

Agency: 350 Supt of Public Instruction
Decision Package Code/Title: SC Increase Access to Online Testing
Budget Period: 2011-13
Budget Level: PL - Performance Level

Recommendation Summary Text:

Superintendent Dorn requests \$3,487,000 to allow all students in grades 3-8 to take required statewide assessments online. Funding would be provided through a grant program for school districts to purchase the necessary technology. By providing technological resources for school districts to be able to assess students online, the administrative burden for testing will be reduced and security will be enhanced. Grades 3-8 assessments in math, reading, and science are currently available online and districts have the option of how to administer the assessment. Last year, 211 of 295 districts provided online testing in at least one of their schools. Based on an analysis of school level data, there is a need for 7,988 computers around the state at a total cost of \$3.487 million. Superintendent Dorn's request provides the funding necessary so that all students in grades 3-8 will be assessed online beginning no later than the 2013-14 school year. An added benefit of this proposal is the purchased computers will be available for instructional use throughout the school year thus increasing student access to technology.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	1,588,000	1,899,000	3,487,000
Total Cost	1,588,000	1,899,000	3,487,000

Package Description:

Background

When Superintendent Dorn took office in January 2009, he worked collaboratively with legislative leaders to replace the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) with shorter, equally rigorous tests: the grades 3-8 Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) and High School Proficiency (HSPE).

He also moved the MSP online, a necessary step to take advantage of technology and to create efficiencies in the testing system. Moving testing to computers saves resources by decreasing the printing, shipping and storage of test booklets, and provides a more secure environment.

Current Situation

The MSP for grades 4-8 were available online last year. This year, the MSP in reading and math for grade 3 will be offered online for the first time. During the spring of the 2009-2010 school year, 774 schools in 211 districts provided at least one assessment online. More

than 300,000 tests for grades 4-8 were provided online in reading, math and science, which is approximately 30 percent of tests taken in those grades.

Proposed Solution

The requested funding will allow OSPI to provide grants to school districts to purchase the necessary computers to offer the math, reading, and science MSP online for all grades 3-8. The grant funding will be prioritized to grades 3-5 in FY12 and grades 6-8 for FY13.

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

By providing the necessary computers to school districts, OSPI anticipates that all students in grades 3-8 will be assessed online by the 2013-14 school year.

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

Superintendent Dorn has made it a priority to shorten the length of the Washington assessments and make them available online. This decision package is essential to his strategic plan to provide online testing for all students in grades 3-8.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

The Governor values world-class student achievement. Online assessments are a more efficient means of measuring the success of students in grades 3-8.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

Not only would this decision package provide more efficient assessment of student achievement, it would also provide technological resources to students that may currently not have access to computers.

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Eighty two percent of students surveyed said they prefer to take tests on the computer rather than paper. Moving testing to computers saves resources by decreasing the printing, shipping and storage of test booklets, and provides a more secure environment.

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

The alternative to this proposal is to continue to allow districts to voluntarily offer assessments online. However, without this grant program, many districts will not be able to purchase the necessary resources to provide online testing and the goal of providing online testing statewide may never be reached.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

The cost to provide assessments on paper will continue to increase. By making this investment now, future cost increases for providing the assessments both in a paper format and online format will be avoided. Administrative burdens in school districts without ample resources for the computers will also continue. In addition, students will have unequal access to the use of technological resources for statewide assessments based on the school and school district boundary in which they reside.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

None

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

No changes to existing statute, rules, or contracts are required. A grant program would be implemented to allow school districts who need the technology resources to access the funding.

Expenditure and Revenue Calculations and Assumptions

The estimated number of computers needed is based on an assumption that the computers would be available for testing once a day for 20 days during the online testing window. Therefore, the number of required assessments in grades 3-8 for each school was divided by 20 to calculate the number of computers needed. The estimated need was then compared against the number of standards based instructional computers available in a library, computer lab, or mobile lab in each school. Based on this analysis, an additional 4,536 computers are needed for grades 3-5 and 3,452 computers in grades 6-8. The cost of the computers are based on the assumption that netbooks or similar devices can be used both instructionally and for online testing for grades 3-5, so an estimated cost of \$350 per device is being used to compute costs for elementary school testing needs. For grades 6-8, low-cost laptops or tablets can be used both instructionally and for online testing at an estimated cost of \$550 per device. The total cost to provide online testing for grades 3-5 is \$1.588 million and \$1.899 million for grades 6-8. The attachment provides a list of the projected need by district and school.

Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?

The grant program would be one-time funding this biennium.

<u>Object Detail</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
N Grants, Benefits & Client Services	1,588,000	1,899,000	3,487,000