

## Questions and Answers: STAAR Modified

(Compiled from presentations during the 2011–2012 school year)

### General

1. ***If a student takes STAAR Modified in high school but is dismissed from special education before graduation, will the student now have to take STAAR?***

Yes. The student is now held to the same requirements as all other general education students.

2. ***Can the ARD committee recommend assessments and/or accommodations, regardless of TEA policy?***

No, the ARD committee's statewide assessment and accommodation decisions must be within the parameters set forth in federal and state requirements and guidance. It is a testing violation to provide a nonallowable accommodation during a statewide assessment, and could result in the student's test results being invalidated.

### Participation Requirements

1. ***Must the ARD committee address the STAAR Modified Participation Requirements for all special education students?***

No. The ARD committee should only address the STAAR Modified Participation Requirements for students for whom a modified assessment is being considered.

2. ***Will all students in grades 3–9 who took TAKS (Accommodated) last year take STAAR Modified this year?***

Probably not. If TAKS (Accommodated) was determined to be the most appropriate assessment for the student last year, the student should have been receiving instruction in the grade-level TEKS, with or without accommodations. If that student is still receiving this type of instruction, then he/she would take STAAR. The ARD committee may review the STAAR Modified Participation Requirements if the student is now receiving modified instruction and STAAR Modified is being considered.

3. ***Is the STAAR Modified science assessment appropriate for a student when the IEP only addresses reading skills, with no goals specific to science?***

No. The ARD committee is required to confirm that the "student's IEP contains standards-based (TEKS-based) goals indicating the modified content the student required in order to access the grade-level or course curriculum."

### PEIMS Numbers

1. ***Are districts required to use the new PEIMS codes for modified courses for high school students taking TAKS?***

Yes. Direct all specific PEIMS questions to TEA's Curriculum Division at 512.463.9581 or curriculum@tea.state.tx.us.

**2. *How do I use the new PEIMS codes?***

Use the new codes for ALL students receiving special education services and completing a course with modified or alternate content. This includes those students who are in grades 10, 11, and 12 who are graduating under the TAKS requirements. For more information see the PEIMS Data Standards 2011-2012 Addendum at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2147497193>.

**Modification Guidelines**

**1. *What is the reading level of STAAR Modified reading selections?***

The decoding level of STAAR Modified reading selections is simplified (e.g., sentence structure, vocabulary). This does not apply to published selections. Readability programs have not been applied to reading selections because they are often inconsistent. TEA bases the appropriateness of each selection's readability on the expertise of TEA staff who are former teachers, as well as educators who participate in the item review meetings.

**2. *Will poetry and drama selections be separated into parts on STAAR Modified reading tests?***

Poetry selections will NOT be separated into parts (i.e., "chunked"). Drama selections WILL be separated into parts, usually according to the number of scenes.

**3. *For STAAR Modified, will test administrators be allowed to read any word in the reading selection that they already read in the pre-reading text, like in TAKS-Modified?***

No. Test administrators MAY NOT READ ANYTHING IN THE READING SELECTION. The test administrator must read aloud the pre-reading text and may read the test questions and answer choices if the student is eligible for an oral administration.

**4. *The modification guidelines for STAAR Modified Algebra I and Geometry mention directing student attention to the ruler, but there is no ruler on the reference materials.***

This is an error. There is no ruler on the state-supplied reference materials for Algebra I and Geometry. Measurement is assessed in ways that do not require the use of a ruler. The modification guidelines will be revised for the 2012–2013 school year.

**Test Administration**

**1. *Can students taking STAAR and STAAR Modified be grouped together on test day?***

STAAR manuals are grouped for grades 3–5, grades 6–8, and for EOC, so students taking mathematics, science, and social studies tests CAN be grouped across these grades/courses and testing programs IF they are not receiving optional test administration procedures/materials or accommodations that may be distracting to other students (e.g., Reading Test Aloud to Self, Oral/Signed Administration). However, STAAR Modified reading and writing tests require the test administrator to read aloud parts of the test, so students taking these tests may NOT be grouped with other grades/courses or testing programs.

**2. Will campuses be able to photocopy student responses to the writing prompts after the STAAR or STAAR Modified writing tests?**

No. According to page O-5 in the 2012 District and Campus Coordinator Manual, district personnel are not permitted to retain copies of student compositions and/or short answer responses for any STAAR or STAAR Modified administration. CDs of confidential images of student compositions and short answer responses will no longer be available.

