

Dated Material Action Required
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March 9, 2004

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT ADDRESSED:

The Texas Education Agency is currently developing a middle school science test as part of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program. This assessment will fulfill two legislative mandates—the federal No Child Left Behind legislation and House Bill 411—which require the state to add a science assessment at the middle school level to the science assessments already in place at the elementary and high school levels. You may remember that in October 2000 your district participated in a survey that provided feedback on the objectives proposed to be included in the new TAKS program for all subjects and grade levels tested. Your district's input, as well as input from other districts across the state, was vital to the development of a high-quality assessment program. Therefore, we are once again asking for your help.

This week each campus in your district that serves grade 6, 7, or 8 will receive the TAKS Middle School Science Grade 8 objectives as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) student expectations proposed to be included on the test. We are asking each campus to conduct one or more meetings with teachers, administrators, parents, other interested community members, and the campus-level planning committee. The purpose of the meeting(s) is to review and discuss the objectives and proposed TEKS student expectations and then to complete the Survey Response Form by April 16, 2004.

Enclosed are copies of the following: the letter being sent to each principal outlining what his or her campus is being asked to do, the TAKS Middle School Science Grade 8 objectives and proposed TEKS student expectations, and the Survey Response Form.

As superintendent you are being asked to ensure that each campus that serves grade 6, 7, or 8 conducts appropriate meetings and completes the Survey Response Form. Education Service Center directors will also receive a notification letter to pass on to their science specialist(s) so that they may assist your middle school science departments.

Feedback from Texas educators is crucial to the development of a reliable, accurate, and fair middle school science test that is closely linked to the curriculum, reflects sound classroom instruction, and is vertically aligned with the TAKS science tests already in place at grades 5, 10, and exit level. We very much appreciate your support of and contribution to this worthwhile goal.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Chandler".

Lisa Chandler  
Director, Student Assessment

Enclosures: Principal Letter  
TAKS Middle School Science Grade 8 objectives and TEKS proposed student expectations  
Copy of the Survey Response Form