



Felipe T. Alanis
Commissioner of Education

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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Time Sensitive Information

March 5, 2003

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Algebra I End-of-Course Examination

In accordance with Section 39.023 of the Texas Education Code, the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency has developed a standardized end-of-course assessment instrument for Algebra I. While districts are not required to administer the Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) examination, and the results are not a component of the statewide accountability system, districts may nevertheless elect to administer the examination during the two-week period prior to the completion of the course.

I am very pleased to announce that the Algebra I EOC examination will again be offered online in Spring 2003. Interested districts are encouraged to volunteer for this unique opportunity which is offered at no charge. Under this option, districts could have these tests both administered and scored online by NCS Pearson, the state testing contractor. NCS Pearson offers user-friendly online testing, "eMeasurement Services," which is fully supported by NCS Pearson staff.

Based on a familiar browser-style navigation with point-and-click technology and drop-down selections, the online system is designed so that even those teachers and students who are not familiar with computers will be comfortable using it. In addition, the single-item presentation is easy to read and allows students to set their own pace as they move through the tests. Reporting capacities include individual student results and class rosters. Most importantly, the online option allows districts to receive student results back immediately after testing; this fast turnaround in scoring provides districts the opportunity to include students' Algebra I EOC examination results in determining final course grades. If interested in this Algebra I EOC online option, please contact NCS Pearson at 1-800-252-9186 no later than **March 21, 2003**.

Districts may also elect to administer the Algebra I EOC in the traditional, "hard-copy" manner. Testing materials may be ordered by visiting the test contractor's web site at <http://k12testing.tx.ncspearson.com> and either submitting an order online or faxing an order form to one of the following numbers: (512) 719-1450 or (512) 835-8083. Materials must be ordered no later than **March 21, 2003**. Please direct questions about ordering test materials to the Austin Operations Center of NCS Pearson by calling 1-800-252-9186. The hard-copy option is offered at no charge to districts, but it does not include scoring. Districts will need to score the tests locally; no formal scoring services will be offered by the testing contractor. All test booklets and answer keys are secure and must be returned to the testing contractor upon completion of testing.

Given the importance of Algebra as a "gatekeeper" course, I would like to emphasize that data from the Algebra I EOC examination can be very useful for program evaluation and thereby lead to meaningful improvements in instruction that can help more students succeed in this critical area of the high school curriculum. If you have any questions about the Algebra I EOC examination, please contact the Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536.

Sincerely,

Paul Cruz
Deputy Commissioner
Dropout Prevention and Initiatives

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