

**State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™)
End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments
Standard Setting Questions and Answers**

STAAR EOC performance standards: What are performance standards and when will they go into effect?

1. What are academic performance standards?

Academic performance standards represent the degree to which students are learning the content and skills required to be taught, as demonstrated by performance on a test. On the STAAR EOC assessments, there are three levels that describe student performance:

- Level III: Advanced Academic Performance
- Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

The academic performance standards are the cut scores on a test that divide students into these three levels. A student is considered to have passed a given STAAR EOC assessment if he/she earned a score at least as high as the cut score for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance. The policy definitions for each performance level are described in more detail at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147496801>.

2. When do the STAAR EOC performance standards go into effect?

Performance standards will be in place for students taking STAAR EOC assessments in spring 2012. A phase-in period will be implemented to provide school districts with time to improve instruction, provide new professional development, increase teacher effectiveness, and close knowledge gaps. A four-year, two-step phase-in for Level II will be in place for all STAAR EOC assessments. In addition, STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing will have a two-year, one-step phase-in for Level III.

The STAAR EOC phase-in periods for performance standards will be on a student-by-student basis by content area. If students take their first STAAR EOC assessment in 2012 or 2013, they will be held to the first set of Level II phase-in performance standards for every assessment in that content area. If students take their first STAAR EOC assessment in 2014 or 2015, they will be held to the second set of Level II phase-in performance standards. Students who take their first STAAR mathematics EOC assessment in 2012 or 2013 will be held to the phase-in performance standard for Level III on the Algebra II assessment. Likewise, students who take their first STAAR English EOC assessment in 2012 or 2013 will be held to the phase-in performance standards for Level III on the English III reading and English III writing assessments. Students who take their first STAAR mathematics EOC assessment in 2014 or after will be held to the recommended Level III performance standard on the Algebra II assessment, and students who take their first STAAR English EOC assessment in 2014 or after will be held to the recommended Level III performance standards on the English III reading and English III writing assessments. The chart at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506326> shows a typical STAAR EOC test-taking sequence for five cohorts of students under the first phase-in, second phase-in, and recommended standards for Level II as well as for the phase-in and recommended standards for Level III.

3. Why will STAAR EOC performance standards be phased in?

The STAAR EOC program represents an increase in rigor (in terms of difficulty and cognitive complexity) when compared with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). The phase-in for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance provides school districts with an appropriate amount of time to adjust instruction, provide additional professional development, increase teacher effectiveness, and close knowledge gaps before recommended standards take effect in 2015–2016. Similarly, the phase-in for Level III: Advanced Academic Performance for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing will allow an appropriate amount of time for students and schools to adjust to the new assessment requirements, since this level of performance is required for students to graduate under the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP).

4. Why is a four-year phase-in period for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance being implemented?

The decision to phase in Level II over a four-year period was based on multiple comparisons using STAAR and TAKS scores. These comparisons suggest that the distance between phase-in standards and recommended standards for the STAAR EOC program is greater than the distance between phase-in standards and recommended standards for the TAKS program. A two year phase-in period was used when the TAKS assessments were introduced in 2003. Therefore, a greater phase-in period for STAAR is being implemented.

5. Why is a two-year phase-in period for Level III: Advanced Academic Performance for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing being implemented?

The distance between the Level III phase-in standards and recommended standards for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing is not as large as the distance between phase-in standards and recommended standards for Level II. In addition, a review of historical trend data suggests that this distance reflects an amount of gain that students might reasonably be expected to make over a two-year period.

6. Why does the phase-in for Level III: Advanced Academic Performance apply only to STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing?

A phase-in for Level III is being implemented for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing because of the requirement that students graduating under the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) attain Level III on these assessments. A phase-in for Level III will not be implemented for other STAAR EOC assessments since achieving Level III on other assessments is not required on any graduation plan.

7. How were the phase-in cut scores determined?

Phase-in cut scores were determined empirically for each STAAR EOC assessment based on the recommended Level II and Level III cut scores. Phase-in 1 cut scores for Level II were set at 1.0 standard deviation (SD) below the Level II recommended cut scores for the STAAR mathematics, science, and social studies assessments and at 0.5 SD below the Level II recommended cut scores for the STAAR English assessments. Phase-in 2 cut scores for Level II were set at 0.5 SD below the Level II recommended cut scores for the STAAR mathematics, science, and social studies assessments, and at 0.2 SD below the Level II recommended cut scores for the STAAR English assessments. Level III phase-in cut scores for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing were set at the point where students meeting the performance standard would have at least a 75% likelihood of earning a grade of C or better in an entry-level college course. In addition, the phase-in cut scores

for Level III are higher than the TAKS Commended performance standard and the recommended Level II performance standards.

8. Why are there different phase-in standards for the STAAR English assessments than for the mathematics, science, and social studies assessments?

Multiple comparisons using STAAR and TAKS scores suggest that the distance between phase-in standards and final standards for the STAAR EOC program is generally greater than the distance between phase-in standards and final standards for the TAKS program. However, external study data indicated that a slightly smaller phase-in is appropriate for the STAAR English EOC assessments compared to the phase-in required for the mathematics, science, and social studies assessments.

