

## talking points



Education



HK today

# Should TSA exams be marked on a simple pass/ fail basis?

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**Titus To Cheuk-lam, 16, Ma On Shan Tsung Tsin Secondary School**

TSA exams should change to a simple pass/ fail assessment, because Primary Three students are not mature enough to tackle such complicated tests. They might feel a lot of stress from being pushed by their teachers to do so much preparation. Also, they may be worried that they have to do well on them. Overloading students like this could make both students and their parents depressed.

The pass/ fail scheme is better because it puts less pressure on schools and students. The assessment results would still reflect school rankings, but with less pressure on young children. It would reduce the negative consequences caused by TSA exams.

**Shirley Or, 17, Our Lady's College**

TSA exams should be marked on a simple pass/ fail basis. This way, schools and teachers, as well as students and their parents, wouldn't be so stressed about them. If students just needed to get a pass, they wouldn't need to worry about aiming for higher marks.

And because schools wouldn't need to focus on TSA exam skills as much, there would be a lot less preparation, leaving students time to focus on other studies. This would be a win-win situation, as the TSAs would still serve its major function - evaluating the ability of students in different schools - but students wouldn't be under too much pressure.

Marking TSA exams on a simple pass/ fail basis would be a better solution than cancelling them.

**Mary Grace Man Villacorte, 12, Tak Nga Secondary School**

From my point of view, the TSAs should not be marked on a pass or fail basis. We should concentrate on the fact that the TSAs are used for assessment. TSA test results can show us which subjects students are good in, and which subjects they need help with. It is also used as a guideline to show teachers where and how to take action, so they can improve, too.

If we only grade the TSAs on a pass or fail basis, the assessment will be totally meaningless! So instead of scrapping the TSA assessments, we need to find a way to improve it, so it can give better results with less effort for the students.

**Cherie Chan, 12, Tak Nga Secondary School**

I think it would be better if the TSAs were cancelled altogether. When I was in Primary Three, I felt stressed because my exam results were not very good. And in addition to the usual exams, I still had to revise for the TSAs. This was tough and tiring.

People say that kids need to play for at least one hour each day, but if you have the TSAs, you can't play because you are too busy revising. Many parents disagree with having the TSA, too. It is difficult to manage exams and TSAs, and the TSAs are a bit too hard for the kids. The Education Bureau should ask the public if they want to keep them.

**Naz Iraj, 17, St Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong**

Definitely not! Marking TSA exams on a simple pass/ fail basis would not do Primary Three students justice. If the authorities don't plan to get rid of the TSAs, they should at least take proper results from them. Students have the right to know how well or how badly they performed, and simply stating "pass" or "fail" takes that right away from them.

Besides, it is also demotivating. For example, if a student fails, they will not be motivated to put effort into their studies. And if a student passes, they will not know how well they performed, or in which area they could use improvement. So using a simple pass/ fail basis to mark? Not at all!



In our next Talking Points, we'll discuss: Should the government have any role in choosing a university council chairman? We are now accepting answers from readers for this new topic. To take part, email your answer with your name, age and school, along with a nice, clear selfie (make sure it's not blurry), to [yp@scmp.com](mailto:yp@scmp.com) by Monday lunchtime next week.