

Chapter 1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas



In 1979 the state of Texas instituted a statewide testing program that, through periodic changes in legislation and policy, has grown in size, scope, and rigor. The timeline illustrates changes made to the assessment program over the years.

1979

The Texas assessment program began when the 66th Legislature enacted a law requiring basic skills competencies in mathematics, reading, and writing for grades 3, 5, and 9.



1980

As required by statute, Texas assessed minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing with the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) tests.



1986

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) implemented the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) examinations. TEAMS was the first statewide assessment that students were required to pass to be eligible to receive a high school diploma.



1990

The implementation of another criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), shifted the focus of assessment from minimum skills to academic skills. The TAAS reading, writing, and mathematics tests were administered in the fall to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Spanish versions of the grade 3 tests were administered to eligible English language learners (ELLs).

1993

The administration of TAAS was shifted to the spring, and the grades and subjects assessed were reconfigured.

1994

TAAS was administered every spring until 2002 to students in grades 3–8 and 10 in reading and mathematics; grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing; and grade 8 in science and social studies. Passing the exit level tests in reading, writing, and mathematics at grade 10 was a requirement for graduation.

The biology end-of-course (EOC) assessment was administered to students who had completed biology at the end of the fall semester.



Reading
Proficiency
Tests in English
(RPTE)

State-Developed
Alternative
Assessment
(SDAA)



1995

Content-based EOC examinations were offered between 1995 and 2002 as an option for meeting graduation requirements.

The Algebra I and biology EOC assessments were administered to students who had completed these courses at the end of the spring semester.

1996

Spanish-language TAAS tests for grades 3–6 were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 and 1997.

1998

The English II and U.S. history EOC assessments were first administered in the fall to students who had completed these courses.

2000

The Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE), designed to evaluate English language acquisition of ELLs in reading in grades 3–12, were implemented.

2001

The State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) was introduced, which was administered to eligible students served by special education in grades 3–8.

2002

TAAS was administered for the last time in grades 3–8. Exit level TAAS remained the graduation requirement for students who were in ninth grade or above on January 1, 2001.

State-mandated EOC assessments were administered for the last time in English II, Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history.

2003

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced TAAS as the primary statewide assessment program. TAKS is designed by legislative mandate to be more comprehensive than its predecessors and to measure more of the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), at more grade levels than TAAS did. By law, students for whom TAKS is the graduation testing requirement must pass exit level tests in four content areas—English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—to graduate from a Texas public high school. Spanish versions of TAKS are administered in grades 3–6.



The Student Success Initiative (SSI), enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, makes satisfactory performance on the grade 3 TAKS reading assessment, the grade 5 TAKS reading and mathematics assessments, and the grade 8 TAKS reading and mathematics assessments a promotion requirement for Texas students. The first cohort of students affected by this law was the grade 3 class of 2002–2003. Student performance on the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year. Grade 8 promotion requirements became effective in 2007–2008.



2004

Additional assessments of English language proficiency were implemented to fulfill requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These new assessments were administered in the language domains of listening, speaking, and writing in grades K–12 and in reading in grades K–2. Together with the RPTE tests for grades 3–12, these assessments formed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).



2005

In response to NCLB regulations, TEA first reported assessment results using a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) process to include eligible recent immigrant ELLs in the state's mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 and 10.

In order to align SDAA to the current statewide testing program—TAKS—TEA made changes to SDAA. The first administration of SDAA II occurred in spring 2005. SDAA II, offered in mathematics, English language arts, reading, and writing, was available to students enrolled in grades 3–10 who received special education services and were instructed in the state-mandated curriculum but for whom TAKS was an inappropriate measure of their academic achievement and progress.

Student performance on the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year for SSI requirements.



2006

TAKS–Inclusive (TAKS–I) was offered for the first time in 2006 for students receiving special education services and for whom TAKS, even with allowable accommodations, was not an appropriate measure of academic progress. TAKS–I met the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requirements for those subjects and grade levels that were assessed with TAKS but not with SDAA II. TAKS–I was administered in science at grades 5, 8, 10, and at exit level; in science in Spanish at grade 5; in social studies at grades 8, 10, and at exit level; and in exit level English language arts and mathematics.

