

TRANSCRIPT

**Leading TEA Accountability
Official Ann Smisco
'Confirms' Grade-Level Rigor
of TAAS Assessments**

**National Academy of
Sciences Presentation**

June, 1999

Irvine, California

Reporter's Certificate

* * * * *

I, Beth C. Drain hereby certify:

that on the 2nd & 3rd day of
June, 1999, I did report in
shorthand the testimony of the foregoing
proceedings;

that on the conclusion of the above entitled
matter, I did transcribe my shorthand notes into
typewriting;

that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct
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Beth C. Drain

Certified Shorthand Reporter
Certificate No. 7152

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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
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FORUM ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND TESTING EQUITY

WORKSHOP ON
MATCHING THE INTENDED REFORM, ENACTED REFORM, AND
OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION REFORM IN TWO STATES

DATE AND TIME: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 1999
THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1999
8:00 A.M.

LOCATION: ARNOLD AND MABEL BECKMAN CENTER
100 ACADEMY DRIVE
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

REPORTER: BETH C. DRAIN, RPR, CSR
CSR NO. 7152

BRS FILE NO.: 48354 & 49355

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1 IRVINE, CALIFORNIA; THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 1999
2 8 A.M.
3

4 MR. TRENT: GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE. I WAS
5 WONDERING -- I WAS ABOUT TO ASK IF ANYONE WAS
6 REALLY OUT THERE. AGAIN, GOOD MORNING. MY NAME IS
7 BILL TRENT IN CASE ANYBODY HADN'T FIGURED THAT OUT.
8 WE HAVE REORGANIZED THE SCHEDULE FOR THIS MORNING.
9 WE'VE REORGANIZED IT IN A WAY THAT ALLOWS THE
10 REPRESENTATIVES FROM TEXAS TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY
11 TO FINISH THINGS THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE AN
12 OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE FOR US YESTERDAY.

13 SO WE'RE GOING TO START WITH A FAIRLY
14 BRIEF PRESENTATION FROM ANNE, AND THEN FROM FELIPE,
15 AND THEY WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS.
16 CAROL IS HERE TO SUPPORT THEM IN ANSWERING THOSE
17 QUESTIONS. AND THEN WE WILL MOVE QUICKLY INTO THE
18 SESSIONS AS YOU SEE THEM DISPLAYED ON THE FLIP
19 CHART.

20 SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, I'M GOING TO
21 ASK ANNE TO BEGIN, AND I WILL TRY TO KEEP TRACK OF
22 THE TIME AND PROVIDE YOU WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK
23 QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.

24 MS. SMISKO: THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING.
25 EVERYONE. NICE TO BE BACK THIS MORNING. AND I HAD

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1 A GREAT EVENING. MY SISTER LIVES IN THE AREA, AND
2 SHE AND I GOT TO GO OUT TO DINNER TOGETHER, AND IT
3 WAS A LOT OF FUN. I HOPE YA'LL HAD A NICE EVENING
4 AS WELL.

5 THIS MORNING WHAT I WAS HOPING TO DO
6 IS JUST TRY TO DO A RECAP OF THE SYSTEM. I TOLD
7 MOLLY BACK THERE THAT I FELT LIKE WE HAD TOLD OUR
8 STORY KIND OF FROM THE INSIDE OUT. SO I'D LIKE TO
9 TAKE JUST A FEW MOMENTS TO TALK ABOUT THE SYSTEM AS
10 A WHOLE BECAUSE WE TALKED SO MUCH ABOUT ONE TEST
11 YESTERDAY, THAT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ALIGNMENT OF
12 GOALS AND CURRICULUM AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES, I
13 HOPE WE'LL HAVE THE TIME LATER IN THE MORNING TO
14 TALK ABOUT THE FACT THAT, AT LEAST IN OUR MINDS,
15 TEXAS MINDS, THIS IS NOT JUST A TEST. IT IS A
16 SYSTEM.

17 BUT TO GET BACK TO THE TEST OR THE
18 ASSESSMENT, THE CHART THAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT NOW
19 GIVES YOU THE SWEEP OF THE CURRENT ASSESSMENT
20 PROGRAM. AS YOU HEARD YESTERDAY, IT'S A THREE
21 THROUGH EIGHT AND EXIT. BUT YOU SEE IN THERE THAT
22 WE DO HAVE AN IMPORTANT TEST IN ALGEBRA, BIOLOGY,
23 ENGLISH II, AND U.S. HISTORY. THESE ARE CRITERION
24 REFERENCE TESTS. THEY'RE BUILT TO THE TEXAS
25 CURRICULUM STANDARDS, FORMERLY CALLED THE ^{ESSENTIAL} ~~CENTRAL~~



1 ELEMENTS. AS OF 1997, IT IS NOW THE TEXAS
2 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.

3 THESE ARE GRADE-BY-GRADE LEVEL
4 STANDARDS IN 15 SUBJECT AREAS. EVERY HIGH SCHOOL
5 COURSE IS SPECIFIED. ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES
6 ARE THE CAPSTONE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM. SO
7 WE HAVE -- THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT CURRICULUM IS THE
8 CURRICULUM IN TEXAS FOR ADVANCED COURSES AT THE
9 HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL.

10 AS WE TALKED YESTERDAY, THESE ARE
11 PRIMARILY MULTIPLE-CHOICE TESTS. THE ITEM RANGE IS
12 FROM 28 ON THE GRAMMAR AND SPELLING PART TO ABOUT
13 60 ON SOME OF THE UPPER LEVEL MATH TESTS. WE DO
14 WRITING ASSESSMENT THAT IS AN OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE
15 TO A PROMPT THAT IS SCORED ON A FOUR-POINT RUBRIC,
16 AS WELL AS, OF COURSE, THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE SPELLING
17 AND GRAMMAR ASSESSMENT ON THE WRITING.

18 WE HAVE A SPANISH VERSION ASSESSMENT
19 IN GRADES THREE, FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX FOR OUR LARGE
20 SPANISH SPEAKING POPULATION AT THE ELEMENTARY
21 LEVEL. DR. ALANIS WILL TALK MORE ABOUT THOSE KIDS
22 AND THEIR PERFORMANCE. BUT WE HAVE DEVELOPED THAT
23 TEST. IT IS WHAT WE CALL TRANSADAPTATION, TRYING
24 TO MAKE IT AS SIMILAR AS POSSIBLE TO THE ENGLISH
25 VERSION TEST, ASSESSING THE SAME CONCEPTS AND



1 SKILLS, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE LANGUAGE
2 DIFFERENCES AND REGIONAL NOTIONS OF WHAT KIDS CALL
3 THINGS AND THAT SORT OF THING.

4 BY LAW THE EXIT-LEVEL TEST, OF
5 COURSE, HAS TO BE HIGHLY RELIABLE AND VALID SO THAT
6 EVERY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT HAS THE SAME STANDARD TO
7 MEET UNLESS, OF COURSE, WE DO ACTUALLY CHANGE THE
8 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STANDARD, IN WHICH CASE WE
9 ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THAT
10 CHANGE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL STANDARD. AND WE DO THAT
11 BY INFORMING SEVENTH GRADERS OF THEIR HIGH SCHOOL
12 GRADUATION REQUIREMENT.

13 I'LL SHOW YOU IN A MOMENT SOME
14 CHANGES TO THE SYSTEM THAT WERE JUST PASSED MONDAY
15 BY THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE.

16 THIS IS OUR CURRENT SYSTEM. WE HAVE
17 BUILT READING PROFICIENCY -- WE'RE IN THE
18 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF BUILDING READING PROFICIENCY
19 TESTS IN ENGLISH. ONCE AGAIN, TO TRY TO CAPTURE
20 THESE BOTTOM TWO ASSESSMENTS, WE ARE TRYING TO
21 CAPTURE MORE AND MORE STUDENTS INTO THE ASSESSMENT
22 SYSTEM. ONCE AGAIN, I'M DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE
23 ASSESSMENT SYSTEM AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM
24 THAT WE DISCUSSED YESTERDAY BECAUSE WHAT WE TRY TO
25 DO IS TEST AS MANY STUDENTS AS POSSIBLE AND REPORT

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1 THEIR RESULTS.

2 ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM USES SOME OF
3 THOSE RESULTS TO RATE SCHOOLS AND TO REPORT TO THE
4 PUBLIC.

