

CHAPTER 10: SCORES AND REPORTS

A variety of test reports are available and are listed in this section. Interested readers are also directed to the TEA publication *Interpreting Assessment Reports*, which is available on the Student Assessment Division Web site.

DESCRIPTION OF SCORES

For a detailed discussion on how test scores are derived, see Chapter 12, Scaling.

RAW SCORE

The raw score is the number of items answered correctly on a subject-area test. By itself the raw score has limited utility; it can be interpreted only in reference to the total number of items on a subject-area test, and raw scores should not be compared across tests or administrations. The raw score is provided for all English-version and Spanish-version TAKS tests, TAAS exit level, SDAA, and RPTE.

TAKS SCALE SCORE

The scale score is a statistic that provides a comparison of scores with the standard and accommodates for differences in the difficulty of the test form used for each administration. Thus, the scale score can be used to determine whether a student met the standard or achieved commended performance, but it cannot be used to evaluate student progress across grades. A scale score is provided for all TAKS tests.

RPTE SCALE SCORE

The RPTE scale score is a statistic that can be used for evaluating a student's annual growth and pinpointing how high or low a student performs within an RPTE proficiency level. This score accounts for differences in the difficulty of the test forms used for each administration. See Chapter 4 for more information about RPTE.

SDAA SCALE SCORE (MATHEMATICS AND READING TESTS ONLY)

SDAA scale scores provide a numeric value that can be used to evaluate a student's annual growth and to pinpoint how high or low the student performs within an achievement level. Scale scores for mathematics must not be compared with scale scores for reading. Knowing how well a student performed within an achievement level may be helpful when establishing the student's performance expectations for future assessments.

The SDAA scale score is a "growth," or vertical scale, score, meaning the SDAA tests are linked across instructional grade levels to create a single underlying scale. With a true vertical scale, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the scale score and estimated student proficiency; that is, two students with the same vertical scale score are estimated to be of the same proficiency on the underlying construct even if one took the third-grade test and the other took the fourth-grade test.

TAAS SCALE SCORE (EXIT LEVEL WRITING)

The TAAS writing scale score is a statistic that provides a comparison of writing scores with the minimum expectations standard and allows for comparison across years within a subject and grade. The scale score ranges from approximately 400 to 2400, with a minimum expectations score of 1500. The score of 1500 does not represent the same amount of achievement at each grade, although it does account for differences in the

difficulty of the test form used for each administration. Thus, the scale score can be used to determine whether a student has met minimum expectations, but it cannot be used to examine student progress across grades.

TAAS TEXAS LEARNING INDEX (EXIT LEVEL READING AND MATHEMATICS)

The Texas Learning Index (TLI) is a statistic that allows for comparison both across years and across grades within a subject area for TAAS reading and mathematics tests at exit level. The TLI range is approximately 0 to 90+ on a subject area test. The minimum expectations score of 70 represents the same amount of achievement at each administration. Thus, the TLI score can be used to assess learning progress within a subject area across administrations.

APPROPRIATE SCORE USES

Test results have several uses for individual students and for comparing the performance of groups.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Scale scores and TLIs indicate whether a student has passed/met minimum expectations and how far the student's achievement is above or below the passing standard. All students failing to meet the standard/minimum expectations on one or more subject area tests must be offered accelerated instruction. In addition, students who fail one or more tests are provided with study guides at no additional charge.

For example, if a student has been administered an exit level TAAS test at least twice, both scale scores and TLI scores can be used to gauge a student's relative achievement gains or losses over the years. In this way, exit level students can see whether their performance is improving over time.

Test results can also be used to compare the performance of an individual student with the performance of a similar demographic or program group or to an entire campus or district. For example, the scores for a Hispanic student in a gifted and talented program could be compared with the average scores of Hispanic students, gifted and talented students, all the students on a campus, or any combination of these aggregations.

