# Chapter 10 Resources

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## **Overview**

In addition to the information provided in the Technical Digest, Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) Student Assessment Division makes a number of resources available to districts, educators, researchers, and parents.

Shown below is a quick guide to information and commonly used references available on TEA's Student Assessment website. Following the quick guide are more detailed descriptions of some of the documents available from the website.

**Table 43.** Ouick Guide to Online References

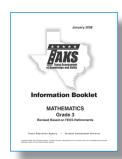
Topic	Access
TAKS resources	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/taks
ELL assessments	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/ELL
TAKS-M resources	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksm
TAKS-Alt resources	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/taksalt
EOC assessments	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/EOC
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about the Texas Assessment Program	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/faq
2008–2009 Test Security Supplement	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/security/
ARD Committee Decision- Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ard
2008–2009 Grade Placement Committee Manual	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi



2008–2009 Accommodations Manual	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/accommodations/
LPAC Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/ELL
2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual Supplement	http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/coormanual/2009Supplement.pdf
2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual	http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/coormanual/2009Overview.pdf

## **Information Booklets**

#### **TAKS Information Booklets**



The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) was implemented beginning in spring 2003. To provide a better understanding of TAKS and its connection to the statewide curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), TEA developed TAKS information booklets, which were originally published in January 2002 before the first TAKS field test. After several years of field tests and live administrations, the information booklets were

revised in August 2004 to provide an even more comprehensive picture of the testing program. The TEKS for mathematics were refined and approved by the State Board of Education in 2005. As a result of the TEKS refinements, the TAKS Mathematics Information Booklets were revised. Some of the existing material has been clarified and, in some cases, new sample items and/or more explanations of certain item types are provided. These clarifications do not signify any substantial change in the TAKS<sup>TM</sup> testing program. The objectives assessed on TAKS remain unchanged.

The revised versions of the TAKS information booklets serve as a user-friendly resource to help educators, parents, and students understand that the best preparation for TAKS is a coherent, TEKS-based instructional program that provides the level of support necessary for all students to reach their academic potential.

#### **ORGANIZATION OF THE TAKS INFORMATION BOOKLETS**

The purpose of the information booklets is to help Texas educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders understand more about the TAKS tests. These booklets are not intended to replace the teaching of the TEKS curriculum, provide the basis for the isolated teaching of skills in the form of narrow test preparation, or serve as the single information source about every aspect of

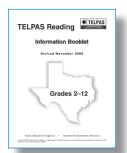
the TAKS program. However, the booklets provide helpful explanations as well as show enough sample items, reading and writing selections, and prompts to give educators a good sense of the assessment.

Each grade within a subject area is presented as a separate booklet. It is recommended that teachers review the information booklets for the grades both above and below the grade they teach. For example, grade 8 reading teachers who review the grade 7 booklet as well as the grade 9 booklet are able to develop a broader perspective of the TAKS reading assessment than if they study only the grade 8 booklet.

The information booklets for each subject area contain some information unique to that subject. For example, the mathematics chart that students use on TAKS is included for each grade at which mathematics is assessed. However, all booklets include the following information, which is considered critical for every subject-area TAKS test:

- an overview of the subject within the context of TAKS
- a blueprint of the test—the number of items under each objective and the number of items on the test as a whole
- information that clarifies how to read the TEKS
- the reasons each objective and its TEKS student expectations are critical to student learning and success
- the objectives and TEKS student expectations that are included on TAKS
- additional information about each objective that helps educators understand how it is assessed on TAKS
- sample items that show some of the ways objectives are assessed

#### **TELPAS Reading Information Booklet**



A preliminary information booklet was issued as a Web-based document in August 2007 to provide information about the new Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) reading assessment implemented in spring 2008. An updated version was issued in fall 2008. The purpose of the information booklet is to familiarize educators with the TELPAS reading tests for English language learners (ELLs) in grades 2–12.

