Chapter **9** # Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) Exit Level

Overview

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), first administered in 1990, was last administered to students enrolled in grades 3–8 in spring 2002. Spring 2002 also marked the final administration of the TAAS exit level test to a full cohort of students enrolled in grade 10. As of spring 2003, all eligible grade 10 students are required to take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests.

Participation Requirements

Commissioner's rules adopted in 2003 mandated that students who were in grade 9 or higher on January 1, 2001, must pass the TAAS exit level tests given in mathematics, reading, and writing. Accelerated students who were in grade 8 on January 1, 2001, and were scheduled to graduate by September 1, 2004, have TAAS as a graduation testing requirement. Students who were in grade 8 or lower on January 1, 2001, and who were scheduled to graduate after September 1, 2004, are required to pass the TAKS exit level tests in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies to meet graduation requirements.

Due to House Bill 3, enacted by the Texas Legislature in June 2009, the TAAS tests will no longer be administered after the 2008–2009 school year. Former TAAS and Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) examinees who have not met their graduation testing requirement will be required to take the TAKS exit level tests. TAKS scores will be matched to the appropriate TAAS or TEAMS passing standard.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students for whom TAAS was the graduation requirement who have yet to pass all three sections of the assessment were able to retake the necessary sections of the TAAS exit level test during the 2008–2009 school year. There were four administrations of the TAAS exit level test during the 2008–2009 school year: October 2008, March 2009, April 2009, and July 2009. During this period, 901 TAAS tests were administered.

Table 41. Students Tested in 2008–2009 TAAS Administrations

Administration	Number of Tests Administered
October 2008	251
March 2009	235
April 2009	217
July 2009	198

Test Development

The TAAS test development process is outlined in detail in the *2001–2002 Technical Digest*.

TAAS performance results and raw score conversion tables can be found on TEA's Student Assessment Division website.

TAAS Exit Level: Written Composition Scoring

All TAAS written compositions were scored at the Pearson scoring center in Austin.

SCORERS

For all 2008–2009 TAAS exit level retests, only scorers who had previously worked successfully on a previous TAAS exit level project were invited to score these assessments. A pool of two to eight scorers and supervisors completed the scoring on each of the four retests scheduled since October 2008.

TRAINING GUIDES AND SETS

Since the test administration of October 2004, TAAS writing prompts used successfully in previous administrations have been used for retests. Training materials prepared for those administrations have been used to retrain these experienced readers. They consist of a response guide, which contains four annotated anchor responses for each score point in order from one to four.

There were three split sets; each contained four close-call papers that defined the "line" between two score points. There was one split set for the 1/2 line, one for the 2/3 line, and one for the 3/4 line. Training Sets A, B, and C each contained 10 randomly mixed responses representing score points one to four. Training Set D contained fifteen randomly mixed responses representing score points one to four.

There was one qualifying set containing twenty randomly mixed responses representing score points one to four. Each of these scorers had previously qualified on this prompt.

EXIT LEVEL SCORE VERIFICATION

Since the spring 1992 exit level scoring session, TEA's contractors have used a score-verification procedure to evaluate all responses that received a score of 1 during the holistic scoring process. A team of readers receives special training on the 1/2 line using 1s and 2s from the holistic guide, split sets, and practice sets. If any response reviewed by a member of the specialist team is thought to be higher than a score of 1, it is read by the specialist coordinator and the scoring director or project monitor. If all agree, they make the final decision on the score of the response. If it involves an issue that should be brought to the attention of TEA, the response is sent to TEA for a final scoring decision.

SCORE RELIABILITY

Throughout the years, TEA has reported on the reliability of the TAAS essay scoring process. Reliability is expressed in terms of reader agreement and correlation between first and second readings. The vast experience of the reader pool for the 2008–2009 administrations of TAAS exit level is reflected in the table below, which summarizes reader agreement rates. The reader agreement rate is expressed in terms of absolute reader agreement (the first reader's score equals the second reader's score).

Table 42. Reader Agreement Rates for 2008–2009 TAAS Administrations

| Administration	Number of Student Responses	Agreement Rate (%) After Two Readings	Number of Third Readings	Agreement Rate (%) After Three Readings
October 2008	313	100	0	100
March 2009	298	100	0	100
April 2009	252	100	0	100
July 2009	227	100	0	100

Pearson scorers worked in tandem (2 scorers, each reading independently, and then coming to a consensus on the final score) for these administrations as the *n*-counts (number of students tested) were so low. The majority of these responses were blank.

Scores and Reports

OVERVIEW

This section lists the variety of reports available for each assessment instrument in the Texas assessment program.
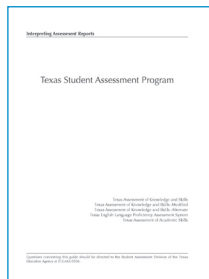
For more information see the TEA publication *Interpreting Assessment Reports*.

Description of Scores

For a detailed description of how test scores are derived, see the "Scaling" section of chapter 3.

Raw Score

The raw score is the number of items answered correctly on a subject-area test. By itself the raw score has limited utility; it can be interpreted only in reference to the total number of items on a subject-area test, and raw scores should not be compared across tests or administrations. The raw score is provided for all TAAS tests.

Scale Score

The scale score is a statistic that provides a comparison of scores with the minimum expectations standard. The scale score ranges from approximately 400 to 2400, with a minimum expectations score of 1500. The score of 1500 accounts for differences in difficulty in the test form used for each administration. Thus, the scale score can be used to determine whether a student met minimum expectations, but it cannot be used to evaluate student progress across grades.

The scale score is provided for TAAS writing tests.

Texas Learning Index

The Texas Learning Index (TLI) is a statistic that allows for comparison across years and across grades within a subject area for TAAS reading and mathematics tests. The TLI ranges from 0 to the maximum score possible on a subject-area test and is preceded by an "X" representing exit level (e.g., X-83). The minimum expectations score of 70 represents the same amount of

achievement at each administration. Thus, the TLI score can be used to assess learning progress within a subject area across administrations.

Reporting

Only standard reports are available for TAAS. In lieu of optional reports, Pearson will post a PDF version of the List of Students' Results (including both in-school and out-of-school examinees) and an individual student data file (including both in-school and out-of-school examinees) on the Pearson website for all participating districts. Reports that include "confidential" in the title contain student-level results.

Standard Reports

The standard reports available for the 2008–2009 TAAS program include the Confidential Student Report, Confidential Student Label, Confidential List of Students' Results, Preliminary Confidential Campus Roster—All Students, and Confidential Electronic Individual Student Record File.

See chapter 4 for detailed information about these reports.