Other scores provide information about academic areas of relative strength or weakness. For example, scores on individual objectives can provide student information to help identify areas in which a student may be having difficulty, as indicated by this particular test. Once an area of possible weakness has been identified, supplementary data should be gathered to further define the student's instructional planning needs.

Finally, individual student test scores may also be used in conjunction with other performance indicators to assist in making placement decisions. However, all decisions regarding placement and educational planning for a student should incorporate as much test performance data as possible about the student.

GROUPS OF STUDENTS

Test results can be used to evaluate the performance of a group over time. Average scale scores, TLIs, and the percent passing/meeting minimum expectations can be contrasted across administrations within the same grade and subject area to give insight into whether student performance is improving across years. For example, the average scale score for special education students taking the grade 4 TAKS reading test can be compared for spring 2003, spring 2004, etc.

Test scores can also be used to compare the performance of different demographic or program groups to one another. TAKS, SDAA, RPTE, and TAAS (exit level) scores can be analyzed within the same subject and grade of any single administration to determine which demographic or program group had, for example, the highest or lowest average performance.

Other scores can be used to help evaluate academic areas of relative strength or weakness. Average performance on student objectives can provide survey information to help identify areas where further diagnosis may be warranted for a group of students.

Test results for groups of students may also be used when evaluating instruction or programs requiring average-score or year-to-year comparisons. Because the tests are designed to measure content areas within the required state curriculum, considering test results by subject area and by objective may be helpful when evaluating curriculum and instruction. Generalizations from test results may be made to the specific content domain represented by the objective or set of objectives being measured on the exam. However, because the tests are measuring a finite set of skills with a limited set of items, generalizations should be made only about student achievement as measured on a particular test. All instruction and program evaluations should include as much information as possible to provide a more complete picture of performance.

In addition, all test scores can be compared with regional and statewide performance within the same subject area and grade for any administration.

RPTE SCORES FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

The RPTE assessments are not designed to measure mastery of content with a pass or fail score. This is one of the main differences between the RPTE and the TAKS reading assessments. Learning to read and fully understand academic content in a second language takes time. RPTE results provide a measure of progress, indicating annually where each LEP student is on a continuum of English language development designed for second-language learners. This continuum is divided into three proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. The progress of students along this continuum is the basis for the RPTE reporting system and the key to helping districts monitor whether their LEP students are making steady annual growth as they learn to read in English.

RPTE test results include two major kinds of scores: a proficiency rating and a scale score. These scores are used to indicate the current reading levels of students as well as their annual growth. The proficiency ratings indicate whether a student demonstrates a beginning, intermediate, or advanced level of proficiency on the test. Students who achieve a rating of advanced are not required to take the RPTE in subsequent years. They have demonstrated the highest level of reading proficiency measured on this assessment instrument. The RPTE scale score provides a numeric value that can be used to evaluate annual growth and pinpoint how high or low a student performs within a proficiency level. To assist schools in examining a student's annual growth, two years of proficiency ratings and scale scores are included in the test results of students who participated in two consecutive administrations.

SDAA RESULTS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

SDAA is designed to measure the academic progress of students who receive special education services for whom TAKS is inappropriate. It provides information about students' performance in the TEKS curriculum and on the effectiveness of instructional programs. There is not a predetermined passing standard for SDAA and results cannot be used to compare one student with another. This is one of the main differences between the SDAA and the TAKS assessments. Although ARD committees may use testing information in conjunction with

other information to make decisions regarding a student's dismissal from special education services, SDAA results should not be used in isolation.

The first year a student takes SDAA in reading and/or mathematics is called a baseline year. The baseline test provides data about a student's academic performance in order to set expectations for growth in the future. Baseline results provide a starting point from which growth is measured. This growth is measured over two consecutive administrations of SDAA.

The SDAA writing test is administered only to qualified special education students enrolled in grades 4 and 7. Therefore, results cannot provide a yearly measure of growth. Instead, SDAA writing test results can assist ARD committees in evaluating student performance and developing IEP goals and objectives for future writing instruction.

CAUTIONS FOR SCORE USE

USING SCORES AT THE EXTREME ENDS OF THE DISTRIBUTION

Analysis of scores of students at the extreme ends of the distribution should be undertaken cautiously because of a testing phenomenon known as regression toward the mean. Students who scored high on the test may achieve a lower score the next time they test because of regression toward the mean. This regression effect is related to the standard error of measurement and is observable in all testing programs. For example, if a student who scored 38 out of 40 on a test were to take the same test again, there would be 38 opportunities for him or her to incorrectly answer an item he or she answered correctly the first time, while there would be only two opportunities to correctly answer items that were missed the first time. If an item is answered differently, it is more likely to decrease the student's score than to increase it. The converse of this is also true for students with very low scores; the next time they test, they are more likely to achieve a higher score, and this higher score may be a result of regression toward the mean rather than an actual gain in achievement. It is more difficult for students with very high or very low scores to maintain their score than it is for students in the middle of the distribution.

INTERPRETING SCORES

In addition to the cautions listed above, specific issues regarding the interpretation of scores should be kept in mind.

A TAKS, SDAA, or RPTE scale score (or TAAS TLI) is not a percent of items correct. It is a standard score. Its primary function is to describe how far above or below the passing standard the student has scored. While the TAKS scale score cannot be used to measure student progress across grade levels, scale score comparisons are appropriate within a particular grade and subject area across test administrations, such as the March, April, and July grade 3 reading test administrations. Similarly, at exit level, the TAKS scale score can be used to evaluate a student's progress within a subject area between the initial exit level administration and subsequent exit level retest administrations.

Finally, for a subject area the average TAKS scale score (for example) for a group is computed by summing each student's scale score and by dividing this sum by the number of students tested. Although a particular scale score may be required to meet the standard/minimum expectations at a given grade and subject, an average score above the standard does not necessarily indicate that most students in the group passed the test. A majority of students could achieve a score just below the standard, and a small number of students could achieve very high scores, resulting in a low percent of students passing the test but an average scale

well above the standard. Only when the percent meeting the standard is above 50% can one conclude that most students passed the test.

USING OBJECTIVE-LEVEL INFORMATION

Objective-level information (regarding performance on specific student objectives) provided with the TAKS, SDAA, RPTE, and exit level TAAS tests can be useful as a preliminary survey to help identify skill areas in which further diagnosis is warranted. As with all tests given at a single point in time, the data gleaned from this snapshot should be used in conjunction with other evaluations of performance to provide an in-depth portrait of student achievement. Once an area of possible weakness has been identified, supplementary data should be gathered to further define students' instructional planning needs.

Furthermore, since the TAKS, SDAA, RPTE, and exit level TAAS exams are equated only at the total subject-area test level, year-to-year comparisons of objective-level performance should be made cautiously. Every effort is made to approximate the overall difficulty of the objectives from year to year in the test construction process, but some fluctuations in the difficulty of the objectives do occur at every administration. Observing trends in objective-level performance over time, identifying patterns of performance in clusters of objectives testing similar skills, and comparing campus or district objective-level performance to that of the region or state are appropriate uses of group objective-level information.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Standardized tests are used for evaluation and accountability in Texas as well as in other states. Test scores can be used as a valuable tool for evaluating programs, but any achievement test can give only one part of the picture. The TAKS, SDAA, RPTE, and exit level TAAS exams are not all-encompassing assessments that can measure every factor that contributes to the success or failure of a program. Although more accurate evaluation decisions can be made by considering all the data the tests provide, test results can be most helpful if considered as one component of an evaluation system.

REPORTS

Two types of reports are provided for the various testing programs: standard and optional reports. Standard reports are provided automatically to districts. Information contained in standard reports is sufficient to satisfy mandatory reporting requirements. Optional reports, which present student performance data in somewhat different formats and, in some instances, greater detail, may be purchased for a nominal fee.

Reports that are titled "confidential" contain student level results. All other reports present test results in an aggregate format.