5 THE READING PROFICIENCY TESTS IN
6 ENGLISH ARE BEING DESIGNED TO DO JUST THAT, AND
7 THAT IS JUST TRACK STUDENTS' GROWTH IN LEARNING TO
8 READ IN ENGLISH. THAT'S THEIR PRIMARY PURPOSE.
9 THAT'S ALL THEY ARE.

10 THE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS FOR
11 SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS ARE BEING DESIGNED. AS
12 I MENTIONED YESTERDAY, THE REGULAR TAAS TEST, THE
13 ARD COMMITTEE MAKES A DECISION ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT
14 THE STUDENTS SHOULD TAKE IT BASED ON WHETHER OR NOT
15 THEY'RE WORKING IN THE STANDARD CURRICULUM OF THE
16 GRADE LEVEL FOR THAT TEST. SO, FOR EXAMPLE, A
17 FIFTH GRADE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT WOULD LIKELY
18 TAKE THE FIFTH GRADE MATH TEST IF HE OR SHE WERE --
19 HIS OR HER IP GOALS HAD FIFTH GRADE TEXT MATH GOALS
20 IN THEM.

21 SO IN OTHER WORDS, IF THEY WERE
22 EXPECTED TO MASTER THAT SET OF KNOWLEDGE AND
23 SKILLS, THEN THEIR ARD COMMITTEE WOULD LIKELY SLATE
24 THEM TO TAKE THAT MATH TEST. OUR COMMITTEE DOES
25 NOT HAVE THE POWER, YOU MIGHT SAY, TO GIVE THEM THE



1 FOURTH GRADE MATH TEST. THEY MUST TAKE THE
2 ON-GRADE LEVEL TEST OR CURRENTLY BE EXEMPT.

3 THESE TESTS DOWN HERE, THE
4 ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS, ARE BEING DESIGNED FOR
5 SORT OF AGE SPANS OF STUDENTS, STUDENTS THAT ARE
6 AGES 3 THROUGH 11, SAY, BUT WHOSE SKILL LEVEL SPANS
7 A MUCH BROADER RANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL. SO
8 THAT THEY'LL -- THE WAY WE CAN VISUALIZE IT RIGHT
9 NOW, THEY'LL BE SORT OF THE ELEMENTARY, THE MIDDLE,
10 AND UPPER MIDDLE, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. AND
11 WE'LL BE TESTING SKILLS AS FAR BACK AS KINDERGARTEN
12 LEVEL SKILLS IN EACH OF THOSE THREE BROAD SETS OF
13 ASSESSMENTS.

14 THEY ARE STILL, I WOULD TERM THEM, IN
15 THE VERY EARLY STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT. WE HAVE DONE
16 SOME ITEM DEVELOPMENT, ITEM TRIALS. WE DID, QUOTE,
17 I WOULD SAY MORE LIKE A PILOT TEST THIS SPRING WITH
18 MOST OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE
19 STATE. WE'RE IN A VERY EARLY STAGE ON THAT ONE.
20 SO THAT ONE REMAINS TO HAVE QUITE A BIT OF WORK
21 DONE.

2 I WANT TO SPEND JUST A MINUTE TALKING
3 ABOUT THE TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR ALL OF THESE
4 TESTS. YESTERDAY SOMEBODY COMMENTED THAT KENTUCKY
5 MADE A TEST IN ONE YEAR, AND I WANT YOU ALL TO



1 RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND AND PROMISE YOU WON'T TELL
2 ANYBODY IN TEXAS THAT BECAUSE WE SAY WE NEED THREE
3 TO FOUR YEARS -- THREE TO FOUR YEARS TO DEVELOP A
4 TEST. AND SOMETIMES PEOPLE WANT US TO DO OURS
5 FASTER THAN THAT. WE DO OUR BEST WHEN WE NEED TO.

6 THE FIRST STEP IN THIS, OF COURSE, IN
7 ANY KIND OF TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IS TO DECIDE
8 ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE TEST. THOSE ARE DRAWN
9 FROM THE STATE MANDATED CURRICULUM. NEXT, WE
10 DETERMINE THE ELIGIBLE TEST CONTENT AND ITEM
11 FORMAT, AND WE USE COMMITTEES OF TEACHERS TO DO
12 THAT KIND OF WORK. AND JUST WANTED TO GIVE YOU A
13 LITTLE SENSE OF THE KIND OF INFORMATION THAT COMES
14 OUT OF THAT PROCESS.

