

Assessment Pilot & Accountability Workgroup

Exceptional Item #4



General Description:

To implement a collaborative pilot program between districts and TEA to research and develop integrated diagnostic measures of student learning. The product developed through this research could be used to usher in the next generation of Texas assessment.

Justification:

This exceptional item serves as a starting point for initiating a conversation about taking Texas schools and students into the next era of education assessments by researching and developing a new tool for gauging student learning.

During the 83rd Legislative Session and throughout the following interim, there has been much debate about the best way to measure student learning. Parents, educators, and legislators have expressed great frustration regarding the frequency of benchmark testing and what is viewed as an over-emphasis on end-of-year state assessments.

In an effort to respond to these frustrations, TEA is requesting this funding to create a research and development team to create an innovative, technological solution that would eliminate the need for benchmark testing by incorporating diagnostic capabilities into an instructional tool.

The research and development team would then explore the option of using information gathered through the use of the diagnostic tool to determine overall student attainment or inform a redeveloped assessment system for the state.

The tool developed through this process would then be piloted in participating schools to determine the efficacy of deploying it statewide.

Additional Information:

Is this a way to get around HB 5 and implement more tests?

- No. The goal of this pilot is to develop a different way of measuring student learning thereby, reducing the reliance on benchmark testing and potentially altering the design of the state's end-of-year assessments.

Is \$30 million necessary for this exceptional item?

- Building a new diagnostic system that will use existing and newly developed technologies is a large undertaking. The development of this tool would require convening TEKS experts to work with external entities, school leaders, teachers and parents to create a system that allows teachers to determine student mastery of content and intervene to provide individualized student support.
- Additionally, these funds would be used to provide technological resources and assistance for districts participating in a pilot, e.g. tablets, high-speed internet access, and training for teachers and administrators.

Funding Request:

- **FY 2016:** \$17,000,000
- **FY 2017:** \$13,000,000
- **Total:** \$30,000,000

Additional Details:

- **FTE Total Request:** 3
- **MOF:** General Revenue

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What is the breakdown of the funding request?

Below is an estimated cost of this research and development project.

Please note: There are multiple ways that this program could be structured, and we look forward to working with the legislature throughout the legislative session to further develop the specific parameters of the program.

- Year 1 – Total \$17 million
 - License and customize learning progressions for TX: \$3M (includes university partners)
 - Software license: \$1M
 - Software customization to handle quizzes, portfolios, etc: \$5M
 - Implementation and professional development: \$1.5M
 - Devices for students and teachers (year 1 of equipment lease): \$2.5M
 - Teacher sub time and travel: \$2M
 - Content development: \$1.5M
 - Research planning: \$0.5M
- Year 2 – Total \$13 million
 - Software license: \$1M
 - Software customization to handle quizzes, portfolios, etc: \$2M
 - Implementation and professional development: \$1.5M
 - Devices for students and teachers (year 2 of equipment lease): \$2.5M
 - Teacher sub time and travel: \$4M
 - Content development: \$1.5M
 - Research planning: \$0.5M

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