

SURVEY OF TESTING AND TEACHING IN GRADES 7-12 IN TEXAS

Boston College
Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy
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Instructions for completing the questionnaire: The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to gather information about testing and testing issues from people like yourself who teach English and Math in grades 7 through 12. These issues are particularly important for the reform efforts that are currently taking place.

A few key terms should be defined as they are used in the questionnaire: (1) **State-mandated tests** are those standardized tests that a state requires of its schools at specific grade levels (such as a statewide basic skills or minimum competency test). (2) **District-mandated tests** are those standardized tests that a school district requires of students in its schools at specific grade levels (such as an achievement test). (3) **Text-supplied tests** are those tests that are supplied by the publisher of the textbook you are using, either in the textbook itself (such as end of chapter tests) or as a supplementary publication (such as a teacher's guide). (4) **Teacher-made tests** are those tests that you and/or your colleagues have built. (5) **Test preparation materials** are those materials designed to prepare students for upcoming standardized tests (such as developing test-taking skills, or using practice tests).

We are interested in your candid beliefs and practices about these important testing issues. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be provided to any other person or group. Since you have been selected as part of a statewide sample, your responses are extremely valuable in learning what teachers across Texas think about these issues.

If you currently teach at the middle school or high school level to more than one class, **select the class that you meet with first on Monday**. Think **only of this class and/or subject** as you complete the questions.

Some of the questions may not be relevant to what takes place in your class, school district, or state. In that case simply respond "not applicable." **Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope within the next week**. We thank you in advance for participating in this important study.

IMPORTANT: USE NO 2 PENCIL ONLY

RIGHT MARK



WRONG MARKS



A Class Information

1. Which one of the following categories best describes the grade level(s) of the students in this class?

- Grade 7 Grade 10
 Grade 8 Grade 11
 Grade 9 Grade 12

2. Are you certified to teach this particular class?

- Yes
 No

3. Are students placed in this class based on their ability/achievement?

- Yes
 No If no, go to question 5.

4. Which one of the following categories best describes the ability/achievement level of this class?

- High ability/achievement
 Average ability/achievement
 Low ability/achievement
 Mixed ability/achievement
 Special Needs

5. Have you taken graduate coursework related to this subject area in the last five years?

- Yes
 No

6. How comfortable are you teaching this subject area?

- Very comfortable
 Quite comfortable
 Somewhat comfortable
 Not too comfortable
 Not comfortable at all

C Information About State And District Testing Programs

1. Are students in your class **REQUIRED** by your **STATE** and/or **DISTRICT** to take standardized tests in this subject during the current academic year (do not include department tests)?

- Yes
- No **If no, skip to section F**

2. What are the names of these required standardized tests? Write the names in the spaces provided, or "don't know" if you don't know the name of a test. Who requires these test: your state, or your district?

| Test Name | Required By | | Not Sure |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | State | District | |
| Test #1 _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Test #2 _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Test #3 _____ | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. Which one of the tests that you have indicated in question 2 is **MOST** important to you in your own work with students in this class? Even if these tests are of little importance to you, please indicate the one that is **MOST** important.

- Test #1
- Test #2
- Test #3

For the remainder of the questionnaire, when responding to questions about a mandated standardized test, think only of the test you selected as most important in question 3 above.

4. For the test you selected above in question 3, are the test results used for any of the following activities? Select as many as apply.

- To place students in programs
- To promote/graduate students
- To evaluate teachers
- To award teacher merit pay
- To retain faculty/staff
- To publish test scores
- To attract/deter home buyers
- To take-over a school
- To alter the school curriculum
- None that I know of

5. How familiar are you with what it is the mandated standardized test your students take measures?

- Very familiar
- Quite familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not too familiar
- Not familiar at all

6. How familiar are you with the specific test items on the mandated standardized test your students take?

- Very familiar
- Quite familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not too familiar
- Not familiar at all

7. The following is a list of ways in which standardized tests are used by teachers. In your own work with students in this class, how important is the state or district mandated test you have selected for each of the functions listed below?

Please rate each function with the following codes:

| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Minimally Important | Not Important |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Recommend placement in gifted and talented | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend placement in special services | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend remediation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend promotion/retention in grade | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend graduation from high school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend grouping by ability in a grade | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group within my class | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Evaluate student progress | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Assess teaching effectiveness | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend textbook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Plan my instruction | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Plan curriculum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Give feedback to students | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Give feedback to parents | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Determine student grades in whole or in part | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

8. In your opinion, how important is the state or district mandated standardized test you selected to administrators when they make the following decisions? Please rate each decision below with the following codes:

| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Minimally Important | Not Important |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Placement in gifted and talented | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Placement in special services | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Placement in remediation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Promotion/retention in grade | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Determine graduation from high school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Group students by ability in a grade | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Recommend textbook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Curriculum planning | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feedback to students | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feedback to parents | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teacher evaluation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Teacher merit pay | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instructional program evaluation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| School evaluation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| District evaluation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

D Test Preparation

1. How do you prepare your students for the mandated standardized test you selected on page 3? Indicate ALL that apply:

- I do no special test preparation.
- I teach test-taking skills.
- I encourage students to work hard and prepare.
- I use materials that motivate students to do well.
- I provide rewards for test completion.
- I teach topics known to be on the test.
- I provide test-specific preparation materials.
- I provide students with similar items.
- I provide students with the same items.

