



CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MARCH 2004 AGENDA

SUBJECT Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program: Approval of Contract Amendment for New Item Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing

RECOMMENDATION

Approve amending the Educational Testing Service (ETS) contract to fund the necessary continued item development for the California Standards Tests (CSTs) to support test development for 2005 and 2006. The amount needed for item development for the remainder of the contract is \$3,374,672.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

The State Board of Education (SBE) approved the development of standards-based tests to assess students' achievement of the California Content Standards that were adopted by the SBE during December 1997 (English-language arts and mathematics) and October 1998 (science and history-social science).

During April 2002, SBE designated ETS as the contractor for the California Standards Test (CST) and the nationally normed test components of the STAR program. SBE approved a three-year contract with ETS during June 2002. The contract included an emphasis on continuing the development of the CSTs.

ETS developed an Item Utilization Plan that provided information about the status of the CST Item Bank in response to the SBE's plan to have the California Department of Education begin publicly releasing items from the CSTs. The Item Utilization Plan was presented to the SBE at the November 2003 meeting.

SBE has approved releasing to the public, twenty-five percent of the questions that were used on the spring 2003 CSTs.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

During June 2002, the SBE approved \$11,067,648 for CST item and test development during years two and three of the ETS three year STAR contract. The Department of Finance approved the contract costs in June 2002, but subsequently reduced the funding for CST item and test development to \$1,407,000 for fiscal years 2003-04 and 2004-05 (a total of \$2,814,000). The CST item and test development appropriation for 2003-2004 and 2004-05 was reduced by a total of \$8,253,648. These reductions necessitated a decrease of the ongoing CST item development. However, consistent with the necessary requirement for science testing in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), 5th and 8th grade item development for science will not be reduced.

Item development begins approximately two years before tests are administered. That

is item development for the spring 2006 tests will begin during spring 2004. The following is a summary of the activities that go into developing the final test forms:

- 18 – 24 months before testing—items are written and reviewed (Jan. through July 2004 for spring 2006 tests)
- 18 months before testing—Content Review Panels (CRPs) review items for accuracy and alignment with content standards and recommend those to be field tested
- 14 – 15 months before testing—contractor constructs field test forms
- 10 – 12 months before testing—students complete tests with field test items embedded in them
- 8 – 10 months before testing—field test item statistics are analyzed and items are selected for the spring test
- 6 – 7 months before testing—test forms are developed and reviewed by CRPs and Department staff

Item development for the spring 2007 CSTs is not included in the current ETS contract.

The STAR component of the approved Item Utilization Plan cannot be implemented without ongoing CST item development to replace items that are released publicly. However, the number of CST items to be developed can be reduced to the minimum number needed to support test development for 2005 and 2006. This minimal item development will require a restoration of test development funds to a funding level of \$3,374,672 for the remainder of the contract. The contract ends December 31, 2005.

FISCAL ANALYSIS (AS APPROPRIATE)

There have been ongoing discussions with the Department of Finance related to the amount needed to replace part of the funding cut from the STAR budget for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

The \$1,407,000 appropriated for fiscal year 2003-04 was used for item and test development from July 1, 2003 through December 31, 2003. A total of \$3,374,672 is needed to continue CST item development through the end of the contract. Of this amount, \$1,967,672 would be funded from Title VI monies (\$1,432,224 for 2003-2004 and \$535,448 for 2004-2005). The remaining \$1,407,000 would be funded with the state General Funds for test development currently in the 2004-2005 proposed budget. Funding is contingent on the Department of Finance approval.

ATTACHMENT

[Attachment 1](#): Scenario 2–Item Utilization Plan (2 Pages)

Scenario 2–Item Utilization Plan
1,548 New Field Tested Items; 2,380 Operational Items

COSTS:

Table D. Scenario 2 Costs

COMPONENTS	TOTAL COSTS	FY 03-04 1/1/04-6/30/04 COSTS	FY 04-05 7/1/04-6/30/05 COSTS
New Item Development	1,003,316	1,003,316	0
Composition of Items for Operational Forms and Stat Analysis	1,276,034	127,600	1,148,434
Released Items	116,625	0	116,625
Item Bank Maintenance	136,617	68,308	68,309
CRP Meetings and Travel	316,000	158,000	158,000
<i>FIELD TESTING OF 1567 CYCLE 1& 2 ITEMS</i>	376,080	0	376,080
<i>REVISION TO SCIENCE REPORTING CLUSTERS</i>	150,000	75,000	75,000
TOTAL FOR SECTION A IN SOW	3,374,672	1,432,224	1,942,448
Total NCLB	432,433	220,000	212,433
TOTAL Less NCLB	2,942,239	1,212,224	1,730,015

Cost Per New Item	\$648
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DISCUSSION:

- This scenario represents the number of items to be field tested each year as specified in the item utilization plan as approved by the State Board of Education.
- This scenario also represents Educational Testing Service (ETS) recommendations for immediate development that will address the most serious of the remaining critical standards and provide better range of difficulty and component coverage.
- ETS makes this recommendation because even after the 2004 field-tested items are placed in the bank, a few standards will remain critical and a few more will have become critical owing to recent CRP decisions (e.g., changes in science reference sheets).
- While Scenario 2 will not eliminate the problem of critical standards, it will reduce the problems sufficiently to allow 2005 and 2006 forms to be built with 50 percent retention, with possibly greater retention in a few standards in 2006.

Because Scenario 2 postpones the solution of fully eliminating critical standards, ETS suggests that the state return to the full RFS requirements for development as soon as possible within the state budget.