

# Transition to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Assessments



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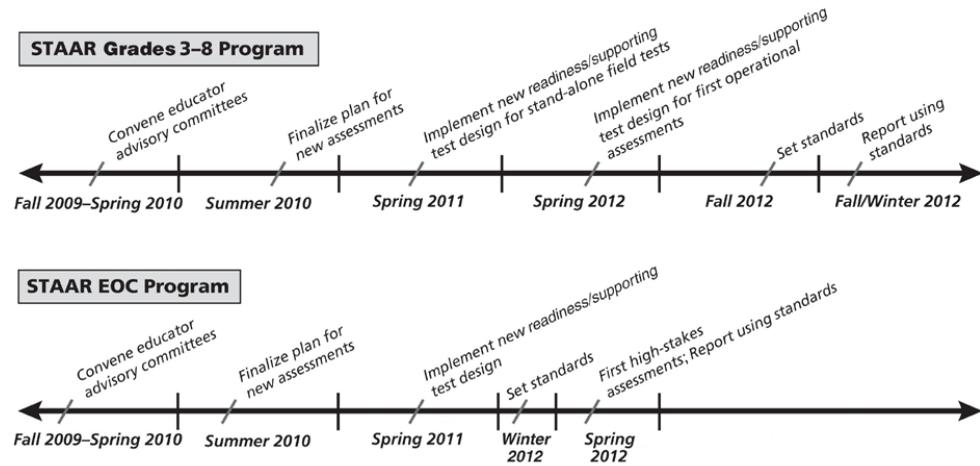
## Overview

In order to fulfill the requirements of House Bill 3 passed by the 81st Texas Legislature and incorporated into Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 39, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). STAAR is a more rigorous assessment program that will focus on readiness for success in subsequent grades and courses and, ultimately, for college and career. STAAR will be implemented in the 2011–2012 school year. For complete information about the transition from TAKS to STAAR, refer to the [House Bill 3 Transition Plan](#) available on TEA's Student Assessment website.



## Timeline for STAAR Development and Implementation

A general timeline for the development and implementation of the STAAR assessment program is shown below.



## Grades and Subjects Assessed

For grades 3–8, STAAR assessments will be administered in the grades and subjects shown in Table 50.

For high school, STAAR assessments will be administered in Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

In addition to general STAAR assessments, the following assessments will be available for students with special needs:

- STAAR Spanish and STAAR L, a linguistically accommodated form, will be available for eligible ELLs.
- STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate will be available for eligible students receiving special education services.



**Table 50.** STAAR Assessments for the 2011–2012 School Year

Subject Area	Enrolled Grade						End-of-Course		
	3	4	5	6	7	8			
Reading	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	English I STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	English II STAAR STAAR Alternate	English III STAAR STAAR Alternate
		STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate			STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate				
Writing		STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate			STAAR STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate				
Mathematics	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	Algebra I STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	Geometry STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	Algebra II STAAR STAAR L
Science			STAAR STAAR Spanish STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate			STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	Biology STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	Chemistry STAAR STAAR L	Physics STAAR STAAR L
Social Studies						STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	World Geography STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	World History STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate	U.S. History STAAR STAAR L STAAR Modified STAAR Alternate

**NOTE:** Modified assessments for English II and geometry will be administered as stand-alone field tests in 2012. The modified assessment for world history will be administered in 2013. Modified assessments for English III and U.S. history will be administered in 2014. Algebra II, chemistry, and physics are not available as modified or alternate assessments.

The general STAAR EOC assessments will be offered in both online and paper formats.

For more information about the EOC program, refer to [chapter 8](#).

## STAAR Spanish and STAAR L

English language learner (ELL) participation requirements for the STAAR program underwent revision and public review in fall 2011 in conjunction with the commissioner of education rule-making process. Refer to the [Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA](#), or the [LPAC Resources](#) page on TEA’s Student Assessment website for the adopted rules.

- Spanish versions of STAAR, called STAAR Spanish, will be available in grades 3–5 for eligible ELLs in the same grades and subject areas assessed by the English versions.
- Linguistically accommodated versions of STAAR, called STAAR L, will be available for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school in mathematics, science, and social studies.
- ELLs not eligible for STAAR Spanish or STAAR L may be provided allowable linguistic accommodations on other STAAR assessments.