2. Approximately how many class hours PER YEAR do you spend in preparing students to take the mandated standardized test you selected?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- More than 30

3. How far in advance of the mandated standardized test you selected do you typically begin preparation?

- No preparation
- Day before
- Week before
- Month before
- Over one month before

4. Do you use any test preparation materials to prepare your students for the mandated standardized test you have selected? **If no or don't know, then skip to Section E.** If yes, check ALL the materials that you use, and whether the decision was made by yourself, the administration, or both (fill in both circles).

- State Developed Materials
- District Developed Materials
- Commercially Developed Materials

Please List Names of all Commercially Developed Materials

5. How similar is the content of the test preparation materials you use to the content of the mandated standardized test you selected?

- Very similar
- Quite similar
- Somewhat similar
- Quite dissimilar
- Very dissimilar

E Reporting of Test Results

1. Did you receive test results for the state or district mandated standardized test selected on page 3 that was given to your class last year?

- Yes
- No

2. How often do you refer to the results of the selected state or district mandated standardized test in your own work with students in this class?

- Daily
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- 1-3 times a month
- 1-3 times a year
- Almost never

F

Relationship of Testing to Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation

For questions 1-3, please indicate separately your responses for the state or district mandated standardized test you selected on page 3 and for text-supplied tests that you use for this class (tests supplied by the publisher of the textbook you are using, separately packaged or in the text). Indicate “not applicable” if a particular type of test is not administered to your students.

1. How similar is the content of your primary text and the content of the following tests?

Mandated standardized test
Text-supplied tests

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Similar | Quite Similar | Somewhat Similar | Quite Dissimilar | Very Dissimilar | Not Applicable |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. How similar is the content of your instruction and the following tests?

Mandated standardized test
Text-supplied tests

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Similar | Quite Similar | Somewhat Similar | Quite Dissimilar | Very Dissimilar | Not Applicable |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. How accurate are the following tests in measuring what your students REALLY know and can do?

Mandated Standardized test
Text supplied tests

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very Accurate | Fairly Accurate | Sometimes Accurate | Fairly Inaccurate | Very Inaccurate | Not Applicable |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

4. To what extent does the mandated standardized test you selected influence (a) you and your teaching, and (b) other teachers in your district?

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE MANDATED TEST SELECTED INFLUENCE.....

The inclusion of topics not otherwise taught
The exclusion of topics otherwise taught
Increasing the emphasis on certain topics
Decreasing the emphasis on certain topics
The content of tests you and/or your colleagues have built
The format of tests you and/or your colleagues have built

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A FOR YOURSELF | | | | | B FOR OTHER TEACHERS | | | | |
| A Lot | Some | A Little | None | Not Applicable | A Lot | Some | A Little | None | Not Applicable |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. To what extent do text-supplied tests influence (a) you and your teaching, and (b) other teachers in your district

TO WHAT EXTENT DO TEXT-SUPPLIED TESTS INFLUENCE

The inclusion of topics not otherwise taught
The exclusion of topics otherwise taught
Increasing the emphasis on certain topics
Decreasing the emphasis on certain topics
The content of tests you and/or your colleagues have built
The format of tests you and/or your colleagues have built

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A FOR YOURSELF | | | | | B FOR OTHER TEACHERS | | | | |
| A Lot | Some | A Little | None | Not Applicable | A Lot | Some | A Little | None | Not Applicable |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Questions 6-21 describe a variety of general perspectives on the influence of mandated standardized testing on teaching. Please indicate your responses about mandated testing FOR ALL OF THE CLASSES THAT YOU TEACH. Use the codes to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Unecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 6. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time in whole group instruction. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time in developing critical thinking skills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time on individual seat work. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time in developing basic skills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time with small groups of students working together (cooperative learning). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time solving problems that are likely to appear on tests. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Mandated testing influences teachers to spend more instructional time in the use of manipulatives and/or experiments for concept development. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Teachers in my district are gearing their instruction to mandated tests | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Mandated testing helps students achieve the objectives of the curriculum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. Teachers in my district have a pretty good idea of what students can do without using mandated tests. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. The evaluation of teachers' competence is influenced (directly and/or indirectly) by their students' mandated test scores. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Mandated testing contributes to the realization of the goals of the current educational reform movement. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. My state or district testing program sometimes leads teachers to teach in ways that go against their own ideals of good educational practice. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. My district is putting pressure on teachers to improve their students' mandated test scores. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. Students' mandated test scores are below the expectations of my school or district. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. Mandated testing influences some teachers in my district to engage in non-standard testing practices (such as changing responses or increasing testing time limits). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. Mandated testing influences some administrators in my district to engage in non-standard testing practices (such as changing responses or increasing testing time limits). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

G**Background Information**

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have, including this year?

- 1
- 2-3
- 4-8
- 9-12
- 13-20
- Over 20

2. At your present school, have you ever served in any of the following capacities? Mark all that apply.

- Tenured teacher
- Master teacher
- Curriculum coordinator/department head
- None

THE LAST TWO QUESTIONS ARE OPTIONAL

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

4. Which of the following categories best describes you?

- African American (not Hispanic)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Hispanic
- Caucasian (not Hispanic)
- Asian or Pacific Islander Other

If you would like to receive a summary of results of this survey, please write your name and address here.

Comments

If you would like to offer any comments about the relationship between mandated testing and teaching in Texas secondary schools please write them here.

**Thank you for your
cooperation with
this study!**