

Why are there learning standards for our children?

Every day our world becomes more complex and demanding. To succeed beyond high school, students must be better prepared than at any time in the history of our state. Consequently, expectations for our students and our schools are higher than they have ever been.

To meet these expectations, the State Board of Education has adopted a curriculum framework for Texas schools — the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). These learning standards will help ensure that all students are prepared to meet the challenges ahead of them as they move into the next century.

- Each student must become a more effective reader.
- Each student must know and apply more complex mathematics.
- Each student must develop a stronger understanding of science concepts, especially in biology, chemistry, and physics.
- Each student must master the social studies skills and content necessary to be a responsible adult citizen.
- Each student must master a wider range of technological skills.
- Each student must master skills in fine arts, including art, music, and theatre.
- Each student must master skills in languages other than English, health education, and physical education.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills identify what Texas students should know and be able to do at every grade and in every course in the required curriculum as they move successfully through our public schools.

The enclosed information summarizes the TEKS at your child's grade level in the four foundation areas of English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

If you would like to see all of the TEKS that your child will learn, ask a teacher or principal to show you a copy, or order a copy from the Texas Education Agency, or review them online at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/index.html>.

We are proud of education in Texas and hope that you will be proud of what your child will learn and do in school this year.

Shirley Neeley, Ed.D.

Commissioner of Education

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) offers the following resources.

TAKS. Students in grades 3 through 11 (exit level) take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). These tests indicate how much your child has learned and help to indicate how well your district's instructional program is functioning. Students receiving special education services may take the State Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II); testing decisions for these students are made by each student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee.

The TAKS and SDAA II tests are released to the public according to guidelines established by state law and State Board of Education rules. Released TAKS and SDAA II tests administered in the 2002-03 and the 2003-04 school years are currently available on the TEA website at: www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/release/index.html Legislative changes may impact the released test schedule; check the website periodically for updates.

Understanding the Confidentiality Student Report. Every child who takes the TAKS test gets a report of his or her score. This report is called the Confidential Student Report, or CSR. By carefully examining your child's CSR, you will find out where your child is doing well and where your child may need to improve. The purpose of the parent brochure is to explain a sample test report so that you can understand your child's actual test report. Parent brochures are available on our website at www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/parent_csr/index.html

Study Guides for TAKS. TEA has developed TAKS Study Guides to help students strengthen the TEKS-based skills that are taught in class and tested on TAKS. The guides are designed for students to use on their own or to work through with family members. Concepts are presented in a variety of ways to help students review the information and skills they need to be successful on the TAKS.

The study guides are sent to each campus in late spring for students who did not successfully meet the passing standard. Another way to access the study guides is to download them from the TEA website at the following address: www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/study/index.html

The TAKS Study Guides may also be purchased by calling Pearson Educational Measurement at 1-800-252-9186.

INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET. If you have access to the Internet, the TEA website provides information, data, and resources about the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), testing, accountability, school finance, state law, and many other areas. The TEA website is www.tea.state.tx.us To see and print the TEKS, go to www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/index.html

FOR MORE INFORMATION. If you have additional questions about Texas public schools, feel free to contact the Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701-1494 or call (512)463-9734.