## STAAR Modified

STAAR Modified assessments will cover the same content as the general STAAR assessments, but will be modified in format and test design. Modified assessments will be developed for all content areas for grades 3–8 that are part of the general STAAR program and for nine of the twelve STAAR EOC assessments. Modified assessments are not being developed for Algebra II, chemistry, or physics as these courses are not required on the Minimum High School Program (MHSP) and all students taking STAAR Modified assessments are on the MHSP because they are receiving modified instruction. The new STAAR Modified assessments will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general assessments and now will include more rigorous item types. In addition, field-test items will be embedded in the modified assessments.

## STAAR Alternate

The final administrations of TAKS–Alt assessments for grades 3–9 were held in spring 2011. The STAAR Alternate assessments will be very similar in design to the current TAKS–Alt assessments. Students will continue to perform standardized assessment tasks linked to the grade-level TEKS that measure student progress on skills aligned with the academic grade-level content standards. However, STAAR Alternate will incorporate a vertical alignment in the program’s assessment tasks, and the high school assessments will move from grade-level assessments to course-based assessments. The new STAAR Alternate assessments will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general and modified assessments.

## Testing Requirements for Graduation

With the implementation of STAAR in the 2011–2012 school year, testing requirements for graduation will change. While TAKS required students to pass exit level tests in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies, students taking STAAR must achieve a cumulative score that is at least equal to the product of the number of EOC assessments taken in each foundation content area (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and a scale score that indicates satisfactory performance.

### Phase-in of STAAR Graduation Requirements

State legislation phases out the current TAKS assessments and replaces them with the STAAR EOC assessments beginning in the 2011–2012 school year. Students first enrolled in grade 9 or below in the 2011–2012 school year will be required to take the STAAR EOC assessments as part of their graduation requirement and will no longer take high school TAKS. Table 51 shows the planned phased-out of high school TAKS and phase-in of STAAR EOC assessments.

**Table 51.** Phase-out of TAKS and Phase-in of STAAR EOC

	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
<b>Grade 9</b>	TAKS	TAKS	STAAR	STAAR	STAAR	STAAR
<b>Grade 10</b>	TAKS	TAKS	TAKS	STAAR	STAAR	STAAR
<b>Grade 11</b>	TAKS	TAKS	TAKS	TAKS	STAAR	STAAR
<b>Grade 12</b>	TAKS*	TAKS*	TAKS*	TAKS*	TAKS*	STAAR or TAKS*

\*Out-of-school testers and grade 12 retesters.

## Plan for Measurement of Student Progress

In 2006, Texas expanded its reporting of student performance to include a measure of student progress when legislation from HB 1 (79th Texas legislature, 2005) required the commissioner of education to determine a method for measuring annual improvement in student achievement. The measure of student progress to be used with STAAR assessments is being developed. Table 52 shows the timeline for developing and implementing the measure of student progress for STAAR assessments..

**Table 52.** Timeline for Implementing and Reporting Progress for STAAR Assessments.

Step	Timeline
Identify the most appropriate student progress measures for the STAAR program	November 2010–May 2011
Empirically evaluate the identified measures	June 2011–October 2011
Obtain advisory group and expert advice	November 2011–August 2012
Reevaluate plans for measures of student progress after spring 2012 STAAR administrations (review of proposed measures and empirical data; additional advisory group and expert advice may also be gathered at this time)	Summer 2012
Approval of the new measures of student progress	Fall 2012
Implement and report first new measures of student progress for the STAAR program	First implementation no later than 2012–2013





## Test Design

A new test design for the STAAR assessments will focus on readiness for success in subsequent grades or courses and, ultimately, for college and career.

The state assessments will continue to be based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the curriculum standards designed to prepare students to succeed in college and careers and to compete globally. However, consistent with a growing national consensus regarding the need to provide a more clearly articulated K–16 education program that focuses on fewer skills and addresses those skills in a deeper manner, TEA is implementing a new assessment model for the STAAR tests for elementary, middle, and high school.

The majority of the new STAAR assessments will test content students studied that year, as opposed to testing content studied over multiple years. Doing so will strengthen the alignment between what is taught and what is tested for a given course of study. While STAAR mathematics, reading, writing, and social studies assessments in grades 3–8 will continue to address only those TEKS taught in the given subject and grade, the content of other STAAR assessments will change in the following ways.

