

# CHAPTER 6: TEST ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

During the 2005–2006 school year, the English-version TAKS/TAKS–I was administered to approximately 2,800,000 students; the Spanish-version TAKS/TAKS–I to approximately 58,000 students; SDAA II to approximately 260,000 students; and TELPAS to approximately 639,000 students.

Districts administered the TAKS/TAKS–I tests to eligible examinees as indicated below.

## Fall—2005

**October:** **English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies** retests at exit level

**December:** **ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies** retests at exit level (online only)

## Spring/Summer—2006

**February:** **Writing** at grades 4 and 7 English and grade 4 (Spanish version)

**Reading** at grades 3, 5, and 9 (grade 9 in online and paper formats) English and grades 3 and 5 (Spanish version)

**ELA** at grade 10 and at exit level\*

**ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies** retests at exit level

**April:** **Mathematics** at grades 3–10 (grade 8 in online and paper formats) and at exit level\* English and grades 3–6 (Spanish version)

**Reading** at grades 4, 6, 7, and 8 (grade 8 in online and paper formats) English and grades 4 and 6 (Spanish version)

**Reading** retests at grades 3 and 5 English and grades 3 and 5 (Spanish version)

**Science** at grades 5\*, 8 (grade 8 in online and paper formats)\*, 10\*, and at exit level\* and grade 5 (Spanish version)\*

**Social Studies** at grades 8 (grade 9 in online and paper formats)\*, 10\*, and at exit level\*

**ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies** retests at exit level

**May:** **Mathematics** retest at grade 5 English and grade 5 (Spanish version)

**June:** **Reading** retests at grades 3 and 5 English and grades 3 and 5 (Spanish version)

**Mathematics** retest at grade 5 English and grade 5 (Spanish version)

**July:** **ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies** retests at exit level\* (online and paper)

\* TAKS–I was administered at this grade and subject.

In February 2006 SDAA II writing tests were administered to students enrolled at grades 4, 7, and 10. SDAA II reading tests were administered at grade 9, and SDAA II ELA tests were administered at grade 10. In April SDAA II mathematics tests were administered at grades 3–10, and SDAA II reading tests were administered at grades 3–8.

TAKS–I measured the academic progress of students receiving special education services in the state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum on or near grade level. In February 2006 the TAKS–I ELA test was administered at the exit level. In April TAKS–I science at grades 5, 8, 10, and exit level, grade 5 science (Spanish version), grades 8, 10, and exit level social studies, and mathematics at the exit level were administered.

For Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) assessments were administered at grades 3–12 in March, along with a grade 2 RPTE II online/paper pilot, and Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) at grades K–12.

Districts administered the TAAS exit level writing, mathematics, and reading retests in October 2005 and in February, April, and July 2006. The calendars for the 2005–2006 test administrations are included in Appendix 15.

## **Training and Materials**

Test administration procedures must be followed exactly so that all individuals eligible for testing have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic achievement. To meet this goal, TEA develops and provides instruction to train all testing personnel across the state on test administration procedures. Each year preparation for test administration begins with a training session for testing coordinators and other personnel from each of the 20 regional education service centers (ESCs) as well as district testing coordinators from some of the state’s largest districts. Using information and materials provided in the TEA training session, the ESC regional testing coordinators train the district coordinators in their respective regions. District coordinators train campus testing coordinators, who are responsible for training campus test administrators.

For each test administration in the 2005–2006 school year, ESC personnel and district coordinators were provided with a district testing coordinator packet, which contained the information and materials necessary for overseeing test administrations including district and campus coordinator and test administrator manuals that provided an overview of the statewide testing program. Separate packets and manuals were provided for TAKS/TAKS–I, TELPAS, SDAA II, and TAAS exit level.

## **Test Security**

Maintaining test security is an important consideration throughout the test administration process. As defined by the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Subchapter B, TAKS, TAKS–I, SDAA II, TELPAS, TAAS, and End-of-Course online are secure testing programs. In addition, any field tests for the TAKS, TAKS–I, SDAA II, TELPAS, and End-of-Course online

programs are also secure. All test materials must be handled in strict accordance with the instructions contained in test and program administration materials. Each person with access to test materials must maintain and preserve the security and confidential integrity of the TAKS, TAKS–I, SDAA II, TELPAS, TAAS, and End-of-Course online tests. All district and campus personnel who handle secure test materials are required to complete an Oath of Test Security and Confidential Integrity.

