

May 3, 2005

INFORMATION ONLY

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Update on the Student Success Initiative

Alternate Assessments for the Student Success Initiative

Section 28.0211(b) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) specifies: "A school district may administer an alternate assessment instrument to a student who has failed an assessment instrument specified under Subsection (a) on the previous two opportunities." As specified in 19 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Assessment, Subchapter BB, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative, §101.2011, the commissioner provides annually to school districts and charter schools a list of state-approved group-administered achievement tests certified by test publishers as meeting the requirements of TEC, §28.0211. The district may select only one test for each applicable grade and subject to be used under this section, and the alternate assessment must be given during the period established in the testing calendar to coincide with the date of the third administration of the statewide assessment. Test publishers are required to provide results of the alternate assessments to school districts within ten working days following receipt of the test materials from the school district. School districts and charter schools are required to follow the same procedures for ensuring test security and confidentiality that are required during the regular administrations of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests.

Currently one assessment instrument has been approved for the alternate assessment option:

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Form B, Grade 3 English Reading Test, produced by the Riverside Publishing Company.

Changes to the Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative

Proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 101, Assessment, Subchapter BB, Commissioner's Rules Concerning the Student Success Initiative, were included in the Grade Placement Committee Manual. These amendments became effective on February 24, 2005. The purpose of these rule changes is to ensure that the grade advancement testing requirements are part of an overall system of support for student academic achievement. The revised rules can be found on the Texas Education Agency website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/ch101bb.html>. Following is a summary of the adopted amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 101, Subchapter BB.

Section 101.2003, Grade Advancement Testing Requirements, was amended by adding a new subsection (b) relating to criteria that identifies eligible students subject to all of the grade advancement requirements. A new subsection (c) was added to clarify the conditions under which a student is subject to the automatic retention component of SSI and to ensure that a student not subject to the automatic retention policy still receives the benefits of SSI (targeted or accelerated

instruction, for example). Subsection (d), formerly subsection (c), was modified to reflect the inclusion of all eligible students enrolled in Grades 3, 5, or 8 who are receiving special education services. Subsection (e), formerly subsection (d), was modified to correct a reference to the Texas Administrative Code.

Section 101.2005, Test Administration and Schedule, was amended by adding a new subsection (d) to require a campus or district to accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in the third administration of an SSI test if that campus or district is testing one or more local students on the applicable test and if the out-of-district student has registered to take the test by a date determined by the agency. A minor editorial change was made in subsection (c)(2).

Section 101.2007, Role of Grade Placement Committee, was amended by adding language to subsection (f)(1) to ensure that districts are aware that performance on past state-mandated assessments may be used as one indicator of student performance in the grade placement committee deliberations. Language was added to subsection (f)(3) to clarify that grade placement committees can consider extenuating circumstances that may have had adverse effects on the student. A new subsection (f)(4) was added to reinforce through rule that the grade placement committee may consider the period of enrollment in making grade placement decisions. A minor technical edit was made in subsection (b). This section was slightly revised from the initial proposed version based on public comments from the Texas Classroom Teachers Association (TCTA) to clarify that the teacher selected to be included on a student's grade placement committee must be a teacher of the subject of the assessment on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily and must be familiar with the student in that subject area. The section was also revised to clarify that the grade placement committee may consider the student's ability to participate in regular instruction as well as his or her ability to participate in testing or accelerated instruction when making a decision about whether to promote the student.

Section 101.2011, Alternate Assessment, was amended in subsection (c) to require the reporting of results of alternate assessments to the Texas Education Agency in a format specified by the agency.

Section 101.2013, Accelerated Instruction, was amended by adding a new subsection (d) that requires districts to accommodate the request of an out-of-district student to participate in any established, on-campus summer accelerated instruction program, provided the student is living away from his or her home district and the program matches the accelerated instruction prescribed by the Grade Placement Committee. Based on public comment from the TCTA, this section was revised slightly to clarify that any accelerated instruction for students who have failed the test must maintain a ratio of no more than ten students to each teacher per class.

If you require additional information, please call the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536.

Sincerely,

Lisa Chandler
Director, Student Assessment

cc: District Testing Coordinator