This booklet describes the design of the grades 2–12 TELPAS reading tests and provides sample reading selections and test questions. Teachers who understand the types of English texts that limited English proficient (LEP) students can and cannot comprehend at various stages of learning English are able to tailor instruction more effectively, not only in reading and language arts classes but also in all content areas in which learning is dependent on the ability to understand written English.





## **Study Guides**



In 2008–2009, TEA contracted with Pearson for the revision, printing, and distribution of summer remediation study guides for parents to use in assisting students who did not perform satisfactorily on any section of the TAKS at grades 3–10 and exit level. Study guides are provided to students free of charge. All guides, including Spanish language versions at grades 3–6, can be found online.

TEA also provides online interactive study guides covering the same grades and subjects as the printed guides, while providing content enhanced with dynamic images, engaging interactive activities, and practice questions with instant feedback. The TAKS interactive study guides—one for every printed TAKS study guide—are available online at no cost to districts or students and are available at <a href="http://www.texasassessment.com/families">http://www.texasassessment.com/families</a>.

Under House Bill 3, enacted in 2009 by the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature, TEA is no longer required to develop TAKS study guides. (For more information, see chapter 1.)

## **Personalized Study Guides**

Personalized study guides are customized for students based on their TAKS scores. They inform students of their individual needs and provide resources to help them focus on specific areas in which improvement is needed. The personalized study guides are an additional resource for students who do not perform satisfactorily on any subject-area test of the grade 9, 10, or exit level TAKS. They are designed to be used in conjunction with the TAKS study guides that are provided to students by TEA.

Each personalized study guide contains

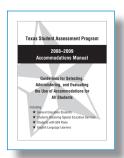
- an overview and explanation of the student's individual TAKS results by subject area and by objective within each subject area;
- a personal study planner to help the student get organized;
- customized study sections for each subject area of the TAKS in which the student did not meet the passing standard; and
- a guide to enable teachers, tutors, and parents to help the student use the study guide.

After each TAKS administration, a personalized study guide is produced for each grade 9, 10, or exit level examinee who did not meet the passing standard on any subject-area test. Since January 2005, students have been able to input their TAKS results from their Confidential Student Reports and download personalized study guides.

Under House Bill 3, enacted in 2009 by the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature, TEA is no longer required to develop TAKS personalized study guides. (For more information, see chapter 1.)

## **Procedural Manuals**

#### **Accommodations Manual**

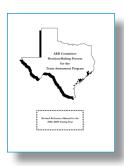


When appropriate accommodations are provided in classroom instruction and testing, students are more successful in learning. When students are provided appropriate accommodations that are allowed during state assessments, their test results will be more valid and reliable indicators of what they know and can do in relation to the grade-level TEKS. To ensure that all students are given access to accommodations during state testing, it is necessary for district personnel to be familiar with guidelines for selecting, providing, and evaluating the use of accommodations.

TEA developed the *Accommodations Manual* to provide guidance to admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees, Section 504 committees, and language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) in learning about, selecting, providing, and evaluating the use of accommodations in instruction and assessment. The information in the manual is applicable to all students requiring accommodations.

The Accommodations Manual is updated each year.

#### **ARD Manual**

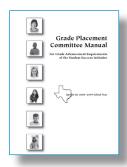


The ARD Committee Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program: Revised Reference Manual for the 2008–2009 Testing Year is designed to guide ARD committees, in selecting the most appropriate assessment for students receiving special education services. This manual explains to ARD committees how to make these decisions by using the TEKS curriculum as documented in each student's individualized education program (IEP).





#### **GPC Manual**



In response to district needs for more information and guidance related to the Student Success Initiative (SSI) and the role of the grade placement committee (GPC), TEA developed the *Grade Placement Committee Manual for the Grade Advancement Requirements of the Student Success Initiative*. The *GPC Manual* is updated annually.

