

August 17, 2020

Subject: New Texas Formative Assessment Resource and Updates to STAAR Interim Assessments

To the District and ESC Testing Coordinator Addressed:

This communication is intended to inform you about the launch of the new optional Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR) and updates to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Interim Assessments.

Texas Formative Assessment Resource (TFAR)

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is launching TFAR, which is a new, free, optional, online tool consisting of an item bank aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). This optional tool, housed on Schoolnet, is designed to support teachers in gaining real-time, formative feedback on student learning as instruction occurs. Teachers will be able to create and deliver quizzes and analyze results to help inform instructional choices such as making immediate lesson plan adjustments or providing specific interventions for students at the level of individual standards. TFAR can be used as part of on-campus or virtual instruction.

TFAR is meant to supplement and support existing district resources and formative assessment practices. Quizzes built using this tool should be combined with a broader set of classroom formative practices that are part of a coherent instructional framework.

TFAR will be available starting August 31, 2020, with registration opening August 27, 2020. Initially, the item bank within TFAR will contain STAAR released items, but over time, additional items will be added. Teachers will be able to create their own TEKS-aligned items and quizzes to administer within the platform.

A TFAR General Webinar is intended for testing coordinators and curriculum coaches interested in learning more about TFAR, including how to register. The webinar will take place on August 24, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. (CT) and can be accessed using the following information:

Please click the link to join the webinar: <https://zoom.us/j/92006096495>

Or join by phone: 346-248-7799, Webinar ID: 920 0609 6495

A recording will be placed on the [Texas Formative Assessment Resource](#) webpage following the webinar. To read the frequently asked questions and view other resources, please visit the [Texas Formative Assessment Resource](#) webpage.

Updates to STAAR Interim Assessments

STAAR Interim Assessments, an optional online tool to help educators monitor progress and predict student performance, will continue for the 2020–2021 school year for all STAAR tested grades and subjects.

Updates to the STAAR Interim Assessments based on stakeholder feedback include:

- Training videos to support educators
- A new robust dashboard that provides item-level data for students and student groups
- Bulk printing of student reports
- Item-level data for test reattempts
- Multi-stage test indicators within reports
- Rostering of multiple grade-levels enhancements

In response to COVID-19, TEA has provided additional support and guidance for districts who would like students to complete an interim assessment at home by offering an in-browser option, test ticket delivery support, and step-by-step guidance for parents and students testing at home. This information can be found in [Section 10](#) of the *STAAR Interim Assessments User Manual*.

The opportunity windows for testing and offered subjects are listed in the tables below. Due to recent TEKS adoption, for the 2020–2021 school year, English I and English II interim tests will only be offered once occurring in the opportunity 2 window.

First testing window (Opportunity 1)	Second testing window (Opportunity 2)
Registration Opens: August 10, 2020	Registration Opens: November 2, 2020
Assessment Window: August 17, 2020–March 31, 2021	Assessment Window: November 23, 2020–March 31, 2021

Two testing opportunities (Opportunity 1 and 2)	One testing opportunity (Opportunity 2 only)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grades 3 through 8 reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grade 5 science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish grades 3 through 5 reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish grade 5 science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grades 3 through 8 mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grade 8 science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish grades 3 through 5 mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grade 8 social studies • Biology • U.S. History • English I • English II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I 	

To register for upcoming webinars and view their recordings, watch support videos, and read the frequently asked questions, please visit the [STAAR Interim Assessments](#) webpage.

If you have any questions regarding TFAR or STAAR Interim Assessments, please submit your questions via the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).

Thank you for all you continue to do for students.

Sincerely,

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division