

**Department of Planning and Budget**  
**2025 General Assembly Session**  
**State Fiscal Impact Statement**

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**PUBLISHED: 1/30/2025 4:35 PM**

**ORIGINAL**

**Bill Number:** SB855S1

**Patron:** VanValkenburg

**Bill Title:** Board of Education; Standards of Learning assessments and related student assessment methods; assessment development, implementation, and administration reform.

**Bill Summary:** Modifies provisions relating to assessment methods for determining the level of achievement of the Standards of Learning objectives by all students, including (i) requirements relating to assessment administration aimed at maximizing instructional time and optimizing time used for assessment administration; (ii) criteria and guidelines for the structure and content of Standards of Learning assessments and alternative assessments developed by local school boards, including criteria for the types of assessment items that shall be included; (iii) provisions relating to eligibility and timelines for students to retake assessments; and (iv) the scoring of Standards of Learning assessments and related assessments, including a requirement that all such assessments be scored on a 100-point scale. The bill requires the Board of Education to provide any teacher who participates in the scoring of Standards of Learning assessments professional development points toward renewal of his license for the time spent scoring such assessments. The bill also requires the Board of Education to develop and make available to each school board certain templates and guidelines relating to assessment content and structure and assessment scoring.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes

**Items Impacted:** 119

**Explanation:** This bill would require the Department of Education to develop new assessments and make several changes to the assessment contract, which would require additional state funding above what is appropriated for a new assessment contract in HB1600/SB800. The bill requires such changes to be fully implemented by the 2030-2031 school year; however, these changes would need to be included in a request for proposals (RFP) and negotiated as part of a new assessment contract. Funding is required to support the RFP and negotiated contract when established. Any impact to local school divisions is indeterminate.

**Fiscal Summary:** The Governor's Introduced Budget, HB1600/SB800, includes additional general fund to support the one-time and ongoing costs of implementing a new statewide assessment contract. It's anticipated that the funding provided in HB1600/SB800 may support most of the assessment changes required by the bill with the exception of releasing all answer keys or grading rubrics and replacing all test items annually. DOE estimates a minimum annual cost of \$21.2 million to release all answer keys or grading rubrics and replace all test items each year. Approximately 10% of this cost is assumed in HB1600/SB800, so the additional state cost to support this requirement is approximately \$19.1 million general fund in FY26 and ongoing.

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**General Fund Expenditure Impact:**

<u>Agency</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>FY2029</u>	<u>FY2030</u>
201 (DOE)	\$0	\$19.1 million	\$19.1 million	\$19.1 million	\$19.1 million	\$19.1 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$19.1 million</b>	<b>\$19.1 million</b>	<b>\$19.1 million</b>	<b>\$19.1 million</b>	<b>\$19.1 million</b>

**Fiscal Analysis:** In order to implement changes to the Standard of Learning (SOL) assessments, the Department of Education (DOE) would have to include these changes in a contract with a statewide assessment vendor. DOE is in the beginning of a process to procure a new contract for the entire statewide assessment system. The Governor’s introduced budget, HB1600/SB800, provides \$61,000,000 general fund in FY25 and \$5,000,000 general fund in FY26 and ongoing for DOE to enter into a new statewide assessment contract and develop new assessments with assumptions for certain contract enhancements. It’s anticipated that the majority of the requirements of this bill could be absorbed within that additional appropriation with the exception of releasing all answer keys or grading rubrics and replacing all test items annually.

The bill requires that DOE make each SOL assessment that was taken in the previous year, and an answer key or grading rubric, available to each teacher. In order to release all test questions and answers and ensure test security, all test items will have to be replaced each year. Based on responses received from potential vendors from a request for information conducted in 2024, DOE estimates a minimum annual cost of \$21.2 million to include the release and replacement of all test items each year in the assessment contract. The appropriation included in Item 119 of HB1600/SB800 for a new assessment contract assumes that the new assessment contract will include the release and replacement of a representative sample, approximately 10%, of test items and replenish with new items annually, along with the necessary teacher training to support the release of this information. Therefore, the additional general fund cost to support the release of answer keys or grading rubrics for all assessments and replacing all test items annually is approximately \$19.1 million above what is provided in HB1600/SB800.

The actual impact will be dependent on the actual assessment vendor chosen and the contract that is negotiated. Any impact to local school divisions is indeterminate.

**Other:** This bill is similar to HB1957.