

Senate Finance Subcommittee on DEED
Alaska Statewide Assessment Questions
2/27/14 – Request of Chair

1. What is the total budget for Alaska Statewide Assessments?

\$10,207.1

2. Last year's funding was approved that included 289.7 for the TerraNova norm-referenced assessment. As this assessment tool is no longer required, was the assessment total budget reduced by this amount?

The Governor nor the Legislature reduced the DEED assessment budget as this funding continues to be allocated towards costs related to statewide assessments; specifically, to the Alaska Technology Readiness Plan; Electronic testing pilot; and new item development. In FY15 this funding will continue to be utilized to meet the basic assessment contractual needs and to avoid requesting an increment for the normal cost increases in assessment contracts the department experiences annually.

3. If the HSGQE is eliminated, will the State of Alaska risk contractual problems with the test vendor?

No

4. If the transition period that allows former students that hold a certificate of achievement to re-take the HSGQE is not adopted, is the State of Alaska in any contractual trouble with the test vendor?

No

5. Does the department plan to require on-line testing to be available in 2015? Will paper and pencil tests be available? What is the difference in cost to the State of Alaska? What is the difference in cost to school districts?

- Yes, on-line testing must be made available to districts and utilized if the districts have the capacity to utilize such testing.
- Paper and pencil testing will be available for districts that do not meet the requirements of technology readiness.
- The cost to the State of Alaska for electronic or paper pencil testing is built into the overall budget as described in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and the vendor's response.
- District costs, if they are in a position of technology readiness, should experience a significant savings since they will no longer have the costs associated with direct handling of the tests.

6. What is the status of the survey regarding the readiness of school districts to conduct on-line testing?

A status report will be provided to the State Board of Education & Early Development on March 14, 2014; that information can be made available at that time.

7. WorkKeys was given on-line and by paper and pencil this school year. Were the results of the on-line test and paper pencil test provided at the same time? If not, when will the results be available? Is the WorkKeys test scored in the same manner regardless of testing method?

- The results were made available to districts in January. The information available to the districts include the electronic test results, hard copy individual score reports (ISR), and National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRCs). Districts have near instant access to student electronic ISRs for those that participate in the WorkKeys internet version once the assessment is complete.
- All items on the electronic and the paper/pencil versions of the test are multiple choice items. They are all scored electronically. The electronic test is scored within 24 hours following completion of the assessment. The paper/pencil assessments answer documents are machine scored using scan technology.

8. What is the status for the new assessment tool to match Alaska's new standards? How will the cut scores be developed? Will a third grade student who is proficient be working at grade-level?

- The department issued a RFP to seek vendors to provide an assessment this past fall. In January an intent-to-award was provided to a vendor, and the department is preparing to develop contract terms with that vendor. The delivery of the first assessment will be in the spring of 2015.
- The cut scores and achievement levels are set by the State Board of Education & Early Development through the regulation process. The process of recommending cut scores is one that will be developed by the department working with the vendor; however, it is the intent that the final assessment in high school be aligned to post-secondary training/education and career opportunities and it will be essential to involve industry, as well as, trade, university, and K-12 educators.
- It would be the intent of the cut score setting process that a student who is on-grade level or proficient based on the Alaska standards in the subject area tested would also be on-grade level on the assessment when they are deemed proficient.