

HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS POLICY**Overview and Rationale**

The assessment program is consistent with legislative intent as specified in the accountability provisions of the state *Education Improvement Act* (1992) and the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001). The program is consistent with the State Board of Education's *High School Policy*, which emphasizes school-wide reform to ensure that all students meet high standards. The assessment program focuses on enabling all students to succeed in challenging coursework by beginning with use of results of the 7th and 8th grade TCAP for diagnostic purposes to determine the appropriate educational experience for entering 9th grade students. School systems will determine the appropriate array of programs; schools will incorporate strategies into their school improvement process. The focus must be on providing high quality instruction, sometimes over extended periods of time, so that all students can be successful. Schools will also use examinations administered in high school for diagnostic purposes.

The purposes to be served and the rationale for testing include the following:

1. **Improvement of Student Learning in Core Content Areas.** The examinations will align with the curriculum standards and will include both content knowledge and critical thinking skills.
2. **Preparation for Further Learning.** The examinations will occur early in the student's high school program of study and help prepare them for success in subjects taken later.
3. **Diagnostic Information.** The examinations will help students to improve their performance and help prepare them for the ACT, SAT, and successful entry into postsecondary educational programs.
4. **School and Program Improvement.** The examinations will provide data that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the instructional delivery system at the school and the school system.
5. **Accountability.** The examinations will provide for teacher, school, and school system accountability. To provide for school and school system accountability, the proposed program provides for examinations in four areas: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. These subjects are important for the successful transition to work and postsecondary study. The state will report results for academic achievement and academic gain; the State Board of Education will include results in revised performance standards. Students will take the examinations in the year they complete the relevant content standards and course work.

Elements of the Program

- ~~1. End-of-course examinations will be administered in the following subjects: English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Math I, Integrated Math II, Integrated Math III, U.S. History, Biology I, Chemistry, and Physics, upon development.
 - ~~(a) The state will report scores for schools and school systems for academic achievement and academic gain.~~
 - ~~(b) Students will take the examinations in the semester they complete the relevant course work.~~
 - ~~(c) Results of individual student performance from all administered end-of-course examinations will be provided in a timely fashion to facilitate the inclusion of these results as part of the student's grade. If an LEA does not receive its students' end-of-course examination scores at least five instructional days before the scheduled end of the course, then the LEA may choose not to include its students' end-of-course examination scores in the students' second semester average. The weight of the end-of-course examination on the student's second semester average is as follows for entering ninth (9th) graders:
 - ~~(i) Fall of 2009 and 2010 – twenty percent (20%);~~
 - ~~(ii) Fall of 2011 and 2012 – twenty five percent (25%); and~~
 - ~~(iii) Fall of 2013 and thereafter – twenty five percent (25%).~~~~~~
- ~~2. Schools will use results of the 7th and 8th grade TCAP assessments for diagnostic purposes in determining an appropriate educational program for each student.~~
- ~~3. School systems will determine how best to meet the needs of students who score below the proficient level. Schools will include in their school improvement plans strategies for ensuring academic success and providing intervention and assistance. Such strategies could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - ~~(a) Pre-high school summer programs;~~
 - ~~(b) After school programs; and~~
 - ~~(c) Course work offered over an extended time, with additional units receiving elective credit.~~~~