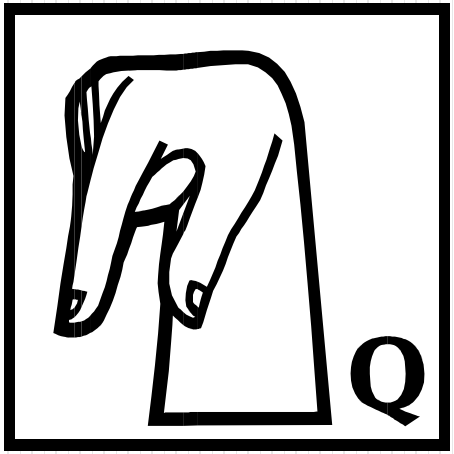
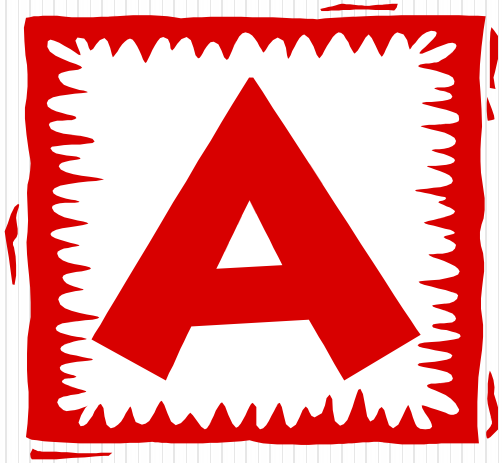
Special Education Assessments

TETN Event #5161 March 30, 2010 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.





1. What information should ARD committees use when determining whether a student should be assessed with a different test? For example, when considering moving the student from TAKS-M to TAKS (Accommodated) or vice versa…

- A student's test results are just one piece of information to be considered when making assessment decisions. Changes in assessment decisions should not be made simply because a student failed (or passed) a test.

- ARD committees should review the following to determine how the student accesses the grade-level curriculum and whether TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS–M, or TAKS–Alt is the appropriate assessment for the student.
  - Participation requirements for TAKS-M and/or TAKS-Alt, if applicable
  - A student's IEP and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statements
  - Information from parents and other professionals who work with the student
  - A student's Confidential Student Report (CSR) from previous assessments, if applicable
  - Other relevant information

This information found on pages 10-23 in the 2009–2010 ARD manual.

2. What accommodations can a general education student have on the TAKS test?

- The Accommodations Manual provides information about accommodations for **ALL** students:
  - General education students
  - Students receiving special education services
  - Students with 504 plans
  - English language learners

- In the Accommodations By Category Chart (pages 18-29), accommodations that have a check mark under TAKS are available to ANY student if
  - the accommodation is routinely used in instruction,
  - the accommodation is documented in the appropriate district paperwork (if applicable), and
  - the student meets the conditions for use specific to that accommodation.

This information is found throughout the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

3. If a student uses a highlighter on TAKS-M, does this have to be documented in the IEP as a testing accommodation?

- Any student in grade 4 or higher may use a highlighter in the test booklet to emphasize important information on any subject-area test. Since this is a part of test administration procedures for all students at these grades, IEP documentation is not required.

- A student receiving special education services who is taking any grade 3 assessment may use a highlighter in the scorable test booklet if the student's IEP requires their use. After testing, transcribing will be necessary.

This information is found on page 66 of the *2010 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and pages 47-48 of the *Spring 2010 TAKS-M General Test Administration Manual*.

4. If you are not allowed to look inside a test booklet BEFORE a test administration, how can a test booklet be divided into short sections by using paper clips (or adhesive notes)?

- Previewing test material is not allowed. The test booklet can be divided into short sections AFTER the test administrator has read the appropriate grade-specific test administrator directions and the student is ready to begin testing.
- There is no need for the test administrator to read test items or passages. The test administrator should flip through the test booklet and place the paper clips on the appropriate page(s) where the student will need to break (e.g., after 10 items, after 3 pages, after a passage and associated items).

This question refers to the accommodation of "Multiple or Frequent Breaks" located on page 29 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

5. Please provide guidance on how to properly read aloud mathematics items that are like Type E from the Oral Administration Appendix.

- Oral administration can encompass different levels of reading support for each student:
  - Reading only a few words or phrases
  - Reading multiple sentences throughout the test
  - Reading the test in its entirety

- The documentation (e.g., IEP, IAP, local paperwork) must appropriately describe the level of reading support the student needs.

