

TEXAS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Texas educators—K–12 classroom teachers, higher education representatives, 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 Texas 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 categories for a specific grade/subject or course test. For each grade or course, 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 reporting categories and to determine how these categories would best be assessed. These preliminary recommendations are reviewed by K–12 teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialists, assessment specialists, and administrators.
- 3) A draft of the reporting categories and student expectations to be assessed is refined based on input from Texas educators. TEA begins to gather statewide opportunity-to-learn information.
- 4) Prototype test items are written to measure each reporting category and, when necessary, are piloted by Texas students from volunteer classrooms.
- 5) Educator committees assist in developing guidelines for assessing each reporting category. 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 reporting category.
- *7) Professional item writers, many of whom are former or current Texas educators, develop items based on the reporting categories 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 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 reporting category 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; results are reported at the student, campus, district, regional, and state levels for state-mandated assessments.
- *17) Stringent quality control measures are applied to all stages of printing, scanning, scoring, and reporting for both paper and online assessments.
- 18) In accordance with state law, the Texas assessment program will release tests to the public.
- 19) In accordance with state law, the Commissioner of Education uses impact data, study results, and statewide opportunity-to-learn information, along with recommendations from standard-setting panels, to set a passing standard for new state assessments.
- *20) A technical digest is developed annually to provide verified technical information about the tests to schools and the public.

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

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