

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 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 academic 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 and is administered primarily online with and without accommodations. There are also paper, large print, and braille versions of STAAR. Refer to the [STAAR Resources](#) web page for more information.

#### 2. In what grades, subjects, and courses are students assessed with STAAR?

STAAR assessments are administered for:

- grades 3–8 mathematics,
- grades 3–8 reading language arts (RLA),
- elementary and middle school science (administered in grades 5 and 8, respectively),
- grade 8 social studies, and
- Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

#### 3. When are the STAAR assessments administered?

STAAR assessments are administered in the spring. Additional testing opportunities are available for STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments in the summer and the fall. To allow districts flexibility in scheduling online administrations, TEA provides two-week testing windows. If a student is not able to test on the locally scheduled day, district testing personnel should provide a make-up testing opportunity for the student later in the testing window.

The specific testing windows for each school year can be found in the Student Assessment Testing Calendar on the [Test Administration Resources](#) web page.

#### 4. 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, 4, 6, and 7; three days in grade 5; and four days in grade 8.

The number of testing days for high school students depends on when the students take specific high school courses and whether they 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.

#### 5. Are there any released test questions available for STAAR?

Yes. Each year TEA releases the spring administration of all STAAR grades/subjects and courses. As STAAR is administered online, the released tests are available in the online [Practice Test Site](#). TEA no longer produces PDF versions of the released tests since STAAR is an online assessment with technology-enhanced items.

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### 6. What types of questions are on STAAR assessments?

STAAR assessments include multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice test questions. The non-multiple-choice questions are designed to give students different ways to show understanding and include multiselect, multipart, hot text, hot spot, inline choice, drag and drop, equation editor, text entry, short constructed response, and extended constructed response. Refer to the *New Question Types* document on the [STAAR Resources](#) web page for more information.

### 7. What are short constructed-response questions?

Short constructed-response questions require students to write a brief response. These questions often go beyond simple recall or recognition and require students to demonstrate critical thinking skills such as analyzing and synthesizing. Short constructed-response questions are scored based on the content included in the response and the evidence used to support it. Refer to the scoring guides for each content area, available on the STAAR content-area web pages.

### 8. What are extended constructed-response questions?

Extended constructed-response questions require students to write an extended response based on a reading passage. These questions are included on all STAAR RLA assessments and require a response written in one of three modes: informational, argumentative, or correspondence. Extended constructed-response questions are scored based on organization and development of ideas and on language conventions. Refer to the writing rubrics and scoring guides available on the [STAAR RLA Resources](#) web page for more information.

### 9. How many characters are allowed for student responses to constructed-response questions?

Student responses are limited to a maximum of 475 characters for a short constructed response and 2,300 characters for an extended constructed response. Punctuation counts toward the maximum number of characters, but spaces do not.

### 10. Are younger students able to type constructed responses on electronic devices?

Research shows that younger students can type online. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted a study with grade 4 students that showed them to be capable of using computer programs to type, organize, and write well enough to be assessed. At least 20 other states require elementary-age students to write extended responses online. Additionally, the Texas technology TEKS require students to be able to type proficiently by grade 3, including learning the proper touch keyboarding techniques and ergonomic strategies. Students who need support with typing have access to transcribing accommodations that allow test administrators to transfer student responses into the online system.

### 11. What type of reading passages are included on the STAAR RLA assessments?

The STAAR RLA assessments include cross-curricular informational passages that reference content aligned to the TEKS for other content areas (e.g., social studies, science, mathematics, fine arts, etc.). While the cross-curricular passages include topics from other content areas, the test questions only assess RLA TEKS; students are not scored on their understanding of TEKS from other content areas based on their responses to RLA test questions.

All passages are reviewed and approved by Texas educators to ensure that the passages:

- represent polished, high-quality writing and are considered exemplary samples of eligible genres;

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- include reliable and accurate information;
- are unbiased against or toward any group;
- are as engaging as possible for students;
- are appropriate for the intended grade level; and
- contain enough content to assess multiple student expectations.

### STAAR TESTING REQUIREMENTS

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

Students in grades 3–8 must take their enrolled grade-level assessments as required by Texas Education Code (TEC) [§39.023\(a\)](#). Students in grades 3–8 must be tested every year in mathematics and RLA. The only exception to this requirement is for a student receiving instruction above grade level.