15 HERE'S THE OLD AND THE NEW, YOU MIGHT
16 SAY, THE OLD ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS. HERE'S THIRD
17 GRADE MATH OBJECTIVES, DEMONSTRATING AN
18 UNDERSTANDING OF NUMBER CONCEPTS. THIS IS THE OLD
19 WORLD OF ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS, AND HERE'S ESSENTIAL
20 ELEMENTS OVER HERE, AND THIS WILL GIVE YOU A SENSE
21 OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AND
22 NEW ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. COMPARING AND
23 ORDERING WHOLE NUMBERS, THERE IS AN OBJECTIVE AND A
24 TARGET.

25 IN THE NEW WORLD WHAT WE'VE DONE WITH



1 THE HELP OF OUR TEACHERS IS TO TRACK THE
2 OBJECTIVES, WHICH REMAIN THE SAME, SO THAT WE CAN
3 HAVE A STABLE TEST. IN OTHER WORDS, ALL OF OUR
4 OBJECTIVES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL
5 STUDIES WERE JUST KIND OF SPECIAL CASES, BUT THE
6 MATH AND READING OBJECTIVES ARE STAYING THE SAME IN
7 THIS TRANSITION FROM ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS TO TEKS.
8 BUT WE HAVE ADDED THE ACTUAL TEKS LANGUAGE, AND YOU
9 CAN SEE THAT IT'S MUCH MORE SPECIFIC AND DETAILED
10 AND GIVES A LOT MORE INFORMATION TO TEACHERS AND
11 STUDENTS ABOUT WHAT'S EXPECTED. AND SO, THEREFORE,
12 THE TEST ITSELF HAS MORE INFORMATION AND MORE
13 DETAIL ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON THE TEST.

14 AND THESE ARE ALL THINGS THAT WE
15 PROVIDE TO TEACHERS, YOU KNOW, TALKING ABOUT
16 TEACHING TO THE TEST. I THINK TEXAS TEACHERS HAVE
17 QUITE A BIT OF INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT THE TEST IS,
18 WHAT THE KIND OF OBJECTIVES ARE, THE EXACT
19 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL FROM THE CURRICULUM,
20 THE STATEWIDE CURRICULUM ITSELF THAT'S BEING
21 TESTED. IN ADDITION, ITEM FORMATS ARE GIVEN IN
22 SETS OF INFORMATION CALLED MEASUREMENT SPECS, WHICH
23 FOR THE SAME, COMPARING AND ORDERING WHOLE NUMBERS,
24 GIVE YOU AT LEAST THREE, FOUR, FIVE USUALLY
25 DIFFERENT WAYS THAT THAT PARTICULAR OBJECTIVE MIGHT



1 BE ASSESSED ON A TAAS TEST.

2 SO THIS IS THE KIND OF INFORMATION
3 AND THE KIND OF WORK THAT WE DO WITH TEACHER
4 COMMITTEES AS A PART OF THE TEST DEVELOPMENT
5 PROCESS, AND THEN THIS MATERIAL IS ALL PROVIDED TO
6 EVERY TEACHER IN THE STATE SO THAT THEY UNDERSTAND
7 WHAT THE OBJECTIVES ARE AND WHAT THE ITEM FORMATS
8 ARE AHEAD OF TIME.

9 TEST ITEMS ARE WRITTEN BY OUR TEST
10 CONTRACTOR. WE DO THIS THROUGH A BIDDING PROCESS.
11 HAPPENS TO BE NATIONAL COMPUTER SYSTEMS RIGHT NOW.
12 THEY SUBCONTRACT WITH HARCOURT BRACE EDUCATIONAL
13 MEASUREMENT FOR THE ITEM WRITING. THOSE ITEMS ARE
14 REVIEWED BY THE CONTRACTOR, FIRST OF ALL, AND THEN
15 BY STAFF INTERNALLY, OUR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT
16 STAFF, TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY MATCH TO THE
17 ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND TO MAKE SURE
18 THEY'RE APPROPRIATE FOR THE GRADE LEVEL AND FOR THE
19 TEXAS ENVIRONMENT.

