

# LegAlert



31 March 2009



## Costly and Counterproductive

## **Urge Senate Education to End 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Testing**

A CTA-sponsored measure that would end costly and counterproductive 2<sup>nd</sup> grade testing is scheduled for its first hearing in the Senate Education Committee on April 15. Your help is needed to ensure the passage of CTA-sponsored SB 800 by Sen. Loni Hancock (D-Oakland).

### **Background**

SB 1448 Alpert (Chapter 233, Statutes of 2004) reauthorized the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, which includes the California Standardized Tests (CSTs) for Grades 3-11 until January 1, 2011, but extended second-grade testing only to July 1, 2007. CTA worked vigorously for the earlier sunset date for the Grade 2 testing.

Despite a staggering budget deficit in July 2007, the governor and legislative leaders in the urgency education trailer bill SB 800 (Chapter 174, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Statutes of 2007) repealed the sunset of the second grade test. Instead, they extended the authority to test nearly 500,000 second graders annually until July 1, 2011.

CTA-sponsored SB 800 would exclude second-graders beginning on July 1, 2010 from the requirement that they participate in the CST's.

### **Action Needed**

We need a **large volume** of letters and phone calls immediately to all members of the Senate Education Committee because:

- Studies show that statewide standardized tests for children under eight are not “age and developmentally appropriate.”
- Studies and professional organizations also demonstrate that such tests do not provide “meaningful, valid, and reliable data” for high stakes purposes in accountability systems.

- The testing of nearly 500,000 second graders costs the state about \$2-4 million annually without providing helpful information to inform teaching and learning.
- A majority of states – about 40 of them – do not require statewide testing of second graders.
- Elimination of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade CST will strengthen the state's accountability system and provide more instructional time for these second graders.
- And eliminating the requirement will bring California's testing requirements in line with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which does not require second-grade testing.

### **CTA Coordinators; Here's How to Help**

√ *Make appointments to meet with Members of the Senate Education Committee back in the district during the Spring Recess April 2-April 12. (Contact information is included below.)*

√ *Organize CTA members including elementary teachers and other school supporters in your area to write and call all Senate Education Members and urge them to vote “YES” on SB 800 when it comes before them on April 15.*

√ *Tell your stories – about how the second grade testing is unnecessary given the variety of standards aligned local assessments including diagnostics that are age appropriate and inform teaching and learning. Also tell lawmakers how second-grade testing is negatively affecting your students and the learning environment.*

√ *Tell lawmakers that the approximately \$2-4 million used to administer and support the second grade test could be used more effectively for other instructional programs.*

**For more information, contact CTA Legislative Advocate Isabelle Garcia at 916-325-1533 or GR Communications Consultant Len Feldman at 916.325.1500.**

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## ***Members of the Senate Education Committee***

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**Note: *Contact Teams should get in touch with the lawmakers and their staff at their district offices.*** Letters and phone calls can also be directed to the lawmakers' Capitol offices in Sacramento. Copy your letters to lawmakers in Sacramento as the Hon. (Lawmaker's Name), Member of the California Senate, The State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.