State-Developed
Alternative
Assessment II
(SDAA II)



2007

SDAA II was administered for the final time in spring 2007.

The following TAKS tests were available in both paper and online formats in 2007: grade 7 reading and mathematics; grade 8 reading, mathematics, science, and social studies; grade 9 reading and mathematics; grade 10 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; and exit level (July) English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In response to NCLB regulations, LAT administrations of the state's reading and English language arts assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 3–8 and 10.

TAKS–I was administered for the final time.



2008

To fulfill federal accountability requirements, the TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) assessment was implemented, replacing SDAA II and locally developed alternate assessments (LDAA). The TAKS–Alt assessment is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Student performance on the grade 8 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2007–2008 school year for SSI requirements.



The TAKS (Accommodated) assessment replaced TAKS–I for students receiving special education services who meet the eligibility requirements for specific accommodations. TAKS (Accommodated) is a general assessment based on the same grade-level academic achievement standards as TAKS, but its form includes format changes (larger font, fewer items per page) and contains no embedded field-test items.



The TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) assessment was administered for the first time for grades and subjects subject to federal accountability requirements. TAKS–M is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements.

In response to NCLB regulations, LAT administrations of the state's science assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 5, 8, and 10.

Revised TELPAS reading tests were first administered for grades 2–12 to more fully address NCLB goals for assessing English language proficiency. TELPAS is designed to be administered as an online testing program.



2009

The TAKS–M assessment was administered for all grades and subjects, while exit level TAAS was administered for the final time.





Assessment Provisions in State Law and Administrative Rule

Texas Education Code

State law pertaining to the statewide student assessment program is found in the [Texas Education Code \(TEC\), Chapter 39, Subchapter B](#). Assessment provisions relating to SSI promotion requirements are located in [TEC § 28.0211](#). Provisions relating to the additional intensive instruction districts must provide to students who do not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment are located in [TEC § 28.0213](#).

In May 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature enacted [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1031](#), requiring changes to the current assessment program, including implementation of an end-of-course assessment program; changes to the administration window for the assessments; limitations on the frequency of stand-alone field testing; and a revised release schedule for test questions and answer keys for most Texas assessments.

In June 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature enacted [House Bill \(HB\) 3](#), which made further changes to the assessment program. These include requiring TEA to develop assessments in a manner that allows the measurement of performance across grades culminating in college readiness performance standards in Algebra II and English III. These performance measures will be part of the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, which encompasses the 12 EOC assessments mandated by SB 1031 and the new grade 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3. The new tests will be used beginning in the 2011–2012 school year.

HB 3 requires districts to participate in mandatory field testing of assessments in the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years for the purpose of setting performance standards and also removes the automatic grade level retention provision for students in grade 3 who do not meet the TAKS reading assessment standard beginning in 2009–2010.

Changes resulting from HB 3 that took effect during the 2008–2009 testing year include eliminating the requirement that assessments administered for the purpose of retesting are subject to mandatory release; specifying that TEA is no longer required to develop TAKS study guides; eliminating exit level testing under the TAAS program; and requiring the commissioner of education, rather than the State Board of Education (SBOE), to determine satisfactory performance levels for assessment instruments.



Texas Administrative Code

The [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\)](#) includes rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Commissioner of Education to address the legislative requirements of the TEC.

In November 2001, the SBOE adopted rules for student assessment that reflect the provisions of SB 103 enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature. These rules require the development and administration of tests, testing for graduation, testing accommodations and exemptions, test security and confidentiality, reporting of test results, and the administration and reporting of group-administered achievement tests. These board rules appear in [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Assessment, subchapters A through E](#).

In September 2001, commissioner's rules concerning the participation of limited English Proficient (LEP) students in the state assessment program were adopted. In May 2002, commissioner's rules concerning the SSI were adopted to reflect provisions contained in [SB 4](#), also enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature. In February 2003, commissioner's rules were adopted to implement requirements for the new testing program as specified by [SB 103](#). Further commissioner's rules were adopted in 2005 to clarify transitional issues related to the implementation of the new testing program, including different graduation requirements under TAAS and TAKS. In 2006, TEA adopted rules to implement procedures to ensure the validity, reliability, and security of assessments. These rules were amended in February 2008 to reflect the test security provisions of SB 1031, enacted in 2007 by the 80th Texas Legislature. The commissioner's rules for assessment appear in [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Assessment, subchapters AA through EE](#).

In 2009, the SBOE and commissioner's rules for student assessment were reviewed as part of a four-year review cycle for all state agency rules. During this review process and in the months following the conclusion of the 81st legislative session, several amendments were made to the SBOE and commissioner's rules for student assessment.

The following major changes to the administrative rules governing student assessment became effective during the 2008–2009 testing year.

The SBOE amended the TAKS performance standards to implement the vertical scale designed to measure growth in student performance in grades 3–8 in TAKS reading and mathematics, required under [SB 1031](#). Although the new performance standards did not take effect until September 1, 2009, TEA reported spring 2009 student assessment results using the vertical scale for informational purposes only. (The TAKS performance standards now appear as a commissioner's rule under [19 TAC, §101.3004](#).)

The SBOE amended [19 TAC, §101.33](#), Release of Tests, to reflect the provision in HB 3 that excludes assessments administered for the purpose of retesting from the statutorily required three-year release schedule.



The Commissioner of Education amended [19 TAC, §101.3003](#), Assessment Requirements for Graduation, to reflect the provision in HB 3 that eliminates exit level testing under the TAAS program. Students who formerly were bound to exit level testing requirements under TAAS or TEAMS will now fulfill requirements for graduation with the exit level TAKS under applicable performance standards established by the Commissioner of Education.



Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) were adopted by the SBOE in July 1997 and were implemented as the statewide curriculum for Texas in the 1998–1999 school year. The TEKS replaced the Essential Elements, which were implemented in 1984. The TEKS were developed to be more specific and focused than the Essential Elements, with emphasis placed on the knowledge and skills students were expected to learn rather than on the delivery standards expected of teachers.

In the 1999–2000 school year, the TEKS were integrated into the existing statewide testing program (TAAS). The same year, work began on the development of the new TAKS testing program, as mandated by the 76th Legislature. Throughout the test development process for TAKS, attention was focused on ensuring a strong, direct, and effective link between the TEKS curriculum and the statewide assessments.

TAKS objectives and the corresponding TEKS student expectations that are eligible for testing can be found in Appendix 3 of the [2005–2006 Technical Digest](#).

In 2005 the SBOE adopted the refinements made to the elementary and secondary mathematics TEKS. All of the TAKS mathematics tests have been revised to ensure that they are fully aligned to the 2005 [refined mathematics TEKS](#). In January 2009 the SBOE adopted minor revisions to the secondary mathematics TEKS to incorporate the Career and College Readiness Standards (CCRS). TEA is in the process of incorporating these minor revisions to the TEKS into the secondary mathematics tests.

The state's standards for addressing the English language proficiency needs of ELLs were revised in 2006–2007 to explicitly require all teachers to address English language proficiency standards in the instruction of ELLs. The SBOE adoption of new K–12 [English language proficiency standards \(ELPS\)](#) for ELLs was effective in December 2007. The 2008 revised TELPAS reading tests were aligned to these standards.

In 2008 the SBOE adopted new TEKS for English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and Spanish language arts (SLA). The 2010 and 2011 TAKS reading, writing, and ELA tests have been revised to ensure alignment with the new TEKS.

In 2009 the SBOE adopted revised science TEKS, and alignment with those TEKS will be reflected in the 2011 TAKS science tests. Current plans are for revised social studies TEKS to be adopted in May 2010.

TEA is in the process of designing a new assessment program (STAAR), which will be fully aligned with the new and revised TEKS across subject areas.