20 AND THEN WE HAVE AN EDUCATOR -- SO WE
21 HAVE A BUNCH OF ITEMS THAT ARE POSSIBLE ITEMS FOR A
22 TEST. THEN WE HAVE THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF
23 EDUCATOR REVIEW COMMITTEES THAT ARE REPRESENTATIVE
24 OF THE STATE AS A WHOLE, BOTH ETHNICALLY AND
25 GEOGRAPHICALLY. AND THEY ARE GRADE LEVEL AND



1 SUBJECT AREA SPECIFIC; IN OTHER WORDS, THERE'S A
2 THIRD GRADE READING COMMITTEE, THIRD GRADE MATH
3 COMMITTEE, AND SO ON AND SO FORTH. AND WE TRY TO
4 MAKE SURE THAT THE REPRESENTATION IS THERE ON EVERY
5 SINGLE COMMITTEE.

6 THAT GROUP IS ASKED FOUR QUESTIONS.
7 DOES THE ITEM MATCH THE OBJECTIVE IT'S SUPPOSED TO
8 MATCH? IS IT APPROPRIATE; THAT IS, SHOULD STUDENTS
9 HAVE LEARNED THIS INFORMATION BY THE END OF X GRADE
0 LEVEL? THE ADEQUACY OF PREPARATION; THAT IS, IN
1 YOUR DISTRICT, DID YOU TEACH THIS BY THE END OF X
2 GRADE? DO STUDENTS HAVE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION BY
3 THE END OF X GRADE TO BE TESTED ON THIS KIND OF
4 INFORMATION? AND THEN IS THERE ANY POTENTIAL BIAS
5 THAT YOU CAN SEE IN THE ITEM ITSELF? THAT'S BEFORE
6 WE DO ANY KIND OF FIELD TESTING.

7 THOSE COMMITTEES HAVE THE DUTY TO LET
8 US KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THE ITEM SHOULD EVEN BE
9 FIELD TESTED. SOMETIMES THEY REVISE ITEMS, EDIT
0 ITEMS, SOMETIMES THEY DO A LITTLE CHANGING, DON'T
1 CALL IT THIS; CALL IT THAT; MAKE THIS PURPLE
2 INSTEAD OF GREEN, WHATEVER THE CASE MIGHT BE. OR
3 IF THEY JUST FEEL THE ITEM WON'T WORK, THEN THEY
4 TELL US THAT AND WE DON'T FIELD TEST THE ITEM.
5 ONCE THEY SORT OF REVIEW THOSE ITEMS, WE GO AHEAD

*Standard
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for*



1 AND FIELD TEST ITEMS.

2 WE DO THIS BY EMBEDDING THE ITEMS IN
3 A LIVE TEST SO THAT EVERY TEST HAS PROBABLY FIVE TO
4 SEVEN EMBEDDED FIELD TEST ITEMS IN IT. WE DO THE
5 WRITING COMP SEPARATELY IN A SEPARATE FIELD TEST,
6 BUT THE MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS ARE EMBEDDED SO THAT
7 WE GET REALLY GOOD DATA BECAUSE KIDS DON'T KNOW
8 WHICH ITEMS ARE REAL LIVE ITEMS AND WHICH ITEMS ARE
9 FIELD TEST ITEMS. SO WE DO THAT IN A LIVE TEST.

10 WE ANNUALLY RELEASE EVERY TEST THAT
11 WE GIVE. SO THAT ONCE AN ITEM IS GIVEN IN A LIVE
12 TEST, IT'S NO GOOD TO US ANYMORE. IT'S DEAD. SO
13 WE HAVE TO BUILD ENOUGH NEW ITEMS EVERY YEAR TO
14 TOTALLY REVISE THE TEST OR TO HAVE A TOTALLY NEW
15 SET -- WE HAVE TO HAVE ENOUGH ITEMS TO BUILD A
16 TOTALLY NEW TEST EVERY SINGLE YEAR. IN EVERY GRADE
17 EXCEPT FOR EXIT WE GIVE AT LEAST TWO VERSIONS, TWO
18 FORMS OF THE TEST. ONE IS THE REGULAR
19 ADMINISTRATION, AND WE GIVE A YEAR-ROUND TEST
20 ADMINISTRATION AS WELL. AT EXIT LEVEL, OF COURSE,
21 WE HAVE EIGHT ITERATIONS OF IT BECAUSE KIDS TAKE
22 THAT TEST BEGINNING IN TENTH GRADE, BUT THEY HAVE
23 EIGHT OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE THEIR NORMAL GRADUATION
24 TIME TO ACTUALLY ATTEMPT TO PASS THE TEST. SO AT
25 THE EXIT LEVEL, WE HAVE A LOT MORE VERSIONS OF THE

