

TE_xES | Texas Examinations of Educator Standards

Preparation Manual



153 Educational Diagnostician

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PREFACE

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) has developed new standards for Texas educators that delineate what the beginning educator should know and be able to do. These standards, which are based on the state-required curriculum for students—the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)—form the basis for new Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES). This initiative will impact all areas of Texas education—from the more than 100 approved Texas educator preparation programs to the more than 7,000 Texas school campuses. This standards-based system reflects SBEC's commitment to help align Texas education from kindergarten through college. SBEC's role in this K–16 initiative will ensure that newly certified Texas teachers have the essential knowledge and skills to teach the TEKS to the state's public school students.

This manual is designed to help examinees prepare for the new TExES test in this field. Its purpose is to familiarize examinees with the competencies to be tested, test item formats, and pertinent study resources. Educator preparation program staff may also find this information useful as they help examinees prepare for careers as Texas educators.

If you have any questions after reading this preparation manual or you would like additional information about the new TExES tests or the educator standards, please visit the SBEC Web site at www.sbec.state.tx.us.

KEY FEATURES OF THE MANUAL

List of competencies that will be tested

Strategies for answering test questions

Sample test items and answer key

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SECTION I

THE NEW TExES TESTS FOR TEXAS TEACHERS

As required by the Texas Education Code §21.048, successful performance on educator certification examinations is required for the issuance of a Texas educator certificate. Each TExES test is a criterion-referenced examination designed to measure the knowledge and skills delineated in the corresponding TExES test framework. Each test framework is based on standards that were developed by Texas educators and other education stakeholders.

Each TExES test is designed to measure the requisite knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools must possess. The tests include both individual, or stand-alone, test items (questions) and items that are arranged in clustered sets based on real-world situations faced by educators.

Development of the New TExES Tests

Committees of Texas educators and interested citizens guide the development of the new TExES tests by participating in each stage of the test development process. These working committees are comprised of Texas educators from public and charter schools, faculty from educator preparation programs, education service center staff, representatives from professional educator organizations, content experts, and members of the business community. The committees are balanced in terms of position, affiliation, years of experience, ethnicity, gender, and geographical location. The committee membership is rotated during the development process so that numerous Texas stakeholders may be actively involved. The steps in the process to develop the TExES tests are described below.

1. **Develop Standards.** Committees are convened to recommend what the beginning educator should know and be able to do. To ensure vertical alignment of standards across the range of instructional levels, individuals with expertise in early childhood, elementary, middle, or high school education meet jointly to articulate the critical knowledge and skills for a particular content area. Participants begin their dialogue using a "clean slate" approach with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as the focal point. Draft standards are written to incorporate the TEKS and to expand upon that content to ensure that all beginning educators possess the appropriate level of both knowledge and skills to instruct students successfully.
2. **Review Standards.** Committees review and revise the draft standards. The revised draft standards are then placed on the SBEC Web site for public review and comment. These comments are used to prepare a final draft of the standards that will be presented to the SBEC Board for discussion, the State Board of Education (SBOE) for review and comment, and the SBEC Board for approval. Standards not based specifically on the TEKS, such as those for librarians and counselors, are proposed as rule by the SBEC Board; sent to the SBOE for its 90-day review; and, if not rejected by the SBOE, adopted by the SBEC Board.
3. **Develop Test Frameworks.** Committees review and revise draft test frameworks that are based on the standards. These frameworks outline the specific competencies to be measured on the new TExES tests. The TExES competencies represent the critical components of the standards that can be measured with either a paper-and-pencil-based or a computer-based examination, as appropriate. Draft frameworks are not finalized until after the standards are approved and the job analysis/content validation survey (see #4) is complete.

4. **Conduct Job Analysis/Content Validation Surveys.** A representative sample of Texas educators who practice in or prepare individuals for each of the fields for which an educator certificate has been proposed are surveyed to determine the relative job importance of each competency outlined in the test framework for that content area. Frameworks are revised as needed following an analysis of the survey responses.
5. **Develop and Review New Test Items.** The test contractor develops draft items that are designed to measure the competencies described in the test framework. Committees review the newly developed test items that have been written to reflect the competencies in the new test frameworks and may accept, revise, or reject test items. Committee members scrutinize the draft items for appropriateness of content and difficulty; clarity; match to the competencies; and potential ethnic, gender, and regional bias.
6. **Conduct Pilot Test of New Test Items.** All of the newly developed test items that have been deemed acceptable by the item review committees are then administered to an appropriate sample of candidates for certification.
7. **Review Pilot Test Data.** Pilot test results are reviewed to ensure that the test items are valid, reliable, and free from bias.
8. **Administer New TExES Tests.** New TExES tests are constructed to reflect the competencies, and the tests are administered to candidates for certification.
9. **Set Passing Standard.** A Standard Setting Committee convenes to review performance data from the initial administration of each new TExES test and to recommend a final passing standard for that test. SBEC considers this recommendation as it establishes a passing score on the test.

Taking the TExES Test and Receiving Scores

Please refer to the current TExES registration bulletin for information on test dates, sites, fees, registration procedures, and policies.

You will be mailed a score report approximately four weeks after each test you take. The report will indicate whether you have passed the test and will include:

- a total test *scaled* score. Scaled scores are reported to allow for the comparison of scores on the same content-area test taken on different test administration dates. The total scaled score is not the percentage of items answered correctly and is not determined by averaging the number of questions answered correctly in each domain.
 - For all TExES tests, the score scale is 100–300 with a scaled score of 240 as the minimum passing score. This score represents the minimum level of competency required to be an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools.
- your performance in the major content domains of the test and in the specific content competencies of the test.
 - This information may be useful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in your content preparation and can be used for further study or for preparing to retake the test.
- information to help you understand the score scale and interpret your results.

