

## Why Does Texas Field Test?

### **What is a field test?**

A field test is a test administration to make sure that newly-developed items measure what they were intended to measure. Without field testing, test developers cannot be sure that all items are accurate, fair, and valid. Field testing contributes to the development of fair, high-quality tests.

### **Who recommends field testing?**

The Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) recommend field testing in their book, *Operational Best Practices for Statewide Large-Scale Assessment Programs* (2010). The American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), also recommend field testing to enhance test development in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1999). Evidence of high quality items has also been required by the United States Department of Education (USDE) during the peer review process.

### **Why do Texas students have to participate in field testing?**

Items are written to assess the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. During the item development process, Texas educators and content experts carefully review the items. Even with this extensive review, it is important to try out the items to see how students respond to them. The most beneficial information about how well an item performs can only be obtained from students who are receiving instruction in the assessed curriculum.

### **What happens to items after field testing?**

The data collected from the field tests are used to evaluate the items. Item statistics are reviewed to determine which items are appropriately measuring student knowledge. Field testing allows a review of item statistics prior to using the item to calculate a student's score; this allows only the highest quality items to contribute towards a student's score.

### **Do students receive scores on field-test items?**

No, students do not receive scores on field-test items. It is best practice to field test all items prior to using them to calculate a student's score. An item should not contribute to a student's score until the item has been shown to be accurate, fair and valid.

### **What would happen if items were not field tested?**

Without field-testing items, student scores may be based on lower quality items that do not accurately measure the assessed curriculum. In addition, item data from field tests could not be reviewed to determine that each item is free from bias (economic, regional, cultural, gender, and ethnicity/race). This would result in student scores that are inaccurate.

### **What other state and national assessment programs use field testing?**

All state and national assessment programs field test their items in either stand-alone administrations or by embedding the items into operational administrations.

### **Are Texas field-test items used outside the state?**

No, all items developed and field tested in Texas are only used on Texas assessments. These items are specifically designed to assess the TEKS curriculum. The items belong to the state and the state makes all decisions concerning their use.