

Texas Assessment Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

STAAR General Questions

1. What is STAAR?

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR[®], is the state testing program that was implemented in the 2011–2012 school year. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and Texas educators, developed the STAAR program in response to requirements set forth by the 80th and 81st Texas legislatures. STAAR is an assessment program designed to measure the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply the knowledge and skills defined in the state-mandated curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Every STAAR question is directly aligned to the TEKS currently implemented for the grade/subject or course being assessed. The STAAR program includes STAAR and STAAR Spanish. There are large print, braille, paper, and online versions of STAAR with and without designated supports. For more information about the STAAR program, visit the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

2. In what grades, subjects, and courses are students assessed under the STAAR program?

STAAR assessments are administered for

- Grades 3–8 mathematics
- Grades 3–8 reading
- Grades 4 and 7 writing
- Grades 5 and 8 science
- Grade 8 social studies
- Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History

Also, districts can choose to administer the optional STAAR Algebra II and English III end-of-course (EOC) assessments to their students.

3. What are readiness standards?

Based on educator recommendations and as part of the development of the STAAR program, TEA identified, for each grade/subject and course assessed, a small percentage of eligible TEKS student expectations as the most critical to assess. These are called readiness standards and are defined as those student expectations that are not only essential for success in the current grade or course but also important for preparedness in the next grade or course. Readiness standards are emphasized on the assessments and are identified for each grade/subject and course tested in the Assessed Curriculum documents on the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

4. Are there any released test questions available for STAAR?

Yes. TEA has released sample test questions, as well as previously-administered test forms for all grades/subjects and courses. These questions can be found on the STAAR Released Test Questions webpage at https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/STAAR_Released_Test_Questions/.

STAAR Testing Requirements

5. What are the general testing requirements for students in grades 3–8?

In most cases, students in grades 3–8 must be tested at their enrolled grade level as required in Texas Education Code (TEC) [§39.023\(a\)](#). Exceptions to this requirement may exist for students receiving instruction above grade level; see the questions that follow.

6. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are receiving instruction in subjects above their enrolled grade?

These students should take STAAR assessments for the subjects in which they are receiving instruction if an assessment exists. For example, a student in grade 7 who is receiving instruction in grade 8 science would take the STAAR grade 8 science assessment and the STAAR grade 7 mathematics, reading, and writing assessments.

For students who are receiving accelerated instruction across multiple grade levels, districts should carefully evaluate the content of the instruction as it relates to the STAAR grade-level assessments to ensure that students are provided the best opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the grade-level content. For example, if students are receiving instruction in all grades 6 and some grade 7 mathematics curriculum during a school year, the students should be administered the STAAR grade 6 mathematics assessment. It would not be appropriate to administer the grade 7 assessment to these students since they have not been given the opportunity to learn all the grade 7 mathematics curriculum.

7. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course that has a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment?

Students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course will take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment in place of their grade-level assessment in that subject area. These students must take all other STAAR grade-level assessments. For example, a grade 8 student enrolled in Algebra I will take the STAAR Algebra I assessment, as well as the STAAR grade 8 reading, science, and social studies assessments.

8. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course that does not have a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment?

- For mathematics, these students would still be required to take their grade-level STAAR assessment since there is not a STAAR EOC assessment to take and because students are required by federal law to be assessed annually in grades 3–8 in mathematics. For example, a grade 8 student enrolled in geometry will take the STAAR grade 8 mathematics assessment (since there is not a STAAR geometry assessment), as well as the other grade 8 assessments.
- For science, students in grades 5 and 8 would still be required to take their grade-level STAAR assessment if they have not already taken it since students are required by federal law to be assessed in science at least once in elementary and once in middle school.
- For social studies, students in grade 8 would not be required to take their grade-level assessment since there is no federal requirement to test in social studies.
- For writing, students in grades 4 and 7 would not be required to take their grade-level assessment.
- This question is not applicable for reading since there is a reading test in every grade from 3–10 to satisfy federal requirements.

9. If students in grades 3–8 are receiving above-grade-level instruction (including instruction in a high school-level course), are they required to take both the higher level and the enrolled-grade-level assessment in the same content area?

No. Students in grades 3–8 are not required to take two tests in the same content area. TEA discourages districts from double-testing accelerated students.

10. What are the testing requirements for students in kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2 who are receiving instruction in subjects above their enrolled grade level?

There are no STAAR testing requirements for students enrolled in kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2, so these students do not test. STAAR testing requirements begin with students enrolled in grade 3.

11. What are the general testing requirements for students enrolled in high school courses?

Regardless of enrolled grade level, students should take STAAR EOC assessments (Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History) as they are completing the corresponding courses since these assessments are required for high school graduation based on TEC [§39.025](#). All students enrolled in Algebra II and/or English III must take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment if the district chooses to participate in those assessments.

12. What are the testing requirements for a foreign exchange student?

A foreign exchange student is required to take STAAR EOC assessments for courses in which he or she is enrolled. However, the student is not required to retest unless he or she is planning to earn a Texas high school diploma.

13. Are districts required to provide accelerated instruction to students who do not pass the STAAR assessments?

Yes. TEC [§28.0211](#)(a-1) requires school districts to provide accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area each time a student fails to pass (i.e., who does not achieve Approaches Grade Level) an assessment administered in grades 3–8. Similarly, TEC [§39.025](#)(b-1) requires school districts to provide accelerated instruction to each student who fails to pass (Approaches Grade Level) a STAAR EOC assessment.

