



## ***BILL AND AMENDMENT SUMMARY***

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# **Student Assessment New Approval Process SF 240**

Status of Bill: On House Floor

Committee: Education (21-1). Passed Senate on March 8, 39-10

Lead Democrat: Representative Steckman

Floor Manager: Representative Dolecheck

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### **Background**

Originally as part of the Ed Reform bill of 2013, the Department of Education (DE) was required to set up a taskforce to choose an assessment to be used by Iowa students in various grades. The assessment chosen by the taskforce in 2015 was the “Smarter Balanced” test, and was approved by the State Board of Education. The 2016 Legislature in the Education budget, SF 2323, passed a delay in the implementation until the 2017-18 school year. The bill also required that the administrative rules review committee review the rule at its regular meeting in December, 2016. The Governor then vetoed the portion of this provision dealing with the rules review in SF 2323. As a result of this veto, the rules implementation of the “Smarter Balance” would have moved forward with a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor to administer the test happening prior to the test implementation for the 2017-18 school year. With the one year delay, the Legislature had an opportunity to fund the test for the FY 2018 budget without it being a mandate on schools.

After the control of the Senate switched to Republican in the last election, Senator Sinclair placed a top priority to study the issue again. Part of the reason for this position is the belief that the taskforce did not within their recommendation, consider cost placed on school districts to implement a new assessment. In addition, with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that replaces No Child Left Behind, there is much less emphasis on a nationwide assessment, and providing more flexibility to states. The Governor, responding to the introduced bill in January, ordered a delay of the “Smarter Balanced” vendor selection until after Legislative action.

The number of states that have chosen or are using “Smarter Balanced” is currently 13 including Iowa. It was as high as 30 at one time. Wisconsin, after one year that experienced implementation problems, dropped it. Massachusetts is another state that has dropped it and has chosen to develop their own assessment. West Virginia, Idaho and New Hampshire have all recently dropped “Smarter Balanced” within the year.

The Iowa Test (used in the field as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or the Iowa Test for Educational Development) has been the main stay test in Iowa, and was developed by the University of Iowa spin off company, Iowa Testing Programs. Every state has at least one or some districts that use the test at the local district level. The Iowa test is currently being considered for a statewide test in Idaho and New Hampshire. There are five known states and the District of Columbia use the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness in College Careers (PARCC). There are three states that are currently using the ACT Aspire test, with one of those three, Wyoming only using it in high school.

### **Adaptive Vs. Summative**

Of the three leading contenders for the new assessment in Iowa, “Smarter Balanced” uses a new process called

an adaptive test. If while taking the test, a student has a right answer, the next question is “adapted” to the student and will be tougher. Wrong answers receive an easier next question. This means that not every student receives the same test questions. Proponents of the “Smarter Balanced” assessment like this adaptive feature as a way to tailor the needs of individual students from the results of the test.

A summative assessment is the type of test featured by ACT Aspire and the Iowa Test. It would be given towards the end of the year to assess the student’s knowledge learned during the year. Proponents of the summative assessment feel that this is a better type of assessment since it would show student progress for that year in those particular subjects and all students would receive the same test for equal comparisons.

## Bill Summary

SF 240 requires a new assessment to be approved by the State Board of Education by July 1, 2018. It requires that students be administered an assessment in grades 3 through 11 for Math and Reading during the last quarter of the school year. All students enrolled in school districts in grades 5, 8, and 10 would be administered an assessment in Science during the last quarter of the fiscal year.

The RFP by DE is required to be for an assessment starting July 1, 2018 and going forward. The assessment under the RFP is required to measure student growth an aligned to Iowa Core Academic Standards for grades 3-8 and at least one grade in high school. It is required to be capable of measuring student performance in English Language Arts, including Reading and Writing; Math; and Science. It is required to be made available in paper and pencil and computer based format. Potential vendors or providers may collaborate to meet the requirements. The Department of Education must issue the request for proposals by **April 30, 2017**. The State Board of Education would have the ability to select the assessment that meets the best criteria without further legislative approval.

In evaluating the proposal the department is to only consider the following:

1. The feasibility of implementation by school districts;
2. The cost to school districts and the state in providing an administering the statewide assessment and the technical support necessary to administer the statewide assessment;
3. The cost of acquiring the infrastructure necessary for implementing technology readiness in all of Iowa school districts, including technology required for accommodations;
4. The degree to which the submission aligned with the Iowa core academic standards;
5. The ability of the assessment to measure student growth and student proficiency;
6. The ability of the assessment to meet the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, and
7. The instructional time required to conduct the statewide assessment.

Under the bill, a private school provision where an accredited nonpublic school **MAY** administer the assessment to students enrolled in the accredited nonpublic school. (So they are NOT required to use whatever the new assessment ends up being. Nonpublic schools are currently using the same Iowa Test as public schools.)

The bill takes effect upon enactment.

## Fiscal Note

The Fiscal note mentions the letter from the federal Department of Education which indicates that the current assessment in use in Iowa is noncompliant with requirement, and continued use could result in loss of federal education funding.

FY 2019 estimated cost of all required assessments, we have the following:

Smarter Balanced: \$10,839,536  
Next Gen Local Scoring: \$7,313,438 (The test would be tabulated by local school districts).  
Next Gen Central Scoring: \$9,640,441 (The test would be tabulated by the company).  
ACT Aspire: \$13,297,160

## **Amendment Summary**

### **H-1213 by Committee on Education: Date of the RFP Moved Back**

Due to concerns raised by DE, the date required for the implementation of the RFP is pushed back from April 30, 2017, to July 1, 2017 (See bolded date in the summary that would change for the RFP date).

### **H-1234 by Steckman and Breckenridge: The Administering of the Test, Would be Subject to an Appropriation**

Regardless of the test that is chosen, there are concerns about an unfunded mandate on local school districts. Under the amendment, once the test is decided, the administration of the assessment by school districts would be subject to an appropriation sufficient to cover the costs for school districts to administer the assessment.

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