This information is found in numerous places, including Appendix A, page 58, of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual.*

Type E from the Oral Administration Appendix

- If the student requires reading support for reading numbers in addition to words, then attention must be given to how the numbers are read aloud so that no cues to the correct answer are inadvertently given.

- Type E: For items that require knowledge of place value to read or write numbers, read the numbers as individual digits. This only applies to mathematics test items in grades 3 through 5.

Guidelines for reading aloud various types of test items are found in the Oral Administration Appendix of the Test Administration Directions.

Example #1

Which of these numbers is greater than 3,590? Mark your answer.

3,491

3,601

3,589

3,578

From the 2009 TAKS Released Test, grade 3 mathematics

Do NOT Say: "**Three-thousand, five-hundred ninety…Three-thousand, four-hundred ninety one…Three-thousand, six-hundred one…**" This can give away the answer.

Say: "Which of these numbers is greater than **three, comma, five, nine, zero**? Mark your answer."

For the answer choices:

- "Take a few moments to look at the answer choices and tell me whether you would like me to read any of the numbers to you. Then let me know when you are ready to go on."

OR

- "The first option is **three, comma, four, nine, one**. The second option is **three, comma, six, zero, one**…" And so on.

Example #2

In the year 2000, there were 173,670 people in Texas who walked to work every day. Which answer choice has the same value as 173,670? Mark your answer.

10,000 + 7,000 + 300 + 600 + 70

100,000 + 70,000 + 3,000 + 600 + 70

10,000 + 70 + 3 + 600 + 70

100,000 + 7,000 + 300 + 600 + 70

From the 2009 TAKS Released Test, grade 3 mathematics

Say: "In the year two thousand, there were **one, seven, three, comma, six, seven, zero** people in Texas who walked to work every day…" And so on.

For the answer choices:

•"Take a few moments to look at the answer choices and tell me whether you would like me to read any of the numbers to you. Then let me know when you are ready to go on."

OR

•"The first option is **[one, zero, comma, zero, zero, zero] plus [seven, comma, zero, zero, zero] plus [three, zero, zero] plus [six, zero, zero] plus [seven, zero]**…"

And so on.

Example #3

The numbers below are arranged from greatest to least.

7,098		**6,902**	**6,598**	**6,075**

Which of the following numbers belongs in the empty box? Mark your answer.

6,901

7,500

6,109

7,005

From the 2009 TAKS Released Test, grade 3 mathematics

Say: "The numbers below are arranged from greatest to least. The number in the first box is **seven, comma, zero, nine, eight**. The second box is empty. The third box has **six, comma, nine, zero, two**…" And so on.

OR

"The numbers below are arranged from greatest to least. Take a few moments to look at the numbers in the boxes and tell me whether you would like me to read any of them to you. Then let me know when you are ready to go on…Which of the following numbers belongs in the empty box? Mark your answer."

Example #3 continued

The numbers below are arranged from greatest to least.

7,098		**6,902**	**6,598**	**6,075**

Which of the following numbers belongs in the empty box? Mark your answer.

6,901

7,500

6,109

7,005

From the 2009 TAKS Released Test, grade 3 mathematics

<u>For the answer choices</u>:

•"Take a few moments to look at the answer choices and tell me whether you would like me to read any of the numbers to you. Then let me know when you are ready to go on."

OR

•"The first option is **six, comma, nine, zero, one**. The second option is **seven, comma, five, zero, zero**…" And so on.

6. What supplemental aids are allowed on each version of TAKS?

- **TAKS**
  - NOT allowed
- **TAKS (Accommodated)**
  - Accommodation Request Form needed for supplemental aids not described in Appendix D
- **TAKS-M**
  - No request needed, follow guidelines in Appendix D

This information is found in Appendix D, pages 70-75, in the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual.*

7. Can a student use a supplemental aid on TAKS-M that is not allowed on TAKS (Accommodated)?

- No. If a supplemental aid is not allowed per Appendix D or not approved per TEA for use on TAKS (Accommodated), then it is also not allowed on TAKS-M.
- If a supplemental aid is listed on pages 72-75 as allowed on TAKS (Accommodated), then it is also allowed on TAKS-M. However, educators must ensure that the supplemental aid meets <u>all</u> of the guidelines in the box on page 70.
- If the supplemental aid is not listed on pages 72-75 as allowed on TAKS (Accommodated), educators must ensure that the supplemental aid meets <u>all</u> of the guidelines in the box on page 70 before using on TAKS-M.