- Students in grades 3–8 who are receiving instruction above grade level should take STAAR for the grade and subject in which they are receiving above-grade instruction if such an assessment exists. For example, a student enrolled in grade 7 who is receiving instruction in grade 8 science should take the STAAR grade 8 science assessment and must take the STAAR grade 7 mathematics and RLA assessments.
- For students in grades 3–8 who are receiving above-grade instruction in a subject across multiple grade levels through a locally developed course, district personnel should carefully evaluate the content of the instruction as it relates to the STAAR grade-level assessments to ensure that those students are provided the best opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the grade-level content. For example, if a student who is enrolled in grade 6 is receiving instruction in all grade 6 and some grade 7 mathematics TEKS through a locally developed course (e.g., Math 03103310), the student should take the STAAR grade 6 mathematics assessment. It would not be appropriate to administer the grade 7 assessment to this student since he or she has not been given the opportunity to learn all the grade 7 mathematics TEKS. For students enrolled in Middle School Advanced Mathematics courses, refer to the next question.
- Students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course will take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment in that content area in place of their grade-level assessment, but they must take all other STAAR assessments at their grade level. For example, a grade 8 student enrolled in Algebra I will take the STAAR Algebra I assessment and the STAAR grade 8 RLA, science, and social studies assessments. When this student is in high school, he or she will need to take either the ACT or the SAT to fulfill federal testing requirements for mathematics, as indicated in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§101.3011](#).

#### 13. What are the testing requirements for a student who is enrolled in a Middle School Advanced Mathematics course?

A student participating in the Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program and taking one of those specific courses must be administered the appropriate STAAR mathematics assessment based on the TEKS covered in the specific course.

- A student enrolled in Grade 6 Middle School Advanced Math (03103210) must take the STAAR grade 6 mathematics assessment.

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- A student enrolled in Grade 7 Middle School Advanced Math (03103220) must take the STAAR grade 7 mathematics assessment.
- A student enrolled in Grade 8 Middle School Advanced Math, Algebra I (0310320) must take the STAAR Algebra I assessment.

### 14. What are the testing requirements for a student in grades 3–8 who is receiving instruction in a high school course that does not have a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment?

- Mathematics: Since there is not a STAAR EOC assessment that aligns with the student’s instruction, the student must take his or her grade-level STAAR assessment to fulfill the federal requirement that students be assessed annually in grades 3–8 in mathematics. For example, a student enrolled in grade 8 who is receiving instruction in geometry must take the STAAR grade 8 mathematics assessment, even if he or she has already taken it, as well as all other STAAR grade 8 assessments.
- RLA: Since there is an RLA assessment in every grade from 3 to 10 to satisfy federal testing requirements, this situation is not likely to arise.
- Science: Since there is not a STAAR EOC assessment that aligns with the student’s instruction, the student must take their grade-level STAAR assessment (if he or she has not already taken it) to fulfill the federal requirement that students be assessed in science at least once in elementary school and once in middle school. If the student has already taken the grade-level assessment, district testing personnel have the option of testing the student again.
- Social studies: Since there is not a STAAR EOC assessment that aligns with the student’s instruction, the student must take the STAAR grade 8 social studies assessment (if he or she has not already taken it) to fulfill the state testing requirement. If the student has already taken the grade-level assessment, district testing personnel have the option of testing the student again.

### 15. What are the STAAR 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 students in these grades are not tested even if they are receiving instruction above their enrolled grade level. STAAR testing requirements begin with students enrolled in grade 3.

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

Regardless of their 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 and most are required for federal accountability purposes.

### 17. Are districts required to provide accelerated instruction to students who do not have a passing score on STAAR assessments?

Yes. TEC [§28.0211](#) requires any student who does not receive a passing score on a STAAR assessment to receive accelerated instruction. Refer to the [Accelerated Instruction](#) web page for more information.

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### STAAR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

#### 18. Which STAAR assessments are required for high school graduation?

In general, students must pass (achieve *Approaches Grade Level* or higher) all 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 school district or open-enrollment charter school as required in TEC [§39.025](#).

#### 19. When should students take a STAAR EOC assessment?

STAAR EOC assessments are offered in spring, summer, and fall. Students should take each EOC assessment 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 window 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, 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, district personnel 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, district personnel should evaluate the extent to which students taking a course such as Biology 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.