TAKS

STANDARD REPORTS

Districts received the following TAKS standard reports in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Confidential Student Report
- Confidential Student Label
- Confidential Campus Roster—All Students
- Confidential Campus Roster—Grade 3 Reading—All Students (Online Version)

- Confidential Campus Roster—Students Not Meeting Standard
- Confidential Campus Roster—Grade 3 Reading—Students Not Meeting Standard (Online Version)
- Campus and District Summary Reports
- Campus and District Demographic Performance Summary Reports
- Campus and District Written Performance Summary Reports
- Campus and District Phase-In Summary Reports
- Item Analysis Summary Report

OPTIONAL REPORTS

The following optional TAKS reports were available in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)—CD-ROM or data diskette
- Electronic Campus and District Summary Reports—CD-ROM
- Optional Confidential Campus Roster—All Students (PDF Format)
- Optional Confidential Campus Roster—Program and Demographic Groups
- Reports for LEP and Non-LEP Students
- Optional Confidential Student Item Analysis Report

RPTE

STANDARD REPORTS

Districts received the following RPTE standard reports in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Confidential Student Report
- Confidential Student Label
- Campus and District Summary Reports
- Confidential Campus Roster—All Students
- Campus and District RPTE Cohort Report
- Item Analysis Summary Report

OPTIONAL REPORTS

The following optional RPTE reports were available in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)—CD-ROM, or data diskette
- Optional Confidential Student Item Analysis Report

SDAA

STANDARD REPORTS

Districts received the following SDAA standard reports in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Confidential Student Report

- Confidential Student Label
- Campus and District Summary Reports
- Confidential Campus Roster—All Students
- Campus and District Demographic Performance Summary
- Item Analysis Summary Report
- Analytic Summary Report—Writing (K, 1, 2)

OPTIONAL REPORTS

The following optional SDAA reports were available in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)—CD-ROM, or data diskette
- Optional Confidential Student Item Analysis Report

TAAS (EXIT LEVEL)

STANDARD REPORTS

Districts received the following TAAS standard reports in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Confidential Student Report
- Confidential Student Label (Cumulative)
- Confidential List of Students' Results
- Campus and District Summary Reports
- Campus and District Summary Reports for First-Time Tested and Retested Students
- Confidential List of Students Meeting Texas End-of-Course Testing Requirements for Graduation
- Preliminary Confidential Campus Roster—All Students
- Campus and District Demographic Performance Summary Reports
- Campus and District Demographic Performance Summary Reports for First-Time Tested and Retested Students
- Confidential Campus Roster—All Students
- Confidential List of Students Not Meeting Minimum Expectations
- Confidential "Do Not Score" Report
- Confidential Student Academic Recognition Roster
- Campus and District Written Composition Analytic Information Summary Reports

OPTIONAL REPORTS

The following optional TAAS reports were available in the 2002–2003 school year:

- Confidential Student Report (Extra Copy)
- Confidential Student Label (Second Copy)
- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)—CD-ROM, or data diskette
- Electronic Campus and District Summaries—IBM CD-ROM

- Optional Confidential Campus Roster—Program and Demographic Groups
- Optional Confidential Campus Roster—Ordered by TLI
- Optional Confidential Campus Roster – All Students (Extra Copy)
- Optional Confidential Report to Parents
- Optional District Summary of Performance Charts
- Optional Subject Area Performance Summary
- Optional Subject Area Performance Summary for LEP and Non-LEP Students
- Optional Campus and District Summary Reports for LEP and Non-LEP Students

CUMULATIVE LISTS—TAAS (EXIT LEVEL)

In September 2002 PEM provided school districts with various TAAS Cumulative Student Summary Lists for exit level students. Each list contained the student's name, campus number, date of birth, PEIMS ID number, local student ID number (if provided by district), testing dates, scores, and mastery status. PEM generated the following lists:

- An alphabetical list of students within each campus
- An alphabetical list of students within the district
- A list ordered by local student ID number within the district