14. What are the testing requirements for the postsecondary readiness assessments (i.e., STAAR Algebra II and English III)?

The STAAR Algebra II and English III postsecondary readiness assessments are optional assessments for districts. If a district chooses to administer either or both assessments, the assessments must be given to all students enrolled in the course(s). The district may choose to administer these assessments on paper, online, or both.

STAAR Student Success Initiative Requirements

15. What is the purpose of the Student Success Initiative (SSI)?

SSI, enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, is a system of supports for on-grade-level student achievement in mathematics and reading at grades 5 and 8. This system of supports includes early intervention activities, research-based instructional programs, targeted accelerated instruction, and multiple testing opportunities. More information about supports can be found in the SSI Manual on the SSI webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ssi/>.

16. What are the SSI promotion requirements?

Under the SSI promotion requirements, students are required to pass (Approaches Grade Level) the STAAR grade 5 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to grade 6. Additionally,

students are required to pass (Approaches Grade Level) the STAAR grade 8 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to grade 9. More information about these requirements can be found on the SSI webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ssi/>.

17. How many testing opportunities are there for SSI?

There are three testing opportunities for students in grades 5 and 8 to pass STAAR mathematics and reading assessments in order to be promoted to the next grade. The first SSI administration is typically in early April. This administration is earlier than other STAAR mathematics and reading administrations to allow sufficient time in the school year for targeted accelerated instruction and another testing opportunity. The second testing opportunity occurs in mid-May. The third testing opportunity for SSI is in late June. The specific testing dates each year can be found on the student assessment testing calendar at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/calendars/>.

18. Which students do the SSI promotion requirements apply to?

SSI promotion requirements apply to students taking STAAR grade 5 or 8 mathematics and/or reading assessments if the students

- are enrolled in grade 5 or 8 and
- are receiving on-grade-level instruction in mathematics and/or reading.

19. Do SSI promotion requirements apply to students in grades 3, 4, 6, or 7 who are receiving mathematics or reading instruction above their enrolled grade and who take the grade 5 or 8 assessment?

No. Because these students are not enrolled in grade 5 or 8, the grades that SSI applies to, they are not subject to the SSI promotion requirements.

20. Can students who are receiving mathematics or reading instruction above their enrolled grade and who will take the above-grade-level assessment at grade 5 or 8 participate in the second or third administration of the mathematics or reading assessments?

No. Only students enrolled in grade 5 or 8 who are subject to SSI promotion requirements and who have not passed the first administration of an SSI test are eligible to participate in the second and third administrations of the mathematics or reading assessments.

For students who are receiving instruction above their enrolled grade level, districts should carefully evaluate the timing of the accelerated instruction as it relates to the STAAR assessment schedule to ensure that students are provided the best opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the content during the first administration of STAAR grade 5 and 8 mathematics and reading assessments.

21. Do SSI promotion requirements apply to a student who is repeating grade 5 or 8?

Yes. If the student is enrolled in grade 5 or 8 and receiving instruction in grade 5 or 8 mathematics or reading, SSI requirements apply, even if the student passed the corresponding assessment the previous school year.

STAAR Graduation Requirements

22. What STAAR tests are required for high school graduation?

In general, students must pass (Approaches Grade Level) five STAAR EOC assessments—Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History—to earn a high school diploma from a Texas public or charter school as required in TEC [§39.025](#).

23. Which students must meet the STAAR graduation requirements?

Students who were first enrolled in grade 9 or below in the 2011–2012 school year, the first year of the STAAR program, must meet the STAAR graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma from a Texas public or charter school. Students who repeated grade 9 or were enrolled in grade 10 or above in the 2011–2012 school year must meet other testing requirements for graduation. More information about testing requirements for these students can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/taks/>.

24. When should students take a STAAR EOC assessment?

Students should take a STAAR EOC assessment during the spring, summer, or fall administration, as close as possible to the completion of the corresponding course. Most students will have received instruction in an entire course or a significant portion of the course by the spring testing date or by the end of the school year, so they would participate in the spring administration. However, if by the end of the school year students have received instruction in only part of the course (e.g., the first half or the second half), then they would take the STAAR EOC assessment in whichever subsequent administration is closest to the time they are completing the course.

For students who are taking courses outside of the typical semester sequence, districts should carefully evaluate the timing of the course instruction as it relates to the STAAR EOC assessment schedule to ensure that students are provided the best opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the course content. For example, because the spring administration of STAAR English I and English II typically occurs a month earlier than the administration of the other EOC assessments, districts should evaluate the extent to which students taking English I or English II in an accelerated block of instruction during the spring are able to complete their testing requirements. Students who do not participate in the spring STAAR administration may not be able or willing to return to school in June to take the assessments and will not have another opportunity to test until December of the following school year, months after they have completed the course.