You will not receive a score report if you are absent or choose to cancel your score.

Additionally, unofficial score report information will be posted on the Internet on the score report mailing date of each test administration. Information about receiving unofficial scores via the Internet and other score report topics may be found on the SBEC Web site at www.sbec.state.tx.us.

Educator Standards

Complete, approved educator standards are posted on the SBEC Web site at www.sbec.state.tx.us.

SECTION II

USING THE TEST FRAMEWORK

The Texas Examination of Educator Standards (TExES) test measures the content knowledge required of an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools. This manual is designed to guide your preparation by helping you become familiar with the material to be covered on the test.

When preparing for this test, you should focus on the competencies and descriptive statements, which delineate the content that is eligible for testing. A portion of the content is represented in the sample items that are included in this manual. These test questions represent only a *sample* of items. Thus, your test preparation should focus on the complete content eligible for testing, as specified in the competencies and descriptive statements.

Organization of the TExES Test Framework

The test framework is based on the educator standards for this field.

The content covered by this test is organized into broad areas of content called domains. Each domain covers one or more of the educator standards for this field. Within each domain, the content is further defined by a set of competencies. Each competency is composed of two major parts:

1. the *competency statement*, which broadly defines what an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools should know and be able to do, and
2. the *descriptive statements*, which describe in greater detail the knowledge and skills eligible for testing.

The educator standards being assessed within each domain are listed for reference at the beginning of the test framework, which begins on page 8. These are then followed by a complete set of the framework's competencies and descriptive statements.

An example of a competency and its accompanying descriptive statements is provided on the next page.

Sample Competency and Descriptive Statements

Educational Diagnostician

Competency:

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of federal and state disability criteria and identification procedures for determining the presence of an educational need.

Descriptive Statements:

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Recognizes and applies knowledge of the cognitive, academic, communicative, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of individuals with disabilities, including those with different levels of severity and with multiple disabilities.
- Knows how to access information on the cognitive, academic, communicative, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of individuals with various disabilities.
- Demonstrates awareness of the variation in ability among individuals with particular types of disabilities.
- Analyzes the educational implications of various disabilities.
- Knows how to use various types of assessment and evaluation procedures to identify students with disabilities and determine the presence of an educational need.
- Knows how to gather and use background information regarding the educational/developmental (e.g., behavioral, social, academic), medical, and family history of individuals with disabilities.

Studying for the TExES Test

The following steps may be helpful in preparing for the TExES test.

1. Identify the information the test will cover by reading through the test competencies (see the following pages in this section). *Within each domain* of this TExES test, each competency will receive approximately equal coverage.
2. Read each competency with its descriptive statements in order to get a more specific idea of the knowledge you will be required to demonstrate on the test. You may wish to use this review of the competencies to set priorities for your study time.
3. Review the "Preparation Resources" section of this manual for possible resources to consult. Also, compile key materials from your preparation coursework that are aligned with the competencies.
4. Study this manual for approaches to taking the test.
5. When using resources, concentrate on the key ideas and important concepts that are discussed in the competencies and descriptive statements.

NOTE: This preparation manual is the only TExES test study material endorsed by SBEC for this field. Other preparation materials may not accurately reflect the content of the test or the policies and procedures of the TExES Program.

TEST FRAMEWORK FOR FIELD 153: EDUCATIONAL DIAGNOSTICIAN

**Domain I Students with Disabilities
(approximately 22% of the test)**

Standards Assessed:

Educational Diagnostician Standard V:

The educational diagnostician knows eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying students with disabilities and determining the presence of an educational need.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VII:

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity and the significance of student diversity for evaluation, planning, and instruction.

**Domain II Assessment and Evaluation
(approximately 33% of the test)**

Standards Assessed:

Educational Diagnostician Standard IV:

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VI:

The educational diagnostician selects, administers, and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.

**Domain III Curriculum and Instruction
(approximately 22% of the test)**

Standards Assessed:

Educational Diagnostician Standard IX:

The educational diagnostician addresses students' behavioral and social interaction skills through appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies.

Educational Diagnostician Standard X:

The educational diagnostician knows and understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for individuals with disabilities.

Domain IV Foundations and Professional Roles and Responsibilities
(approximately 22% of the test)

Standards Assessed:

Educational Diagnostician Standard I:

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education.

Educational Diagnostician Standard II:

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles, and responsibilities.

Educational Diagnostician Standard III:

The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships with families, educators, the school, the community, outside agencies, and related service personnel.

Educational Diagnostician Standard VIII:

The educational diagnostician knows and demonstrates skills necessary for scheduling, time management, and organization.

DOMAIN I—STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Competency 001

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of federal and state disability criteria and identification procedures for determining the presence of an educational need.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Recognizes and applies knowledge of the cognitive, academic, communicative, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of individuals with disabilities, including those with different levels of severity and with multiple disabilities.
- Knows how to access information on the cognitive, academic, communicative, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of individuals with various disabilities.
- Demonstrates awareness of the variation in ability among individuals with particular types of disabilities.
- Analyzes the educational implications of various disabilities.
- Knows how to use various types of assessment and evaluation procedures to identify students with disabilities and determine the presence of an educational need.
- Knows how to gather and use background information regarding the educational/developmental (e.g., behavioral, social, academic), medical, and family history of individuals with disabilities.

