

TEXAS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Texas educators, including K–12 classroom teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialists, administrators, and education service center staff, play a vital role in all phases of the test development process. Thousands of Texas educators have served on one or more of the educator committees involved in the development of the Texas assessment program. These committees represent the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school district. The procedures described below outline the process used to develop a framework for the tests and provide for the ongoing development of test questions or items.

- 1) Committees of Texas educators review the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), to develop appropriate assessment categories for a specific grade/subject or course. For each grade/subject or course, educators provide advice on an assessment model or structure that aligns with best practices in classroom instruction.
- 2) Educator committees work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) both to prepare draft test reporting categories and to determine how these categories would best be assessed. These preliminary recommendations are reviewed by K–12 teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialists, assessment specialists, and administrators.
- 3) A draft of the reporting categories and TEKS student expectations to be assessed is refined based on input from Texas educators. TEA begins to gather statewide opportunity-to-learn information.
- 4) Prototype test questions are written to measure each reporting category and, when necessary, are piloted by Texas students from volunteer classrooms.
- 5) Educator committees assist in developing guidelines for assessing each reporting category. These guidelines outline the eligible test content and test-question formats and include sample questions.
- 6) With educator input, a preliminary test blueprint is developed that sets the length of the test and the number of test questions measuring each reporting category.
- 7)* Professional item writers, many of whom are former or current Texas educators, develop test questions based on the reporting categories, the TEKS student expectations, and the item guidelines.
- 8)* TEA content specialists from the curriculum and assessment divisions review and revise the proposed test questions.
- 9)* Item review committees composed of Texas educators review the revised test questions to judge the appropriateness of item content and difficulty and to eliminate potential bias.

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- 10)* Test questions are revised again based on input from Texas educator committee meetings and are field-tested with large representative samples of Texas students.
- 11)* Technical processes are used to analyze field-test data for reliability, validity, and possible bias.
- 12)* Data-review committees are trained in statistical analysis of field-test data and review each question and its associated data. The committees determine whether questions are appropriate for inclusion in the bank of questions from which test forms are built.
- 13) A final blueprint that establishes the length of the test and the number of test questions measuring each reporting category is developed.
- 14)* All field-test questions and data are entered into a computerized item bank. TEA staff build tests from the item bank so that the tests are equivalent in difficulty from one administration to the next.
- 15)* Content validation panels composed of university-level experts in each content area review the end-of-course assessments for accuracy because of the advanced level of content being assessed.
- 16)* Tests are administered to Texas students. Results of these tests are reported at the student, campus, district, regional, and state levels.
- 17)* Stringent quality control measures are applied to all stages of printing, scanning, scoring, and reporting for both paper and online assessments.
- 18) In accordance with state law, the Texas assessment program releases tests to the public.
- 19) In accordance with state law, the Commissioner of Education uses impact data, study results, and statewide opportunity-to-learn information, along with recommendations from standard-setting panels, to set a passing standard for state assessments.
- 20)* A technical digest is developed annually to provide verified technical information about the tests to schools and the public.

*These steps are repeated annually to ensure that tests of the highest quality are developed.

Further information about the Texas assessment program is available on the TEA website (www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment).