

KERA UPDATE

September 1997

Analysis of Third Grade CTBS-5 Scores Provide Important Indication

CTBS-5 Is the Latest Nationally-Normed Standardized Achievement Test to be Widely Used in Kentucky

— Because of widespread concern throughout Kentucky that basic skills were in decline in public schools, the 1997 KIRIS testing program included testing with portions of the CTBS-5, a new test from the same publisher that created the CTBS-4 and CAT-5 tests. Now, initial analysis of the CTBS-5 scores indicate there has been a notable decline in 3rd Grade performance in Kentucky since KERA was enacted in 1990.

In 1989 and 1990, Kentucky tested state-wide with the CTBS-4. When KERA was enacted, the education reform group that took over at the reorganized Kentucky Department of Education said these types of tests were detrimental to good schooling, and their use was discontinued. However, as concerns about decays in

basic skills mounted, many school districts returned to using nationally normed achievement tests, generally the CAT-5, by 1995. Indications from these schools were disturbing enough that Kentucky instituted state-wide testing with the recently published CTBS-5 in the Spring of 1997.

Do CTBS-5 Scores Equate to the Earlier Tests? A problem was generated when Kentucky adopted a new test rather than using the established CAT-5 and CTBS-4. Would the scores equate from these three different tests?

The answer comes from two different sources. First, the publisher of these tests developed equating software for CTBS-4 to CAT-5 several years ago. Third grade results using that equating were published by Dr. Faurest Coogle of the Kentucky School Boards Association in 1995, and these CAT-5 equivalent scores appear below.

The other key to the puzzle, equating CTBS-5 to CAT-5, appears to be solved with the scores from Jefferson County elementary schools. The same group of Jefferson County 3rd Graders took the CAT-5 in the Fall of 1996 and then took the new CTBS-5 in the following Spring. These kids scored an average of 46.4 on the the CAT-5 and a virtually identical 45.93 on the CTBS-5. Thus, it appears little, if any, change is necessary to compare CTBS-5 to CAT-5 scores.

As a result, the comparison table and graph below appear to be quite reasonable. It is clear that Kentucky's 3rd Graders have declined notably in basic skills performance since KERA began. Even if the scores for children who didn't have an Individual Education Plan are considered, the 1997 CTBS-5 results have dropped dramatically from 1989 and 1990 scores.

**Kentucky CTBS/CAT Results
(CTBS-4 Converted to CAT-5 Equivalents)**

School Year and Test Type	NCE Score
1989, CTBS-4 Source: KSBA	53.71
1990, CTBS-4 Source: KSBA	56.74
1995, CAT-5 Source: KSBA	50.98
1997, CTBS-5 Source: OEA	49.7 (With IEP) 51.3 (Without IEP)

Kentucky 3rd Grade CTBS/CAT NCE Scores on Common CAT-5 Scale