#### 20. How many opportunities do students have to pass the STAAR EOC assessments?

All five STAAR EOC assessments—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 depends on when students take the corresponding course. For example, most students take biology during their freshman year, meaning they have 10 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 graduation. Students who do not pass one or more of the required assessments before their scheduled graduation may continue to test during any subsequent administration. The specific testing windows for each school year can be found in the Student Assessment Testing Calendar on the [Test Administration Resources](#) web page.

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

To satisfy graduation requirements, students can use satisfactory scores on several assessments (e.g., ACT, SAT) in place of satisfactory scores on STAAR EOC assessments. Always refer to the current version of TAC [§101.4002](#) to determine which assessments can be used for this purpose.

Regardless of a student’s choice to use a satisfactory score on a substitute assessment to fulfill part of his or her graduation requirements, federal and state laws require all students to take STAAR EOC

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assessments at least once for federal accountability purposes. This testing requirement is independent of the graduation requirement and does not impact the student’s ability to use a substitute assessment to meet graduation requirements.

**22. Can a student use more than one substitute assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirements?**

Yes. A student can use a qualifying score on a substitute assessment to satisfy his or her graduation requirement for a STAAR EOC assessment, as indicated in each cell of the substitute assessment chart in TAC §101.4002(d)(1). 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 possibility for using a single score on a substitute assessment to meet the graduation requirement for more than one EOC assessment is to take the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment at the end of a college preparatory course (as listed on the [College Preparatory Courses for CCMR Accountability](#) web page) and meet the qualifying score for reading and writing. That score can be used to substitute for both STAAR English I and English II.

**23. 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 as a substitute 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 to fulfill his or her testing requirement for graduation. Refer to TAC §101.4002 for more information.

**24. 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 STAAR EOC assessments to fulfill their testing requirements for graduation.

**25. 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 testing requirements for graduation. 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 testing requirement for graduation. Refer to TAC [§74.24](#) for more information about CBE.

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

The requirements depend on where the final course credit is earned, regardless of whether the final course credit earned is a partial credit for the first or second semester. A student whose final course credit is earned in another state, another country, a private school, or a home 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 public school district or open enrollment charter school accepts the

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course credit from the entity outside the Texas public school system in which the course was taken, or

- is required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill the student’s graduation requirement when he or she takes the corresponding course in the Texas public school system because the Texas public school district or open enrollment charter school does not accept the course credit.

**27. 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 (achieves *Approaches Grade Level* or higher) a STAAR EOC assessment, the student has fulfilled that part of his or her graduation requirement and cannot retest.

**28. 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 again before retesting?**

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

### STAAR PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING

**29. How is student performance described for STAAR?**

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

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

**30. What is the passing standard for STAAR?**

The passing standard for STAAR is *Approaches Grade Level*. A student who scores at or above this level has passed the STAAR assessment. A student who scores within the *Did Not Meet Grade Level* category has not passed. Refer to the [STAAR Performance Standards](#) web page for more information.

**31. 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 assessment 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 an assessment in any given year. A scale-score system allows every assessment to have exactly the same passing standard, or level of performance required, even though the raw score needed to pass the assessment may vary slightly from year to year.

During the annual assessment development process, it is not always possible to select questions that have exactly the same difficulty as questions on previous versions of the assessment. It is important to maintain the passing standard (but not necessarily the raw score needed to pass) from year to year to

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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.

### 32. 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.

### 33. Why isn't the passing standard for each STAAR assessment set at 70 percent of the questions correct?

While many people believe a raw score that is equal to 70 percent 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 an assessment. A student who gets 50 percent 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 percent of the questions correct on a very easy test. For example, Person A is given a 10-question test on calculus and answers 7 out of 10 questions correctly, which equals 70 percent. Person B is given a 10-question test on multiplication and answers 7 out of 10 questions correctly, which equals 70 percent. Person A's test covered more difficult content—calculus as compared to multiplication. Although both testers answered 70 percent of the questions correctly, it would not be accurate to say that both testers demonstrated the same level of mathematics proficiency.

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 percent of the questions correctly on an assessment does not necessarily indicate poor performance either in terms of scale scores or mastery of the assessed content.

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

Students' test results are available to students and their parents through the Texas Assessment Family Portal. Parents can see their child's recent test results as well as easy-to-use resources to support learning at home and assist their child in focusing on the skills he or she most needs help with. For spring administrations of STAAR, parents can see each test question, the correct answer, a rationale for the correct answer, and their child's answer. Test results from previous administrations are also available. Each student is provided a unique access code, found at the bottom of the STAAR student report card, to log in to the Family Portal, which can be accessed on the [Texas Assessment](#) website.

