

Replacement of the TerraNova Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills with the TerraNova Second Edition in Grade 2

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Background

During the 2005–2006 school year, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will replace the TerraNova Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) in Grade 2 with the TerraNova Second Edition (TN/2). Since 2000, MCPS has administered the CTBS to students in Grade 2 on a yearly basis to provide comprehensive measurement of basic skill achievement in five areas: reading, language, mathematics, language mechanics, and mathematics computation.

These skill areas are considered crucial in educational development because they help determine the extent to which students can profit from further instruction. Published by CTB/McGraw-Hill, the CTBS was normed in 1996. The TN/2, also a CTB/McGraw-Hill product, offers year 2000 norms that, unlike the CTBS norms, include students whose individual education plans specify testing accommodations.

Use of this test also will facilitate alignment of instruction to the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Maryland uses the TN/2 to assess student proficiency in mathematics and to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations in mathematics in Grades 3 through 8 under the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) act of 2001.

Purpose

Results from TN/2 administrations provide data to compare MCPS Grade 2 students with all Grade 2 students nationally. Other testing programs, such as the MSA, also provide comparisons with national results or norms. However, the main purpose of the MSA is to provide state, district, and school proficiency

scores in reading and mathematics that serve as the basis for calculating AYP under NCLB.

The TN/2 is a nationally norm-referenced test. This means the test publisher (CTB/McGraw-Hill) gives the TN/2 to a representative group of students nationwide prior to its availability to schools. This initial cohort of test takers is referred to as the norm group. The scores of students who take the TN/2 after publication of the norms are then compared (i.e., referenced back) with those of the norm group. There is a wide variety of other nationally normed tests. Among these are the Metropolitan Achievement Test, the Stanford Achievement Test, the California Achievement Test, and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.

The results of the TN/2 are crucial to school improvement efforts at the early primary level. As was the case with the CTBS, the Department of Shared Accountability (DSA) provided schools with a range of reports that include item analyses, overall and disaggregated student performance, and other relevant information to help schools interpret their results and guide their school improvement planning. Additionally, the student-level information, which includes a national percentile rank for each of the five subtests and the percentage of correct responses on each subtest, can assist schools with instructional decisions.

Transition

The transition from the CTBS to the TN/2 should not be difficult for schools. Both assessments have several common features that are familiar to schools, such as the following:

- Multiple choice items
- Same subtests and objectives

- Similar test administration times
- Recording of students' responses directly onto the test booklet
- Use of national percentile ranks to report performances

However, comparison of TN/2 results with CTBS results will not be possible. CTB/McGraw-Hill used a sophisticated psychometric process (a three-parameter logistic model based on Item Response Theory) to generate the national norms. This process takes into account the difficulty of test items, among other factors, to provide more exact national percentile ranks for students.

In contrast, the CTBS norms are based solely on raw scores (the number of correct items). This change makes it impossible to fairly compare the results from the CTBS and the TN/2. Therefore, pending official system approval, the 2005 administration of the TN/2 will become the baseline for reporting Grade 2 results. The school accountability indicators, such as the Battery Index, will remain the same.¹

Preparations and Training

Systemwide training on test security protocols and test administration procedures is scheduled for February 22–23, 2006. Administration of the TN/2 to Grade 2 students is scheduled for March 1–7, 2006. The DSA is currently working with CTB/McGraw-Hill on the pricing of test book materials, and the licensing to scan and score the TN/2 locally.

1. The Battery Index is similar to the standards of performance required by the NCLB legislation, namely, the percentage of students who performed at or above a designated cut score. For the TN/2, the cut score is the TN/2 50th national percentile rank, since it is the national average, and is slightly above the proficiency standards of the NCLB-mandated MSA for Grade 3. On the basis of this cut score, results can be combined across subtests to provide an overall performance indicator on the battery of TN/2 tests. The resulting Battery Index is then the percentage of scores that are at or above the TN/2 50th national percentile across the five subtests.