

TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Texas educators — classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators, and education service center staff — play a vital role in all phases of the test development process. Thousands of Texas educators have served on one or more of the educator committees involved in the development of the state assessment program. These committees represent the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school district. The procedures described below outline the process used to develop a framework for the tests and provide for the ongoing development of test items.

- 1) Committees of Texas educators review the state-mandated curriculum to develop appropriate assessment objectives for a specific grade and/or subject test. For each subject area, educators provide advice on an assessment model or structure that aligns with good classroom instruction.
- 2) Educator committees work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) both to prepare draft test objectives and to determine how these objectives would best be assessed. These preliminary recommendations are distributed widely for review by teachers, curriculum specialists, assessment specialists, and administrators.
- 3) A draft of the objectives and student expectations to be assessed is refined based on input from Texas educators. TEA begins a statewide opportunity-to-learn study.
- 4) Prototype test items are written to measure each objective and, when necessary, are piloted by Texas students from volunteer classrooms.
- 5) Educator committees assist in developing guidelines for assessing each objective. These guidelines outline the eligible test content and test-item formats and include sample items.
- 6) With educator input, a preliminary test blueprint is developed that sets the length of the test and the number of test items measuring each objective.
- *7) Professional item writers, many of whom are former or current Texas teachers, develop items based on the objectives and the item guidelines.
- *8) TEA curriculum and assessment specialists review and revise the proposed test items.
- *9) Item review committees composed of Texas educators review the revised items to judge the appropriateness of item content and difficulty and to eliminate potential bias.
- *10) Items are revised again based on input from Texas educator committee meetings and are field-tested with large representative samples of Texas students.

- *11) Field-test data are analyzed for reliability, validity, and possible bias.
- *12) Data-review committees composed of Texas educators are trained in statistical analysis of field-test data and review each item and its associated data. The committees determine whether items are appropriate for inclusion in the bank of items from which test forms are built.
- 13) A final blueprint that establishes the length of the test and the number of test items measuring each objective is developed.
- *14) All field-test items and data are entered into a computerized item bank. Tests are built from the item bank and are designed to be equivalent in difficulty from one administration to the next.
- *15) Content validation panels composed of university-level experts in each of the fields of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies review each high school-level test for accuracy because of the advanced level of content being assessed.
- *16) Tests are administered to Texas students; and results are reported at the student, campus, district, regional, and state levels.
- *17) Stringent quality control measures are applied to all stages of printing, scanning, scoring, and reporting.
- 18) All Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE), and State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II) tests are released to the public in accordance with state law.
- 19) The State Board of Education uses impact data and the statewide opportunity-to-learn study, along with additional information, to set a passing standard for each new test.
- *20) A technical digest that provides verified technical information about the tests to schools and the public is developed annually.

* These steps are repeated annually to ensure that tests of the highest quality are developed.

Further information about the state assessment program is available on the TEA website (www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment).