

# CHAPTER 11: SCORES AND REPORTS

A variety of reports are available for each assessment instrument in the Texas assessment program and are listed in this section. Interested individuals are also directed to the TEA publication *Interpreting Assessment Reports*, which is available on the Student Assessment Division website.

## Description of Scores

For a detailed description of how test scores are derived, see Chapter 13: Scaling.

### Raw Score

The raw score is the number of items answered correctly on a subject-area test (for example, TAKS Grade 4 reading). 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, SDAA II, RPTE, and exit level TAAS tests.

### TAKS Scale Score

The scale score allows scores to be compared 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 can be used to evaluate a student's annual growth and pinpoint how high or low a student performs within an RPTE proficiency level. This score accounts for differences in the difficulty of grade-cluster test forms across administrations. See Chapter 4 for more information about RPTE.

### TAAS Scale Score (Exit Level Writing)

The TAAS writing scale score not only can be used to determine whether a student has met minimum expectations but can also be used to examine student progress across administrations. This scale score ranges from approximately 400 to 2400, with a minimum expectations score of 1500. The score of 1500 represents the same level of achievement at each administration of the exit level writing test and thus adjusts for differences in the difficulty of test forms across administrations.

## TAAS Texas Learning Index (Exit Level Reading and Mathematics)

The Texas Learning Index (TLI) allows for comparison across administrations within a subject area for the TAAS exit level reading and mathematics tests. 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 Uses for Scores and Reports

As with other assessments that record the progress of students in a snapshot, scores from these assessments must be used appropriately if these scores are to be valid indicators of student performance. All test result uses regarding individual students or groups of students should incorporate as much data as possible.

State statute requires that the State Board of Education adopt a set of indicators for determining the quality of learning on a campus. Included in those indicators are test results from the statewide student assessment program. All statewide tests in Texas are based on the following premises.

- The tests are grounded in the TEKS and reflect those skills in a manner consistent with sound instructional practice.
- Information about the content, level of expectation, and structure of the tests is based on judgments made by Texas educators, students, and the public.
- Texas educators participate in all phases of test development.
- Test results are useful for providing a snapshot of individual student performance, an indicator of areas in which further diagnosis is warranted, and a mechanism for providing a level playing field for comparing the performance of campuses and districts.

The student performance data reports are designed to provide information about student achievement. This information may be used in a variety of ways, some of which are outlined below.

- *Reporting results to parents of individual students.* The TAKS and SDAA II reports contain information about the student's achievement in relation to the performance standards, the content areas in which the student may need instructional intervention, and the specific skills in which further diagnosis is indicated. TELPAS reports provide information about students' English-language development in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The information in these reports can help parents more fully understand their child's academic performance.

- *Reporting results to the local school board, school professionals, and the community.* Although individual student's scores are confidential by law, reports of group (aggregated) scores are considered public record. However, if the specific group (e.g., limited English proficient students) contains fewer than five students, scores are not included in reports to protect student confidentiality.
- *Evaluating student scores for use in placement decisions.* Instructional intervention is required by state law for students exhibiting difficulty with skills on TAKS, SDAA II, and RPTE tests. Student test scores may also be used in conjunction with other performance indicators to assist schools in making placement decisions, such as whether a student should take a reading improvement course, be placed in a gifted and talented program, or exit a bilingual program.
- *Evaluating programs, resources, and staffing patterns.* Districts may use campus and district test scores in evaluating a particular program, resource, or staffing pattern. For example, a campus may use its scores to evaluate the improvement of students in an at-risk program or to assess the need to focus resources and staff on a particular group of students.
- *Evaluating district and campus instructional programs.* Since the tests are designed to measure the TEKS for reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, considering performance results by subject area and by objective may be helpful when evaluating instructional programs. Generalizations from student scores can be made to the specific content represented by the objective or set of objectives being measured on the examination. However, because the tests measure a finite set of skills with a limited set of item types, any generalizations about student achievement that are derived solely from a particular test should be made cautiously and with full reference to the fact that the conclusions were based only on that test.

## **TAKS and TAAS Results for Individual Students**

Scale scores and TLIs indicate whether a student has met standard/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. Beginning in August 2004, students who have not met the standard on one or more exit level TAKS tests were provided with personalized study guides at no charge.

If a student has been administered a TAKS or exit level TAAS test at least twice, both scale scores and TLI scores can be used to gauge the 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 a 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 of the student's test performance data as possible.

## **Groups of Students**

Test results can be used to evaluate the performance of a student group over time. Average scale scores, TLIs, and the percent meeting the standard/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 students receiving special education services who are taking the Grade 4 TAKS reading test can be compared for spring 2003, spring 2004, and so on.

Test scores can also be used to compare the performance of different demographic or program groups to one another. TAKS, SDAA II, RPTE, and exit level TAAS 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 can be made to the specific content domain represented by the objective or set of objectives being measured on the test. However, because each test measures a finite set of skills with a limited set of items, any generalizations about student achievement that are derived solely from a particular test should be made cautiously and with full reference to the fact that the conclusions were based only on that 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.