Incidents resulting in a deviation from documented procedures are defined as testing irregularities. The superintendent and campus principal of each school district, chief administrative officer of each charter school, and any private school administering tests must develop procedures to ensure the security and confidential integrity of the testing program, and must notify TEA of conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of administered tests.

A critical feature of test security involves accounting for all secure materials before, during, and after each test administration. Each test booklet and secure SDAA II test administrator manual has a unique security number that is used for tracking purposes. Only authorized personnel may have access to test materials, and all secure items must be kept in locked storage when not in use. When testing has concluded, all secure materials assigned to individual campuses must be returned to the district’s testing coordinator, who then ships them to the testing contractor.

The return of test materials after each administration is critical for two reasons. First, scorable test materials must be returned for scoring so that student reports can be generated. Second, test booklets must be returned to preserve the security and confidential integrity of field-test items, which may be used on future tests.

Pearson Educational Measurement (PEM) assigns secure test booklets to districts by unique nine-digit bar-coded security numbers. Districts complete and return answer document packing lists with their test materials to help PEM determine whether any student answer documents are missing. PEM compares bar-code scan files of returned test booklets with test booklet distribution files to determine whether all secure materials have been returned from each campus and district. Districts are responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of all test materials and their secure return. PEM contacts any district with missing test booklets. During the 2005–2006 school year, PEM scanned approximately 8.7 million TAKS/TAKS–I test booklets, 3 million SDAA II test booklets, 615,000 RPTE test booklets, and 13,000 TAAS exit level test booklets returned by districts to ensure that all secure test booklets were accounted for. In addition, PEM scanned more than two million TAKS/TAKS–I and SDAA II field-test booklets and secure manuals.

More detailed information about test security procedures can be found in the *2006 District and Campus Coordinator Manual*.

In an effort to improve security procedures, TEA commissioned Dr. Gregory Cizek of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to review current practices and to make recommendations for improvements in the program. As a result of this review, test security

procedures were enhanced for the 2005–2006 school year, and more stringent procedures are in place to help ensure the overall security of the state assessment program.

## Testing Accommodations

A testing accommodation is a change to the testing environment to assist a student with special needs so that assessment can mirror instruction as much as possible without invalidating test results. District and campus testing coordinators are responsible for communicating information about testing accommodations to test administrators and other interested individuals. Information about testing accommodations is also included in the test administrator manuals.

The decision to use a particular accommodation with a student should be made on an individual basis and should take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in classroom instruction and testing. If a student receives special education services, all accommodations must be documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

The following guidelines for testing accommodations were in place for the 2005–2006 school year, as stated in the *2006 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and in the *TAAS Directions for District Coordinators, Campus Coordinators, and Test Administrators*.

### Allowable Accommodations—TAKS

- Instructions given orally before or after the test may be either signed to an examinee who is deaf or hearing impaired, or translated into the native language of an examinee with limited English proficiency.
- The writing prompt may be signed to an examinee who is deaf or hearing impaired, but no elaboration on the prompt may be provided.
- An examinee may place a colored overlay or a magnifying device over the test or use a blank place marker with the test and the answer document. Test booklets are secure documents and may not be photocopied onto colored paper due to security issues. Blank answer documents, which do not contain secure information, may be copied onto colored paper; however, they must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard answer document for scoring.
- An examinee may be tested in a small group or receive an individual administration. In an individual administration the examinee may read aloud while working or read the test into a tape recorder during testing and play it back while working. A test administrator must be present in the testing room at all times. All tape recordings must be returned with the nonscorable materials.
- An eligible examinee may use a large-print or braille version of the test.
- If an examinee has a temporary or permanent disabling condition that interferes with his or her ability to record machine-scorable responses, the examinee may respond orally to test items, mark responses in the test booklet, type responses, or

record responses on a dry-erase board, chalkboard, or scratch paper. An individual administration may be necessary for this type of accommodation. The test administrator must record these responses verbatim on a scorable answer document and write “Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)” at the top of the answer document. Transcription must be done in No. 2 pencil. Test responses cannot be scored unless they appear on the answer document.

