

TAAS Established the Foundation and Acceptance of Deception As A Strategy

True. This is a handful of math questions on TAAS tests at various grade levels but used to primarily focus upon comparability to questions on the 10th grade exit test that the TEA used to assert grade-level performance and even use the results of these questions inclusively to further assert a standard of “college readiness.”

Episodic? Yes. Genuine academic analysis coupled with statistically reliable analysis confirm what your eyes and your brain are telling you here? Yes.

Had the Texas Education Agency’s student testing and accountability system been concocted and operated for three decades as it has in the private sector, it would constitute pervasive consumer fraud by the literal definition and inherent meaning of that phrase. It would be consumer fraud that injured people in profound ways and subject to recovery.

Yet wrapped in the power of government and its cumulative billions of dollars to implement and reward complicit political, corporate, and organizational beneficiaries who have and do still prosper in a variety of ways, the conduct has been relegated to an almost one-sided debate about public policy.

It has effectively been that one-sided debate because Texas Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, educational advocates and civil rights attorneys have acquiesced if not surrendered to the sheer power of state government to assert that its self-blessed constitutional power to define the “general diffusion of knowledge” entitles it to lie and cheat and distort its moral and ethical burden to at-risk, disadvantaged children statistically dominated by children of color.

This introduction does not deal with episodic or out of context examples to make points about the TEA’s historic devaluation of even a pretense that its fidelity to achievement gap closure and meaningful constitutional equity has been real. Volumes of data will confirm that the practice has been pervasive, systemic, and continuing. That data is available to the recipients of this overview.

Consider these from the initial era of statutory and constitutional testing of students in the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

The results of the 10th grade exit test were used to assert both grade level and college-readiness. Thus, these questions were used by the TEA in the calculation of grade level and college readiness.

10th Grade Exit Test: 1997-98 – Multiple Choice Format

- At a restaurant, Steve ordered food totaling \$6.85. If he paid with a \$20 bill, how much change should he receive?

Keep in mind the following from:

5th Grade Test: 1997-98 – Multiple Choice Format

- A magazine cost \$3. Lenny gave the clerk \$20 for the magazine. How much change should Lenny have received from the clerk?

5th Grade Test: 1996-97 – Multiple Choice Format

- Byron bought some groceries. The total was \$17.44 including tax. If he paid with a \$20 bill, how

6th Grade Test: 1995-96 – Multiple Choice Format

- Mrs. Vargas pumped \$5.67 worth of gasoline into her car. If she gives the gas station attendant a \$10 bill, how much change should she receive?

6th Grade Test: 1998-99 – Multiple Choice Format

- Ms. Foster put \$10.32 worth of gasoline into her car. If she gives the gas station attendant a \$20 bill, how much change should she receive?

6th Grade Test: 1995-96 – Multiple Choice Format

- Mrs. Vargas pumped \$5.67 worth of gasoline into her car. If she gives the gas station attendant a \$10 bill, how much change should she receive?

Two final examples from different indicators of grade level and college readiness available to the TEA from the then 10th grade exit math test:

10th Grade Exit Test: 1996-97 – Multiple Choice Format

- The ages of the students in a dance class are 15, 10, 16, and 15. What is the mean (average) age of these students?

10th Grade Exit Test: 1998-99 – Multiple Choice Format

- Sarah bought a rake for \$8.29, a garden hose for \$12.99 and a 50-pound bag of topsoil for \$4.49. How much did she spend altogether, not including tax?

5th Grade Test: 1997-98– Multiple Choice Format

- Alexander bought a book for \$12.89, a ruler for \$1.75, a calculator for \$14.89, and a dictionary for \$26.76. How much money did he spend altogether, not including tax?

It should be observed that in the TAAS era, every test in every subject was released every year prior to the following year's TAAS test.

The entire testing era was rigged psychometrically by exposing actual test questions for which parallel questions were subsequently inserted into future tests at all grade levels. Further, by using questions that had a lower percent correct answer profile in the field-testing administration was able to assert a harder level of rigor even though such subsequent harder questions were both parallel and essentially exposed in prior testing.

The system worked. It created the Texas Educational Miracle; played a role in electing a Texas governor President of the United States, helped the State prevail in state and federal courts; and launch the national movement of No Child Left Behind. As a former president once said in a different arena, "mission accomplished."