Competency 002

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity and the significance of individual diversity for evaluation, planning, and instruction.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Demonstrates knowledge of issues related to the identification of disabilities in individuals from ethnically, culturally, linguistically, and/or socioeconomically diverse backgrounds.
- Recognizes how the ethnic, cultural, and environmental background of students and their families, including linguistic and socioeconomic diversity, may affect evaluation, planning, and instruction.
- Applies knowledge of cultural and linguistic factors to make appropriate evaluation decisions and instructional recommendations for individuals with disabilities.
- Uses strategies and procedures that are responsive to the diverse backgrounds and particular disabilities of individuals in relation to evaluation, programming, and placement and that ensure nonbiased results.
- Demonstrates awareness of issues related to the representation in special education of populations that are culturally and linguistically diverse.

DOMAIN II—ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Competency 003

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics and needs of individual students in relation to assessment and evaluation for their least restrictive placement within a continuum of services.
- Knows the rights of parents/guardians and students (i.e., procedural safeguards) in relation to assessment and evaluation.
- Applies knowledge of the links between evaluation, goals and objectives, and placement decisions.
- Uses assessment and evaluation information to assist in identifying realistic expectations for educationally relevant behavior (e.g., vocational, functional, academic, social) in various settings.
- Interprets and uses assessment and evaluation information to plan individualized programs, make instructional decisions, and support ongoing review.
- Knows the roles of team members, including the student when appropriate, in planning an individualized program.

Competency 004

The educational diagnostician selects and administers appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Applies knowledge of basic terminology and statistical concepts (e.g., standard error of measurement, mean, standard deviation) used in assessment and evaluation.
- Demonstrates knowledge of standards for test norming, reliability, and validity; procedures used in standardizing assessment instruments; and sources of measurement error.
- Demonstrates knowledge of how to select and use assessment and evaluation materials based on technical quality and individual student needs (e.g., communication, physical and other disabilities).
- Demonstrates knowledge of how to select or modify assessment procedures to minimize bias in results.
- Applies knowledge of the uses and limitations of various types of assessment instruments (e.g., norm-referenced, criterion-referenced) and observation techniques (e.g., anecdotal, frequency, temporal).
- Applies knowledge of methods used for academic and nonacademic assessments (e.g., vocational, developmental, assistive technology, motor skills).
- Applies knowledge of procedures for screening, prereferral, referral, and eligibility.
- Demonstrates the ability to score assessment and evaluation instruments accurately, and to create and maintain evaluation reports according to federal and state guidelines.
- Knows how to collaborate effectively with families and with other professionals in assessing and evaluating individuals with disabilities.

Competency 005**The educational diagnostician applies skills for interpreting formal and informal assessments and evaluations.**

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Analyzes the uses and limitations of various types of formal and informal assessment and evaluation data.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the appropriate application and interpretation of derived scores (e.g., standard scores, percentile ranks, age and grade equivalents, stanines, T-scores, z-scores).
- Applies skills for evaluating and interpreting information derived from formal and informal instruments and procedures in the areas of cognitive ability, adaptive behavior, and academic skills.
- Recognizes when a student needs further assessment and/or evaluation, including that conducted by other professionals, in specific areas (e.g., language skills, physical skills, social/emotional behavior, assistive technology needs).
- Uses assessment and evaluation results to determine a student's needs in various curricular areas and to make recommendations for intervention, instruction, and transition planning.
- Uses performance data and information from teachers, other professionals, the student, and the student's parents/guardians to recommend appropriate modifications and/or accommodations within learning environments.
- Recognizes the need to monitor the progress of individuals with disabilities.

DOMAIN III—CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Competency 006

The educational diagnostician understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for students with disabilities.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Demonstrates knowledge of curricula for the development of motor, cognitive, academic, social, language, affective, career, and functional skills for students with disabilities.
- Demonstrates knowledge of individualized assessment strategies for instruction (e.g., authentic assessment, contextual assessment, curriculum-based assessment).
- Applies skills for interpreting assessment and evaluation data and using data for instructional recommendations.
- Demonstrates knowledge of a variety of instructional strategies, technology tools, and curriculum materials to address the individual needs and varied learning styles of students with disabilities within the continuum of services.
- Knows how to modify curriculum content for individuals with disabilities.
- Knows how to select and adapt instructional methods, strategies, and materials to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities.
- Applies knowledge of functional skills instruction for transitioning across environments (e.g., preschool to elementary school, school to work) and the supports needed for transition and integration into various program placements.

Competency 007

The educational diagnostician understands the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies for developing students' behavioral and social skills.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Demonstrates knowledge of requirements and procedures for functional behavioral assessments and manifestation determination reviews.
- Knows applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the planning and implementation of behavioral intervention plans for students with disabilities.
- Demonstrates knowledge of ethical considerations in all aspects of behavior intervention.
- Demonstrates knowledge of social skills needed for school, home, community, and work environments.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the effects of antecedents and consequences, including teacher attitudes and behaviors, on the behavior of students with disabilities.
- Demonstrates knowledge of strategies for preparing students to live productively in a multiclass, multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational world.
- Knows strategies for crisis prevention, intervention, and management for students with disabilities.
- Applies knowledge of key concepts in behavior intervention (e.g., least intrusive intervention within the learning environment, reasonable expectations for social behavior, social skills curricula, cognitive behavioral strategies).

