

Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note

**FINAL
FISCAL NOTE**

Drafting Number: LLS 15-0661	Date: July 13, 2015
Prime Sponsor(s): Sen. Kerr Rep. Kraft-Tharp	Bill Status: Signed into Law Fiscal Analyst: Josh Abram (303-866-3561)

BILL TOPIC: FREQUENCY OF STATEWIDE SOCIAL STUDIES TESTING

Fiscal Impact Summary*	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017
State Revenue		
State Expenditures	<u>\$935,180</u>	<u>\$935,180</u>
General Fund	935,180	935,180
FTE Position Change		
Appropriation Required: \$935,180 - Colorado Department of Education (FY 2015-16).		

** This summary shows changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. Parentheses indicate a decrease in funds.*

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to administer an annual statewide assessment in social studies to students enrolled in a single specified elementary school grade, middle school grade, and high school grade.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, this bill allows the CDE to instead administer the social studies assessment in a representative sample of public schools, so long as it administers the assessment in each public school at least once every three years. If the CDE chooses a three year assessment schedule, a school district or charter school may request to have the assessment administered in years when they would otherwise not be part of the representative sample. The CDE will administer the assessment in that school in the year following the request.

State Expenditures

For FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17, this bill's net fiscal impact increases state expenditures from the State Education Fund by \$935,180.

House Bill 15-1323, signed into law by the Governor on May 20, 2015, eliminates social studies testing beginning with FY 2015-16. This bill, also signed into law by the Governor on May 20, 2015, requires that the CDE administer social studies assessments on a sampling basis beginning with FY 2015-16. Thus, compared to current law, this bill requires funding to support the administration of social studies assessments; however, since the bill reduces the total amount of social studies testing that had been anticipated prior to HB 1323, the bill both reduces and increases state expenditures. Table 1 details the bill's fiscal impact.

Table 1. Fiscal Impact of SB15-056		
Cost Components	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
Restore social studies assessments	\$1,400,180	\$1,400,180
Reduction to reflect sampling	(540,000)	(540,000)
Paper and pencil test options	75,000	75,000
TOTAL	\$935,180	\$935,180

School District Impact

Statewide assessments at the local level create both direct and indirect costs for school districts. As part of the House Bill 14-1202 Standards and Assessment Task Force, the consulting firm of Augenblick, Palich, and Associates (APA) prepared a study of assessment use in Colorado and identified three categories of costs for school districts.¹ These costs include one-time expenses to ensure a school district has the capacity to administer assessments, such as the cost to purchase needed technology if it is not already owned by the school district; on-going opportunity costs as a result of student and staff time spent administering and taking assessments that could have otherwise been spent on instruction or other functions; and on going direct costs incurred to prepare for and administer assessments, including the direct cost to purchase testing materials, the cost of hiring additional test proctors and classroom substitutes during test days, and any material management costs.

In conducting their study, APA discovered that direct costs range dramatically between districts and represent different resource starting points and capacity capabilities. Though not a perfect correlation, APA found that smaller districts tend to have higher costs than larger districts.

In years when a given school is not part of the assessment schedule, workload and administrative costs related to the assessment are reduced.

Effective Date

The bill was signed into law by the Governor and took effect on May 20, 2015.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education

Higher Education

Law

¹ Study of Assessment Use in Colorado Districts and Schools. November 2014. Augenblick, Paliach and Associates. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/finalapareport>