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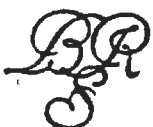
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1 TEST.

2 AND AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WE LOOK
3 FOR ISSUES; FOR EXAMPLE, EARLY ON IN THE TESTING
4 PROGRAM, A DECISION WAS MADE FOR THIRD GRADERS TO
5 LET THEM PUT THEIR MARK IN THE BOOKLET ITSELF
6 BECAUSE THERE WERE TOO MANY INSTANCES WHERE THE
7 KIDS COULDN'T TRANSFER TO THE SCAN SHEET. SO AT
8 THIRD WE ACTUALLY SCORE -- WE RIP THE BOOKLET APART
9 AND SCORE THE BOOKLET ITSELF RATHER THAN HAVE KIDS
10 TRANSFER TO A SCAN SHEET. BUT FROM FOURTH GRADE UP
11 WE DO THAT.

12 THOSE ARE THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT
13 COME OUT OF FIELD TESTING SITUATIONS. WE CAN SEE
14 HOW THE ITEM WORKS AND HOW THE KIDS ARE ACTUALLY
15 RESPONDING TO IT.

16 THEN WHEN WE GET THE FIELD TESTING
17 DONE, THE DATA -- WE SCORE ALL THOSE ITEMS, AND
18 THEN WE PROVIDE A LOT OF STATISTICS TO ANOTHER
19 EDUCATOR COMMITTEE, ONCE AGAIN, REPRESENTATIVE OF
20 THE STATE GEOGRAPHICALLY AND BY ETHNICITY. THIS
21 TIME WE ASK PEOPLE TO -- WE TRAIN THEM IN THE
22 STATISTIC THEY'RE LOOKING AT. WE PROVIDE A BUNCH
23 OF ITEM STATISTICS, WE TRAIN THEM IN WHAT THOSE
24 STATISTICS MEAN, AND THEN WE HAVE A DISCUSSION
25 ABOUT EVERY ITEM. HOW DOES THIS ITEM LOOK? DOES



1 IT SEEM TO HAVE ANY UNUSUAL TENDENCIES? DO YOU
2 STILL THINK IT'S A GOOD ITEM? SO WE GO THROUGH
3 THAT PROCESS AT THAT POINT IN TIME WITH THE ITEM
4 ANALYSIS DATA.

5 FINALLY, ONCE THAT GROUP HAS SORT OF
6 OKAYED AN ITEM FOR POSSIBLE USE ON A TEST, IT GOES
7 INTO OUR ITEM BANK. AT THAT POINT IN TIME, WE
8 DON'T ALLOW ANY KIND OF EDITING. IT'S EITHER KIND
9 OF AN UP OR A DOWN DECISION AT THAT POINT. THE
10 ITEM GOES INTO THE ITEM BANK IF IT'S GOOD. THEN WE
11 CONSTRUCT A BENCHMARK TEST. WHEN WE'RE FIRST
12 DEVELOPING A TEST, WE CONSTRUCT WHAT WE CALL A
13 BENCHMARK TEST. THERE'S NO CUT SCORE AT THIS POINT
14 IN TIME.

15 MR. POGGIO: CAN YOU JUST TALK A LITTLE
16 BIT ABOUT BIAS SINCE THE ISSUE HERE IS EQUITY? CAN
17 YOU DO A FEW WORDS ABOUT THAT?