The manual is designed to guide GPCs through the process of evaluating student performance, determining

accelerated instruction plans (AIPs), and, when applicable, making promotion decisions. The manual also provides districts with detailed instructions for implementing all requirements of the SSI and includes timelines and flowcharts, as well as sample forms and letters to aid districts with parental notification and documentation of activities. The sample forms and letters are provided in both English and Spanish to help districts meet the requirement of a good-faith effort to provide parental notifications in the parent's native language.

#### **LPAC Manual**



Section 101.1003 of the Commissioner's Rules
Concerning the Participation of Limited English Proficient
Students in State Assessments requires LPACs to make
assessment decisions on an individual student basis and
in accordance with administrative procedures
established by TEA. The publication titled LPAC DecisionMaking Process for the Texas Student Assessment Program
was developed to guide LPACs in making decisions
about the inclusion of LEP students in the Texas

assessment program and to promote an increased awareness of the educational needs of second language learners.

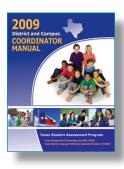
#### The LPAC manual addresses

- decisions about administering TAKS in English or Spanish,
- LEP exemptions for students in grades 3 through 10,
- exit level LEP postponements,
- linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) assessment procedures,
- documentation requirements for LEP exemptions and LAT accommodations,
- using state assessment results to monitor progress,
- federal testing and accountability requirements for LEP students, and
- assessment provisions for LEP students served by special education.

The procedures included in this manual were developed in accordance with Section 39.023(m) of the Texas Education Code (TEC) to ensure that exempted LEP students are administered TAKS at the earliest practical date. The procedures reflect the efforts of Texas educators, policymakers, and citizens to include LEP students in state assessments without delay and in a manner that provides meaningful information about their instruction and learning. The procedures help ensure that schools act promptly to deliver the specialized instruction LEP students need in order to reach their potential and achieve long-term academic success. Training for school districts and charter schools on the procedures contained in the manual is provided annually by the regional education service centers.

The LPAC manual is updated annually.

## **District and Campus Coordinator Manual**



The 2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual explains the responsibilities of district and campus testing coordinators for the TAKS, including TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS–M, and TELPAS testing programs. This manual encompasses preparation and administration procedures for each program for the 2009 calendar year. Separate test administrator manuals and field-test administrator manuals are distributed to districts before each test administration.

## **District and Campus Coordinator Manual Supplement**



The 2009 District and Campus Coordinator Manual Supplement describes procedures for district and campus personnel to follow in administering the online TAKS and EOC assessments.

This manual includes

- quides and training tools for online testing;
- policies and processes specific to online testing;
- information for planning the administration of EOC assessments; and
- program-specific information for testing coordinators, including training, materials, and score codes.





## **Released Tests**

In accordance with the TEC, §39.023(e) and 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), §101.33, every third year TEA shall release the questions and answer keys to each assessment instrument administered under Subsection (a), (b), (c), (d), or (I) after the last time the instrument is administered for that school year. Field-test items, which may be used to build future forms of the tests, are not released. Under House Bill 3, enacted in 2009 by the 81st Texas Legislature, items from TAKS assessments administered for the purpose of retesting are no longer eligible for release. (For more information, see chapter 1.)

All regional education service centers (ESCs) and districts are able to access copies of released test forms, answer keys, and scoring guides on TEA's Student Assessment Division website. Additional hard copies of these materials are made available through Pearson for a nominal fee.

A document authorizing district superintendents and ESC directors to reproduce the copyrighted materials only for noncommercial purposes is also included with the released test materials. Appropriate noncommercial use of released test materials includes disclosing the released test items to the public and using the released tests for the formative evaluation of Texas students.

# **Interpreting Assessment Reports**



The guide titled Interpreting Assessment Reports provides information about the assessments that comprise the Texas assessment program (including TAKS, TAKS–M, TAKS–Alt, TELPAS, and TAAS exit level) and the assessment reports and performance data provided to Texas districts following each test administration.

The guide is updated each year with examples of standard and optional assessment reports for each testing program as well as information to assist school personnel in understanding and interpreting the student performance data contained in each report, as required by Section 39.030(b) of the TEC.