- An examinee may have a temporary or permanent disabling condition that interferes with his or her ability to write the composition or the responses to open-ended test items. In these circumstances the examinee may tape-record the responses or essay while composing and then play the tape back for the test administrator, noting spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Afterward, the examinee must be allowed to review the responses or essay and indicate where he or she would like to make corrections. The test administrator must record the work verbatim on a standard answer document and write “Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)” at the top of the appropriate answer document page(s). Test responses cannot be scored unless they appear on the answer document. All tape recordings must be returned with the nonscorable materials.
- An eligible examinee may type the written composition or the responses to open-ended test items on a typewriter, portable word processor, or a computer but may not use features such as spell-check or the word predictability function. In addition, student responses may not be saved to a disk or hard drive. The composition or responses must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard answer document for scoring. The test administrator must write “Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)” at the top of the appropriate answer document page(s). Transcription must be done in No. 2 pencil. Test responses cannot be scored unless they appear on the answer document. After the composition or responses have been transcribed, the typed version of the work must be returned with the nonscorable materials.

### **Nonallowable Accommodations—TAKS**

- The examinee may not receive any reading assistance on TAKS, with the exception of the grade 3 mathematics test.
- Students may not receive an oral administration of the writing, reading, or ELA tests (with the exception of the writing prompt).
- The examinee may not use foreign-language reference materials.
- Students may not use a calculator on the mathematics tests at grades 3–8 or on the science tests at grade 5 and 8.
- Test items must not be translated. This includes reading and writing selections.
- Test questions, answer choices, selections, and writing prompts may not be rephrased or clarified.
- Other accommodations that would invalidate the test are prohibited.

## Linguistically Accommodated Testing

In spring 2005 TEA implemented a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) alternative assessment process for students who by state law meet the criteria for a limited English proficient (LEP) exemption from the TAKS mathematics tests in grades 3–8 and 10. This alternative assessment process was instituted to meet NCLB requirements for including exempted recent immigrant LEP students in federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability measures. Students eligible for a LAT administration of TAKS take a separate, secure form of the TAKS mathematics test.

The linguistic accommodations used in LAT administrations are designed to help students better understand the language used in the mathematics test questions. The particular accommodations selected are required to be consistent with the accommodations used in a student's routine mathematics instruction and testing. The language proficiency assessment committee and mathematics teacher meet to determine and document the appropriate linguistic accommodations for each eligible student.

Allowable accommodations include linguistic simplification, reading assistance, bilingual dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, oral translation, and use of Spanish-version and English-version tests side by side. The accommodations made during LAT administrations must not include explanations, definitions, pictures, gestures, or examples related to mathematics terminology, concepts, or skills assessed since such assistance would invalidate the test results. More detailed information about LAT accommodations may be found in the test administrations manuals and the TEA publication titled *LPAC Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program: Procedural Manual*, which is available on the TEA Student Assessment Division website.

During the 2005–2006 school year, LAT test administrators received test administration training through a training-of-trainers model. The education service center (ESC) training session conducted in December 2005 included annotated examples of appropriate linguistic accommodations using released mathematics test questions and practice materials. Also for the 2005–2006 school year, TEA developed a *Linguistically Accommodated Testing (LAT) Test Administrator Manual*, which serves as the basis for training in LAT test administration procedures. Finally, TEA provided secure, state-developed *Linguistic Simplification Guides*. These guides delineate ways to simplify the language in LAT mathematics test questions and are used by test administrators with students for whom this accommodation is necessary.

## Educational Materials Required for Testing—TAKS

### Dictionaries and Thesauruses

English-language dictionaries and thesauruses must be provided to examinees for

- the written composition portion of the grade 7 writing test,
- the entire grade 9 reading test, and
- the reading and written composition portion of the grade 10 and exit level English language arts (ELA) tests.

There must be at least one dictionary for every five examinees; it is also recommended that there be one thesaurus for every five examinees, if possible. Examinees may also use a combination dictionary/thesaurus. Note that an English as a second language (ESL) dictionary, which uses simple English and pictures to define words, may be provided for limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Examinees may not use a dictionary or thesaurus on the revising and editing portion of either the grade 7 writing test or the grade 10 and exit level ELA tests. The grade 7 writing test and the ELA tests contain two sealed sections; the first section contains the written composition portion (grade 7) or the written composition and reading portion (grade 10 and exit level), and the second sealed section contains the revising and editing portion. After an examinee completes the first sealed section, the test administrator will collect the examinee's dictionary and thesaurus. The examinee may then break the seal on the second sealed section and begin the revising and editing portion of the test.