8. Explain the difference between a supplemental aid that contains "definitions of grade-appropriate literary terms" which is allowed on TAKS (Accommodated) reading/ELA tests and "glossaries…that contain definitions of other vocabulary specific to reading" which are not allowed.

- Unintended error which will be corrected in next year's manual
- **Bottom line**
  - Multiple pages of an alphabetical list of literary terms, similar to a glossary, is not allowed
  - Supplemental aid should only contain definitions of those FEW grade-appropriate literary terms the student has difficulty remembering

This question refers to allowable reading/ELA supplemental aids for TAKS (Accommodated) located on page 73 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

9. How specific does the ARD committee need to be when documenting supplemental aids?

- The IEP documentation should connect the supplemental aids that a student uses to his/her present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).
  - How do the supplemental aids ensure access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE)?
  - Why does the student need these supplemental aids?

- It would be a good idea to specifically document (or attach copies of) what the student currently uses but leave room for supplemental aids that may be needed for newly learned skills.

- The IEP documentation should be specific enough that a teacher knows what supplemental aids a student needs to be successful.

- Think…
  - If the student left my school tomorrow and enrolled in a new school, would the new teacher know from the IEP what types of supplemental aids the student needs to be successful?
  - If a new student entered my classroom tomorrow, what information would I need in the IEP to provide the student with the appropriate supplemental aids?

10. Can all of the students in my class use the exact same supplemental aid if it is allowed per Appendix D or approved by TEA and documented in the IEP?

- The decision to use an accommodation should be made on an individual basis and take into consideration the needs of the student. It is neither appropriate nor effective to provide "one size fits all" accommodations to students. In most cases, accommodations are unique to a student and should not be provided to an entire group of students, such as those in the same class or disability category.

This information is found on page 14 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

- If you use a particular supplemental aid with EVERY student in your class, consider…
  - Is this an accommodation based on the individual needs of each student? If so, why does each student need this particular supplemental aid?
  - Have I provided each student with an opportunity to show mastery without the use of the supplemental aid? What was the outcome?
  - Is this supplemental aid part of my instructional materiald used to teach a particular skill? If so, do I have students who do not need to use the supplemental aid to show understanding of the skill? Do I have students who need the entire supplemental aid to show understanding of the skill? Do I have students who need only certain parts of the supplemental aid to show understanding of the skill?

11. What if a teacher discovers prior to testing that a student no longer needs a particular supplemental aid that is documented in his IEP for use on the state assessment? Does the supplemental aid have to be removed from the IEP prior to testing since he will not be using it?

- The answer depends on how the accommodation is documented in the IEP.
  - If the documentation states the student needs a particular supplemental aid, and it is allowed/approved, then the student must be provided this accommodation or the IEP must be revised.
  - If the documentation provides some latitude with regards to the use of the supplemental aid (e.g., use on an as-needed basis, use at student request) then the student does not have to use the accommodation.

12. When a student has a scribe on a writing test, does the scribe write the composition as dictated with standard punctuation and capitalization or does the scribe write the composition as dictated without capitalization or punctuation and have the student edit?

- This is a local decision dependent on the guidelines located in the Accommodations Manual and on the needs of the student.
- "The role of the scribe is to write exactly what is dictated. The scribe should ask for clarification from the student about the intended use of capitalization, punctuation…since these conventions are part of the score the student receives. The student must have the opportunity to review and edit what the scribe has written; *for example*, the scribe may intentionally leave out all capitalization and punctuation for the student to edit."

This information is found under "Other Methods of Response" located on page 22 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual.*

13. Can a student who is deaf use a sign language dictionary along with a standard dictionary?

- When a standard dictionary/thesaurus is a <u>required</u> part of test administration procedures, a grade-appropriate sign language dictionary may be used in conjunction with the standard English dictionary/thesaurus.
  - Written composition portion of grade 7 writing tests
  - Entire grade 9 reading tests
  - Written composition and reading portions of grades 10 and 11/exit level ELA tests

- If a standard dictionary is used as a supplemental aid on TAKS (Accommodated) or TAKS-M, a sign language dictionary that is grade- or ability-appropriate may also be used. (See conditions in Accommodations Manual.)

- Professional judgment is acceptable when determining grade- or ability-appropriate sign language dictionaries.

- Dictionary entries with sample sentences are not prohibited (for standard as well as sign language dictionaries).

This information is found in Appendix C, page 67, of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

14. Can a sign language interpreter fingerspell words for students?

- Scenario: A student who is deaf is writing his composition. He wants to use the word "cow" but he doesn't know how to spell it. He may not even know the first letter. He only knows the sign for the word.

