

WHAT THE TAKS IS ALL ABOUT

The *Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills* (TAKS) is comprised of tests that are more rigorous and challenge students' knowledge in more subjects and grades than the previous *Texas Assessment of Academic Skills* (TAAS) tests of 1994 through 2002. This is the fifth year that students across Texas have taken TAKS tests, and is the fourth year for campuses to receive a rating under the state's current accountability system.

TAKS tests were given on several dates beginning in February through April 2007 to students in third through eleventh grades. Subjects tested were Reading (grades 3-9), English Language Arts (10-11), Mathematics (3-11), Writing (4 & 7), Science (5, 8, 10 & 11), and Social Studies (8, 10 & 11).

Third and fifth grade students are required to pass the Reading tests to be promoted to the next grade; fifth grade students must also pass the Math test to advance to sixth grade; and eleventh grade students are required to pass four separate tests to graduate (English/Language Arts; Math; Science; and Social Studies).

Tests in Science (Grade 5) and Social Studies (Grade 8) are completely integrated into the TAKS-based state accountability system for the third year, as is testing in grades 9 and 11. The same is true of the State Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II). Eighth grade Science will be included no later than the 2008 ratings cycle.

Similarly, four-year completion rates for high schools, and dropout rates for schools serving grades seven and eight, are now incorporated into the state system.

Performance standards for state rating levels in 2007 are:

	<i>Exemplary</i>	<i>Recognized</i>	<i>Academically Acceptable</i>
TAKS Passing Rates	90% in all subject areas	75% in all subject areas	65% in Reading, Writing, Social Studies 45% in Math 40% in Science
Alternative Tests (State Developed Alternative Assessment)	90% "Met Expectations" for all tests taken	70% "Met Expectations" for all tests taken	50% "Met Expectations" for all tests taken
Completion Rates (High Schools)	95%	85%	75%
Dropout Rates (Grades 7& 8)	0.2%	0.7%	1.0%