



TESCCC and CSCOPE FAQ Items

Items are organized into two topical categories- those more specific to CSCOPE and to the TESCCC. These FAQ items are also available at: <http://www.cscope.us/faq.html>

Note: School districts, charter systems, and/or private schools are collectively referred to as “school districts” throughout this FAQ.

CSCOPE-related Topics

1. What is CSCOPE?

CSCOPE is a comprehensive online curriculum management system developed and owned by the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC), a consortium composed of 19 of the 20 ESCs in the state. The CSCOPE system includes a curriculum framework for grades K-12 in all foundational academic subject areas aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. CSCOPE content is regularly updated based on all SBOE-adopted changes in the TEKS, as well as any relevant changes/interpretations of state standards and from feedback collected through various stakeholder groups in the collaborative, including individual teacher submissions through the CSCOPE website and the School District Advisory Committee, comprised of district representatives from all participating regions of the state. Participating school districts may also use the online CSCOPE system to customize and/or create content, as well as providing for the inclusion of locally approved or adopted supplemental resources.

CSCOPE provides districts a common language, structure, and process for curriculum delivery, based on the TEKS. Curriculum components highlight the content and cognitive rigor of each student expectation that will be assessed on STAAR and ensure teachers are informed of the depth and complexity to which they should be teaching. In addition to quality curriculum components and resources, CSCOPE provides assessment and instructional components to assist teachers in meeting the highest standard of rigor and relevance as they address the TEKS/STAAR expectations. Required English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and College and Career Readiness Standards are embedded into the curriculum as well.

The curriculum and instructional components of CSCOPE are based on best practice models from top researchers in the field of education, including: Robert Marzano, Fenwick English, John Crain, Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, H. Lynn Erickson, and James Barufaldi.

2. How long has CSCOPE been around and how many school districts are involved?

Initial CSCOPE development began during the 2005-06 school year, with the 2006-07 school year designated as the first year of implementation. In 2006-07, there were 182 active CSCOPE districts in Texas. As of September 25, 2012, there are 875 active CSCOPE districts. This equates to approximately 70% of the *districts in Texas.

*According to AskTED, as of October 23, 2012, there were 1,247 districts in Texas (the full list includes Common, Independent, Texas Youth Commission, TSD/TSBVI, and Charter School Districts).

<http://mansfield.tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.Web/Forms/ReportSelection.aspx>

3. What is included in a contract for CSCOPE system access and support?

Support: each member-ESC provides standard and/or customizable plans of support for participating school districts. CSCOPE is most effective when implemented as a systemic process; therefore, supporting service centers work with schools to develop a deep understanding of CSCOPE design and assist districts in establishing an implementation plan that best meets the needs of each participating school district/system. During implementation, ESC staff provides ongoing CSCOPE training, support, and technical assistance.

Content: CSCOPE provides TEKS-aligned and updated K-12 curriculum, assessment, and instruction components for English and Spanish Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (foundation curriculum). The CSCOPE system, including all content, is delivered to participating school districts in a web-based format, which also allows districts to customize content to address the unique district and community expectations and priorities. Please visit <http://www.cscope.us/curriculum.html> to learn more about CSCOPE content and components.

4. Why is CSCOPE used by so many Texas school districts, open enrollment charter schools, and private schools?

Implemented with the guidance and support of member-ESCs, CSCOPE helps school districts meet the expectations of ever-changing state-mandated standards (TEKS), a more rigorous state testing and accountability system (STAAR/EOC), and improving student performance, while faced with shrinking financial resources.

Most school districts/systems do not have the human and financial resources (or the time) to create a vertically aligned K-12 curriculum, along with assessment and instructional components for all of the foundational subject areas. CSCOPE not only meets this need, but also provides the curriculum, assessment, and instructional components in a customizable, dynamic, web-based format with many different tools and resources to support implementation efforts. Delivered with an ongoing system of support and professional development through a member-ESC, it is no wonder that CSCOPE is an attractive option for schools in Texas.

What CSCOPE has done for the teachers of Texas is to map out the curriculum, providing a scope and sequence that guarantees all TEKS will be taught. It also provides clarification/specificity not found in reading the TEKS in isolation. Educational researchers sometimes refer to this specificity as “unpacking the standards,” or clarifying the content and cognitive specificity of the knowledge and skills statements and student expectations. This is where we find the rigor and relevance of the TEKS, which is critical in preparing for STAAR. As part of this curriculum design, CSCOPE maps standards, clarifies the content, and identifies the level of complexity of the verbs in the context of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills statements and the student expectations.

5. Who can purchase a license to access the online CSCOPE system and/or content?

Designed to be most effectively implemented as a systemic process, CSCOPE is only available to school districts in Texas through TESCCC-member ESCs. There are special considerations under the state accountability system that may apply to individual campus licensing. CSCOPE is not available for purchase by individuals.

6. Is there evidence that CSCOPE “works” or improves student achievement?

CSCOPE has not commissioned or been part of any recent or comprehensive independent study, but has been the subject of several doctoral dissertations leading to favorable findings.

For purposes of discussion at the 2010 CSCOPE District Advisory Meeting, the TESCCC administered a voluntary survey to active CSCOPE districts to learn more about specific content-area implementation, including any requirement for teachers to use CSCOPE lessons, and district-level student performance on TAKS by year of implementation.

The chart below shows a breakdown of the data collected for Science from districts implementing CSCOPE in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years:

Number of Districts responding	Year of CSCOPE Implementation	All Student % increase CSCOPE	All Student % increase State Avg.	Eco Dis. % increase CSCOPE	Eco Dis. % increase State Avg.	# Districts requiring ⁺ Lessons
40	2007-08	8% ¹	7% ¹	11% ¹	8% ¹	16
44	2008-09	9% ²	4% ²	8% ²	5% ²	23

Note: TAKS data for CSCOPE districts and the State includes results from “All Tests Taken” for Science and was obtained from AEIS reports available at: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/>

⁺ Survey results indicated whether or not use of CSCOPE Science lessons was required or optional.

¹ Student TAKS data includes total % gains in Science from the 2006-07 through the 2008-09 school years.

² Student TAKS data includes total % gains in Science from the 2007-08 through the 2008-09 school years

One of the most interesting findings from this particular set of data came from the districts in Year 1 of CSCOPE implementation (2008-09). In the “All Students” and “Economically Disadvantaged” categories, CSCOPE districts had much higher percentage gains in Science TAKS scores than the State average, with over half of the districts requiring the use of CSCOPE Science lessons.

It is also worth noting that the significant increase in the number of CSCOPE districts since 2006-07 (see Question #2) indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the system. Since student and/or district success may be measured in a variety of ways, the TESCCC views the continuation and increase of CSCOPE district licensing statewide as evidence that CSCOPE works.

7. Are participating school districts required to implement CSCOPE a certain way?

No. CSCOPE is built on the premise that the district and the individual classroom teacher know what’s best for their students. CSCOPE is implemented in a variety of ways and at very different levels by school districts across the state. Supporting ESCs work closely with individual school districts during the initial and ongoing CSCOPE implementation process, but there is not a mandatory implementation plan that all districts must follow.

Additionally, CSCOPE launched a new website on July 1, 2012, that includes a variety of features and functions that enhance a district’s ability to customize, modify, and/or supplement CSCOPE content. The web-based platform supports districts in determining how they will implement CSCOPE in the various content areas and/or grade levels.

8. With regard to CSCOPE, what type of relationship exists between the TESCCC and school districts?

Texas school districts that purchase an annual CSCOPE license do so by contacting one of the ESCs listed on the CSCOPE public website (http://www.cscope.us/region_contacts.html). CSCOPE licensing agreements are available through the member ESCs in the collaborative.

When a CSCOPE licensing agreement and contract for services is established between a district and a supporting ESC, the district Superintendent or designee is required to sign a District User License Agreement (DULA) with the TESCCC. The DULA addresses the terms and conditions of CSCOPE access and use.

9. What type of agreement do individual users have to sign regarding access and use of the CSCOPE system and content?

Each authorized user is required to sign an electronic *Terms of Use* in order to access the CSCOPE website and content. The *Terms of Use* is very similar to other user agreements for licensed software.

The DULA and the *Terms of Use* are in place to protect and maintain the integrity of the CSCOPE system by establishing guidelines for authorized users.

10. Does the TESCCC's District User License Agreement (DULA) or individual *Terms of Use* agreement prevent parents from viewing certain CSCOPE content or components?

Neither the DULA, nor the *Terms of Use* agreement, prohibit an authorized user (e.g., a teacher) from revealing CSCOPE content to parents or other non-authorized users, as long as they follow these primary guidelines:

- Adhere to district policy and guidelines for how CSCOPE content should or may be shared/displayed
- Adhere to the TESCCC DULA and *Terms of Use* by not allowing unauthorized users to have online access to the CSCOPE site or gain permanent possession of CSCOPE content

A school district may also request written permission from the TESCCC to reveal or provide CSCOPE content or website access that may not be allowed under the current TESCCC DULA or *Terms of Use*.

Note: Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher or campus administrator to learn more about how their district is using CSCOPE and to what degree lessons are being used (if at all). Likewise, parents are encouraged exercise their rights to view any materials used by their child's teacher, including CSCOPE content being used in the classroom.

11. Has CSCOPE content gone through any external or independent review?

CSCOPE is currently engaged in a multifaceted approach to review all content in the system. The ultimate goal for all review work is to focus on CSCOPE's alignment to the content and cognitive rigor of the TEKS. Ensuring that CSCOPE content aligns with the most updated versions of the TEKS is the highest priority of the CSCOPE development team.

Content Review Process: a Request for Proposal (RFP) was published in spring 2012 to have an external review of the CSCOPE Curriculum by content area. The awarded vendor, Resources for Learning¹, began the process of reviewing Science content K-12 in the spring of 2012 to gauge the alignment of CSCOPE content with the TEKS, the state standards. Over the course of the coming years, each of the content areas will be subject to a similar review, while allowing for CSCOPE to honor its commitment to provide a curriculum management system that continues to improve and be responsive to both end user feedback, as well as new information released from TEA.

Unit Test Review and Revision Process: The TESCCC contracted with EdGate Correlation Services² to provide an external, extensive analysis of CSCOPE's Instructional Focus Documents (IFDs) with corresponding unit tests to ensure that test items are aligned to the content, cognitive rigor, and intent of the TEKS on each IFD. Following EdGate's analysis, over 90 teachers, district curriculum

leaders/specialists, and ESC staff across Texas met to review and add to EdGate’s recommendations. Final unit test revisions were then submitted to the CSCOPE Assessment Team for the creation and posting of enhanced unit tests for 2012-13. (*Review included all content areas, grades 2-12*).

Citations:

¹Since 1998, Resources for Learning (RFL), a woman-owned, Texas HUB-certified small business, has collaborated with state, regional, and local level groups of educators and policymakers to design and manage education projects and develop products. In 2008, RFL led a 10-district curriculum review project for the Texas Legislative Budget Board (LBB). RFL has also assessed curriculum systems and implementation in individual districts and has been involved in numerous projects to develop curriculum resources aligned with the TEKS.

²EdGate Correlation Services is a company established by educators for educators and has been in business since 1997. EdGate is nationally recognized for leadership in the field of aligning educational content to standards, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

12. Has there ever been a formal review of the CSCOPE system?

There have been external or independent reviews of elements of CSCOPE in the past. For example, in a separate study¹ published in 2009, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) reviewed district student performance data. Of the 10 school districts reviewed, at least two were CSCOPE users at the time of the study. The study cited that:

...across all TAKS tests and grades tested, most of the districts in the targeted review performed above the state average in school years 2002–03 to 2006–07. The districts generally show a trend of increasing student performance over the period. In addition, the eight districts with either internally developed or externally developed curriculum management systems generally performed above the state average across all core subject areas and made improvements across student group performance. While improvements in student performance across the districts in the targeted reviews cannot be attributed directly to district curriculum management system activities, anecdotal evidence indicates that districts attributed some of the improvements in student achievement to the instructional tools used in the districts. (pp. 531-532)

The study examined CSCOPE and two other regional educational service center (RESC) developed systems. As of 2011, CSCOPE is the only one of the three still in existence. The report indicated that, “All of the RESC-developed curriculum management system products provide comprehensive curriculum, assessment, and data management materials in addition to support for product implementation in the cooperatives.” (p. 534)

An additional study² conducted by the State Comptroller and published in 2010 noted:

In addition to shared business services, there are also shared curriculum services available to school districts. Nineteen of the state’s 20 ESCs partnered to develop an interactive curriculum development and management system called CSCOPE. CSCOPE provides districts with access to TEKS-aligned curriculum, developed by Texas educators. CSCOPE is a low cost resource that is available to all districts. One school district estimates that using CSCOPE saves between \$25,000 and \$35,000 a year. (p. 35)

The report also cites Smart Practices that support the efficiency and effectiveness of districts. One of the identified practices is CSCOPE. You may find the reference to this at:

<http://www.fastexas.org/smartPractices/staff.php>

Citations:

¹In January 2009, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) published “Texas State Government Efficiency and Effectiveness Study on Select Issues and Recommendations” for the then upcoming 81st Legislative Session.

Legislative Budget Board (LBB) staff, in conjunction with Resources for Learning, Inc. (RFL) personnel, conducted a targeted review of 10 Texas school districts to gain a broad perspective about curriculum and curriculum management systems implemented across the state. In addition to onsite work in districts, the nine RESCs in which these districts reside were visited by LBB staff to gather additional information about their roles in curriculum development with their area districts. The remaining 11 RESCs were also surveyed to garner similar information. (p. 531)

²In 2009, the Legislature's House Bill 3 directed the Comptroller to "identify school districts and campuses that use resource allocation practices that contribute to high academic achievement and cost-effective operations." The Comptroller's office created the Financial Allocation Study for Texas (FAST) to examine district and campus resource allocation — and the relationship between this spending and student achievement.

13. What types of processes are in place to allow district leaders and teachers to have a "voice" in the CSCOPE system and content development?

The TESCCC strives to include end users in the CSCOPE development and improvement process in a variety of ways. In the Unit Test Review and Revision Process (described in item #10), approximately 82% of the Unit Test Advisory Committee members were from CSCOPE districts, with the remaining 18% representing member-ESCs. Of the district committee members, 53% were classroom teachers.

Moreover, end users are able to submit feedback/questions on any piece of content through an online feedback mechanism in the CSCOPE site. Feedback collected through the CSCOPE site not only helps to improve the system, but also allows the collaborative to determine any additional professional development that may be necessary or useful based on patterns of feedback from end users.

Supporting ESCs also provide a variety of methods for district leaders and teachers to have a voice in CSCOPE. Examples include hosting content-specific training sessions, administrator forums, listservs, and virtual sessions/groups that allow for CSCOPE feedback and input.

Other mechanisms for CSCOPE feedback/input include an annual District Advisory Meeting, whereby district representatives gather with CSCOPE Leadership and State Team members to discuss what's working, what needs to be improved, and what future initiatives may be necessary/worthwhile for the collaborative. Other events, such as the annual CSCOPE State Conference and regional meetings, provide networking and sharing opportunities for end users that also help to inform CSCOPE's continuous improvement in development and support.

14. What is different about the design of CSCOPE Language Arts components, and does it align with the TEKS and STAAR/EOC requirements?

CSCOPE curriculum units for English/Spanish Language Arts and Reading are genre based, similar to the organization of the TEKS (i.e., if students are reading poetry, they are also writing poetry). CSCOPE includes the Figure 19 reading comprehension skills and writing process skills in each unit; therefore, students can apply them in each genre.

CSCOPE exemplar lessons for English/Spanish Language Arts and Reading provide a balanced approach to literacy learning by implementing multiple aspects of instruction. Daily Lessons emphasize Word Study, Reading, and Writing with an integration of speaking and listening to allow the development and practice of processes needed for growth in both academic and personal worlds. Shared, interactive, guided, and independent practice is provided in the Instructional Routines of lessons through explicit, reciprocal, and responsive instruction.

At the K-2 level, exemplar lessons include explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics as directed by the TEKS. If districts are not implementing CSCOPE lessons, and if they do not have a resource for phonics instruction in place, CSCOPE provides a suggested Phonics Scope and Sequence for teachers to use as a guide to plan instruction.

At all grade levels, exemplar lessons include conventions taught explicitly in both Word Study and Writing. Students are then expected to apply their knowledge of conventions in reading, writing, and speaking which is required by TEKS.

15. Why are there no textbooks for students to take home?

CSCOPE is developed as an online curriculum management system that encourages the integration and use of district resources in accordance with district policies and guidelines, including locally adopted textbooks. CSCOPE is designed for use primarily by teachers and administrators. It is not a system designed for direct student access or to be used like a textbook. CSCOPE does provide lessons and student resources (e.g., handouts) with each unit of instruction, but local decision-making determines the extent with which CSCOPE lessons may be used (if at all) and what other resources may be used for instruction.

16. How might parents, community members, or the general public obtain more information about the TESCCC and/or CSCOPE?

The TESCCC maintains a public website at www.cscope.us that includes sample CSCOPE components and information for those who may want to know more about the TESCCC and the CSCOPE curriculum management system. Additionally, the CSCOPE Parent Portal, which includes the Concepts and Key Understandings for all units in all content areas K-12, exists for public viewing at: <http://www.cscope.us/parentportal>.

17. Does CSCOPE align to the Common Core Standards?

No. By law, educators in Texas are charged with ensuring that all students in the state receive instruction that is based on our state standards, the TEKS. All CSCOPE components are aligned solely to the state-mandated TEKS.

18. How does CSCOPE address potentially sensitive topics?

District policy guides the content that is taught in the classroom. Districts implementing CSCOPE are advised to review all the content and lessons prior to use to ensure that they meet the standards of the community served. Districts may revise, add, or refocus any lesson topic to ensure that instruction serves the intended learning goals of the district.

The TESCCC recognizes that there are certain topics included in the TEKS that are typically viewed as sensitive in nature. CSCOPE is designed to focus on the depth and complexity of the standards and assist districts in preparing students for academic success. CSCOPE content is not designed to show favor toward any special interest group/organization.

TESCCC-related Topics

1. What is the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC), and how does it relate to CSCOPE?

The TESCCC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation organized under Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organizations Code. The TESCCC owns and manages the CSCOPE curriculum management system.

Management of the TESCCC processes and procedures is vested in its Board of Directors. The TESCCC Board of Directors is comprised of the 19 executive directors representing each of the member education service centers (ESCs) in Texas.

2. What is the purpose of the TESCCC?

The purpose of the TESCCC is to provide high quality curriculum components and resources to help school districts ensure that all students meet rigorous academic achievement standards in efficient and economical ways.

3. Does the TESCCC have a separate location and staff from its member ESCs?

Currently, there are no employees of the TESCCC. The registered office and fiscal agent of the corporation is located at Education Service Center Region XIII in Austin. There is a designated, professional staff (State CSCOPE Team) housed and employed by ESC Region XIII.

4. What is the relationship between the TESCCC and the Texas Education Agency (TEA)?

Regional education service centers in Texas were created by the Texas Legislature and are governed by the Texas Education Code (TEC). Although ESCs are not officially part of the TEA, the Commissioner of Education has oversight related to the governance and operation of service centers. TEC Chapter 8, Section 8.053, directs the ESCs to offer services requested and purchased by school districts (including charter schools) and campuses in the state. ESCs are directed to support school districts and charter systems in operating more efficiently, effectively, and economically. ESCs are able to enter into contracts and agreements among themselves and with school districts, independent of TEA, in the formation of cooperatives and shared-service agreements, such as with CSCOPE.
(<http://www.texasresc.net/default.htm>)

5. How is the TESCCC (CSCOPE) funded?

Each member ESC contributes a portion of the CSCOPE fees collected from districts to cover centralized statewide functions for CSCOPE development, technology, and administrative delivery and oversight costs. ESCs then use the remaining funds for CSCOPE training, support, and technical assistance.

The TESCCC does maintain vendor partnerships for the purpose of aligning/correlating content or materials with CSCOPE (approved vendor partners are listed on the CSCOPE website at: http://www.cscope.us/partner_vendors.html). Fees collected from approved vendor partners comprise approximately 6% of the revenue collected through the TESCCC for CSCOPE.

NOTE: The TESCCC is not funded by any special interest group/organization or any federal or state agency.