### **Calculators**

For the mathematics tests at grades 9 and 10 and at exit level, districts must provide each examinee with a graphing calculator for the entire administration. Students may use their own calculators instead of those provided by the district. Any kind of graphing calculator may be used except one with a typewriter-style keypad (known as QWERTY) or one that includes a computer algebra system (CAS). Handheld minicomputers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), or laptop computers may not be used. All types of memory, including standard memory, ROM, and flash ROM, must be cleared to factory default both before and after testing. In addition, any programs or applications must be removed prior to the test administration.

Calculators may also be used on the grade 10 and exit level science tests. Examinees must have access to four-function, scientific, or graphing calculators. Again, students may use their own calculators instead of those provided by the district. There must be at least one calculator for every five examinees. Examinees may share calculators on the science tests. However, a calculator's memory must be cleared after each examinee uses it. The guidelines for types of graphing calculators, clearing of memory, and removal of programs and applications for the science tests are the same as those listed for mathematics. Students taking the grade 5 or grade 8 science tests may not use calculators.

### **Dyslexia Accommodations—TAKS Reading**

In spring 2004 a study was conducted to evaluate the effects of a series of accommodations on the performance of elementary students who have been identified with dyslexia on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) reading test. This study focused on three accommodations that might benefit these students on the TAKS reading test:

- orally reading all proper nouns associated with each passage before students began individual reading,
- orally reading all questions and answer choices to students, and
- extending the testing time over a two-day period.

These three accommodations were “bundled,” meaning the accommodations listed above were provided together. The purpose of the study was not to determine which accommodation was most effective but whether these bundled accommodations leveled the playing field for students who have been identified with dyslexia or who have difficulty reading words in isolation, allowing them to demonstrate their best reading performance without invalidating the test as an accurate measure of reading comprehension.

Beginning in spring 2006, the three bundled accommodations were available for students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who met the eligibility requirements below. These accommodations were used to administer both English and Spanish version TAKS reading tests, including all three SSI tests at grades 3 and 5. In spring 2006 an additional study was conducted to evaluate the effects of a bundled accommodation package for older students with dyslexia on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). An accommodated assessment was administered to individuals with significant word recognition difficulties identified for reading problems in dyslexia or special education programs in Grades 7 and 11 to determine whether a bundle of accommodations effective with third graders was also effective with older students. In the Grade 7 study, test administrators administered the reading test in three formats: with all three accommodations as a “bundled” package, with the first two accommodations only, or in the standard manner. In Grade 11, test administrators administered the test with all three accommodations as a “bundled” package or in the standard manner. Study results at Grade 7 supported extending the bundled accommodations (including the administration over two days) to students in middle school who show clear evidence of decoding problems. Study results at Grade 11 were not clear and indicated that more research is needed on accommodations for high school students. See Appendix 16 for more details on the study.

## **Eligibility**

In the spring 2006 administrations, student who met the following criteria were eligible to receive the set of three bundled accommodations on English and Spanish TAKS reading tests at grades 3, 4, or 5.

- A student not receiving special education services had to be identified with dyslexia. A student receiving special education services had to either be identified with dyslexia or have a severe reading disability that exhibited the characteristics of dyslexia, causing the student to lack word-identification skills and to have difficulty reading words in isolation.
- The student had to routinely receive accommodations in classroom instruction and testing that addressed the difficulties he or she has reading words in isolation.

The test administrator must indicate that the student received the dyslexia accommodation by marking the Dyslexia Accom. field on the front of the answer document.

## **Authority for Decision**

For a student with dyslexia not receiving special education services who met both criteria above, the decision to provide the bundled accommodations had to be made either by the student’s placement committee as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

or by the committee of knowledgeable persons as outlined in *The Dyslexia Handbook* (available on the TEA website). In both of these cases, the committee's decision had to be documented in writing in accordance with district policies and procedures.

For a student receiving special education services who met both criteria above, the decision to provide the bundled accommodations had to be made by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP).

## **Allowable Accommodations—TAKS–I**

A testing accommodation is a change to the testing environment to assist a student who receives special education services so that assessment mirrors instruction as much as possible without invalidating test results. The ARD committee must make and document the decision to allow any accommodations.

The ARD committee should consider

- the needs of the student; and
- whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in instruction and testing.

With the exception of the nonallowable accommodations listed below, accommodations documented in the individualized education program (IEP) that are necessary to address the student's instructional needs based on his or her disability but do not invalidate the assessment may be used. All accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP.

- A student may use the blank pages in the test booklet to plan his or her writing, but the composition must be written on the answer document. A student's written composition cannot be scored unless it is written on the answer document.

