

# 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 test in F5apr5x</MCID 4 3F

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**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

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**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

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**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

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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

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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

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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 i**

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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 [Rtl] committee, or student assistance team). When campus-level committees (including Rtl 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.

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**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?**







**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, (ons )inn( and u),6(n-11.2(6(i)2.6(s).5(i)2.6(c)-2(i)2.6(enc)-2(y)8.8( l)(c )-12.6(s)8.7 T

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