### 35. What reporting data are available to districts and campuses?

Authorized district and campus personnel, including classroom teachers, have access to the Centralized Reporting System (CRS), which allows users to analyze results and to compare current and historical data. Users can compare campuses to campuses, campuses to districts, districts to districts, and districts to the state. District and campus personnel can also organize the data to examine different demographic and program information groups, enabling access to cross-sectional analyses of the assessment data. CRS can be accessed on the [Testing Personnel](#) page of the Texas Assessment website.

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### ACCOMMODATIONS ON STATE ASSESSMENTS

#### 36. What are accommodations?

TEA defines accommodations as changes to materials or procedures that enable students to participate meaningfully in learning and testing. Refer to the [Accommodation Resources](#) web page for more information.

#### 37. What are the different levels of accommodations available for state assessments?

Accommodations fall into three categories: accessibility features, locally-approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval. Comprehensive information about the procedures and materials within each of these categories, as well as their specific eligibility criteria, is available on the Accommodation Resources web page.

Accessibility features are procedures and materials that should be made available to students who regularly use them during classroom instruction. Examples of accessibility features include visual supports such as a zoom feature or a large mouse pointer.

Locally-approved designated supports are procedures and materials that are 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 should take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely and effectively uses the support during classroom instruction and classroom testing. Examples of locally-approved designated supports include basic transcribing and oral administration.

Designated supports requiring TEA approval are procedures and materials that require the submission and approval of an Accommodation Request Form for students who meet eligibility criteria. There are four designated supports requiring TEA approval—Complex Transcribing, Extra Day, Mathematics Scribe, and Other. A request for one of these designated supports must be made through the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) prior to the posted deadlines and approved by TEA before a student can use the designated support on the state assessment.

#### 38. Which students can receive accommodations?

Accommodations 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; student assistance team). When campus-level committees 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.

#### 39. What do the terms “routinely” and “effectively” mean in the eligibility criteria for accommodations?

“Routinely used” does not mean that the accommodation must be used every day during instruction. Routine use of an accommodation means that the student has used the support often enough during classroom instruction and classroom testing that he or she is able to use it during the state assessment. “Effectively” means that 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 accommodation.

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### 40. Why is oral administration not allowed on reading passages for STAAR RLA assessments?

One purpose of the STAAR RLA assessments is to assess students' reading comprehension—the degree to which students understand what they read. These assessments are not intended to be a measure of listening comprehension, which is a distinctly different skill. For this reason, students are required to read the passages independently. Listening to the STAAR reading passages being read aloud would make the assessment an inappropriate and invalid measure, since no determination about a student's reading comprehension could be made.

### ASSESSMENTS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS: SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504

#### 41. What testing options are available for students with disabilities?

Most students with disabilities will take STAAR with or without allowable accommodations. The appropriate committee at the campus level is responsible for deciding if a student meets eligibility requirements to receive a designated support according to the policy documents found on the [Accommodations Resources](#) web page.

Students receiving special education services who have the most significant cognitive disabilities may meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. Educational decisions for students who receive special education services, including determining the most appropriate assessment for the student, are made by the ARD committee. Refer to the [Assessments for Special Populations](#) web page for more information.

#### 42. 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 graduation requirements, as described in TAC [§89.1070](#). Refer to the [Special Education](#) web page for additional questions about graduation requirements for students receiving special education services.

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

An ARD committee may determine that satisfactory performance on a required EOC assessment is not necessary for graduation. Such a determination means that the student will not need to participate in a retest administration for that specific STAAR EOC assessment. Note that retest opportunities are not available for STAAR Alternate 2 EOC assessments.

#### 44. What is STAAR Alternate 2?

STAAR Alternate 2 is an academic assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards and is available for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the participation requirements. STAAR Alternate 2 has been developed to meet federal requirements of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (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. Refer to the [STAAR Alternate 2 Resources](#) web page for more information.

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### 45. What assessments are available for STAAR Alternate 2?

STAAR Alternate 2 is a standardized item-based assessment administered to students in a one-to-one setting and is available in the same grades/subjects and courses as the general STAAR assessments:

- grades 3–8 mathematics,
- grades 3–8 RLA,
- elementary and middle school science (administered in grades 5 and 8, respectively),
- grade 8 social studies, and
- Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

### 46. 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 the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, the student will be assessed in all subjects for the enrolled grade using STAAR Alternate 2.

