



Majority of students meet TAKS promotion requirements

AUSTIN - Ninety-three percent of the state's third-grade students met a significant promotion requirement by passing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) reading test this spring, the Texas Education Agency announced today.

Students in grades five and eight must pass both the reading and mathematics TAKS to meet promotion requirements for their grades. Eighty-nine percent of fifth-grade students and 95 percent of eighth-grade students passed the TAKS reading tests. As reported last month, 84 percent of fifth-grade students who took the test in English and 79 percent of the eighth-grade students passed the TAKS math test on the first try. Results from the May math retest are not yet available.

Those students who have not passed the tests tied to promotion will be offered additional instruction, primarily through summer school. They will have another opportunity to take the TAKS math test on June 30 and the TAKS reading test on July 1.

A bill passed by the legislature and awaiting the governor's review will modify the promotion requirements for third grade in future years if it becomes law. However, the bill leaves the existing requirements in place for fifth and eighth-grade students.

"I'm pleased to see such strong performance during a year that has been plagued by many disruptions such as hurricanes and flu outbreaks," Commissioner of Education Robert Scott said. "Performance has improved at most grade levels and in most subjects this year. I applaud both our students and our teachers who stayed focused on academics and thus were well prepared for the TAKS this spring."

Though not tied to promotion standards, third-grade students also take the TAKS math test and posted strong performance results. Eighty-four percent of students who took the mathematics test in English passed it, while 37 percent earned Commended Performance, which indicates a high level of performance. Seventy-seven percent of those who took the math test in Spanish passed with 24 percent earning Commended Performance.

A TAKS-Modified (TAKS-M) test is available for some students served by special education. It covers the same grade-level content as the standard TAKS but contains some modifications such as larger font size, simpler vocabulary and fewer answer choices. Eighty-five percent of the third-grade students passed the TAKS-M reading test and 82 percent passed the TAKS-M mathematics test on the first try. A cumulative passing rate for TAKS-M reading that includes the results of the reading test is not available.

Another assessment called TAKS-Alternative (TAKS-Alt) is an assessment designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. TAKS-Alt meets federal requirements mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act. Though these students are required by federal law to be

tested on grade-level curriculum, alternative standards are used. About 3,100 third-graders took the TAKS-Alt assessment. Passing rates were 84 percent on reading and 85 percent on math.

Additionally at these key grade levels, fifth-grade students who took the TAKS science test in English had a passing rate of 84 percent. Students who took the science test in Spanish had a passing rate of 43 percent. The science test has proven to be the hardest test for fifth graders. However, this year's results represent the highest passing rates in the six year history of this test.

“Clearly, we still have room to improve but these results show that elementary science instruction is improving, which is good news for the state since so many 21st century jobs are tied to science,” Scott said.

Ninety-two percent of eighth-grade students passed the TAKS social studies test and 72 percent passed the science test.

Eleventh grade

While the tests at grades 3, 5 and 8 determine promotion, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must pass all four parts of the exit-level TAKS, which is given for the first time in the spring of the 11th grade. The students must also earn 24 or 26 course credits to fulfill graduation requirements.

Seventy-five percent of the students tested in the Class of 2010 met this testing requirement when they took the tests this spring. These students passed all four tests - English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

On the individual tests, the highest passing rate occurred on the social studies assessment, which 97 percent of the students passed. Ninety-two percent passed the English language arts (ELA) test, which is an integrated reading and writing test. Eighty-five percent of the students passed the science TAKS, while 81 percent passed the mathematics assessment. Historically, the science and math tests have proven the hardest for students.

This performance showed improvement over the first administration scores earned by the Class of 2009. Last year, the passing rates were 95 percent on social studies, 90 percent on English language arts, 80 percent on science and 79 percent on math. Overall, 71 percent passed all four tests. A cumulative pass rate for the Class of 2009, which has now had five opportunities to take the exams, is not yet available.

Below are passing rates for grades or subjects not detailed above. These scores, along with other detailed testing results, help educators pinpoint students' strengths and weaknesses and adjust instruction accordingly.

Percentage of students passing TAKS

Grade	Reading/ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies	Writing
4 English	84%	86%	--	--	91%
4 Spanish	79%	78%	--	--	91%
4 TAKS-M	79%	78%	--	--	NPSE#
4 TAKS-Alt	82%	86%	--	--	86%
5 TAKS-M	62%		48%	--	--
5 TAKS-Alt	82%	87%	88%	--	--
6 English	91%	80%	--	--	--
6 Spanish	75%	62%	--	--	--
6 TAK-M	78%	71%	--	--	--
6 TAKS-Alt	80%	85%	--	--	--
7	84%	79%	--	--	93%
7 TAKS-M	81%	69%	--	--	NPSE#
7 TAKS-Alt	83%	86%	--	--	83%
8 TAKS-M	54%	64%	56%	NPSE#	--
8 TAKS-Alt	80%	82%	87%	86%	--
9	87%	67%	--	--	--
9 TAKS-M	NPSE#	NPSE#	--	--	--
9 TAKS-Alt	80%	80%	--	--	--
10	88%	65%	66%	90%	--
10 TAKS-M	80%	51%	51%	NPSE#	--
10 TAKS-Alt	81%	84%	85%	87%	--
11 TAKS-M	NPSE#	NPSE#	NPSE#	NPSE#	--
11 TAKS-Alt	80%	81%	81%	80%	--

No Passing Standard Established (Available October 2009)

TELPAS

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is given to gather information about English language learners' language development in English in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The test is available from kindergarten through 12th grade. A student's language acquisition level is rated at one of four levels – beginning, intermediate, advanced or advanced high.

More than 103,000 kindergarten students were given the TELPAS this year. Most were at the beginning level of English acquisition. Their listening skills were the strongest, while their English writing skills were the weakest area.

By third grade, when almost 95,000 students were tested, the vast majority of students were in the intermediate or advanced levels of English-language acquisition.

By fifth grade, many students had mastered English and no longer needed to take this test. Of the approximately 53,000 students who did take the TELPAS assessment, 63 percent had reached the advanced high level of reading in English. Writing continued to be the most difficult area for students with 28 percent at the advanced-high level of performance. The test is available from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Complete results for TAKS and TELPAS are available at:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=3631&menu_id3=793.

District, campus and individual student results have been sent to local districts and charter schools by the state's testing contractor. At this time, the Texas Education Agency does not have local results.

State accountability ratings will be released July 31. In addition, federal ratings called Adequate Yearly Progress will be issued Aug. 6.

###