DOMAIN IV—FOUNDATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Competency 008

The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of professional practices, roles, and responsibilities and the philosophical, legal, and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Demonstrates knowledge of models and theories that provide the basis for special education evaluations, and knows the purpose of evaluation procedures and their relationship to educational programming.
- Applies knowledge of state and federal laws, rules, and regulations related to the roles and activities of the educational diagnostician, including the assessment and evaluation of individuals with educational needs.
- Knows how to comply with local, state, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- Applies knowledge of issues, assurances, and due process rights related to evaluation, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, schools, students, teachers, and other professionals in relation to individual learning needs.
- Applies knowledge of ethical practices (e.g., in relation to confidentiality, informed consent, placement, state accountability measures).
- Knows how to create quality educational opportunities that are appropriate for individuals with disabilities and reflect respect for their culture, gender, and personal beliefs.
- Knows qualifications necessary to administer and interpret various instruments and procedures.
- Knows organizations and publications relevant to the field of educational diagnosis, and demonstrates awareness of the importance of engaging in activities that foster professional competence and benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and/or colleagues.

Competency 009

The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships and demonstrates skills for scheduling, time management, and organization.

The beginning educational diagnostician:

- Applies skills and strategies for engaging in effective communication, collaboration, and consultation with others (e.g., students with disabilities, parents/guardians, classroom teachers, other school and community personnel) to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a culturally responsive manner.
- Demonstrates knowledge of family systems and the role of parents/guardians in supporting student development and educational progress, and applies strategies for encouraging students' and families' active participation in the educational team, addressing families' concerns, and fostering respectful and beneficial relationships between families and education professionals.
- Applies skills for effective communication and collaboration in a variety of contexts (e.g., conducting conferences with students and families, working with other professionals to include students in specific learning environments, communicating about characteristics and needs of students with disabilities, reporting and interpreting assessment results to professionals and parents/guardians).
- Knows the roles of students with disabilities, parents/guardians, teachers, and other school and community personnel in planning educational programs, and knows strategies for collaborating with team members to develop appropriate educational programs for individuals.
- Knows how to keep accurate and detailed records of assessments, evaluations, and related proceedings (e.g., ARD/IEP meetings, parent/guardian communications and notifications).
- Demonstrates knowledge of time management strategies and systems appropriate for various educational situations and environments, including the selection, modification, and design of forms to facilitate planning and scheduling.
- Knows how to use technology appropriately to organize information and schedules.
- Applies knowledge of legal and regulatory timelines, schedules, deadlines, and reporting requirements and methods for maintaining eligibility folders and for organizing, maintaining, accessing, and storing records.

SECTION III

APPROACHES TO ANSWERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS

The purpose of this section is to describe multiple-choice item formats that you will see on the TExES test in this field and to suggest possible ways to approach thinking about and answering the multiple-choice items. However, these approaches are not intended to replace familiar test-taking strategies with which you are already comfortable and that work for you.

The Educational Diagnostician test is designed to include 80 scorable multiple-choice items and approximately 10 nonscorable items. Your final scaled score will be based only on scorable items. The nonscorable multiple-choice items are pilot tested by including them in the test in order to collect information about how these questions will perform under actual testing conditions. Nonscorable test items are not considered in calculating your score, and they are not identified on the test.

All multiple-choice questions on this test are designed to assess your knowledge of the content described in the test framework. The multiple-choice questions assess your ability to recall factual information **and** to think critically about the information, analyze it, consider it carefully, compare it with other knowledge you have, or make a judgment about it.

When you are ready to answer a multiple-choice question, you must choose one of four *answer choices* labeled A, B, C, and D. Then you must mark your choice on a separate answer sheet.

Item Formats

You may see the following two types of multiple-choice questions on the test.

- Single items
- Items with stimulus material

You may have two or more items related to a single stimulus. This group of items is called a cluster. Following the last item of a clustered item set containing two or more items, you will see the graphic illustrated below.



This graphic is used to separate these clustered items related to specific stimulus material from other items that follow.

On the following pages, you will find descriptions of these commonly used item formats, along with suggested approaches for answering each type of item. In the actual testing situation, you may mark the test items and/or write in the margins of your test booklet, **but your final response must be indicated on the answer sheet provided.**

SINGLE ITEMS

In the single item format, a problem is presented as a direct question or an incomplete statement, and four answer choices appear below the question. The following question is an example of this type. It tests knowledge of Educational Diagnostician competency 003: *The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.*

An educational diagnostician is conducting a scheduled reevaluation for Garrett, an upper elementary student who has autism. Currently, Garrett is in a general education classroom with a fulltime aide. Which of the following pieces of information collected by the diagnostician would most strongly suggest that Garrett's ARD committee should consider the possibility of a more restrictive placement for him?

- A. Garrett's scores on standardized assessments of intellectual ability have not improved significantly since his last reevaluation.
 - B. Garrett's parents report that he sometimes resists preparing and leaving for school in the morning.
 - C. Garrett has made little or no progress in achieving the set of goals that are identified in his current IEP.
 - D. Garrett is not always willing to participate fully in class activities despite the availability of significant support.
-

Suggested Approach

Read the question carefully and critically. Think about what it is asking and the situation it is describing. Eliminate any obviously wrong answers, select the correct answer choice, and mark it on your answer sheet.

In this situation, an educational diagnostician is conducting a scheduled reevaluation for Garrett, a student who has autism. During Garrett's reevaluation, one important goal of his Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee should be to determine whether his current placement in a general education classroom with a fulltime aide is appropriate. The question asks you to identify which of four pieces of information collected by the diagnostician most strongly indicates that Garrett may benefit from a change to a more restrictive placement.