### 47. Can a person who is not employed by the district but whose presence is required by the student’s individualized education program (IEP) be present during testing?

Yes. District testing personnel should develop local policies to document the potential exposure of non-district employees, such as nurses or therapists, to secure test materials. District testing personnel must make the non-district employees aware that they have access to secure test materials so that the security and confidentiality of the test is maintained as described in the [District and Campus Coordinator Resources](#).

### 48. 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. District testing personnel must make the parents, guardians, health care providers, and anyone else who may have access to the video recording aware that it includes secure test materials so that the security and confidentiality of the test is maintained as described in the [District and Campus Coordinator Resources](#).

### 49. How is student performance described for 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

Refer to the [STAAR Alternate 2 Performance Standards](#) web page for more information.

## ASSESSMENTS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS: EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS

### 50. What testing options are available for emergent bilingual (EB) students?

All EB students must take an academic assessment—STAAR, STAAR Spanish (for students who are eligible), or STAAR Alternate 2 (for students who meet the participation requirements). STAAR with and without accommodations is available for EB students in grades 3 through high school. STAAR Spanish with and without accommodations is also available for students in grades 3–5.

All EB students must also take an English language proficiency assessment—the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) or TELPAS Alternate (for students who meet the

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participation requirements)—until they are determined to be proficient by meeting the EB student reclassification criteria.

LPACs must meet annually to make and document state assessment decisions for individual EB students. Refer to the Emergent Bilingual Students section of the [Assessments for Special Populations](#) web page for more information.

### 51. What is STAAR Spanish?

STAAR Spanish is an academic assessment designed to measure the extent to which students who receive instruction in Spanish and can best demonstrate their learning through a Spanish language assessment have learned and are able to apply the knowledge and skills defined in the TEKS.

Mathematics and science questions are translated from English and adapted as necessary to ensure cultural and linguistic accessibility. Passages and questions for the RLA assessment are developed independently 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. Refer to the [STAAR Spanish Resources](#) web page for more information.

### 52. Which assessments are available for STAAR Spanish?

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

### 53. How is student performance described for STAAR Spanish?

There are three cut scores on STAAR Spanish assessments, which separate student performance into the same four categories that are used for STAAR in English. The performance categories are:

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

Refer to the [STAAR Performance Standards](#) web page for more information.

### 54. What is TELPAS?

TELPAS is an English language proficiency assessment that measures the progress EB students in kindergarten through grade 12 make in acquiring the English language. TELPAS measures English language acquisition in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in alignment with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), which are part of the TEKS. Refer to the [TELPAS Resources](#) web page for more information.

### 55. Who takes TELPAS?

All EB students 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. EB students are required to take TELPAS annually until they are determined to be proficient by meeting the EB student reclassification criteria.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 56. 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 2–12, TELPAS includes online assessments for listening and speaking and for reading and writing. TELPAS is designed specifically for students who do not speak English as their first language.

### 57. How is student performance described for TELPAS?

TELPAS reports student performance in terms of four English language proficiency levels to show the progress students make in learning English from year to year. These levels are:

- Beginning
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Advanced High

Refer to the [TELPAS Proficiency Standards](#) web page for more information.

### 58. What is TELPAS Alternate?

TELPAS Alternate is an alternate English language proficiency assessment for EB students enrolled in grades 2–12 with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A student’s ARD committee, in collaboration with his or her LPAC, will determine if the student meets the participation requirements for TELPAS Alternate. TELPAS Alternate is aligned to the ELPS; however, TELPAS Alternate is based on alternate proficiency level descriptors that were created to address the specific needs of this student population. Refer to the [TELPAS Alternate Resources](#) web page for more information.

### 59. How are the TELPAS Alternate language domains assessed?

TELPAS Alternate is a holistic inventory based on teacher observations of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for grades 2–12. TELPAS Alternate consists of 40 Observable Behaviors.

### 60. How is student performance described for TELPAS Alternate?

TELPAS Alternate reports student performance in terms of five English language proficiency levels to show the progress students with the most significant cognitive disabilities make in learning English from year to year. These levels are:

- Awareness
- Imitation
- Early Independence
- Developing Independence
- Fluency

Refer to the [TELPAS Alternate Proficiency Standards](#) web page for more information.