

May 17, 2006

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Student Assessment Online Initiatives for the 2006-2007 School Year

This letter provides important information regarding the Texas assessment program and online initiatives for the 2006-2007 school year, including the fall 2006 study period as well as the fall 2006 and spring 2007 operational online test administrations.

In response to interest from Texas policymakers and educators, the Texas assessment program will continue to expand its use of computer-administered testing. Online testing has advantages such as easier data capture and data management, a more motivating test environment for students, and reduced material handling requirements for test administrative staff. More importantly, within three years it is possible that some of the state assessments will be administered exclusively online. In the meantime, selected tests will be made available in both paper and online formats, which will allow districts time to prepare their technology infrastructures for large-scale online assessment. Detailed technology infrastructure requirements and procedures for system testing at the local level will be forthcoming.

Fall 2006 Study Period

During the fall 2006 study period, scheduled for September 11–22, 2006, a study will take place with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Grade 10 English language arts test. As part of the study design, voluntary campuses will be assigned either the online version or the paper-and-pencil version of the test. Details regarding the fall 2006 TAKS Grade 10 ELA study as well as notification of campus selection for participation will be provided in a separate letter.

Fall 2006 Operational Online Administrations

- **TAKS Exit Level Retest**
In October 2006 the TAKS exit level English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies tests will be offered in both paper and online formats.
- Please note that the optional online Algebra I end-of-course exam will no longer be offered in the fall.

Spring 2007 Operational Online Administrations

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

- **TAKS Grade 7**
TAKS Grade 7 mathematics and reading tests will be offered in both paper and online formats.

- **TAKS Grade 8**
TAKS Grade 8 mathematics, reading, science, and social studies tests will again be offered in both paper and online formats. Like the spring 2005 field test and the spring 2006 operational test, the Grade 8 science test will again contain field-test item types that include interactive media.
- **TAKS Grade 9**
TAKS Grade 9 reading and mathematics tests will again be offered in both paper and online formats.
- **TAKS Grade 10**
TAKS Grade 10 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies tests will be offered in both paper and online formats.
- **TAKS Exit Level Retest**
In July 2007 the TAKS exit level English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies tests will be offered in both paper and online formats.

End-of-Course Examinations

- **Algebra I End-of-Course Exam**
The TAKS-aligned version of the Algebra I end-of-course examination has been offered exclusively online since spring 2005. This optional state assessment will be offered again in an online-only format. This exam is scheduled during a May 7–25, 2007, testing window.
- **Biology and Geometry End-of-Course Field Tests**
A field-testing window for Biology and Geometry end-of-course exams is scheduled for April 23–May 11, 2007. Note that these mandatory field tests are planned to be administered exclusively online during this three-week window to students enrolled in either Biology or Geometry courses at the time of field testing.

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

- **Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE)**
It is anticipated that RPTE II, which will be administered to limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades 2–12, will be implemented in an online-only format beginning in spring 2009. Please note that previous correspondence indicated the possibility that this assessment would be administered exclusively online beginning in spring 2008. For next spring, it is anticipated that online and paper-and-pencil testing will occur. Comparability studies between online and paper-and-pencil testing are being planned.

TAKS-Alternate (TAKS-Alt) Field Test

- Information regarding the online TAKS-Alt assessment field test has been provided in previous correspondence. TAKS-Alt is the assessment for special education students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. TAKS-Alt will be operational in spring 2008. It is a non-traditional assessment in that students are assessed by teachers using an online tool; it is not a paper-and-pencil test.

Online Training

- **Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) Holistic Rating Training**
Information regarding online refresher training courses for the TOP holistic rating process has been provided in previous correspondence.
- **TAKS-Alternate (TAKS-Alt) Online Training Modules**
General information regarding the online TAKS-Alt assessment online training modules has been provided in previous correspondence. More specific details will be forthcoming.

Planning for 2006-2007 Online Administrations

Districts are encouraged to evaluate their infrastructure and take advantage of online testing opportunities in the 2006-2007 school year to prepare their students and staff for the broad spectrum of tests that may move to an online-only format in the coming years.

Detailed instructions and information about online testing hardware/software requirements, proxy environments, browser setup, and installation of TestNav™, the test delivery software will be provided separately but may also be found on the eMeasurement Texas State Assessments Resources page, located at the following address:

<http://etest.pearson.com/Customers/Texas/eoct/txeoct/resources.htm>

If you have questions about online testing initiatives for the 2006-2007 school year, please contact the Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536. Please direct questions about accessing online resources or online test administration procedures to the Texas Online Team at the Austin Operations Center at 800-252-9186 (Option 3).

Sincerely,

Lisa Chandler
Director, Student Assessment

cc: District Test Coordinators
Education Service Center Executive Directors
Education Service Center Test Coordinators