September 10, 2010

TO THE SUPERINTENDENT ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: 2010–2011 Field Testing and Related Activities for the Texas Assessment Program

The purpose of this letter is to notify districts of field testing and related assessment activities for the 2010–2011 school year for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program. STAAR will include assessments for grades 3–8 as well as end-of-course assessments. In order to implement STAAR in the 2011–2012 school year, field testing for the new STAAR program is required in 2011.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has made a concerted effort over the past several years to minimize the amount of instructional time used for testing purposes, particularly stand-alone field testing. However, the transition to STAAR makes it necessary to conduct additional stand-alone field testing in 2010–2011 only. In the future, TEA plans to use embedded field testing in all STAAR assessments, with the exception of grade 4 STAAR writing, which will require an abbreviated field test every three years.

Grades 3–8 Field Tests

In 2011, grade 4 (English and Spanish) and grade 7 writing will be administered as a one-day, stand-alone field test. STAAR field testing for grades 3–8 mathematics, grades 3–8 reading, grades 5 and 8 science, and grade 8 social studies will be accomplished by embedding field-test items in the operational TAKS forms (both the English and grades 3–5 Spanish versions).

EOC Field Tests and Operational Assessments

Testing is mandatory for campuses selected for either field testing or operational assessments. World history, English II, and English III will be field-tested for the first time in 2011. Field-test data from a sample of students representative of the state are critical to the state's ability to build high-quality assessments. The other nine EOC assessments—Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, world geography, U.S. history, and English I—will be administered as operational tests, but selected samples of students are required to take these operational assessments. This allows TEA to administer the assessments to a sufficient number of students to enable the establishment of performance standards as mandated by Texas Education Code §39.0242. All EOC field tests and operational assessments will be provided both online and on paper for the spring 2011 administration.

TEA recognizes the challenges districts and campuses face with regard to time and resources when they are selected to participate in mandatory activities in preparation for new testing programs. However, the testing activities in 2011 will provide several major benefits for students and school districts.

• Standards for STAAR EOC assessments will be set prior to the 2011–2012 administrations that will first be used to fulfill students' testing requirements for graduation, enabling districts

- to meet the legislative requirement to include the results of the EOC assessments as 15% of students' grades.
- Campuses will receive score reports for all EOC assessments in 2011, except for the world history, English II, and English III field tests.
- TEA will have data to inform the development and implementation of student progress measures for the new STAAR program prior to use for state and federal accountability.

TELPAS Listening and Speaking Audit

As part of TEA's periodic validity and reliability audits of the TELPAS assessments, a small-scale audit will be conducted during the TELPAS administration window of March 7–April 8 to evaluate the 2011 TELPAS listening and speaking domains in grades 3–5. Information about rater adherence to the assessment protocol and district adherence to required training and testing procedures will be collected. The audit will also provide evidence of interrater reliability through second independent ratings of students during classroom instruction. Districts and campuses will receive notification of their selection for the audit in February 2011. The audit information will be used to meet federal requirements.

Modified and Alternate versions of STAAR

No sampling or stand-alone field testing is planned for either modified or alternate versions of STAAR during the 2010–2011 school year.

Linguistically Accommodated Versions of STAAR

No sampling or stand-alone field testing is planned for linguistically accommodated versions of STAAR for the 2010–2011 school year.

District testing coordinators have been copied on this correspondence. The information below will assist them in reviewing the selections for your district.

Campus assignments for the 2011 field tests and assessment development activities can be found in the Texas Assessment Management System, delivered through PearsonAccess, at http://www.TexasAssessment.com/login. Once logged in with your secure user ID, you will need to access **TEST RESULTS**, click on **View Published Reports**, and change the administration to the "2010–2011 Texas General Administration" to view the testing assignments for your district.

The selection criteria used in the sampling process for 2011 are as follows.

STAAR Grades 4 and 7 Writing Field Tests

- All eligible students enrolled in the grade at a campus will participate.
- Because of the small numbers of students who take the Spanish-version TAKS tests, all
 students in the state who will take the Spanish TAKS test in writing (at grade 4) this spring are
 required to participate in the Spanish-version grade 4 writing field test.
- Campuses will be excluded based on the following:
 - Campuses identified as JJAEP, DAEP, or TYC
 - Campuses identified as alternative education campuses
 - Campuses rated as academically unacceptable (AU) in 2009 according to the state accountability system for three years or more
 - Campuses that failed to meet federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and were at stage 5 in 2009
 - Campuses selected for NAEP testing in 2011

EOC Assessments

- Campuses will not be assigned more than four EOC assessments.
- Because of the relatively small number of students enrolled in physics, all campuses that offer physics during the 2010–2011 school year will be required to administer the physics EOC. This counts as one of the four assigned assessments.
- English I, II, and III EOC assessments consist of two parts, reading and writing. To reduce overall burden at the campus level, English I, II, and III EOC assessments will each be counted as two (of the potentially four) assignments.
- Campuses will be assigned to test either on paper or online for each assessment and may be assigned a maximum of two online assessments.
- For campuses assigned to online EOC assessments, the maximum number of students required to test online for each course is 350 per campus.
- For campuses assigned to paper EOC tests, all students enrolled in the course at a campus will participate.
- Care was taken to minimize the amount of testing at the student level by spreading the testing burden within each campus across grade levels, based on the typical course-taking sequence; however, some 11th grade students may be assigned two tests because all campuses that offer physics will be required to test physics.
- Campuses identified as JJAEP, DAEP, or TYC were excluded from the testing assignments.

Refer to the 2010–2011 student assessment testing calendar at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3635&menu_id=793 for testing dates. If you have questions about the selection process or need additional information about the 2010–2011 assessment activities, please contact the Student Assessment Division. Call Pearson's Austin Operations Center at 800-252-9186 with questions concerning access to your assignments.

We anticipate that districts will continue to support these critical activities through their participation in field testing and auditing activities. To maintain valid and reliable assessments of student performance, TEA will evaluate districts' participation and implement indicator(s) within the Performance-Based Monitoring Student Assessment Data Validation System, as necessary.

Assessment Contact Information

Texas Education Agency

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cc: ESC and District Testing Coordinators