- There are no phonics or sounds in sign language. This makes sounding out words and spelling words very challenging for the deaf student. As a result, looking up words in the dictionary is challenging.

- The sign for "cow" has no connection to its spelling.

Current policies regarding spelling assistance:

- Conditions for use include a disability that affects the physical reproduction of letters and words or the ability to remember spelling rules, word structures, or letter patterns.
- Word lists only for TAKS (Acc) and TAKS-M grade 4 written composition
- Spell check, pocket spell checkers, and word lists for TAKS (Acc) and TAKS-M grade 7 writing, grade 9 reading, or grade 10 & 11/exit level ELA; written compositions and open-ended questions only, not revising and editing
- At this time, a sign language interpreter **cannot** provide spelling assistance by fingerspelling a word for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing.

This information is found under "Spelling Assistance," pages 23-24, of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

- TEA recognizes the need for additional considerations for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population. As we learn more about these specific needs, we will revisit policies and add information to the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Appendix of the Accommodations Manual.
- TEA welcomes input and feedback from the field so the we can better address the unique needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

Thank you in advance for sharing your ideas and suggestions.

15. Why can't "smart foods" (e.g., gum, peppermint candies) be allowed to students during testing?

- The TEA Student Assessment Division does not provide guidance about this topic.
- This information can be found in Texas Administrative Code, Title 4, Part 1, Chapter 26, Subchapter A.
- One highlight of this law:
  - TAKS Test Days. Schools and parents may provide one additional nutritious snack per day for students taking the TAKS tests. The snack must comply with fat and sugar limits of this subchapter and may not contain any Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value or consist of candy, chips or dessert type items (cookies, cakes, cupcakes, pudding, ice cream or frozen desserts, etc.)…
  - There is an exception for students receiving special education services who have documentation in the IEP.

This information is found at www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/.

16. Why do struggling learners have to stay seated for long periods of time? Some students need breaks.

- TEA does NOT require this…
  - Test administrators may allow students to take brief breaks in the testing room during a test session. However, breaks are not mandatory; test administrators may use their own judgment in determining whether any are necessary.
  - Multiple or frequent breaks are also allowed as an accommodation for any student who meets the conditions located in the Accommodations Manual. An Accommodation Request Form is not required.
- In both cases, certain security measures should be adhered to.

This information is found on page 178 of the *2010 District and Campus Coordinator Manual* and under "Multiple or Frequent Breaks" located on page 29 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual.*

17. Why were there no supplementary materials for the test administrator to read from during the TAKS-M writing test? The test administrator had to borrow a student's booklet to read from.

- During certain test administrations, test administrators should have their own test booklet to read from…
  - TAKS–M reading, writing, and ELA tests because certain parts of these tests must be read aloud
  - Mathematics, science, and social studies tests if a test administrator is conducting an oral administration
- If additional booklets are needed during testing, contact the campus coordinator.

This information is found in every Spring 2010 TAKS-M test administrator manual.

18. Which groupings would be allowable for tests where directions appear to be the same. In a small school, having enough test administrators is a big challenge.

- Students taking TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS-M math, science, or social studies tests without an oral administration can be in the same testing room at the same time AFTER the test administrator has read the appropriate grade/subject-specific test administrator directions and the students are ready to begin testing. Page references in the test administrator directions differ among all grades and subjects.

- Students requiring an oral administration of math, science, or social studies on an as-needed basis or at the word/phrase level may be grouped with other students even if they are taking tests in different programs (TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS-M), grades, or subjects (after guidelines in previous bullet are followed). It is the district's responsibility to maintain test security, confidentiality, and to ensure that no child is distracted by student(s) receiving this accommodation.

- You may NOT group students together who require an oral administration of math, science, or social studies where the <u>test is read in its entirety</u> if the tests are…
  - different grades,
  - different programs (TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS-M), or
  - different subjects.

For example, TAKS math grade 6 is acceptable to group together, but not grades 6 and 7, TAKS and TAKS (Accommodated), or math and science.

- Students taking different TAKS-M reading, writing, or ELA tests may NOT be grouped together because certain parts of these tests must be read aloud.

There are exceptions and exclusions to each bullet on slides 31-32. It is recommended that the testing coordinator call the Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 to discuss.

19. I have a grade 12 student whose ARD committee has determined that TAKS-M is the most appropriate assessment. This student should also have taken TAKS-M as an 11th grader, but did not. How do I submit an answer document for this student?