## **Nonallowable Accommodations—TAKS–I**

The following accommodations are nonallowable because they would invalidate the test results:

- The test administrator may not provide any direct or indirect assistance or reinforcement that identifies or aids in the identification of the correct response to an item.
- Test questions, answer choices, and the writing prompt may not be translated (except in sign language), rephrased, or clarified.
- The student may not have the number of answer choices for an item reduced.
- The TAKS–I ELA test (with the exception of the writing prompt) may not be read aloud to students.

- Test booklets are secure documents and may not be photocopied onto colored paper. Answer documents, which are not secure, may be copied onto colored paper; however, they must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard document for scoring. After transcription, color copies of answer documents must be destroyed.
- Other accommodations that would invalidate the test are prohibited.

## **Allowable Accommodations—SDAA II**

The ARD committee must make and document the decision to allow any accommodations. The ARD committee should consider

- the needs of the student; and
- whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in instruction and testing.

With the exception of the nonallowable accommodations listed below, accommodations documented in the individualized education program (IEP) that are necessary to address the student's instructional needs based on his or her disability but do not invalidate the assessment may be used. All accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP.

## **Nonallowable Accommodations—SDAA II**

- The test administrator may not provide any direct or indirect assistance or reinforcement that identifies or aids in the identification of the correct response to an item.
- Test questions, answer choices, and the writing prompt may not be translated (except into sign language), rephrased, or clarified.
- The student may not have the number of answer choices for an item reduced.
- The reading, writing, and ELA tests (with the exception of the writing prompt) may not be read aloud to students at Instructional Levels 2–10.
- Test booklets are secure documents and may not be photocopied onto colored paper. Answer documents, which are not secure, may be copied onto colored paper; however, they must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard document for scoring. After transcription, color copies of answer documents must be destroyed.
- Other accommodations that would invalidate the test are prohibited.

## **Allowable Accommodations—RPTE**

The decision to use a particular accommodation with a student should be made on an individual basis and should take into consideration both the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in classroom instruction and testing. If a

student receives special education services, all accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP.

- Instructions given orally before or after the test may be either signed to a student who is deaf or hearing impaired or translated into the student's native language.
- A student may place a colored overlay or a magnifying device over the test or use a blank place marker with the test and answer document. Test booklets are secure documents and may not be photocopied onto colored paper due to security issues. Answer documents, which are not secure, may be copied onto colored paper; however, they must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard answer document for scoring.
- A student may be tested in a small group or receive an individual administration. In an individual administration the student may read aloud while working or may read the test into a tape recorder during testing and play it back while working. A test administrator must be present in the testing room at all times. All tape recordings must be returned with the nonscorable materials.
- A student with a visual impairment may use a large-print version of the test. No braille tests are available.
- If a student has a temporary or permanent disabling condition that interferes with his or her ability to record machine-scorable responses, the student may respond orally to test items or mark responses in the test booklet. The test administrator must record these responses verbatim on a scorable test booklet or answer document. Administrators must write "Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)" at the top of the scorable test booklet or answer document. Transcription must be done in No.2 pencil. Test responses cannot be scored unless they appear on the scorable test booklet or answer document.

### **Nonallowable Accommodations—RPTE**

- The student may not receive any reading assistance.
- The student may not use English-language or foreign-language reference materials.
- Test items and reading selections must not be translated.
- Test questions, answer choices, and selections may not be rephrased or clarified.
- Other accommodations that would invalidate the test are prohibited.

### **Allowable Accommodations—TAAS Exit Level**

The decision to use a particular accommodation with a student should be made on an individual basis and should take into consideration both the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the accommodation in classroom instruction and testing. Any student may be considered for an accommodation. If a student receives special education services, all accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP.

- Instructions given orally before or after the test may be either signed to an examinee who is deaf or hearing impaired, or translated into the native language of an examinee with limited English proficiency.
- The writing prompt may be signed to an examinee who is deaf or hearing impaired, but no elaboration on the prompt may be provided.
- An examinee may place a colored overlay over the test or use a blank place marker with the test and answer document.
- An examinee may be tested in a small group or receive an individual administration. In an individual administration, the examinee may read aloud while working or read the test into a tape recorder during testing and play it back while working. A test administrator must be present in the testing room at all times. All tape recordings must be turned in with the nonscorable materials.
- An examinee may use a large-print or braille version of the test.
- An examinee may have a temporary or permanent disabling condition that interferes with his or her ability to write the composition. In these circumstances the examinee may tape-record the essay while composing it and then play it back for the test administrator, noting spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Afterward the examinee must be allowed to read over the composition and indicate where he or she would like to make corrections. The test administrator must record these responses verbatim on a standard answer document and write “Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)” at the top of the written composition page. Test responses cannot be scored unless they appear on the answer document. All tape recordings must be turned in with the nonscorable materials.
- An examinee may type the written composition on a typewriter or on a computer but may not use the computer’s spell-check feature or the word predictability function and may not save the document. The composition must be transcribed verbatim onto a standard answer document for scoring. The test administrator must write “Transcribed by (NAME) because (REASON)” at the top of the written composition page. After the composition has been transcribed, the typed version of the work must be turned in with the nonscorable materials.