25. How many testing opportunities do students have to pass the STAAR EOC assessments?

All five STAAR EOC assessments required for graduation—Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History—are administered at the end of the first semester (fall), at the end of the second semester (spring), and in the summer, giving students three testing opportunities each year. The number of testing opportunities students have prior to high school graduation is dependent on when students take the corresponding course. For example, most students take biology during their freshman year. That means students have ten testing opportunities before they are scheduled to graduate. In contrast, most students take U.S. history during their junior year, giving them four testing opportunities prior to high school graduation. Students who do not pass one or more of the required assessments before their scheduled graduation may continue to test during any administration. The specific testing dates each year can be found on the student assessment testing calendar at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/calendars/>.

26. What types of substitute assessments can students use to fulfill their STAAR graduation requirements?

To satisfy their testing requirements for graduation, students can use several assessments (e.g., SAT and ACT) in place of STAAR EOC assessments. Details on which assessments can currently be used for this purpose are provided in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§101.4002](#).

27. Can a student use more than one substitute assessment to fulfill their graduation requirements?

Yes. A student can use a qualifying score on a substitute assessment to satisfy his or her testing requirement for an EOC assessment as indicated in each cell in the substitute assessment chart. For example, a student could use a qualifying score on SAT mathematics to substitute for STAAR Algebra I and a qualifying score on SAT reading and writing to substitute for either STAAR English I or STAAR English II, but not both. The only time a student can use a single score on a substitute assessment to meet the testing requirement for more than one EOC assessment is when a student has taken the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment at the end of a college preparatory class. If the student meets the qualifying score for reading and writing, he or she can use that score to substitute for both STAAR English I and English II. See TAC [§101.4002\(d\)\(1\)](#).

28. Can a student use a score from a substitute assessment that he or she earned in middle school to fulfill their graduation requirements?

Yes. A middle school student can use a qualifying score on a substitute assessment to satisfy his or her testing requirement for an EOC assessment as indicated in each cell in the substitute assessment chart. For example, a grade 8 student who is administered the PSAT 8 can choose to use a qualifying math and/or reading and writing score to substitute for an EOC assessment when they are enrolled in Algebra I and/or English I instead of taking the corresponding STAAR EOC assessments.

29. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through distance learning programs, correspondence courses, or dual credit courses?

Students who earn Texas high school course credit through distance learning programs (e.g., the Texas Virtual School Network), correspondence courses, or dual credit courses are required to pass all five STAAR EOC assessments to fulfill their testing requirements for graduation.

30. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses?

Students who earn Texas high school course credit through an AP or IB course that is substituting for a TEKS-based course required for graduation (e.g., AP biology instead of TEKS-based biology) are required to take the STAAR EOC assessment. However, if the student takes the AP or IB test, the student may be able to use the AP or IB test score instead of the STAAR EOC assessment score to fulfill his or her testing requirement for graduation. See the substitute assessments question above.

31. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through credit by examination (CBE)?

If a student uses CBE to gain credit for a course in which he or she has had some prior instruction, the student is required to pass the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her STAAR graduation requirement. However, if a student uses CBE to gain credit for a course in which he or she has had no prior instruction, the student is not required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her STAAR graduation requirement. More information about CBE can be found in TAC [§74.24](#) or by calling the Curriculum Division of TEA at 512-463-9581.

32. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for a student who moves into a Texas public high school from out of state or country or from a private school?

A student whose high school credit has been earned out of state or country or from a private school for a course in which there is a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment

- is not required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirement if the Texas school district accepts the course credit from the school in which the course was taken, or
- is required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirement when they take the corresponding course if the Texas school district does not accept the course credit.

33. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who completed a high school course prior to spring 2012, the first high-stakes administration of STAAR EOC assessments?

A student who has completed a high school course prior to spring 2012 (e.g., a grade 8 student who completed Algebra I during the 2010–2011 school year or a grade 9 student who completed English I in the first semester of the 2011–2012 school year) is not required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirement.

34. If a student fails the course but passes the STAAR EOC assessment, is the student required to retest when he or she retakes the course?

No. Once a student passes (Approaches Grade Level) a STAAR EOC assessment, the student has fulfilled that part of his or her graduation requirement and cannot retest.

35. If a student fails the course and fails the STAAR EOC assessment, does the student have to wait until he or she completes the entire course before retesting?

No. The student has already received instruction in the entire course and is eligible to retest during any future administration. The district must ensure that the student is provided an opportunity to test to meet his or her graduation requirement each time the assessment is offered.

36. How will STAAR EOC assessments be used to satisfy the requirements of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI)?

For a student who Meets Grade Level or Masters Grade Level on the STAAR Algebra II and/or English III assessments, TEC [§51.338\(d\)](#) provides an exemption from TSI requirements in the corresponding content area. Note that the STAAR Algebra II and English III assessments are administered on a voluntary basis. For more information about TSI, visit the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website at <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/>.

37. Which STAAR EOC assessments can be used to establish dual credit eligibility?

A student's performance on the STAAR Algebra I, Algebra II, and/or English II assessments can determine his or her eligibility for enrollment in dual credit courses in the corresponding content area. More information about dual credit eligibility can be found in TAC [§4.85](#) or by calling the Curriculum Division of TEA at 512-463-9581.

STAAR Test Administration

38. When are the STAAR tests administered?

STAAR assessments are administered in the spring (April and May). Additional testing opportunities are available for SSI and EOC assessments in the summer (June) and for EOC assessments in the fall (December).

- Beginning of April: STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing, grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading, English I, and English II
- Beginning of May: STAAR Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History

- Middle of May: STAAR grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 mathematics and reading, grades 5 and 8 science, grade 8 social studies, and retests for STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading
- End of June: retests for STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading and STAAR Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History
- Beginning of December: STAAR Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History

The specific testing dates each year can be found on the student assessment testing calendar at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/calendars/>.

39. How many days are students taking STAAR assessments?

In general, students spend the following number of days testing during each school year: two days in grades 3 and 6; three days in grades 4, 5, and 7; and four days in 8. Due to SSI promotion requirements, some students in grades 5 and 8 may need additional testing days for retests.

The number of testing days for high school students is dependent on when students take specific high school courses and whether students need to retest. In most cases, a high school student would have five days of testing throughout his or her high school years—three in grade 9, one in grade 10, and one in grade 11.

40. Which STAAR assessments are offered on paper and which are offered online?

The general STAAR is administered in both paper and online formats for all grades/subjects and courses. STAAR Spanish at grades 3–5 is available only on paper but will be available online beginning in spring 2019.

41. What type of flexibility do districts have in scheduling the STAAR assessments?

The STAAR grades 3–8 assessments should be administered on the state-assigned days listed on the student assessment testing calendar. TEA recognizes that districts sometimes have conflicts and are unable to administer tests on the dates scheduled. If a conflict arises, a district may adjust the testing dates, except for grades 4 and 7 writing, as long as they administer all the scheduled assessments within the testing week.

Most STAAR EOC assessments are offered during a testing window. For Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History, districts have the flexibility to schedule testing sessions anytime within the testing window. However, districts must administer English I and English II on the state-assigned days listed on the student assessment testing calendar.

42. What if a student is not able to test on the scheduled date?

STAAR assessments must be administered during specific testing weeks. If a student is not able to test on the scheduled test date, the district should provide an opportunity for the student to test later in the testing week. This is especially important for assessments that are required for grade promotion or for high school graduation.

43. Is there a time limit for STAAR assessments?

Yes. All STAAR assessments have a four-hour time limit except for English I, English II, and English III, which have a five-hour time limit. The time limits were established as the maximum amount of time allowed to complete the assessment, although most students should be able to complete the assessment in less time. Accommodations for extra time within the same day or an extra day are available for students who meet eligibility criteria.

Once a student has completed the test, he or she may be allowed to leave the testing room or may be provided an instructional activity. More information can be found in the STAAR Policies and Procedures document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/>.

44. Are breaks allowed during STAAR assessments?

Yes. Students can take breaks during the administration of STAAR assessments. Some breaks, such as water and snack breaks, are included in the time limit. Other breaks, such as those needed for lunch or medical reasons, may require the test administrator to stop the testing time and restart the time clock when testing resumes. More information can be found in the STAAR Policies and Procedures document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/>.

45. Are special test administration procedures or materials allowed on STAAR?

Yes. During the administration of STAAR assessments, certain accessibility features may be provided to students based on their needs. In general, these procedures and materials are available to any student who regularly benefits from the use of them. In addition, accommodations, or designated supports, are changes to assessment materials, procedures, or techniques that allow eligible students to participate more meaningfully in testing activities. Some accommodations, or designated supports, are available as embedded supports in the STAAR Online Testing Platform. Information regarding accessibility features and allowable designated supports for STAAR can be found on the Accommodation Resources webpage at <https://tea.texas.gov/accommodations/>.

STAAR Performance and Reporting

46. How is student performance described on STAAR?

There are three cut scores on STAAR assessments, which separate student performance into four categories. For the STAAR program, the labels for the performance categories are

- Masters Grade Level (passing)
- Meets Grade Level (passing)
- Approaches Grade Level (passing)
- Did Not Meet Grade Level (not passing)

47. What is the passing standard for STAAR?

The passing standard for STAAR assessments is Approaches Grade Level. A student who scores at or above this level has passed the STAAR test, but a student who scores within Did Not Meet Grade Level has not passed. More information about the passing standards, including a separate questions and answers document, is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

48. Why are the STAAR performance standards presented as scale scores rather than raw scores?

As with many standardized assessments, the STAAR program uses scale scores to communicate information about performance levels. A scale score is a more exact way to determine subject mastery than a raw score because a scale score considers the difficulty level of each individual test question in addition to whether a student answers the question correctly. The basic score on any test is the raw score, which is the number of questions answered correctly regardless of difficulty level. A scale score is a conversion of the raw score onto a scale that takes into account the difficulty level of the specific set of questions used on a test in any given year. A scale-score system allows every test to have exactly the same passing standard, or level of performance required, even though the raw score needed to pass the test may vary slightly from year to year.

When building new tests each year, it is not always possible to select questions that have exactly the same difficulty as questions on previous versions of the test. Maintaining the passing standard (but not necessarily the raw score needed to pass) from year to year is important to ensure that students passing in one year will have exactly the same rigorous testing requirements as students passing in a subsequent year, even though the test questions differ from one year to the next.

49. Why isn't the passing standard for each STAAR assessment set at 70% of the questions correct?

While many people believe a raw score that is equal to 70% of the questions correct should qualify as passing, a score that is simply the percentage of questions correct does not take into account the difficulty of the questions on a test. A student who gets 50% of the questions correct on a very difficult test will likely demonstrate a higher mastery of subject matter or course content than a student who gets 90% of the questions correct on a very easy test. For example, you are given a ten-question test on calculus, and you answer 7 out of 10 questions correctly, which equals 70%. Another person is given a ten-question test on multiplication and answers 7 out of 10 questions correctly, which equals 70%. Although you both answer 70% of the questions correctly, it would not be accurate to say that both of you demonstrate the same level of mathematics proficiency. Your test covered more difficult content—calculus as compared to multiplication.

Scale scores are a better indicator of a student's mastery of test content. While raw scores on STAAR will be available to students, parents, and teachers, it is important to understand that answering fewer than 70% of the questions correctly on a test does not necessarily indicate poor performance either in terms of scale scores or mastery of the assessed content.

50. Does the passing standard for STAAR change each year?

No. The passing standards (scale scores) do not change. However, the raw scores associated with the scale scores may shift slightly from one administration to the next due to differences in the test questions. This minor shift (either up or down a point or two) in raw scores can be seen in the [STAAR Raw Score Conversion Tables](#). These tables are produced each year after the assessments are administered.

51. Which STAAR assessments are reported on a vertical scale?

Under TEC [§39.036](#), TEA is required to develop a vertical scale for assessing student performance in grades 3–8 mathematics and reading. A vertical scale allows for a student's scale scores to be compared across different grades for the same subject area. The changes in the student's vertical scale scores indicate the academic progress the student has made over time. The assessments for which vertical scales were developed are STAAR grades 3–8 mathematics and reading in English and STAAR Spanish grades 3–5 mathematics and reading.

In contrast, horizontal scale scores were developed for STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing, grades 5 and 8 science, grade 8 social studies, and EOC assessments. A horizontal scale converts a raw score onto a scale that allows for comparisons across test forms from year to year for a specific assessment. Similar to vertical scales, horizontal scales maintain the passing standard that students are required to meet. However, unlike vertical scales, horizontal scale scores cannot be compared to scale scores for other grades in the same subject area.

52. Is there a progress measure for STAAR?

Yes. The STAAR progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or progress a student has made in a subject. For STAAR, progress is measured as a student's gain score, the difference between the scale score a student achieved in the previous year and the

scale score a student achieved in the current year. Individual student progress is categorized as Accelerated, Expected, or Limited progress. For more information about the STAAR progress measure, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the STAAR Progress Measures webpage at <https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/progressmeasure/>.

53. What reports are provided for the STAAR program?

TEA provides STAAR Report Cards, Confidential Student Labels, Confidential Campus Rosters, Campus and District Summary Reports, Combined Summary Reports (grades 3–5 only), Cumulative Summary Reports (grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading only), and data files to districts. Districts are required to report individual results to parents according to the timeline indicated on the calendar of events. Districts are also required to provide overall assessment results to their local school board at a regularly scheduled meeting.

54. Does TEA provide additional information about the test questions on STAAR?

Yes. After the first spring administration of each STAAR assessment, TEA provides the TEKS student expectations assessed in each test question. In science and social studies, process standards are also provided if the test question incorporates a process skill. This information can be found on the STAAR Student Expectations Tested webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/exptested/>.

When STAAR assessments are released to the public, TEA also provides Confidential Student Item Analysis Reports. These reports provide detailed student-level results for each assessment, including the answer choice the student selected and the correct answer for each question. In addition, item rationales are provided that explain why the answer is correct and why students might have chosen each of the incorrect answers.

55. What reporting data are available to students and their parents?

A student portal is available to students and their parents through the Texas Assessment Management System. A student can see his or her recent test results and, in many cases, the student can see the test question, his or her answer choice, and a reason why the answer choice is correct or incorrect. The student is also able to see his or her test results from previous administrations. Each student is provided a unique access code to log in to the data portal. The access code is found at the bottom of the student's STAAR Report Card. The student portal can be accessed at <https://www.texasassessment.com/>, and there is no charge for students or parents to use it.

56. What reporting data are available to campuses and districts?

Campus and district personnel have access to an analytic reporting tool that allows users to analyze results to compare current and historical data. Users can perform comparisons of campuses to campuses, campuses to districts, districts to districts, and districts to the state. Campus and district personnel are also able to organize the data to examine different demographic and program information groups, enabling access to cross-section analyses of the assessment data. The analytic reporting tool is available at <https://www.texasassessment.com/>, and there is no charge for district personnel to use them.

Accessibility on State Assessments

57. What is accessibility?

Accessibility means ensuring that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response mode of the test. Assessments should allow all test takers to

demonstrate their knowledge of the content being tested without the format of the assessment, non-tested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers. To meet this goal, TEA has implemented various features and supports that can be made available on paper and online tests to students who use the same or similar supports during classroom instruction. More information can be found on the Accommodation Resources webpage at <https://tea.texas.gov/accommodations/>.

58. What are the different levels of accessibility available for state assessments?

Accessibility falls into three categories: accessibility features, locally-approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval. It is important to refer to the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources webpage (<https://tea.texas.gov/accommodations/>) for comprehensive information about the procedures and materials within each of these categories as well as their specific eligibility criteria.

59. What are accessibility features?

Accessibility features are procedures and materials available to any student who regularly benefits from their use during instruction. Accessibility features may be provided to students based on their needs; however, a student cannot be required to use them during testing. Testing coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials. In some cases, a student may need to complete the test in an individual setting to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the test are maintained.

60. What are locally-approved designated supports?

Locally-approved designated supports include accommodations that may be made available to students who meet eligibility criteria. The decision to use a designated support during a state assessment should be made on an individual student basis and take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the support during classroom instruction and classroom testing. The appropriate team of people at the campus level determines eligibility as indicated in each policy document. The twelve locally-approved designated supports available for state assessments are

- Basic Transcribing
- Braille
- Calculation Aids
- Content and Language Supports
- Extra Time
- Individualized Structured Reminders
- Large Print
- Manipulating Test Materials
- Mathematics Manipulatives
- Oral/Signed Administration
- Spelling Assistance
- Supplemental Aids

61. What are designated supports requiring TEA approval?

These are designated supports that require the submission of an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. The appropriate team of people at the campus level, as indicated in each policy document, determines whether the student meets all the specific eligibility criteria and, if so, submits an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. Accommodation Request Forms must be received by TEA according to the deadlines posted on the Accommodations Resources webpage.

The request must be approved by TEA before a student can use the designated support on the state assessment.

62. Which students can receive designated supports?

Designated supports are intended for students who are approved to use them based on the decisions of the appropriate committee (e.g., admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee, 504 committee, language proficiency assessment committee [LPAC], response to intervention [RtI] committee, or student assistance team). When campus-level committees (including RtI committees and student assistance teams) make decisions, they should be addressing a student's consistent academic struggle in a specific area. For example, supplemental aids are not the same as common study aids used by students who are not struggling academically.

63. Can a student receive multiple designated supports?

Yes. Students may be eligible for multiple designated supports at one time. For example, a student may be eligible for an oral administration, content and language supports, and extra time. The decision to use a designated support or multiple supports during a state assessment should be made on an individual student basis and take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the support(s) during classroom instruction and classroom testing. The appropriate team of people at the campus level determines eligibility as indicated in each policy document.

64. What does the following student eligibility criteria mean: routinely, independently, and effectively uses it [designated support] during classroom instruction and classroom testing?

Routinely used does not mean that the designated support must be used every day during instruction. Routine use of a designated support means that the student has used the support often enough during classroom instruction and testing that he or she is able to use it independently during the state assessment. Independent use is applicable to some designated supports (e.g., calculation aids) but not to others (e.g., oral administration). In addition, the support has been proven to be effective in meeting the student's specific needs, as evidenced by student scores or teacher observations with and without the use of the designated support.

65. Can accessibility features be made available for paper and online administrations of STAAR?

Yes. Accessibility features are intended to make STAAR accessible to students for a variety of reasons, regardless of the mode of testing. In addition, a student may take STAAR on paper for one subject and online for another, depending on appropriateness and/or accessibility.

66. Which mode of testing (paper versus online) is more appropriate if a student requires specific designated supports?

When making decisions based upon individual needs, due consideration should be given to the mode in which an allowed or approved designated support is offered. Designated supports may require a student to take STAAR in a certain mode. For example, if a student requires a braille assessment, then a paper form must be used since braille assessments are not available online. A student eligible for content and language supports must take STAAR online, as these supports are embedded in the online testing system. In contrast, decisions about supplemental aids can be based solely on individual need since this support is provided locally and is not part of the assessment mode.

67. What is text-to-speech (TTS)?

The TTS tool is one of the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) options available in the Assessment Management System for students who meet the eligibility criteria for an oral administration. TTS is a technology that converts digital text into spoken voice output. The TTS tool allows a student to independently select and change his or her level of reading support during the test administration. This embedded support will only appear as an option in sections of the test for which it is allowed if it has been activated in the Assessment Management System.

68. Is TTS available for all state assessments?

No. TTS is only available as an embedded support for STAAR assessments administered online.

- STAAR Spanish is only administered on paper, therefore TTS is not available. However, TEA is in the planning stages for offering STAAR Spanish online with TTS as embedded support.
- STAAR Alternate 2 is only administered on paper, therefore TTS is not available.
- Although the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is administered online, TTS is not available. Oral administration (via TTS) is not an allowable designated support for the TELPAS reading assessments. For the TELPAS listening and speaking assessments, text is read aloud to all students as part of the test administration.

69. What parts of each STAAR test are read aloud by TTS?

- TTS will read aloud the entire mathematics, science, and social studies assessments.
- TTS will read aloud all test questions and answer choices on reading assessments, including the reading section of English I, English II, and English III. TTS will not read aloud the reading selections as indicated by a Do Not Read icon.
- TTS will read aloud revising selections, revising test questions and answer choices, and the prompt on writing assessments, including the writing section of English I, English II, and English III. TTS will not read aloud editing selections or editing test questions and answer choices as indicated by a Do Not Read icon.

**70. Why is oral administration not allowed on reading selections?**

Reading aloud the STAAR reading selections makes the assessment an inappropriate and invalid measure, since no determination about a student's reading comprehension can be made. The purpose of the STAAR reading assessment is to assess the degree to which students understand what they read. STAAR is not intended to be a measure of listening comprehension, which is distinctly different from reading comprehension. For this reason, students are required to read the selections independently on STAAR reading tests.

71. What levels of reading support does TTS offer on STAAR?

TTS provides the student access to three levels of reading support.

