

Partners in Math

Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills Training

January 7, 2010

No Child Left Behind

- **An Act by Congress to close the achievement gap**
- **Enacted January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush**
- **Accountability and funding, parental involvement**



1. An Act by Congress to close the achievement gap so that no child is left behind.
2. It is based on the belief that individual outcomes in education can be improved by setting high standards and having measurable goals.
3. Accountability & funding – school funding is directly tied to accountability expectations. Schools have to make sure that all students learn the state defined “essential knowledge & skills” for their grade-level. This is for ALL students. NCLB requires that data reporting include the learning journey of each student and the effectiveness of every school in that effort. You can see where the schools feel pressure. They don’t perform, they don’t get funding.
4. Each year parents are provided a detailed report of how their student does on the TAKS test. On this report are explanations about their child’s achievement level. They also receive a report card on how their school has performed overall.

What is TAKS?

- Stands for **T**exas **A**ssessment of **K**nowledge and **S**kills
- Established in 2003
- Standardized test for grades 3-11 to assess learning of skills mandated by the Texas Education Agency
- Test is not timed



TAKS is an acronym for Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. It is a standardized test given in the spring of every year and its purpose is to assess what students have learned in math (my personal favorite), reading, writing, social studies and science.

TAKS was created before NCLB, but it has been greatly impacted by the NCLB standards. The test scores from the TAKS test are used to hold school districts and individual schools accountable for student performance.

TAKS is designed to see how well a student is able to acquire, learn, and use the specific skills and goals outlined in an instructional unit or year-long curriculum that is taught according to state educational standards.

Each state is responsible for creating an accountability system, attaching consequences—or stakes—for student performance. Schools have to meet annual yearly progress measures to remain in compliance with NCLB (to remain open).

It is worth noting that this test is not timed and students have all day to take it. It is not uncommon for some students to stay after school well into the evening to complete the test.

How is TAKS created?

- Mandate by 76th Texas Legislature
- Collaboration between the Texas Education Agency, Pearson, and Texas educators



1. TAKS came about because in 1999 the 76th Texas Legislature mandated the Texas Education Agency to develop a new assessment program that was aligned to the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills) – which is the state mandated curriculum. They wanted a more rigorous testing program.
2. TAKS was first created by the TEA, Pearson Educational Measurement (company that also creates text books), and Texas Educators. (a detailed history can be found online from the TEA website under Student Assessment Division.)
3. Each year Pearson develops test questions which the Texas Education Agency reviews and approves.

What is tested

3rd	Math	*Reading			
4th	Math	Reading	Writing		
5th	*Math	*Reading		Science	
6th	Math	Reading			
7th	Math	Reading	Writing		
8th	*Math	*Reading		Science	Social Studies
9th	Math	Reading			
10th	Math	Reading	Writing	Science	Social Studies
11th	*Math	*Reading	*Writing	*Science	*Social Studies

* Denotes "must pass" to be promoted to next grade



* Must pass years

TAKS–M Test

- Modified test for students receiving special education services
- Modifications may include format changes and test changes



TAKS–M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but TAKS–M tests have been changed in format (larger font, fewer items per page, etc.) and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.).

If you have a student that struggles with very basic math skills, it is possible that they will be taking the TAKS-M test. The teacher cannot tell you who is taking TAKS-M.

Scoring

- 50 questions scored by a computer.
- 3-5 “field” questions included
- a scaled score of 2100 is required to pass
- 2400 is required to earn “commended” status.



The science, social studies, math, and reading tests (before grade 9) consist of multiple-choice questions scored by computer. However, for the Math test, there are 1-2 grid questions. On each test, a scaled score of 2100 is required to pass and 2400 is required to earn "commended" status.

The TAKS test are approximately 3-5 “field-test” questions in addition to the regular test. These questions are being tested for future inclusion in an actual TAKS test. These questions are mixed in and the students do not know which they are. It is important to encourage your students to not get frustrated if they have a question that is difficult. They should try their best to answer the problem, but it could actually be a field test question that does not count against their score.

Resources

If you want to read more about the creation of TAKS

- www.pearsonassessments.com
- www.tea.state.tx.us



While bringing personal gifts to your students is not okay, there is no problem with bringing something for the whole class, just check with the teacher first. For example, in the past we have had volunteers bring pens with their company logo.

Also, at important times of year, groups of volunteers sometimes coordinate special treats for their students. This is never expected but is perfectly okay as long as every student in class will be treated equally. For example, every student might receive a book at the end of the year, or each volunteer might write an encouraging note to their kids the week before the TAKS test.

Finally, it is always acceptable for an individual volunteer to bring something special to the classroom teacher, whether it is a muffin in the morning, extra markers for their white board, or just a note saying "Thank you!".