

When is TAKS–M administered?

TAKS–M is administered on the same schedule as the primary test administrations of TAKS. For more information about the testing calendar, please refer to the TEA Student Assessment Division website listed below.

Because TAKS–M standard-setting will not begin until summer 2008, the grade-advancement requirements of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) do not apply to students who took TAKS–M in an SSI grade and subject in spring 2008. Unlike TAKS, therefore, multiple retest administrations were not offered in TAKS–M in grades 3, 5, and 8; neither were retests offered at grade 11.

When will TAKS–M results be reported?

Standard-setting committees will meet in summer 2008 to review test results from the spring TAKS–M test administrations. The committees will then set appropriate passing standards for TAKS–M.

Because standards will not be set until summer 2008, each student who took TAKS–M in an NCLB-required grade and subject in the spring will receive a report showing only his or her raw score, or the number of items the student answered correctly on each subject-area test. Following standard-setting for TAKS–M, each student will receive a new Confidential Student Report (CSR) showing his or her raw score as well as a scale score, which is a statistic that can be used to compare the student's performance on a test with the state's performance standard. The CSR will show whether a student met the state's passing standard in a specific subject area and, further, whether he or she achieved commended performance.

The student will receive an overall score on each test, but more information about his or her strengths and weaknesses can be gained by looking at the score on each test objective. Test objectives representing knowledge and skills areas will be listed for each subject area assessed with TAKS–M. TAKS–M cannot test everything that a student is learning, but the score will provide information about the progress he or she is making in learning academic skills.



For more information about the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills–Modified, please contact the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency at

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Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills–Modified (TAKS–M)

Information Brochure for Spring 2008

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, or TAKS, is the name of the testing program for students in Texas public schools. Each public school in Texas must teach the same curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TAKS tests are based on this curriculum—in other words, on what students are taught in school.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed an alternate assessment called TAKS–Modified, or TAKS–M. TAKS–M also measures the degree to which students understand the TEKS. It was developed for students receiving special education services who need extensive modifications to classroom instruction and assessment in order to demonstrate progress in the state-mandated curriculum. TAKS–M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but TAKS–M tests have been modified in format (larger print, fewer questions per page, etc.) and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.) to make them more accessible to students with disabilities.

The TAKS–M assessment option is available to students receiving special education services who have a disability that significantly affects academic progress in the grade-level curriculum and precludes the achievement of grade-level proficiency within a school year. TAKS–M is administered in the following grades and subject areas:

- Mathematics for Students Enrolled in Grades 3–11
- Reading for Students Enrolled in Grades 3–9
- Writing for Students Enrolled in Grades 4 and 7
- English Language Arts (ELA) for Students Enrolled in Grades 10 and 11
- Science for Students Enrolled in Grades 5, 8, 10, and 11
- Social Studies for Students Enrolled in Grades 8, 10, and 11



Why was TAKS–M developed?

TAKS–M was designed to meet requirements under both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (IDEA 2004) and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). These federal laws require that all students with disabilities be included in statewide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments when necessary, as indicated by their individualized education programs (IEPs).

Like TAKS, TAKS–M measures the degree to which students understand the TEKS. TAKS–M was developed for a small number of students receiving special education services who need extensive modifications and/or accommodations to classroom instruction, assignments, and assessments in order to access and demonstrate progress in the state-mandated curriculum.

TEA conducts field testing in order to develop new tests such as TAKS–M. TAKS–M field tests were administered in October 2007 in all grades and subjects required by NCLB: grades 3–8 and 10 mathematics, grades 3–8 and 10 reading/English language arts, and grades 5, 8, and 10 science. For these grades and subjects, the “operational” tests, or those for which students receive scores, were administered in spring 2008.

Grades and subjects that are not required by NCLB were field-tested in spring 2008: grades 4 and 7 writing, grades 9 and 11 mathematics, grades 9 and 11 reading/ELA, grade 11 science, and grades 8, 10, and 11 social studies. All TAKS–M tests administered in the spring, including field tests, fulfill students’ state-mandated testing requirements for the 2007–2008 school year.

What are the assessment options for students enrolled in grades 3–11 who receive special education services?

By state and federal law, all students in Texas have the right to be exposed to as much of the grade-level curriculum as possible so that they can reach their academic potential. Participation in the general assessment, TAKS, should be considered first when determining the appropriate assessment for a student. A student should take **TAKS** if he or she needs no accommodations that would invalidate the test.

TAKS includes a form called **TAKS (Accommodated)** for students served by special education who meet the eligibility requirements for certain specific accommodations.

For those students who cannot be assessed appropriately with TAKS and/or TAKS (Accommodated), the state has developed two alternate assessments. Students receiving special education services who have a disability that significantly affects academic progress in the grade-level curriculum and precludes the achievement of grade-level proficiency within a school year should be assessed with **TAKS–M**.

Students receiving special education services who have the most significant cognitive disabilities and are unable to participate in the other statewide assessments, even with substantial accommodations and/or modifications, should be assessed with **TAKS–Alt** for all subjects required at a student’s enrolled grade level.

Each subject area tested in TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–M is considered separately when making assessment decisions, since a student’s skill level may vary across subjects.

Who decides which assessment a student should take?

The participation requirements for the alternate assessments describe the type of grade-level TEKS instruction that a student must be receiving in order to participate in a specific alternate assessment. For students receiving special education services, these considerations and decisions lie with the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee.

The members of the ARD committee must weigh the benefits of rigorous and challenging expectations with the possibilities of success, given each student’s individual strengths, needs, instruction, and accommodations. Keeping high standards in mind, the ARD committee must choose the assessment that matches the educational needs of each student. If the ARD committee decides that TAKS–M is the best option for a student, it must then consider the specific participation requirements outlined for this assessment.

When an alternate assessment is selected, the ARD committee must also document in the student’s IEP why the student is not able to participate in TAKS, as well as the allowable or approved accommodations that the student will need during testing.

What modifications are made to TAKS–M test design and test administration procedures?

The modifications incorporated into the TAKS–M test design are used in quality classroom instruction. Educators from across the state reviewed and revised all proposed TAKS–M passages and test items before field testing. Modifications to test design and format include:

- Larger print
- Fewer test items
- Three rather than four answer choices for each test item
- Simplified sentence structure and vocabulary
- Deletion of extraneous information when appropriate
- Reduction of visual complexity in the graphics
- Addition of pre-reading text that will be orally presented to students by the test administrator prior to all passages

In addition, students eligible for TAKS–M may be allowed to take this assessment with the accommodations specified in the *2007–2008 Accommodations Manual*. Any accommodation documented in the IEP that is necessary to address an individual student’s instructional and assessment needs based on his or her disability may be used for administering TAKS–M, provided it is allowable or approved by TEA.

The modifications to TAKS–M tests and test administration procedures are intended to allow each student to show his or her best performance on the test.