- The student can choose to have the questions and answer choices read aloud in their entirety.
- The student can select a specific group of text to be read aloud.
- The student can select individual words to be read aloud.

72. What is the difference between an oral administration on paper versus online?

An oral administration of a STAAR paper test is provided by the test administrator, while an oral administration of a STAAR online test is provided using TTS. For an oral administration of a STAAR paper test, the appropriate team of people at the campus level must determine eligibility and document the level of reading support a student needs in the appropriate student paperwork. This ensures that the test administrator provides the type of oral administration that meets the

student's individual needs. For an oral administration of a STAAR online test, a determination should not be made about the level of reading support a student needs since the student independently selects his or her level of reading support during the test administration.

In addition, the online testing system can distinguish various parts of the writing test, and therefore make TTS available for the revising selections, questions, and answer choices. A test administrator may not look at the writing test to distinguish revising selections from editing selections. Therefore, the test administrator may not read aloud the revising or editing parts of a writing test during an oral administration of a STAAR paper test.

73. Can a student take STAAR online but have an oral administration by the test administrator instead of using TTS?

No. Students should be provided opportunities to complete the STAAR online tutorial, as well as the practice tests, prior to test administration. These resources allow students to become familiar with the functionality of the TTS tool and online tests. The tutorial and practice tests are available through the STAAR Online Testing Platform, which operates through a secure browser that must be installed on a desktop or tablet. More information is available at the following link: [STAAR Online Testing Platform](#).

It is important to note that students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and eligible for an oral administration (i.e., signed administration) may take STAAR online. However, since these students are unable to access the TTS functionality, a signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud.

74. What is the spelling assistance tool?

The spelling assistance tool is one of the PNP options available in the Assessment Management System for students who meet eligibility criteria for spelling assistance. This embedded support is only available on the written composition portion of STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, and English II. Spelling assistance will only appear as an option in sections of the test for which it is allowed if it has been activated in the Assessment Management System.

Although this tool is available for students who meet eligibility criteria for the designated support of spelling assistance, it should only be provided to students who use this type of assistance during classroom instruction and testing. For instance, if an eligible student uses a frequently misspelled word list in the classroom, then the PNP option for spelling assistance would not be activated. It is important to note that students may use any allowable examples or types of spelling assistance listed in the designated support policy document in lieu of or in addition to this online embedded support.

If using the spelling assistance tool, the student should be provided opportunities to complete the STAAR online tutorial, as well as the practice mini-test, prior to test administration. These resources allow students to become familiar with the functionality of the spelling assistance tool and online tests. The tutorial and practice tests are available in the STAAR Online Testing Platform, which operates through a secure browser that must be installed on a desktop or tablet. More information is available at the following link: [STAAR Online Testing Platform](#).

Assessments for Special Populations

75. What STAAR testing options are available for English learners (ELs)?

Accessibility features and designated supports for STAAR are available for eligible ELs in grades 3–8 and high school, and Spanish versions of STAAR are available for eligible students in grades 3–5. LPACs must meet annually to make and document state assessment decisions for ELs on an individual student basis. More information about the LPAC decision-making process is available on the LPAC Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/lpac/>.

76. What is STAAR Spanish?

STAAR Spanish is designed to measure the knowledge and skills of students who receive academic instruction in Spanish and can best demonstrate their learning through a Spanish language assessment. The mathematics and science questions are translated from English and adapted as necessary to ensure cultural and linguistic accessibility. Passages and questions for the reading and writing tests are developed uniquely in the Spanish language so that the Spanish language arts curriculum can be assessed in a more authentic and meaningful manner.

The English and Spanish versions of STAAR have the same test blueprint and assess the same TEKS student expectations. These documents can be found on the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

77. What tests are available for STAAR Spanish?

STAAR Spanish is available in mathematics and reading at grades 3–5, writing at grade 4, and science at grade 5 for students whom an assessment in Spanish provides the most appropriate measure of academic progress.

78. What is the passing standard for STAAR Spanish?

Approaches Grade Level is the passing standard for all STAAR Spanish assessments. A student who scores at or above this level has passed the test, but a student who scores within Did Not Meet Grade Level has not passed. More specific information about the passing standards is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

79. Are ELs who are enrolled in an English I or English II for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL I or ESOL II) course required to take the STAAR English I or English II assessments?

Yes. ELs enrolled in ESOL I or ESOL II are required to take the corresponding STAAR English I or English II assessment. However, in accordance with TAC [§101.1007](#), eligible ELs only need to meet the passing standard on English II to fulfill their STAAR graduation requirements in English.

80. What is the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)?

TELPAS assesses the progress that ELs in kindergarten through grade 12 make in acquiring the English language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS measures English language acquisition in alignment with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) that are part of the TEKS, the state-mandated curriculum. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires states to conduct annual statewide English language proficient assessments. More specific information is available on the TELPAS Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>.

81. Who takes TELPAS?

All ELs in kindergarten through grade 12 are required to participate in TELPAS, including students classified as limited English proficient (LEP) in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) whose parents have declined bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) program services. ELs are required to take TELPAS annually until they meet bilingual/ESL program exit criteria and are reclassified as non-LEP. Information about the state's exit criteria can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/bilingual/esl/education/>.

