



Governor's Proposals on Merit Scholarships and Algebra Academies SB 1503 (Polanco)

Legislative Analyst's Recommendations

Presented To
Senate Education Committee



Who Would Receive Merit Scholarships Under Governor's Proposal?

	Number of STAR Test Takers ^a	Qualifying for Merit Scholarship	
		Number	Percent of STAR Test Takers
50 high-performing schools ^b	16,600	5,900	35.5%
50 low-performing schools ^c	30,400	1,520	5.0

^a 9th graders taking the Stanford-9 reading test.
^b Fifty highest-performing public high schools in the state.
^c Fifty lowest-performing public high schools (excluding continuation high schools).



Governor's Scholars Programs

- **Restructure Distribution of Scholarships.** Recommend providing scholarships to the top 10 percent of students at each high school in order to (1) provide incentives for a more diverse set of students across the state and (2) increase the program's college outreach effect. (*Analysis of the 2000-01 Budget Bill*, page E-39.)
- **Use Augmented Test for Scholarships.** Recommend using only the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program *augmentation* test scores to determine which students receive scholarships because (1) using two tests causes unnecessary confusion, and (2) rewarding the standards-aligned STAR augmentation reinforces the central role the state's academic content standards must play in the state's accountability framework. (*Analysis*, page E-42.)
- **Defer Merit Scholarship Implementation One Year.** Recommend that the Legislature appropriate funds for the Merit Scholarship program for expenditure beginning in the 2001-02 fiscal year. The program needs to be in effect before students take the test in order to affect their effort. Adoption of this recommendation would create \$111 million of one-time non-Proposition 98 savings and \$1 million in one-time Proposition 98 savings for other legislative priorities. (*Analysis*, page E-43.)
- **Distinguished Math and Science Scholars.** Recommend deleting \$6 million proposed for the Governor's Distinguished Math and Science Scholars Program because the funding would not create additional incentive for California's highest achieving students. (*Analysis*, page E-44.)



Algebra Academies and Teacher Training Institutes

- **Transform Proposal for Intensive Algebra Academies.** Recommend the Legislature redirect the \$18 million proposed for Intensive Algebra Academies to increase the funding base of summer school and after school programs, because the need for improved algebra can be met better through such locally determined supplemental instructional programs. (*Analysis*, page E-91.)

- **Redirect Training Funds to School Districts.** Recommend redirection of funds proposed for teacher training institutes in pre-algebra and algebra to school districts as part of a larger staff development block grant. This would enable districts to (1) allocate resources based on local needs and (2) obtain training from the provider best positioned to meet those needs—which might or might not be a provider under a UC-directed program. (*Analysis*, page E-91.)