18 MS. SMISKO: I'VE GOT SOME INFORMATION I'D
19 BE GLAD TO SEND, LEAVE WITH YOU. I'M NOT A
20 PSYCHOMETRICIAN. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE
21 CONTRACTORS PROVIDE THE -- LET'S SEE -- A NUMBER OF
22 THEM. THEY PROVIDE P VALUES, THEY PROVIDE ROSCH
23 DIFFICULTY VALUES, AND THEY PROVIDE THOSE THINGS BY
24 POPULATION THAT TOOK THE TEST. THEY ALSO PROVIDE
25 BY POPULATION THAT TOOK THE TEST, THAT IS, OUR



1 WHITE, HISPANIC, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, AND ECONOMICALLY
2 DISADVANTAGED. THEY PROVIDE THE NUMBERS OF KIDS
3 THAT TOOK EACH ANSWER RESPONSE. YOU KNOW MORE
4 ABOUT THIS THAN I DO. BUT IT'S THOSE KINDS OF
5 THINGS THAT THE PSYCHOMETRICIANS PROVIDE ALL THE
6 DATA ABOUT EACH ITEM, AND THEN TALK TO THE EDUCATOR
7 GROUP ABOUT POTENTIALLY WHAT THAT MIGHT MEAN. AND
8 THAT'S THE INFORMATION THEY HAVE IN FRONT OF THEM
9 WHEN THEY MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THAT, YES, LET'S
10 LEAVE THE ITEM IN OR, NO, IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S SKEWED
11 TOO MUCH ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

12 I KNOW THAT WASN'T EXACTLY HELPFUL TO
13 YOU, BUT I DO HAVE SOME MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
14 STATISTICS THAT ARE PROVIDED. BUT IT IS ONE OF
15 THOSE THINGS WHERE THE COMMITTEE TRIES TO MAKE THE
16 MOST REASONABLE JUDGMENT IT CAN GIVEN THE
17 INFORMATION ON EACH ITEM. AND SO WE JUST TRY TO
18 TAKE EACH ITEM AND SAY IF THERE WAS SOME UNUSUAL
19 STATISTIC ABOUT IT, WHAT DO YOU THINK IS CAUSING
20 IT? WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S HAPPENING? DOES THIS
21 SEEM TO BE AN ITEM THAT WE OUGHT TO MAYBE NOT USE?
22 AND THAT'S THE KIND OF DISCUSSIONS THAT ARE HAD
23 AROUND THE TABLE.

24 MR. TRENT: WHO HAS DECISION AUTHORITY
25 WITH REGARD TO DROPPING AN ITEM?

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MS. SMISKO: WHO HAS DECISION AUTHORITY?
WE LISTEN TO THE COMMITTEE. IF THE COMMITTEE
DOESN'T THINK WE SHOULD USE IT, WE DON'T USE IT.

MR. TRENT: THAT'S THE REVIEW COMMITTEE.

MS. SMISKO: THAT'S THE EDUCATOR REVIEW
COMMITTEE.

MR. TRENT: IS ONE OF THE GROUPS THAT YOU
LOOK AT, DO YOU LOOK AT BOYS AND GIRLS TOO?

MS. SMISKO: YES, GENDER AS WELL.

MS. JOHNSON: IN WHAT SEEMS TO BE YOUR
REALLY ELABORATE AND USEFUL PROCESS, I WONDER,
THOUGH, HOW DO YOU FINALLY DECIDE -- HOW DOES THE
COMMITTEE DECIDE WHAT THE LEVEL OF RIVER IS GOING
TO BE? YOU DO FIELD TESTING AND YOU'RE ASKING
TEACHERS TO PROVIDE INPUT. WHO DECIDES ULTIMATELY
HOW TO RAISE THE BAR ON THE ITEM?

MS. SMISKO: WELL, ITEMS DON'T WORK THAT
WAY. THE ITEMS REALLY ARE DECIDED IN TERMS OF
THEIR LEVEL BACK HERE WITH WHETHER OR NOT IT IS --
WHETHER OR NOT THEY THINK THAT'S AN APPROPRIATE
OBJECTIVE FOR THAT GRADE LEVEL. REMEMBER, THIS IS
A GRADE LEVEL TEST. IT DOESN'T GO ABOVE THIRD
GRADE. IT'S A THIRD GRADE TEST. ARE THESE ITEMS
THAT KIDS OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER AND DO WELL ON
BY THE END OF THIRD GRADE?