### **Nonallowable Accommodations—TAAS Exit Level**

- The examinee may not receive any reading assistance on the writing or reading tests. Examinees who are identified as having a disability that affects their reading may qualify for an oral administration of the mathematics test.
- The examinee may not use English-language or foreign-language reference materials.
- The examinee may not use a calculator, slide rule, or mathematics chart other than the chart that is provided with the testing materials.
- Test items must not be translated. This includes reading and writing selections.
- Test questions, answer choices, selections, and writing prompts may not be rephrased or clarified.
- Other accommodations that would invalidate the test are prohibited.

## Oral Administration

### Eligibility

A test administrator may read aloud or sign the test questions and answer choices for mathematics, science, and social studies tests to

- an eligible examinee identified as having a disability that affects the examinee's reading and who regularly receives this accommodation in the classroom; and
- an examinee who is deaf or hearing impaired and whose IEP requires the signing of daily instruction.

Only students served by special education or Section 504 may receive an oral administration of TAKS, SDAA II, or TAAS exit level. Any student taking TAKS-I may receive an oral administration.

### Authority for Decision

A student who meets the eligibility criteria may receive an oral administration. The decision to provide an oral administration to a student receiving special education services should be made by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and must be documented in the student's IEP. For a student not in special education, this determination rests with the student's placement committee required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

For the TAKS and TAKS-I programs, the oral administration is available only for the mathematics, science, and social studies tests. It is not available for the English language arts, reading, and writing tests. For the TAAS program, the oral administration is available only for the mathematics test. It is not available for the reading or writing tests.

The test administrator must indicate that the student received an oral administration by completing the appropriate code in the "OA" (oral administration) field on the front of the TAKS, TAKS-I, or TAAS answer document. When this field is marked, the oral administration will be noted on the student's performance report.

For the SDAA II program, an oral administration is available only for the mathematics test. It is not available for the reading, writing, or ELA tests. Instructional Levels K, 1, and 2 of the SDAA II mathematics test are specifically designed to be read aloud to students. IEP documentation of oral administration is not required for these instructional levels.

### Students with Visual Impairments

Large-print test booklets are available for all TAKS (LAT included), TAKS-I, SDAA II, and RPTE operational administrations.

Braille test booklets are only available for

- TAAS operational administrations;
- TAKS operational administrations; and

- operational administrations of SDAA II writing at Instructional Levels 3/4–8/9, reading at Instructional Levels 2–9, ELA at Instructional Level 10, and mathematics at Instructional Levels K–10.

Braille test booklets are not available for TAKS–I, LAT, or RPTE administrations.

Test administrators receive instructions for testing visually impaired students with braille or large-print test booklets. Districts are instructed to indicate on the answer document whether a student used a large-print or braille version of a test.

## **ARD- and LEP-Exempt Students**

Assessment requirements for LEP students and students receiving special education services are outlined in the Texas Education Code. During the 2005–2006 school year, a student receiving special education services was administered state-developed criterion-referenced (TAKS or SDAA II) tests unless the student’s ARD committee determined that any test was an inappropriate measure of the student’s educational progress, as outlined in the student’s IEP. Each special education student exempted from SDAA II was required to participate in a locally determined alternate assessment, as determined by the student’s ARD committee. Appropriate alternate assessments included but were not limited to released TAKS tests or locally selected assessments.

During the 2005–2006 school year, LEP students in grades 3 through 10 were required to take the TAKS tests unless they were recent immigrants and eligible for a LEP exemption. To fulfill federal NCLB requirements, these students were included in federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting through their participation in RPTE and linguistically accommodated test administrations of TAKS mathematics. Texas state rules and test administration procedures require exemption decisions to be based on clearly defined criteria and made on an individual student basis. Immigrant LEP students enrolled in U.S. schools for three years or less are eligible for an exemption only if they meet specific exemption criteria related to their language proficiency and schooling outside the United States. Language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) are responsible for determining the appropriate assessment options for LEP students using the procedures delineated in the TEA publication titled *LPAC Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program: Procedural Manual*.