- This can be the result of several situations
  - Student re-classified from a 10th grader to a 12th grader
  - Student new to Texas public schools (out of state, home school)
  - Student absent on the day of the grade 11 TAKS-M test

- As stated on page 29 of the 2009-2010 ARD manual, TAKS–M operational assessments are not administered to students in grade 12.

- ARD committee documentation is sufficient. No answer document should be submitted. Student is on the minimum plan because of TAKS-M eligibility.
  - VOID the pre-coded TAKS answer document if applicable.

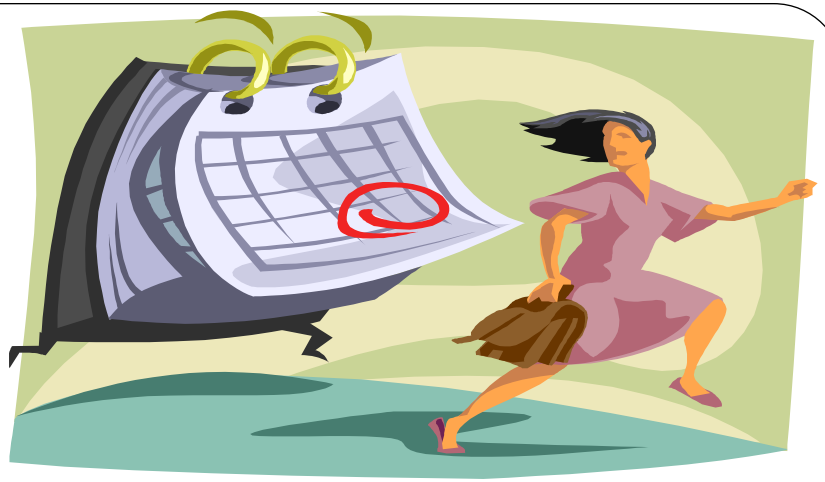
For specific student situations, call the Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 and ask to speak with a member of the Analysis and Reporting Team.

20. Will TAKS-M count for participation for this year?

- The TEA Performance Reporting Division answers questions about state and federal accountability.
  - 512-463-9704
- This information can also be found in the attachment to the TEA Student Assessment letter to districts dated 9/18/09.

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/letters/

REMINDER



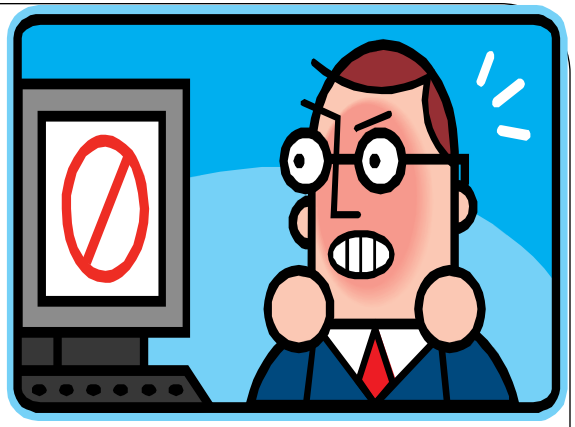
Accommodation requests for the April 6th–7th test administrations will no longer be processed after Wednesday, March 31st, 4:00 p.m. CST.

Accommodation requests for the April 27th – 30th test administrations will no longer be processed after Tuesday, April 20th, 4:00 p.m. CST.

Exceptions: requests for TELPAS, unschooled asylees/refugees, newly enrolled students, medical emergencies, or updated ARD decisions.

This information is found on step 1 of the Online Accommodation Request Form. This policy is discussed on pages 4 and 49 of the *2009-2010 Accommodations Manual*.

Internet Explorer version 6.0 users



Recent updates to Internet Explorer v6.0 have created issues accessing the online Accommodation Request Form. We have taken every effort to ensure that our system operates correctly in multiple browsers and on varied platforms. Unfortunately, during this high demand period, there is insufficient time to resolve this issue and guarantee quality.

We respectfully request that IE 6 users update their Internet Explorer. Please consider using IE v7.0 or greater or access the form using Macintosh's Safari, or Mozilla's Firefox browsers. Faxing should only be considered as a last resort as processing faxed requests takes considerably more time.

REMINDER

Don't forget to notify campus coordinators and other interested personnel of upcoming TEA Web-based surveys:

- The effectiveness of linguistic accommodations provided to ELLs during LAT administrations (mid-April – May 26, 2010)
- The effectiveness of testing accommodations in general (mid-April – May 26, 2010)
- Accommodation policies, procedures, and conditions for use on state assessments (TBD)

This is your opportunity to provide input! Decisions are made based, in part, on YOUR feedback.