

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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To: Superintendents

From: Shirley J. Holloway, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education & Early Development

Date: April 27, 2001

Subject: New State Contract for Norm-Referenced Test

The Department of Education & Early Development has recently accepted a bid from CTB McGraw Hill, for the *TerraNova, The Second Edition*. The TerraNova contract is for six years and will be first administered beginning in Spring 2002 and every year thereafter. The test will be administered at grades 4, 5, 7, and 9.

The specific form of the test selected is the *TerraNova Complete Battery*. The Complete Battery is supplemented with the Plus Option that provides in-depth information about students' essential skills. Reports for the *TerraNova Complete Battery with the Plus Option* will provide the following scores:

- Reading
- Language
- Mathematics
- Science (not required - may be given at district discretion)
- Social Studies (not required - may be given at district discretion)

Plus Option

- Vocabulary
- Language Mechanics
- Spelling
- Mathematics Computation

Two additional grades (5 and 9) have been added to the NRT in order to provide reliable school designator ratings. Testing at these additional grades was recommended by the School Designator Committee to ensure that grade-to-grade growth in student academic achievement can be measured. A common scale will be developed that will measure academic growth between a standards-based exam given one year and a norm-referenced test given the following year (or vice-versa). The table below shows the configuration of state-mandated testing that will begin in the 2001-2002 school year.

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Exam	Grades									
Standards-based Exams	3			6		8		10	11	12
Norm-referenced Tests		4	5		7		9			

I believe that educators will be pleased with the new norm-referenced test. With the Plus Option, diagnostic information will be available to assist teachers in the design of appropriate instruction. Additionally, optional science and social studies tests are included and will be scored at no cost to the district.

A final part of the new contract includes score reports that will be sent to school districts. These include:

- a home report that provides families with an easy-to-read graphic display of a child's progress in relation to similar students nationwide;
- score labels for cumulative records;
- a teacher report containing detailed information about the performance of each student; and
- class, school, and district summary results.

Samples of two of these reports and an explanatory guide are enclosed with this mailing.

Because the *TerraNova* differs significantly from the old CAT/5, the Department will make audioconference training for district test coordinators available in Fall 2001. If you have questions about the new exam, please call Richard Smiley at (907) 465-8691.

Enclosures

cc: Assessment Directors