LEP students are required to take the exit level assessment. However, a LEP student is allowed to postpone the initial administration of the test if the student is a recent immigrant enrolled in U.S. schools no more than 12 months before the administration of the exit level test for which the postponement is sought.

RPTE was administered for the seventh year in spring 2006. This assessment ensures that all LEP students who are exempt from TAKS participate in an appropriate annual reading assessment. RPTE helps districts monitor whether students are making steady annual growth in English acquisition during the time they are eligible for an exemption from TAKS. RPTE also determines when an immigrant who has been in U.S. schools for less than three years is proficient enough in English to not need an exemption from TAKS.

Exemptions on the basis of limited English proficiency are not permitted for RPTE, since these tests are designed specifically for LEP students. All LEP students in grades 3–12 take RPTE, with the following exceptions.

- LEP students who arrive in the United States for the first time during the second semester of a school year are not required to take RPTE if their LPAC determines that they read virtually no English. These students are assigned a proficiency rating of Beginning and the minimum RPTE scale score, which will be their baseline score against which to measure growth in reading proficiency in future years.
- LEP students served by special education are not required to take RPTE if their ARD committee exempts them on the basis that this type of assessment is inappropriate given the nature of their disability.

## **Make-Up Testing**

### **Background**

In 2003 TEA received numerous requests from district superintendents to institute make-up testing. Participation requirements for making Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act are stringent at 95 percent. These requirements are particularly challenging to meet at the high school level, but middle and elementary schools are also affected.

Although other changes, such as a refinement of the definition for participation rate that takes into account small numbers, did in part address superintendents' concerns, there was still a strong desire for make-up testing.

### **Spring 2006 Make-Up Testing**

For the 2005–2006 school year, make-up tests were allowed for the TAKS and SDAA II subject-area tests and grade levels that were included in the calculation of AYP. This policy change went into effect in the 2003–2004 school year and marked a significant departure from previous administration procedures that required, with few exceptions, all students in the same grade to take the same subject-area test at the same time. The intention of the policy change was to be responsive to the requirement of federal law without jeopardizing the integrity and validity of the Texas Student Assessment Program. Major features of the make-up test policy include the following:

- The tests involved were those included in the AYP calculation: reading at grades 3–8, English language arts at grade 10, and mathematics at grades 3–8 and grade 10. Spanish-version tests were also included.
- A separate test form for the grade 10 English language arts make-up test was administered on an assigned day (February 23, 2006).
- The regular testing schedule was maintained, with districts allowed to give make-up tests during the remainder of the week, including Saturday, only to those students who were absent on the regularly scheduled test administration day.

- No make-up tests were allowed for the writing, science, and social studies tests, or for any subject-area test at grade 9 and exit level.

## **Out-of-District Testing**

For the summer TAKS assessments (grade 3 reading, grade 5 reading and mathematics, and exit level), students who are unable to retest at their home district's designated test site may test out of district. Enrolled out-of-district students are required to complete the out-of-district registration form, and exit level students must also present picture identification. For example, a student from Houston who spends the summer in Dallas and who wants to test in Dallas is required to register to test out of district. "Out-of-district" also applies to students who are part of the Texas Tech or University of Texas high school programs.

A campus or district must accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in the third administration of a Student Success Initiative test (grade 3 reading and grade 5 reading and/or mathematics in 2005–2006) if that campus or district is testing one or more local students on the applicable test and if the student has registered in advance for out-of-district testing. A district may choose to test walk-in students or out-of-district students who register after the deadline, but the district is not required to do so.

## **Out-of-School Testing**

Individuals who have completed all graduation requirements, but have not passed all four sections of the exit level TAKS test (or, if applicable, all three sections of the TAAS exit level test) and who are no longer enrolled in a district may retake the appropriate sections each time the test is administered. Districts are required to publicize the designated dates, the precise location(s) and times of testing, and the actions out-of-school individuals interested in retesting must take to ensure access to the testing areas and to testing materials.

