

INFORMATION ONLY

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Middle School—Grade 8 Science TAKS Assessment

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) Student Assessment Division is pleased to release the Middle School—Grade 8 Science Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) objectives, the proposed test blueprint, and the formula chart. This information should better prepare your middle school science teachers for the 2005 spring field test of middle school science as well as help your district further strengthen the vertical alignment of your instructional program in science from elementary through high school.

The middle school science assessment is modeled after the elementary science assessment, which tests Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) student expectations taught at grades 2, 3, 4, and 5. The middle school assessment, which will assess TEKS student expectations taught at grades 6, 7, and 8, will serve as a bridge between the elementary grade 5 TAKS science test and the grade 10 and exit level TAKS science tests.

TAKS objectives and TEKS student expectations proposed to be included on the middle school science test as well as the formula chart were reviewed at the winter meeting of the Texas Science Education Leadership Association (TSELA), which is composed of science curriculum coordinators, department heads, and teacher leaders from across the state, and at the 2004 Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST). The Student Assessment Division received input from approximately 500 educators at these two forums.

In March 2004, more than 4,000 copies of a consensus survey of the proposed TAKS objectives were mailed to superintendents, education service center (ESC) science specialists, and principals. District leaders were asked to convene teachers, coordinators, parents, and other interested parties to review the objectives and return input to TEA. Approximately 1,400 surveys were received and reviewed by TEA science curriculum and assessment staff. This summer, a middle school science educator committee, which was representative of the state, met in Austin to review the objectives, the formula chart, and the prototype items. This committee also assisted TEA in drafting a proposed test blueprint based on their professional judgment of the relative importance of each objective with regard to the overall middle school science curriculum. The enclosed TAKS objectives are a result of all the input TEA received from middle school science teachers and other interested Texas educators and stakeholders.

Please find enclosed a copy of the middle school—grade 8 science TAKS objectives, the proposed test blueprint, and the formula chart. Please share this information with your district's science teachers and curriculum specialists. Remember that these are the TEKS student expectations that will be tested on TAKS but that science instruction must occur at every grade in order for students to be academically successful in science. The Student Assessment Division plans to make available to teachers an information booklet for middle school—grade 8 science TAKS in the fall of 2005.

If you have questions about the upcoming middle school—grade 8 TAKS science test, please call the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536. Questions concerning science curriculum should be directed to the Curriculum Division at (512) 463-9581.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Neeley, Ed. D.

Enclosures

cc: District Test Coordinators