SAW
level
for



1 NOW, THE QUESTION YOU MAY BE ASKING
2 IS THE LAST ITEM ON THIS SHEET, WHICH IS THE CUT
3 SCORE, THE PERFORMANCE STANDARD ITSELF. WHAT WE DO
4 THEN IS WE PUT TOGETHER A TEST, AND WE USE THE ITEM
5 STATISTICS AND DIFFICULTY LEVELS TO MAKE SURE THAT
6 THE ITEMS WE PICK TO PUT TOGETHER ON EACH TEST EACH
7 YEAR ARE PREDICTED TO HAVE THE SAME DIFFICULTY
8 LEVEL AS THE TEST THE YEAR BEFORE. WE KEEP THE
9 LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY THE SAME UNLESS WE DECIDE THAT
10 WE'RE GOING TO MAKE THAT JUMP TO THE NEXT LEVEL,
11 WHICH WE MADE IN 1990 WITH TAAS, IN 1985 WITH TEKS,
12 AND IN 1980 WITH TASP, OUR FIRST TEST.

*State Board
reference*

13 SO THE LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY IS
14 DESIGNED TO BE THE SAME FROM YEAR TO YEAR. AND THE
15 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, WHICH IS A 15-MEMBER
16 ELECTED BODY, MAKES THE DECISION ABOUT WHAT THE
17 PASSING STANDARD WILL BE, THE PERFORMANCE
18 STANDARD. AND THEY DO THAT WITH DATA AFTER A
19 BENCHMARK ADMINISTRATION, IN OTHER WORDS, EVERY
20 STUDENT TOOK THE TEST, AND WE PROVIDE THEM WITH THE
21 DATA ABOUT THE POPULATION PERFORMANCE, EACH
22 POPULATION PERFORMANCE, AS THEY'RE MAKING THE
23 DECISION ABOUT WHAT THIS PASSING STANDARD OUGHT TO
24 BE SO THAT THEY KNOW AT A 50-PERCENT STANDARD, WHAT
25 THE PASSING RATE WOULD BE FOR ALL STUDENTS, FOR



1 AFRICAN-AMERICANS, HISPANICS, AND ECONOMICALLY
2 DISADVANTAGED, AT A 60 PERCENT, AT A 70, AT EACH
3 STANDARD LEVEL THEY KNOW WHEN THEY'RE MAKING THAT
4 DECISION HOW IT WOULD IMPACT VARIOUS POPULATIONS
5 GIVEN THE BENCHMARK TEST, OF COURSE.

6 SO THAT'S -- THEY ALSO HAVE
7 INFORMATION AT THAT POINT IN TIME ABOUT ADEQUACY OF
8 PREPARATION SURVEYS THAT WE DO WHEN WE BENCHMARK A
9 NEW TEST. THAT IS FOR A SAMPLE -- REPRESENTATIVE
10 SAMPLE OF TEACHERS WE ASK FOR EACH TEST, WAS
11 YOUR -- DID YOU FEEL YOUR STUDENTS WERE PREPARED?
12 DID YOU TEACH THESE OBJECTIVES THIS YEAR? AND
13 THERE'S A WHOLE SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT WE ASK
14 TEACHERS AT THE TIME WE BENCHMARK A NEW TEST SO
15 THAT THE BOARD CAN HAVE SOME INFORMATION ABOUT HOW
16 THE EDUCATORS -- WHAT LEVEL OF CONGRUENCE THE
17 EDUCATORS THOUGHT THIS TEST HAD WITH WHAT THEY
18 UNDERSTOOD THEY SHOULD BE TEACHING.

19 MR. POGGIO: SO AS I UNDERSTAND YOUR
20 DESCRIPTION, THEY REALLY DON'T ENGAGE IN A FORMAL
21 STANDARD SETTING PROCESS. SO THEY REVIEW DATA, A
22 HISTORY OF THE EXAM, AND SAY, WELL, LET'S MAKE IT
23 73 PERCENT THIS YEAR. THERE'S NO FORMAL ENGAGEMENT
24 IN WHAT WE WOULD CALL THE STANDARD SETTING?

25 MS. SMISKO: I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND

