

**State of Texas Assessments of
Academic Readiness (STAAR)
Audit**

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Date: September 16, 2021

To: Board of Trustees
Dr. Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent

From: Robert Rubel, MBA, CPA, CIA, CISA,
Chief Internal Audit Officer

Subject: State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Audit

Executive Summary

In accordance with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 Audit Plan, the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) completed the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Audit. The audit found the Evaluation and Assessment (E&A) Department is in compliance with training, test administration, and test security procedures at the campus level for the 2020-2021 school year.

There were no findings noted. There were some minor exceptions where individuals were not in compliance with District requirements; however, there was no indication test administration overall was not meeting District requirements at the campuses.

Background

E&A provides program evaluation results, student data, and implements locally developed and state-mandated assessments to provide information utilized by District decision makers. Within the E&A Department is the Assessment section (Assessment).

Assessment coordinates the administration, distribution, and processing of all state exams such as STAAR 3-8, STAAR EOC (End-of-Course), STAAR Alternate 2, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). Assessment is also responsible for test security. In this capacity, Assessment trains campus testing coordinators, monitors test administrations, and reports testing irregularities to the proper authorities (TEA, Human Capital Management, Professional Standards Office, and OIA).

Assessment's goal is to provide reliable and valid assessments, which will enable teachers to obtain information to inform instructional improvement and student learning. Assessment supervises the creation, distribution, training, scanning, scoring, and data reporting of valid and reliable assessments aligned to the District's curriculum or the state's curriculum standards called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Assessment's main work is to provide Assessments of Course Performance (ACPs) to serve as end-of-semester tests for schools. Assessment also creates the common assessments for STAAR grades and subjects for six weeks 1, 2, 4, and 5.

The test coordinator (coordinator) and test administrator (administrator) training are provided by the E&A Department. District policies and procedures are discussed and distributed at the training sessions. The coordinator is responsible for training their campus assistants. Each coordinator may develop their own campus reference manual for standardized testing. The coordinator assigns a test room to each

administrator; a large campus may have as many as 50 test rooms with an administrator assigned to each one. The administrator is responsible for classroom administration of the exams.

The majority of STAAR testing conducted this year was performed online. The only paper testing was for Special Education and students with 504 or other accommodations and James Madison High School, which conducted all testing via paper. STAAR testing occurred throughout the months of April and May 2021. Schools/campuses determined their testing schedule in order to accommodate and comply with COVID protocols.

Scope

The scope of this audit included STAAR testing completed during May 2021 (School Year 2020-2021). OIA performed observations of coordinator training, security over test materials on test days, and actual test administration procedures on test days from a judgmental sample of 11 out of a population of 235 schools (4.6% of total schools). OIA reduced the sample size of testing this fiscal year to accommodate and comply with District COVID protocols.

Objective

The objective of this audit is to determine if staff are following district standardized testing procedures. This included:

- Training of coordinators and administrators
- Security over test materials on test days
- Test administration on test days

Methodology

Our methodology included reviews of departmental training procedures, security requirements, interviews with selected staff, and on-campus observation of test day administration.

OIA met with the E&A Assistant Superintendent and the Assessment Executive Director to gain an understanding of the 2020-2021 school year campus testing procedures. OIA staff assigned to this audit attended district-wide mandatory coordinator training to obtain the training information that was discussed and distributed. Training included the TEA required areas for proper test administration.

Eleven auditors were assigned to 11 high schools to observe between May 6th and May 26th the 2020-2021 STAAR test administration. Auditors recorded their observations on the STAAR Observation Checklist 2021.

Audit Findings and Recommendations

Observation

No findings were identified in our testing. E&A's processes were found to be operating in compliance with requirements.

Testing shows the District has established effective test administrative procedures. OIA determined

campus STAAR test administration complied with the following District requirements:

- Training
- Security over test materials
- Test day administration

However, auditors noted some improvements could be made to ensure compliance of test administration. A summary of low risk exceptions by individuals, which were not considered process issues, were noted and the details discussed in the exit conference with the Assessment Executive Director. Examples of exceptions by individuals include:

- Two campuses did not have documented training for one individual at each campus
- Two campuses did not have backpacks collected prior to testing
- One campus did not have seating charts posted, and one campus did not have times posted on the seating charts

Specific individuals can be coached for seating chart requirements, collection of unauthorized material, and ensuring all administrators are trained.

Acknowledgement:

An exit conference was held on Thursday, August 24, 2021, with the Assessment Executive Director. The discussion included the results of the audit and the observation made by the auditors. There were no findings or recommendations made in the audit; therefore, a written response by management was not necessary.

Conclusion

The E&A Department has established effective test administrative procedures for the District. The auditor determined on-campus test administration is in compliance with District requirements for training, test administration, and test security procedures at the campus level for the 2020-2021 school year.

We would like to thank the E&A Department staff for the cooperation and courtesy extended to us during the audit.

The audit was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*. Those standards require Internal Audit to plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Internal Audit believes the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

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