

ACTION REQUESTED

December 1, 2005

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT ADDRESSED:

As you may remember, in October 2000 your district participated in a survey that provided feedback on the skills proposed for inclusion in the new Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program for all subjects and grade levels tested. Your input, as well as that of other educators across the state, was vital to the development of a high-quality assessment program. We are once again asking for your help.

The Texas Education Agency is currently evaluating the content eligible to be assessed on the TAKS mathematics tests at grades 6–10 and exit level because of the refinements recently made to the secondary mathematics Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). These refinements, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in February 2005, include some TEKS student expectations that have been slightly modified or reworded for clarification. However, many TEKS student expectations have not changed in any way. Input regarding student expectations that have not been changed or reworded is not being sought. They will continue to be assessed on TAKS just as they are now. Items assessing any new TEKS content would be field tested beginning in 2007 and would be eligible for assessment **no earlier than 2008**.

An online survey has been developed to obtain input as to whether the new TEKS content should be assessed on TAKS mathematics tests at grades 6–10 and exit level. We are asking each campus to conduct at least one meeting with teachers, administrators, parents, and other interested community members to review and discuss this additional content. All middle school and high school mathematics teachers as well as bilingual/ESL and special education teachers who work with students in mathematics at grades 6 through 12 should be involved in these meetings. Members of the campus-level planning committee required by Texas Education Code §11.251 should also be included. This review and discussion will serve as the basis for a campus recommendation on the proposed additional content. Participants on middle school campuses are asked to respond to the portions of the survey that address middle school grade levels, while participants on high school campuses should focus on high school grade levels. Finally, we ask that you complete the online survey by January 31, 2006. The survey can be found at the following link: <http://K12testing.tx.ncspearson.com/TEKSMathSurvey.htm>.

The survey should reflect the consensus of all educators and other stakeholders who attend the meeting(s) about the proposed additional content. If consensus is not reached, participants will need to vote on whether the additional content should be included on TAKS in whole or in part. If the consensus of the meeting participants is that the content is essential to measure but not in its entirety, please provide comments specifying the restrictions the participants recommend.

Additionally, this online survey addresses several other aspects of the TAKS mathematics tests at grades 6–10 and exit level. We are gathering input on the proposed inclusion of graph paper on the mathematics tests at grades 6–8 and isometric dot paper on the mathematics tests at grades 7–10 and exit level. We would also like input on suggested changes to the TAKS mathematics charts for grades 6–10 and exit level.

As superintendent, you are being asked to do the following:

- Decide how best to organize your district's campus meeting(s).
- Determine who should facilitate the meeting(s). Remember that the facilitator is responsible for reflecting the consensus of the meeting participants and ensuring that the survey reflects this consensus.
- Ensure that the survey is submitted by the January 31, 2006, deadline.

Feedback from Texas educators on these refined TEKS student expectations is crucial to the continued development of reliable, accurate, and fair mathematics tests that are closely linked to the curriculum and reflect sound classroom instruction. We very much appreciate your important contribution to this worthwhile goal.

If you have any questions, please contact the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536.

Sincerely,

Lisa Chandler
Director, Student Assessment

cc: District Test Coordinator