There are rare circumstances in which a student may not be required to participate in one or more TELPAS language domains. More specific information can be found in the [District and Campus Coordinator Manual \(DCCM\)](#).

82. How are the TELPAS language domains assessed?

TELPAS includes holistically rated observational assessments of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for kindergarten and grade 1. For grades 2 through 12, TELPAS includes online multiple-choice tests for listening and speaking and for reading, as well as holistically rated student writing collections. The TELPAS listening and speaking test and reading test are designed specifically for students who do not speak English as their first language. These tests consist of questions that span a full range of English reading, listening, and speaking ability. While the beginning level reading selections and questions include very common English words and many pictures, the advanced and advanced high reading selections and questions require a near-native understanding of English. Once students reach a proficiency rating of advanced high on the test, they have little difficulty understanding what they read in class and on state assessments of academic skills. The results in listening, speaking, and writing indicate how well students understand and use English during academic instruction.

83. How is student performance described for TELPAS?

TELPAS reports student performance in terms of four English language proficiency levels—beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high—to show the progress students make in learning English from year to year. For students to reach their full academic potential, it is important for them to make progress in learning English. For more information about the TELPAS performance standards, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the TELPAS Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>.

84. What testing options are available for students with disabilities?

Most students with disabilities will take STAAR with or without allowable accommodations, or designated supports. The appropriate committee at the campus level is responsible for deciding if a student meets eligibility to receive a designated support according to the policy documents found on the Accommodation Resources webpage.

Students receiving special education services who have significant cognitive disabilities and access the grade-level TEKS through prerequisite skills may meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. Education decisions for students who receive special education services are made by the ARD committee, including which assessment is most appropriate for the student. More information is available on the Assessments for Students with Disabilities webpage at <https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/SWD/>.

85. Can an ARD committee decide that retesting is not required after a student has taken the first administration of an assessment?

Yes. The ARD committee can decide that a student does not need to take a STAAR retest for any state assessment where retests are offered. Retest opportunities are not available for STAAR Alternate 2.

86. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students receiving special education services who take STAAR EOC assessments?

The ARD committee makes educational decisions for a student with a disability, including decisions related to state assessments and decisions related to graduation requirements as described in TAC [§89.1070](#). For more information about the graduation requirements for students receiving special education services, call the Special Education Division at TEA at 512-463-9414.

87. What is STAAR Alternate 2?

STAAR Alternate 2 is an assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards and is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities receiving special education services. It is only available for students who meet participation requirements. STAAR Alternate 2 has been developed to meet federal requirements of both ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ESEA requires that all students be assessed in specific grades and subjects throughout their academic career, whereas IDEA requires that students with disabilities have access to the same standards as their non-disabled peers and be included in statewide assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 is a standardized item-based assessment administered to students in a one-on-one setting. Participating students will respond to questions provided in a test booklet, and answers will be submitted by the test administrator in an online form. More specific information, including the participation requirements, is available on the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt/>.

88. What tests are available for STAAR Alternate 2?

STAAR Alternate 2 is available in the same grades/subjects and courses as the general STAAR assessments.

- Grades 3–8 mathematics
- Grades 3–8 reading
- Grades 4 and 7 writing
- Grades 5 and 8 science
- Grade 8 social studies
- Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History

89. Can a student be assessed with STAAR Alternate 2 in one subject and with STAAR in another subject?

No. If an ARD committee determines that a student meets participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, then he or she will be assessed in all subjects for the enrolled grade.

90. Can a person who is not employed by the district but is required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) be present during testing?

Yes. Districts should develop local policies to document the potential exposure of non-district employees, such as a nurse or therapist, to secure test materials. The district must make the non-district employees aware that they have access to secure test materials. Therefore, the security

and confidentiality of the test materials must be maintained as described in the [District and Campus Coordinator Manual \(DCCM\)](#).

91. Can STAAR Alternate 2 be administered in a location where there is active video monitoring?

Yes. STAAR Alternate 2 can be administered in a location where video is being recorded, whether it is in a classroom or a home setting. The district must make the parents, guardians, healthcare providers and anyone else who may have access to view the videotape aware that it includes secure test materials. Therefore, the security and confidentiality of the test materials must be maintained as described in the [District and Campus Coordinator Manual \(DCCM\)](#).

92. How should the STAAR Alternate 2 image cards be used during testing?

For STAAR Alternate 2, each student kit includes a set of image cards, a student booklet, and a test administrator manual. The image cards should be used in conjunction with the student booklet and should not take the place of the student booklet. The image cards are intended to reduce teacher preparation of testing materials and can be used when similar accommodations (e.g., pair images with text or provide images one at a time) are required. The image cards should be returned with other nonscorable materials.

93. How is student performance described on STAAR Alternate 2?

There are two cut scores on STAAR Alternate 2 assessments, which separate student performance into three categories.

- Level III: Accomplished Academic Performance
- Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Level I: Developing Academic Performance

94. Is there a progress measure for STAAR Alternate 2?

Yes. The STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or growth a student has made from year to year. For STAAR Alternate 2, progress is measured based on a student's stage change from the prior year to the current year. Stage change is determined by 1) classifying the student's scores from the previous school year and the current school year in terms of the stage of performance achieved, and then 2) comparing the stages from year to year. Student progress is then categorized as Exceeded, Met, or Did Not Meet.