## SDAA II Results for Individual Students

SDAA II is designed to measure the academic progress of students who receive special education services and for whom TAKS is inappropriate. It provides information about students' performance in the TEKS curriculum and on the effectiveness of instructional programs. SDAA II tests have no statewide predetermined passing standard, and results cannot be used to compare one student to another. This is one of the main differences between the SDAA II 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 II results should not be used in isolation.

The SDAA II achievement level is a measure determined by the number of items a student answers correctly on SDAA II. It has two purposes: it describes a student's performance on SDAA II, and it allows for an evaluation of the student's progress from year to year in reading and mathematics. The SDAA II writing/ELA test is administered only to students enrolled in Grades 4, 7, and 10. Therefore, results cannot be compared over two consecutive years. Instead, SDAA II writing/ELA test results can assist ARD committees in evaluating student performance and developing individualized education program (IEP) goals and objectives for future writing/ELA instruction. There are three achievement levels (I–III) within each instructional level. A description of the performance associated with each achievement level follows.

**Level I:** Few, if any, of the test questions were answered correctly (beginning knowledge and skills).

**Level II:** Many of the test questions were answered correctly (developing knowledge and skills).

**Level III:** Most or all of the test questions were answered correctly (proficient knowledge and skills).

The SDAA II testing program includes a TAKS Equivalency Standard for the reading, English language arts, and mathematics assessments. Students for whom SDAA II is the most appropriate assessment may demonstrate performance that is equivalent to Met Standard on TAKS if they are testing on grade level and earn a score that places them at Achievement Level III. Performance on SDAA II at or above the TAKS Equivalency Standard does not necessarily imply that a student would have performed at or above Met Standard on TAKS. Further, meeting the TAKS Equivalency Standard on SDAA II does not imply that a student who took SDAA II should have taken TAKS or should take TAKS in the future. Unlike TAKS, SDAA II provides a measure of academic progress that is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities by allowing for most accommodations and/or modifications that meet the needs of these students. The ARD committee must continue to determine which assessment is most appropriate for each student based on the IEP.

## TELPAS Results for Individual Students

The TELPAS assessments (RPTE and TOP) are not designed to measure mastery of content with a pass or fail score. This is one of the main differences between the TELPAS and TAKS assessments. The TELPAS test 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 four proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. The progress of students along this continuum is the basis for the TELPAS reporting system and the key to helping districts monitor whether their LEP students are making steady annual growth as they learn to listen, speak, read, and write in English.

Students who take the TELPAS assessments receive proficiency ratings in each language area assessed—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as a composite rating that combines the four language-area ratings into one overall English language proficiency rating. The following gives a brief description of the abilities associated with each level of proficiency.

**Beginning level of English language proficiency:** Students who receive this rating are in the early stages of learning English. These students have a small vocabulary of very common words and little ability to use English in academic settings. These students often communicate using English they have memorized.

- Beginning listeners struggle to understand simple conversations and to identify and distinguish individual words and phrases spoken in English.
- Beginning speakers mainly speak using single words and short phrases and lack the knowledge of English grammar necessary to connect ideas and speak in sentences.
- Beginning readers' ability to derive meaning from English text is minimal. They rely heavily on previous knowledge of the topic, their limited vocabulary, and pictures to gain meaning from English text.
- Beginning writers lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures and grammar necessary to build writing skills in English and address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a meaningful way.

**Intermediate level of English language proficiency:** Students who receive this rating are able to use common, basic English in routine academic activities but need considerable English-language support to make learning understandable. Socially, these students are able to communicate simply about familiar topics and are generally able to understand conversations but may not comprehend all the details.

- Intermediate listeners usually understand simple or routine directions as well as short, simple conversations and discussions on familiar topics. They frequently understand only part of what they hear and seek clarification by requesting the speaker to repeat, slow down, or rephrase speech.

- Intermediate speakers know enough English to speak in a simple manner using basic vocabulary. They are able to participate in short conversations and speak in sentences, though they may hesitate frequently and for long periods to think of how to communicate their intended meaning.
- Intermediate readers are able to understand short connected texts on familiar topics but tend to interpret English very literally and have difficulty following story lines that have a surprise twist or nonstandard format. Because their English vocabulary consists mainly of high-frequency words, they rely heavily on prior knowledge of a topic for comprehension and need the support of pictures that illustrate meaning.
- Intermediate writers have a limited ability to use the English language to build writing skills and a limited ability to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in English. They frequently exhibit features of their primary language when expressing themselves in English and are sometimes unable to be understood by individuals not accustomed to English language learners.

**Advanced level of English language proficiency:** Students who receive this rating are able to use academic English in classroom activities when given some English-language support. In social situations, these students can understand most of what they hear but have some difficulty with unfamiliar grammar and vocabulary.

