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Alternative Grade 11 Assessment Pilot Program.
- 2) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish guidelines for accepting up to five school districts to participate in the pilot program.
- 3) Specifies that the Long Beach Unified School District shall be selected to participate if it applies.
- 4) Provides that participating districts may administer an assessment in grade 11 other than the CAASPP if the following requirements are met:
 - a) The assessment is a statistically reliable and valid norm-referenced or criterion-referenced test;
 - b) The assessment shall be aligned to the academic content standards adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE);
 - c) The administration of the alternative assessment is consistent with the district's local control and accountability plan (LCAP);
 - d) The assessment is administered at no charge to pupils; and
 - e) The assessment is administered to all pupils in grade 11 except those who opt out as allowed by existing law.
- 5) Requires participating districts to do the following:
 - a) Report test results to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) as determined by the SPI;
 - b) Report to the SPI, by June 30, 2022, on the effectiveness of the alternative assessment in all of the following areas:
 - i) Increasing high school graduation rates;
 - ii) Increasing enrollment in A-G and Advanced Placement courses;
 - iii) Increasing college attendance rates among high school graduates;

- iv) Improving student performance on the assessment; and
 - v) Other areas jointly agreed to by the participating districts and SPI.
- 6) Provides that participating districts shall not receive an apportionment for administration of the grade 11 CAASPP.
- 7) Establishes a sunset date of July 1, 2022.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CAASPP, which consists of standardized assessments that are aligned to SBE-adopted curriculum content standards and administered in grades 3 to 8, inclusive, and grade 11.
- 2) Requires all local education agencies to administer the CAASPP assessments in the appropriate grades.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: CAASPP was established in 2014 and currently consists of assessments in English language arts and math in grades 3 to 8, inclusive, and grade 11. In addition, the state is in the process of developing a California Science Test (CAST) in compliance with federal requirements. CAST will be administered in grades 5 and 8 and in one grade in high school and is being pilot tested in the spring of 2017. The assessments are developed by the multi-state Smarter Balanced consortium and are aligned to the common core state standards (CCSS), which have been adopted by the SBE. The Smarter Balanced consortium assessments are commonly referred to as SBACs.

This bill is sponsored by the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), which submitted a letter to the president of the SBE on January 17, 2017 requesting a waiver to permit the district to administer the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) instead of the grade 11 SBAC. The district received a reply jointly signed by the SPI and the SBE president stating that the statutory provisions requiring the administration of all CAASPP assessments are not waivable. Accordingly, the district is seeking statutory authorization to administer the alternative assessment instead of the grade 11 SBAC.

Until now, the district has been administering both assessments and believes that the SAT is better for its purposes because, by administering it in grades 10, 11, and 12, it allows pupils to identify deficiencies and receive targeted interventions to improve their performance. And because the SAT has direct consequences for college admission, it is more meaningful to pupils than the SBAC. The district believes that its administration of the SAT has contributed to an increased college attendance rate among its graduates and would like to reduce total test taking time by being relieved of the requirement to administer the SBAC.

In their letter to LBUSD, the SPI and SBE president identified the following concerns with the district's request:

- The SAT may not be aligned to the CCSS;

- The SAT does not provide a reliable and valid measurement across the entire spectrum of pupil performance (for example it is not designed to measure performance at the low end of the spectrum well), which could leave the district open to lawsuits based on discrimination;
- The SAT does not offer disabled students the same set of supports and accommodations as the CAASPP assessments;
- The SAT does not report results on the same scale as the CAASPP assessments;
- Not administering the CAASPP assessment could result in the loss of federal funds; and
- The College Board, which publishes the SAT, has different requirements regarding data ownership and pupil privacy.

The sponsor's responses to SPI/SBE concerns. The bill's sponsor has provided information to committee staff in response to the concerns raised by the SPI and SBE president. The information focuses on the SAT, because that is the test that the sponsor intends to administer in lieu of the grade 11 SBAC.

Alignment to CCSS. The sponsor argues that the SAT focuses on the same skills that the SBAC assesses and is a proven measure of the skills and knowledge that matter most for college and career success. They cite a 2015 study that was conducted by the College Board to assess alignment. That study concluded that "the alignment of the California state standards with the SAT Suite of Assessments is strong to very strong." The sponsor's own experience shows that pupil performance on the SBAC "correlates almost identically with performance on the SAT." For example, 49% of 11th graders met or exceeded benchmarks on both the SAT and the SBAC English language arts assessments, and 28% of 11th graders met or exceeded standards on the SBAC math assessment, while 29% met or exceeded the benchmark on the SAT math.

Validity and reliability. The sponsor argues that the SAT objectively measures academic achievement for all students across the performance spectrum, including very low-performing students, English learners, and students with disabilities. They state that it is the most researched and cited educational assessment in the world, with strong evidence that it is a valid predictor across all student groups of first-year college performance.

Supports and accommodations. According to the sponsor, the College Board recently changed its accommodations policy to make it easier for students to get the supports they need to do their best work. The changes also streamline the process for schools and educators. Beginning January 1, 2017, the vast majority of students who are approved for and using testing accommodations at their school through a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan will have those same accommodations automatically approved for taking the SAT and other College Board assessments. The College Board also is providing support to English learners. EL students taking a state-funded SAT during the school day will have access to testing instructions in several native languages and approved word-to-word bilingual glossaries. The new accommodations policy complies with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Comparability with CAASPP assessments. On the grade 11 SBAC, a Level 3 benchmark means a student is ready for entry-level, credit-bearing college courses. The SAT benchmarks are built around the likelihood of a student getting a grade C or better in first-semester college courses.

Determining an SAT score that's comparable to a SBAC score would be achieved through a process known as "concordance," which is a proven way to compare scores from different assessments. Concordance tables are used to equate scores between different assessments. The sponsor indicates that it has the commitment of the College Board to create concordance tables between the SAT and the grade 11 SBAC.

Potential loss of federal funds. The sponsor identifies seven states have already received approval from the federal government to use the SAT for federal accountability purposes: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Student privacy. The College Board complies with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is the federal law that protects student privacy. Test scores are released to institutions of higher education for admissions purposes only with the approval of the student and only to the institutions the student identifies.

Peer review. Although the bill has no registered opposition, concerns have been raised about whether the alternative assessment that may be administered under the pilot program would be in compliance with the new peer review requirement contained in ESSA. ESSA requires that assessments used for federal accountability purposes be peer reviewed. A peer review is performed on the basis of the administration of an assessment, and therefore cannot be conducted prior to the assessment being administered. Because the SAT was first administered in other states in 2016, it will undergo a peer review in 2017, with results reported in 2018.

The results of the peer review of the SBACs were released in 2017. In a letter to the SPI and the SBE president dated January 18, 2017, the United States Department of Education found that SBAC meets "many, but not all of the statutory and regulatory requirements...of ESSA." The letter requested, among other things, evidence that the SBAC's design aligns to the full depth and breadth for all of the academic content standards in reading/language arts and math at all grade levels.

To address concerns raised regarding the peer review, **staff recommends** that the bill be amended to require the alternative assessment to be in compliance with ESSA. This would also address the other concerns raised by the SPI and SBE president. **Staff also recommends** that the bill be amended to change the due date of the report from June 30, 2022 to June 30, 2023 (and make a corresponding change to the sunset date) to allow for five years of data collection.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

EdVoice
Long Beach Unified School District

Opposition

None received

Analysis Prepared by: Rick Pratt / ED. / (916) 319-2087