- The new science assessments for grades 5 and 8 will continue to address TEKS from multiple grade levels, but these tests will focus on the science TEKS for those respective grades. The science assessments at these two grades will emphasize the grade 5 and 8 curriculum standards that best prepare students for the next grade or course. Additionally, these assessments will include curriculum standards from two lower grades (i.e., grades 3 and 4 or grades 6 and 7) that support students' success on future science assessments. In contrast, the current TAKS assessments uniformly address TEKS from multiple grade levels without any specific emphasis.
- The new end-of-course assessments will address only the TEKS for a given course, as opposed to the high school level TAKS assessments that address TEKS from multiple courses.

By focusing on the TEKS that are most critical to assess, STAAR will better measure the academic performance of students as they progress from elementary to middle to high school. Based on educator committee recommendations, TEA has identified for each grade or course a set of knowledge and skills drawn from the TEKS eligible to be assessed and emphasized this set of knowledge and skills, called readiness standards, on the assessments. The remaining knowledge and skills are considered supporting standards and will be assessed, though not emphasized.

Readiness standards have the following characteristics.

- They are essential for success in the current grade or course.
- They are important for preparedness for the next grade or course.



- They support college and career readiness.
- They necessitate in-depth instruction.
- They address broad and deep ideas.

Supporting standards have the following characteristics.

- Although introduced in the current grade or course, they may be emphasized in a subsequent year.
- Although reinforced in the current grade or course, they may be emphasized in a previous year.
- They play a role in preparing students for the next grade or course but not a central role.
- They address more narrowly defined ideas.

TEA will also implement a number of changes that should serve to test knowledge and skills in a deeper way.

- Tests will contain a greater number of items that have a higher cognitive complexity level.
- Items will be developed to more closely match the cognitive complexity level evident in the TEKS.
- In reading, greater emphasis will be given to critical analysis than to literal understanding.
- In writing, students will be required to write two essays rather than one.
- In social studies, science, and mathematics, process skills will be assessed in context, not in isolation, allowing for a more integrated and authentic assessment of these content areas.
- In science and mathematics, the number of open-ended (griddable) items will increase to allow students more opportunity to derive an answer independently.

## Item Development and Review

New items for the STAAR 3–8 assessments were developed in 2010–2011.

- 4,485 new items developed (English)
- 167 new passages developed (English)
- 1,974 new items developed (Spanish)
- 70 new passages developed (Spanish)

Additional information about the development and review of new items is located in [chapter 2](#).



## Field Testing

Field testing of new STAAR items occurred during the 2011 spring administrations to ensure that sufficient items are available in the item bank to develop new test forms. Data for items that were field-tested were reviewed by TEA and Pearson staff to determine if they were appropriate for inclusion on operational tests. For more information about the data review process, refer to [chapter 2](#).

STAAR 3–8 items were embedded in 2011 TAKS live test forms with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing, which were stand-alone field tests.

STAAR English II, English III, and world history items were field-tested in stand-alone field tests in 2011. In addition, the other nine STAAR EOC assessments—Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, world geography, and U.S. history—were administered as operational tests with embedded field test items.

The overall field-test burden of STAAR on students and school districts will be significantly reduced from that of TAKS through the embedding of field-test items whenever possible beginning with operational assessments in 2012.

## Testing Accommodations

In 2011 TEA evaluated testing accommodations to determine the ones that will continue in the STAAR program and the accommodations that will be added or discontinued.

### ■ Students with disabilities:

A separate accommodated form for students receiving special education services will not be available for the STAAR program. Instead, specific accommodations will be built into the general STAAR assessments. Allowable accommodations for STAAR were grouped by type and by need for TEA approval, and illustrated as an Accommodation Triangle. The complete Accommodation Triangle, with links to each accommodation policy, is available on the [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#) webpage.

### ■ ELLs:

Linguistic accommodations, which are designed to decrease the language barrier ELLs experience when learning and demonstrating knowledge and skills in English, will be available for eligible ELLs taking STAAR assessments in English. The allowable linguistic accommodations are described on the [Linguistic Accommodations for ELLs](#) webpage. ELLs with disabilities may be eligible for linguistic accommodations and accommodations based on their disabling condition.

## Performance Standards

STAAR performance standards will be set so they require a higher level of student performance than is required on the current TAKS assessments. STAAR performance standards for STAAR EOC will be set in February 2012 and reports will be available in June 2012 after the first May 2012 administration.

Performance standards for STAAR grades 3–8 will be set in fall 2012, after the first spring administration. Therefore, the Student Success Initiative (SSI) promotion requirements will not include use of the STAAR results in the 2011–2012 school year only because passing standards will not yet be established. Statute continues to require the use of other academic information (teacher recommendations, student grades, etc.) in promotion decisions.