- Advanced listeners can usually understand longer conversations and class discussions but sometimes need visuals, verbal cues, and gestures to support understanding.
- Advanced speakers can participate comfortably in most conversations and academic discussions on familiar topics, with occasional pauses to restate, repeat, or search for words or phrases to clarify meaning. They can narrate, describe, and explain in some detail and have an emerging ability to speak in English using grade-appropriate sentences and grammar structures.
- Advanced readers can often engage in grade-appropriate reading activities because they have acquired a variety of grade-appropriate English vocabulary and are familiar with the basic structures of the English language. With support, they can use this knowledge to understand texts that introduce them to unfamiliar topics, and they can move beyond literal comprehension to begin to think critically about ideas presented in grade-appropriate texts.
- Advanced writers have enough knowledge of English to address grade-appropriate writing tasks with support. They have a grasp of a variety of verb tenses and sentence patterns, and they can communicate their ideas in some detail, although they often require assistance when topics are abstract, academically challenging, or unfamiliar.

**Advanced high level of English language proficiency:** Students who receive this rating are able to use academic English in classroom activities with little English-language support from others, even when learning about unfamiliar material. Students at this level have a large enough vocabulary in English to communicate clearly and fluently in most situations.

- Advanced high listeners can understand long conversations and class discussions with little dependence on visuals, verbal cues, and gestures to support understanding. In both social and instructional interactions, they are able to understand main points and details at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers.
- Advanced high speakers are able to use abstract and content-based vocabulary and can participate in extended discussions on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics with only occasional disruptions or hesitations.
- Advanced high readers may have occasional difficulty with low-frequency vocabulary or new English expressions but demonstrate, at a level nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers, comprehension of both explicit and implicit information in grade-appropriate texts.
- Advanced high writers have acquired the English vocabulary and command of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks. They are nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers in their ability to express themselves clearly and precisely, with occasional exceptions when dealing with complex or abstract ideas or when attempting to use low-frequency words and expressions.

## 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 regression toward the mean. This regression effect is related to the standard error of measurement and is present and observable in all testing programs. Students who scored high on a test may achieve a lower score the next time they test due to regression toward the mean rather than to an actual decrease in achievement. For example, if a student who answered correctly 38 out of 40 items 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 achieving 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 to 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.

The primary function of a TAKS or RPTE scale score (or TAAS TLI) is to describe how far above or below the performance standards 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 February, April, and June Grade 3 TAKS 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 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 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 of students meeting the standard is above 50 can one conclude that most students passed the test. Therefore, both the average scale score and the percent meeting the standard should be examined when comparing results from one administration to another.

## Using Objective-Level Information

Objective-level information (regarding performance on specific student objectives) provided with the TAKS, SDAA II, 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 needs for instructional intervention.

Furthermore, since the TAKS, SDAA II, RPTE, and exit level TAAS tests 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 provide only one part of the picture. The TAKS, SDAA II, RPTE, and exit level TAAS tests 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. 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 include “confidential” in the title contain student-level results. All other reports present test results in an aggregate format and are considered public information.

## TAKS

### Standard Reports

Districts received the following TAKS standard reports in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Confidential Student Report\*
- Confidential Student Label\*
- Confidential List of Students’ Results\*
- Confidential Campus Roster—All Students\*
- Confidential Campus Roster—Students Not Meeting Standard
- Grades 3 and 5 Cumulative Summary Reports for Retest Administrations
- 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
- Preliminary Confidential Campus Roster—All students\*
- Preliminary Confidential Campus Roster—Students Not Meeting Standard

## **Optional Reports**

The following optional TAKS reports were available in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)\*
- Electronic Campus and District Summary Data File
- Confidential Campus Roster—Program and Demographic Groups\*
- Campus and District Summary Reports for LEP and Non-LEP Students
- Confidential Images of Essays and Open-Ended Responses
- All reports were available in PDF format on CD-ROM or on the NCS SchoolHouse website.

\*LAT information included in these reports.

## **SDAA II**

### **Standard Reports**

Districts received the following SDAA II standard reports in the 2004–2005 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

### **Optional Reports**

The following optional SDAA II reports were available in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)
- Optimal Confidential Student Item Analysis Report
- Confidential Images of Essays and Open-Ended Responses
- All reports were available in PDF format on CD-ROM or on the NCS SchoolHouse website.

# TELPAS

## Standard Reports

Districts received the following TELPAS standard reports in the 2004–2005 school year.

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

## Optional Reports

The following optional TELPAS reports were available in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)
- All reports were available in PDF format on CD-ROM or on the PEM SchoolHouse website.

# Exit Level TAAS

## Standard Reports

Districts received the following TAAS standard reports in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Confidential Student Report
- Confidential Student Label (Cumulative)
- Confidential List of Students' Results
- Campus and District Summary Reports
- Preliminary Confidential Campus Roster—All Students (February and October tests only)

## Optional Reports

The following optional TAAS reports were available in the 2004–2005 school year.

- Electronic Individual Student Record File (Confidential)
- Electronic Campus and District Summary Data File
- All reports were available in PDF format on CD-ROM or on the PEM SchoolHouse website.