Option A suggests that the ARD committee should consider a more restrictive placement for Garrett because his scores on standardized assessments of intellectual ability have not shown much improvement since his last reevaluation. Garrett's reevaluation should include an assessment of general intellectual ability, and his ARD committee should review and consider the results of this assessment. However, since measures of an individual's general intellectual ability often do not change significantly over time, a lack of improvement in scores in this area would not in itself indicate a problem with Garrett's current placement or a need for a change of placement. Option A can therefore be eliminated as the best response to this item.

Option B suggests that the ARD committee should consider a more restrictive placement for Garrett because his parents report that he sometimes resists preparing and leaving for school in the morning. Such resistance could indicate that Garrett is experiencing problems in his classroom; if that is the case, then an appropriate committee response would be to learn more about the problems and then generate recommendations about possible remedies. However, this piece of information by itself is unlikely to indicate that Garrett requires a change to a more restrictive placement. Thus option B can be eliminated as the best response to this item.

Option C suggests that the ARD committee should consider a more restrictive placement for Garrett because he has made little or no progress in achieving the goals identified in his current IEP. Since a primary purpose of Garrett's individualized program is to help him achieve the IEP goals specified by his ARD committee, failure to achieve the goals is a serious problem indicating that significant changes may be required in regard to Garrett's current placement and/or the instructional strategies being used by his teachers. Therefore, option C, making little or no progress in achieving identified IEP goals, would be an appropriate reason for considering the possibility of a more restrictive placement for Garrett.

Option D suggests that the ARD committee should consider a more restrictive placement for Garrett because he is not always willing to participate fully in some activities in his general education classroom despite the availability of significant support. Garrett's unwillingness to participate fully in some class activities may reflect the nature of his disability, or it may suggest that some additional accommodations or support would be in order. However, this information would not in itself indicate that Garrett requires a change to a more restrictive placement. Therefore, option D can be eliminated as the best response to this item.

Of the alternatives offered, the only issue of sufficient scope and severity to warrant consideration of a possible change to a more restrictive placement would be Garrett's failure to make adequate progress in achieving his IEP goals. Therefore, the correct response is option C.

ITEMS WITH STIMULUS MATERIAL

Some questions are preceded by stimulus material that relates to the item. Some types of stimulus material included on the test are reading passages, graphics, tables, or a combination of these. In such cases, you will generally be given information followed by an event to analyze, a problem to solve, or a decision to make.

One or more items may be related to a single stimulus. You can use several different approaches to answer these types of questions. Some commonly used approaches are listed below.

- Strategy 1** Skim the stimulus material to understand its purpose, its arrangement, and/or its content. Then read the item and refer again to the stimulus material to verify the correct answer.
- Strategy 2** Read the item *before* considering the stimulus material. The content of the item will help you identify the purpose of the stimulus material and locate the information you need to answer the question.
- Strategy 3** Use a combination of both strategies; apply the "read the stimulus first" strategy with shorter, more familiar stimuli and the "read the item first" strategy with longer, more complex, or less familiar stimuli. You can experiment with the sample items in this manual and then use the strategy with which you are most comfortable when you take the actual test.

Whether you read the stimulus before or after you read the item, you should read it carefully and critically. You may want to underline its important points to help you answer the item.

As you consider items set in educational contexts, try to use the identified teacher's point of view to answer the items that accompany the stimulus. Be sure to consider the items in terms of only the information provided in the stimulus—not in terms of specific situations or individuals you may have encountered.

Suggested Approach

First read the stimulus, which describes an ARD committee that has decided to include a behavior contract in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Use the information below to answer the two questions that follow.

An ARD committee is developing an IEP for Larry, a sixth grader with diagnosed special needs. The committee decides that Larry's IEP should include a behavior contract designed to increase his on-task behavior.

Now you are prepared to address the first of the two questions associated with this stimulus. The first question measures competency 007: *The educational diagnostician understands the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies for developing students' behavioral and social skills.*

If Larry's IEP includes a behavior contract, which additional information must his committee also include in his IEP?

- A. a description of how the effectiveness of the behavior contract will be evaluated
 - B. an agreement signed by Larry to adhere to all terms specified in the behavior contract
 - C. documentation of strategies that have been used previously to address Larry's problem behavior
 - D. identification of a specific date after which the behavior contract will no longer be in effect
-

Consider carefully the information presented in the stimulus regarding an ARD committee's decision to include a behavior contract in an IEP being developed for Larry, a sixth grader with special needs. Then read the first question, which asks you to identify additional information that must appear in Larry's IEP once committee members have decided to include a behavior contract in the IEP. Now look at the response options to identify additional information that must appear in Larry's IEP.

Option A suggests that if Larry's IEP includes a behavior contract, it must also include a description of how the effectiveness of the behavior contract will be evaluated. According to IDEA, the federal law mandating appropriate educational programs for students with disabilities, a student's IEP must include not only a description of any services or interventions that will be used to help the student achieve his or her goals, but also a description of how the effectiveness of the specified services or interventions will be evaluated in terms of student goal achievement. Therefore, option A accurately describes a piece of information that Larry's ARD committee should include in his IEP.

Option B suggests that if Larry's IEP includes a behavior contract, it must also include an agreement signed by Larry to adhere to all terms specified in the contract. Although behavior contracts themselves are generally signed by both student and teacher, an agreement signed by a student promising adherence to all contract terms is not an IEP requirement. Thus option B is not an accurate response to this item.

Option C suggests that if Larry's IEP includes a behavior contract, it must also include documentation of strategies that have been used previously to address Larry's problem behavior. Before deciding to implement a behavior contract for Larry, his ARD committee may well discuss strategies that have been used previously to address his needs. However, guidelines for IEPs do not require documentation of these strategies. Therefore option C may be eliminated.

Option D suggests that if Larry's IEP includes a behavior contract, it must also include identification of a specific date after which the behavior contract will no longer be in effect. Although ARD committees are required to monitor the effectiveness of services and interventions included in a student's IEP and to meet periodically to review the student's progress in achieving goals, they are not required to identify specific end dates for behavior contracts or other interventions. Option D is therefore not the best response to this item.

Of the four options offered, only option A accurately identifies a piece of information that must be included in Larry's IEP once his ARD committee decides to include a behavior contract in the IEP.

Now you are ready to answer the next question. The second question measures competency 007: *The educational diagnostician understands the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning, and instructional strategies for developing students' behavioral and social skills.*

The behavior contract included in Larry's IEP is most likely to achieve its intended result if which of the following occurs?

- A. The behavior target identified in the contract is defined in a flexible way that can vary over time.
 - B. Larry is allowed to play an active role in helping develop the terms of the contract.
 - C. Baseline data is shared with Larry before beginning implementation of the contract.
 - D. Rewards specified in the contract are determined by significant adults in Larry's life (e.g., teacher, parent).
-

Consider carefully the information presented in the stimulus. Then read and reflect on the second question, which asks you to identify which of the circumstances listed is most likely to lead to Larry's behavior contract achieving its intended result.

Option A suggests that Larry's behavior contract is most likely to achieve its intended result if the behavior target identified in the contract is defined in a flexible way that can vary over time. To the contrary, behavior contracts should be very clear and precise in specifying behavior targets and definitions in order to prevent disagreement or confusion about student compliance and the conditions under which the student will be rewarded. Thus option A is not the best response to this question.

Option B suggests that Larry's behavior contract is most likely to achieve its intended result if Larry is allowed to play an active role in helping develop the terms of the contract. Typically, students with a behavior contract are invited to participate in establishing their contract and defining under what conditions rewards may be earned. This practice is widely used because students are more likely to be motivated to abide by the terms of a contract they have helped create than if the terms had been established by someone else. Therefore option B is a good response to the question.

Option C suggests that Larry's behavior contract is most likely to achieve its intended result if baseline data is shared with Larry before beginning implementation of the contract. Although baseline data may be collected prior to implementing a new behavior contract, the primary purpose of such data collection is to enable measurement of a student's progress under the contract. For a student like Larry, sharing information about the nature and intensity of his problem behavior prior to contract implementation would be far less likely to promote a positive outcome than ensuring that he knows what behaviors are expected of him under the terms of his behavior contract. Option C can therefore be eliminated.

Option D suggests that Larry's behavior contract is most likely to achieve its intended result if the rewards specified in the contract are determined by significant adults in Larry's life. For most sixth graders, the best way to ensure that rewards specified in the contract are truly motivating is to invite the student to identify the rewards himself. Thus option D is not the best response.

Of the four options offered, only option B would be expected to help ensure that Larry's behavior contract will achieve its intended result.

SECTION IV

SAMPLE ITEMS

This section presents some sample test items for you to review as part of your preparation for the test. To demonstrate how each competency may be assessed, each sample item is accompanied by the competency number that it measures. While studying, you may wish to read the competency before and after you consider each sample item. Please note that the competency numbers will not appear on the actual test form.

An answer key follows the sample items. The answer key lists the item number and correct answer for each sample item. Please note that the answer key also lists the competency assessed by each item and that the sample items are not necessarily presented in competency order.

The sample items are included to illustrate the formats and types of items you will see on the test; however, your performance on the sample items should not be viewed as a predictor of your performance on the actual examination.

Educational Diagnostician

Competency 001

1. When beginning to conduct an evaluation for a young child with cerebral palsy, an educational diagnostician should be aware of which of the following?
 - A. Children with this impairment exhibit substantial variability in regard to their cognitive abilities.
 - B. Symptoms of the child's impairment are likely to become increasingly severe as he or she grows older.
 - C. Children with this impairment tend to have significantly better control of their hands and arms than their lower limbs.
 - D. The severity of the child's intellectual impairment is likely to parallel the severity of his or her physical impairment.

Competency 001

2. In Texas, which of the following conditions must be diagnosed by a licensed physician?
 - A. mental retardation
 - B. attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
 - C. dyslexia
 - D. emotional disturbance

Competency 002

3. An educational diagnostician wishes to ensure bias-free testing of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. When evaluating a particular standardized assessment instrument for use with such students, the diagnostician can best achieve this goal by examining information about which of the following?
- A. the composition of the sample that was used to develop norms for the assessment
 - B. the reliability statistics reported in the technical manual
 - C. the names, backgrounds, and professional affiliations of the authors of the assessment
 - D. the standard error of measurement reported for the instrument

Competency 002

4. An educational diagnostician is preparing to assess Fernando, an eighth grader who has been having academic problems. When Fernando's family arrived from Mexico four years ago, he knew little English, but now his teachers report that he is at ease speaking both Spanish and English. In selecting assessments for Fernando, the diagnostician should consider which of the following?
- A. Since Fernando has spent most of his life speaking Spanish and has been using English for a relatively short period, the diagnostician should evaluate him in Spanish rather than English.
 - B. Although most adults require more than four years to achieve full fluency in a new language, children who are Fernando's age require much less time, so the diagnostician can safely assess Fernando in English.
 - C. Since language learners are the best judge of their own skills in a new language, the diagnostician should ask Fernando to choose the language in which he wishes to be evaluated.
 - D. Although Fernando speaks English fluently, the diagnostician should investigate the situation further since it cannot be assumed that testing in English will allow Fernando to exhibit fully what he knows.

Competency 003

5. During an evaluation, Gina, an elementary school student, refers several times to stress at home resulting from conflict between her parents. In Gina's evaluation report, the educational diagnostician notes that, in her professional judgment, anxiety due to reported conflict at home appears likely to have had an adverse effect on Gina's performance during the evaluation. At Gina's ARD meeting, the diagnostician repeats this concern. Gina's father is uneasy about having this information included in Gina's report, but the diagnostician says its inclusion is important for interpreting Gina's evaluation results. Soon after the ARD meeting, Gina's father contacts the diagnostician to insist that all reference to Gina's anxiety be deleted from her report. Which of the following is the most appropriate way for the diagnostician to respond?
- A. Invite Gina's father to identify specific content included in the evaluation report that he finds objectionable, and agree to delete that content.
 - B. Offer to talk to Gina again to discuss the issue of stress at home and determine whether the report may be in error.
 - C. Refer Gina's father to his copy of procedural safeguards, and inform him that he has a right to a hearing to challenge content included in Gina's report.
 - D. Offer to revise Gina's report to downplay but not remove the information Gina's father finds objectionable.

Competency 004

6. A student's standardized test score is reported as 84, with a ninety-five percent confidence interval of 76–92. Which of the following is the most accurate interpretation of this result?
- A. Ninety-five percent of the time the student's true score would be between 76 and 92; five percent of the time it could be outside that range.
 - B. There is a ninety-five percent probability that the student scored higher than approximately seventy-six percent of the examinee population.
 - C. Ninety-five percent of the time the student's true score would be 84; five percent of the time it would be at some other point between 76 and 92.
 - D. There is a ninety-five percent probability that the student scored higher than approximately eighty-four percent of the examinee population.

Competency 005

7. Monique is an eighth grader who has taken the State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) in mathematics. Following is information from her confidential student report.

	Spring 2001	Spring 2002
ARD's Expected Achievement Level for Student:	BASELINE TEST	6-III
Student's Achievement Level: SDAA Scale Score:	5-III 676	6-II 654
Met ARD Expectations:	Not Applicable	No

In reviewing these results, Monique's ARD committee should most likely focus the greatest attention on addressing which of the following issues?

- A. What program changes should be implemented to improve Monique's achievement?
- B. Could problems with Monique's baseline test be responsible for her inability to meet this year's ARD expectations?
- C. Why is Monique, an eighth grader, unable to pass a mathematics test at the sixth-grade level?
- D. Would a Locally Developed Alternative Assessment (LDAA) in mathematics be more appropriate for Monique than the SDAA?

Competency 006

8. Lena, a 16-year-old high school student with a learning disability, reads at a fifth-grade level. Which of the following options would be most appropriate for addressing Lena's needs in a general education setting?
- A. Arrange to provide Lena with taped versions of texts used in her classes.
 - B. Make available to Lena a range of fifth-grade reading materials.
 - C. Offer Lena extra time to complete readings assigned in her classes.
 - D. Assign Lena a partner in each class to review and summarize assigned readings for her.

Competency 006

9. Patti, a middle school student, has been found to have traumatic brain injury resulting from an automobile accident. Assessment indicates that some of Patti's intellectual abilities have been severely affected, while others have remained intact. Patti's ARD committee can best address this result by including which of the following recommendations in her IEP?
- A. Emphasize direct instruction in Patti's areas of greatest need until significant improvement occurs in those areas.
 - B. Provide Patti with the same grade-level instruction her classmates receive, and avoid any decrease in expectations for her performance.
 - C. Excuse Patti from activities requiring skills that have been lost or weakened until she herself expresses a desire to attempt such activities.
 - D. Prioritize the academic skills that Patti needs to learn, and use her remaining strengths to develop areas of need.

Competency 007

10. According to federal and state law, what is the maximum number of consecutive or cumulative days that students with disabilities who have violated school rules may be removed from their current placement and receive no educational services?
- A. 3 school days
 - B. 5 school days
 - C. 10 school days
 - D. 15 school days

Competency 008

11. When beginning a student evaluation, an educational diagnostician becomes aware that she is close friends with the student's family and that personal biases outside of her control will affect her interactions with the student. According to ethical guidelines for assessment professionals, the diagnostician should take which of the following steps?
- A. Continue assessing the student, but seek assistance from another assessment professional in interpreting the results.
 - B. Describe fully within the assessment report any concerns about potential assessor bias.
 - C. Seek immediate assistance from an appropriate professional in understanding causes of the bias problem and resolving it.
 - D. Withdraw from the evaluation and request that another assessment professional take over the case.

Competency 008

12. Which of the following factors should be most important in making a placement decision for an 11-year-old student with multiple disabilities who is transitioning from elementary school into middle school?
- A. the degree of alignment between the student's IEP goals and the state-wide curriculum for middle school
 - B. the extent to which the student's identified needs can be met in various school environments
 - C. the judgments of ARD committee members regarding the student's long-term potential to achieve
 - D. the availability of appropriate related service providers in the middle school

Competency 009

13. Whenever possible, an educational diagnostician uses percentile ranks rather than standard scores to describe student scores in evaluation reports. One of the main benefits of this practice is that compared with standard scores, percentile ranks:
- A. are easier for many people to understand.
 - B. provide more precise information about the attribute(s) being measured.
 - C. are easier to use in making comparisons among students with similar disabilities.
 - D. provide more comprehensive information about a student.

Competency 009

14. At an ARD committee meeting, the parents of a young child with significant physical and cognitive disabilities state that they would like to do whatever they can to promote successful implementation of their child's individualized program. School personnel can best respond by:
- A. helping the parents identify ways to ensure continuity and uniformity in particular elements of the student's home and school environments.
 - B. enlisting the parents' assistance in locating and securing access to the diverse resources their child will require for full participation in his or her classroom.
 - C. identifying one or more goals in the student's IEP that can be addressed mainly by the parents at home rather than by staff at school.
 - D. requesting that the parents regularly submit brief reports to school staff highlighting their perceptions about their child's ongoing development and current needs.

Use the information below to answer the three questions that follow.

Michael is a fourth grader who is nine years, five months old. He was referred by his classroom teacher for a full individual evaluation because of poor academic performance resulting from a consistent failure to complete assigned work. Following are Michael's results on the WISC-IV.

<p>Verbal Comprehension Index</p> <p>Subtest Scores</p> <p>(Information) 10</p> <p>Similarities 9</p> <p>Vocabulary 12</p> <p>Comprehension 11</p> <p>Working Memory Index</p> <p>Subtest Scores</p> <p>Digit Span 11</p> <p>Letter-Number Sequencing 8</p> <p>(Arithmetic) 6</p> <p>Processing Speed Index</p> <p>Subtest Scores</p> <p>Coding 6</p> <p>Symbol Search 8</p>	<p>Perceptual Reasoning Index</p> <p>Subtest Scores</p> <p>(Picture Completion) 7</p> <p>Block Design 6</p> <p>Picture Concepts 9</p> <p>Matrix Reasoning 11</p>
	<p>Verbal Comprehension Index 102</p> <p>Working Memory Index 97</p> <p>Processing Speed Index 83</p> <p>Perceptual Reasoning Index 92</p> <p>Full Scale IQ 92</p>

Competency 005

15. Which of the following statements regarding Michael's results is best supported by the data?
- A. All of Michael's index scores fall within the average range.
 - B. Michael experienced more difficulty overall on timed tasks than on untimed tasks.
 - C. The pattern of Michael's scores is suggestive of a reading disability.
 - D. Visual processing appears to be an area of weakness for Michael.

Competency 005

16. Michael's poor handwriting is most likely reflected by his below average performance on which of the following subtests?
- A. Coding
 - B. Picture Completion
 - C. Arithmetic
 - D. Letter-Number Sequencing

Competency 004

17. When scoring Michael's WISC-IV, the diagnostician discovers that for one of the subtests, credit or partial credit was awarded for his responses to several items that were administered beyond attainment of the ceiling. Which of the following accurately describes how the diagnostician should treat this information when calculating Michael's raw score for this subtest?
- A. All points earned should be counted toward the raw score since the initial ceiling may be considered a false one.
 - B. A raw score should not be calculated for this subtest, and the administration of the subtest should be treated as invalid.
 - C. All points earned should be counted toward the raw score, and the irregular administration should be noted in the evaluation report.
 - D. Only those points earned at and below the ceiling item should be used to calculate the raw score for the subtest.



ANSWER KEY

Item Number	Correct Answer	Competency
1	A	001
2	B	001
3	A	002
4	D	002
5	C	003
6	A	004
7	A	005
8	A	006
9	D	006
10	C	007
11	D	008
12	B	008
13	A	009
14	A	009
15	B	005
16	A	005
17	D	004

SECTION V

PREPARATION RESOURCES

The resources listed below may help you prepare for the TExES test in this field. These preparation resources have been identified by content experts in the field to provide up-to-date information that relates to the field in general. You may wish to use current issues or editions to obtain information on specific topics for study and review.

Journals

Assessment for Effective Intervention, Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (a division of the Council for Exceptional Children).

Dialog, Texas Educational Diagnosticians' Association.

Other Sources

Alper, S. K., Schloss, P. J., and Schloss, C. N. (1994). *Families of Students with Disabilities: Consultation and Advocacy*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.

Cook, A. M., and Hussey, S. M. (2002). *Assistive Technologies: Principles and Practice*, Second Edition. St. Louis, MO: Mosby, Inc.

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Dana, R. H. (1993). *Multicultural Assessment Perspectives for Professional Psychology*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

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Heward, W. L., and Orlansky, M. D. (1994). *Exceptional Children: An Introductory Survey of Special Education*, Fourth Edition. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company.

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Salvia, J., and Ysseldyke, J. E. (2001). *Assessment*, Eighth Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Sattler, J. M. (2001). *Assessment of Children: Cognitive Applications*, Fourth Edition. San Diego, CA: Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

Sattler, J. M. (2002). *Assessment of Children: Behavioral and Clinical Applications*, Fourth Edition. San Diego, CA: Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J. L., and Ysseldyke, J. E. (2003). *Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., and Leal, D. (1999). *Exceptional Lives: Special Education in Today's Schools*, Second Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Wehman, P. (1996). *Life Beyond the Classroom: Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities*, Second Edition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Online Resources

A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education, www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/ardguide

ARD Committee Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program, Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division, www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/sdaa

Assistive Technology, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education, www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/astech

Assistive Technology Strategies, Tools, Accommodations and Resources, <http://www.atstar.org>

Federal Regulations: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) '97, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education, www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/rules/cfr

Legal Framework for the Child Centered Process, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/forms/index.html>

Procedural Safeguards, Parents Rights, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/explansaf>

Reading Resources, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/reading/resource.html>

Special Education Rules and Regulations, Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education, www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/rules/comm

State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA), Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division, www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/sdaa

Student Success Initiative, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html>