This information also applies to TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), and TAKS–Modified ELA tests. See page 78 of the *2012 Directions for District Coordinators, Campus Coordinators, and Test Administrators — TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS–M, and LAT*.

**3. Can very small classes of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders be grouped together for the math and reading tests in April?**

Refer to question #1 above. If it is determined that students who are using optional test administration procedures/materials or accommodations will not be a distraction to other students, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders can be grouped together for STAAR and STAAR Modified mathematics tests, as well as STAAR reading tests. However, students taking STAAR Modified reading and/or writing tests cannot be grouped with students from any other grade/course or testing program.

**4. The test administration directions are not clear about when and how test administrators should remind students about testing accommodations or optional test administration procedures/materials. How should this be done?**

Prior to opening the directions, a test administrator can remind students about their accommodations or optional test administration procedures/materials. However, the test administrator cannot deviate from the SAY directions.

**5. If a student is eligible to receive an oral administration of the questions and answer choices on a STAAR reading assessment, how does the test administrator indicate this accommodation to the student? The test administration directions for STAAR reading tests don't allow for the test administrator to say that some students can have the questions and answers read aloud. (The STAAR Modified test administration directions provide guidance to test administrators giving an oral administration. Can these additional instructions be considered for future test administration directions for STAAR?)**

Your feedback about the test administrator manuals is greatly appreciated and will be taken into consideration as revisions are made to these manuals for future test administrations.

The test administration directions for STAAR Modified reading assessments provide specific guidance to test administrators giving an oral administration of the questions and answer choices because of the different format of these assessments and because of the population of students taking these assessments. Test administrators read certain parts (i.e., pre-reading text) of STAAR Modified reading tests aloud to students as part of required test administration procedures. Providing the accommodation of an oral administration requires additional guidance so that a test administrator only reads aloud those parts of the assessment that are allowed. In addition, students taking a STAAR Modified reading

assessment are "multiple years below grade level" in reading and will most likely get an oral administration.

Regarding the STAAR reading assessments, there are specific directions in the grades 3–5 and 6–8 test administrator manuals for test administrators giving an oral administration. One of the directives is: "Prior to beginning the test, explain the level of reading support you are allowed to provide during the test based on the documentation in the appropriate paperwork."

**6. Does the clock stop during an administration of STAAR Modified reading tests when the test administrator reads directions between reading selections?**

No. The pre-reading text is not part of the directions in a STAAR Modified reading test. It is the part of the test that is the modification to assist the student while decoding the selection independently.

**7. For students who do not bubble as they go along, can TEA consider allowing the students to work for 4 complete hours and bubble after that time?**

One of the key aspects of the four-hour time limit includes the requirement that students record all responses on their answer documents before the end of the four-hour time period. In the test administration directions, test administrators are instructed to say, "All of your answers must be recorded on your answer document before the four-hour time period ends."

Test administrators should be reminded of the importance of active monitoring to ensure that students mark their responses on their answer documents within the four-hour time limit. If a student tries to submit an answer document without recording answers on it, the test administrator should say, "You have not recorded your answers on the answer document. Please go back and mark your answers on it now." If a test administrator fails to notice that a student has not recorded answers on the answer document, it will be considered a monitoring error, and the student's test will be marked "S" for score.

### **Answer Document**

**1. Can the side of the answer document with the bubbles be photocopied for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to practice marking their answers?**

No. Although a blank answer document is not considered "secure," it does contain information that should not be viewed prior to test day. The side of the answer document with the student identification and demographic information is posted for staff training purposes at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/training/answer-docs>.

**2. What score code is marked if a student only completes one day of a test designed to be administered over two days (e.g., writing, English)?**

This question will be considered by division directors as they discuss future administrations of STAAR.

**3. What are the directions for marking the answer document for students who test above grade level?**

Sample Scenarios:

For a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student taking the 7<sup>th</sup> grade math test:

- On the 6<sup>th</sup> grade answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'O' for Math.
- On the TEST TAKEN INFO box mark the EOC/Above Grade bubble for Math.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> grade answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'S' for Math and 'O' for reading.

For a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student taking both the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade math tests:

- On the 6<sup>th</sup> grade answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'S' for Math.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> grade answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'S' for Math.

For a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student taking an EOC test (e.g., Algebra I):

- On the 6<sup>th</sup> grade answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'O' for Math.
- On the TEST TAKEN INFO box mark the EOC/Above Grade bubble for Math.
- On the Algebra I answer document mark the SCORE CODE field 'S'.

For further clarification, contact TEA's Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 and ask for the Analysis and Reporting team.