A district may select out-of-school testing site(s) within the district or collaborate with an education service center or neighboring district to test out-of-school examinees at an alternate testing site. Districts are provided with registration packets so that individuals who are no longer enrolled in school may register for the exit level test. Out-of-school examinees may register online or by mail. Registered individuals receive an admission letter informing them of the date, time, and location of testing. Test results are mailed to the individual and to the district from which he or she is eligible to receive a diploma.

## **Optional Algebra I End-of-Course Testing**

An optional Algebra I End-of-Course exam was offered in accordance with Section 39.023 of the Texas Education Code. Districts are not required to administer the test, though they may choose to do so during the testing window that occurs prior to the end of each school semester.

Five districts administered the Algebra I End-of-Course exam in fall 2005 to 122 students. A total of 129 districts administered the spring 2006 examination to more than 21,523 students. The standard online-only reports (the Confidential List of Students' Results and the Confidential Student Report) were available approximately one business day after students

completed their exams. Online training and support, as well as test administration manuals, and other administration resources were provided to districts by PEM.

## Testing Irregularities

Because of its commitment to test security, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) takes any allegations of testing irregularities very seriously. TEA staff reviews incident reports received throughout the school year. Initial investigation is usually conducted by the local districts and reported to TEA. Follow-up investigations, and occasional initial investigations, are done by TEA staff. In some cases, TEA also works with the State Board for Educator Certification or law enforcement agencies. The investigations rely on documentation and first-hand evidence.

Many irregularities reported are minor offenses, such as breaking the seal on the test a few minutes early, and are typically isolated cases in one or two classrooms. These incidents are handled quickly through additional training or local reprimands. Serious test violations, however, have severe consequences in which all parties involved may be penalized through restrictions, reprimands, suspension, or even revocation of their Texas Educator Certificate.

In addition, TEA continually evaluates and improves its tracking system for helping monitor testing irregularities. Erasure analysis is one of the components currently used to pinpoint classrooms or campuses that may need additional monitoring.

## Light Marks (Erasure) Analysis

Pearson Educational Measurement currently has scanning capabilities that allow for the detection of 15 levels of shadedness in student responses on answer documents. During scanning these procedures collect the darkest response for each item and the location of the next darkest response. These multiple shaded responses often, but not always, result from an erasure. Under the assumption that such marks potentially result from an erasure, this information is summarized in an *Erasure Analysis Report*, also referred to as a *Light Marks Analysis Report*.

The light marks (erasure) analysis report displays any *header group* whose average wrong-to-right erasures is greater than three standard deviations above the statewide average for each of the subjects within each grade tested. Each header group represents a testing unit. Districts determine the composition of these header groups by how they complete the "Return Batch Header." Assuming the distribution of the mean wrong-to-right erasures for header groups is normally distributed, roughly 0.13 percent of the header groups will be flagged.

Information and descriptive statistics for each flagged header group can be found in the report. The information types and what they represent include:

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<b>County-District</b>	The six-digit number representing the code for the county and the district number
<b>State Summary</b>	This line provides the average number (and standard deviation) of wrong-to-right erasures made on this test statewide
<b>Campus</b>	The three-digit number and name of the campus
<b>Header Group</b>	The name of the header group
<b># of Students</b>	The number of students within the header group
<b>All Items</b>	The average number of total erasures for the students in the group
<b>Wrong-to-Right</b>	The average number (and percentage) of erasures from incorrect to correct answers. The number of erasures that went from wrong to right may be the primary area of interest in the report
<b>Right-to-Wrong</b>	The average number of erasures from correct-to-incorrect answers
<b>Wrong-to-Wrong</b>	The average number of erasures from one incorrect answer choice to another incorrect answer choice

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In addition, statewide statistics for the test are reported, including the average erasures of any type, the average and standard deviation of wrong-to-right erasures, and the average right-to-wrong and wrong-to-wrong erasures.

The erasure analysis report has two parts. The first part of the report presents the results of header groups ranked by average number of wrong-to-right erasures. The second part of the report, known as the district summary report, presents the same results grouped by county-district code.

It should be stressed that these statistical analyses serve only to flag an extreme number of erasures. These procedures are merely a screening device and provide no insight into the reason for excessive erasures. A student could, for example, have an extremely high number of erasures if he or she began bubbling on the wrong line and had to erase and re-enter the answers. Or, a student could just be particularly indecisive and second-guess his or her answer selections. By themselves, data from light marks analyses cannot provide evidence of inappropriate testing behaviors.

A sample erasure analysis report for a Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills grade 3 mathematics test is provided in Appendix 17. All identifying information has been removed to preserve confidentiality.