STAAR EOC performance standards: What performance standards were set and how were they set?

9. What are the STAAR EOC performance standards?

Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance

The phase-in 1 standard is

- 3500 for mathematics, science, and social studies EOC assessments
- 1875 for reading and writing EOC assessments

The phase-in 2 standard is

- 3750 for mathematics, science, and social studies EOC assessments
- 1950 for reading and writing EOC assessments

The recommended standard is

- 4000 for mathematics, science, and social studies EOC assessments
- 2000 for reading and writing EOC assessments

Level III: Advanced Academic Performance

The phase-in standard is

- 4080 for Algebra II
- 2135 for English III reading
- 2155 for English III writing
- Phase-in standards for Level III are not applicable to the other EOC assessments.

The recommended standard is

- 4333 for Algebra I, 4397 for geometry, and 4411 for Algebra II
- 4576 for biology, 4607 for chemistry, and 4499 for physics
- 4404 for world geography, 4634 for world history, and 4440 for U.S. history
- 2304 for English I reading, 2328 for English II reading, and 2356 for English III reading
- 2476 for English I writing, 2408 for English II writing, and 2300 for English III writing

For 2012, students taking STAAR EOC assessments need to meet the Level II phase-in 1 standards on each assessment to pass. The table at

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506325> provides a more detailed summary of the performance standards for STAAR EOC assessments.

10. How were the performance standards for the STAAR EOC assessments determined?

Performance standards for STAAR EOC assessments are based on recommendations from standard-setting committees. These committees — convened in February and March 2012 — were composed of both K–12 educators and higher education faculty, and each panelist was an expert in both the assessed content (e.g., chemistry) and the high school curriculum (i.e., the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills [TEKS]). In addition, a policy committee convened in early February 2012 to recommend reasonable score ranges within which performance standards should be set. This committee — composed of policy experts, legislative staff, business and workplace leaders, and secondary- and higher-education representatives — used the results of various studies to inform its recommendations. These studies established links between performance on STAAR and performance on other assessments and provided research-based anchors for setting meaningful and rigorous performance standards. A brief description of the standard-setting process used for STAAR EOC assessments can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506324>.

11. Why have performance standards been set for the STAAR EOC assessments but not for the STAAR assessments in grades 3–8?

House Bill 3, the law that mandates STAAR, requires that the performance standards be aligned from grade 3 through high school. Under an aligned set of standards, student performance at each level (i.e., Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, or Advanced Academic Performance) within a content area should indicate whether or not the student is on track to be successful at the next grade or course.

In order to align the performance standards in this way, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) started with STAAR EOC assessments at the high school level and worked backwards to grade 3. This means that performance standards for STAAR grades 3–8 could not be set until performance standards for STAAR EOC had been set. Based on the requirements in law that TEA determine STAAR EOC cut scores by looking at a variety of external data, the earliest the performance standards could be established was April 2012.

Given this, the performance standards for STAAR grades 3–8 could not be set in time to report spring 2012 test scores in the regular time frame. These performance standards will be established in fall 2012 and will then be applied to spring 2012 test scores.

12. What does postsecondary readiness mean?

According to current state legislation, postsecondary readiness is the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program or for certificates or credentials other than baccalaureate or advanced degrees. It should be noted, however, that the measurement of postsecondary readiness through the Algebra II and English III assessments will be only one piece of information that students, parents, and schools will have in making readiness determinations. Algebra II and English III are courses students typically take in grade 11; after students have taken these assessments and potentially met the Level II or Level III performance standards, they will need to continue to take higher-level courses in grade 12 to acquire content knowledge and fully prepare for postsecondary success.

13. What is the relationship between the performance standards and postsecondary readiness for STAAR Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing?

Research study data indicate that the concept of postsecondary readiness represents a continuum of preparedness. Postsecondary readiness is not an “all or nothing” status that students achieve at a certain level of test performance. Rather, students may have varying degrees of postsecondary readiness based upon the level of performance on the test. For example, students who achieve Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance are *sufficiently prepared* for postsecondary success. Similarly, students who achieve Level III: Advanced Academic Performance are *well prepared* for postsecondary success. For more information about the policy definitions for the STAAR performance levels, see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147496801>.

14. What research studies were used as part of the standard-setting process?

TEA conducted extensive research to support the standard-setting process. Studies focused on creating links between STAAR assessments and other measures of students’ knowledge and skills. Some studies focused on comparisons between STAAR assessments and corresponding TAKS tests. Other studies linked students’ scores on STAAR assessments to corresponding course grades. Another set of studies linked STAAR assessments to established national and international assessments, such as SAT, ACT, NAEP, and PISA. Additional studies linked STAAR assessments to other assessments (THEA and ACCUPLACER) used by Texas colleges and universities to place students in credit-bearing courses. Finally, research was conducted to link STAAR scores to corresponding grades in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses. To support reliable and meaningful score interpretations, links between two assessments were based on the same students taking STAAR and one of the assessments listed above. For example, SAT mathematics performance was compared to STAAR Algebra II performance for the same group of students.

15. Why were STAAR EOC performance standards set before high-stakes data were available?

A decision was made to set the performance standards prior to the first high-stakes administration (spring 2012) of the STAAR EOC assessments. The impact data used in the standard-setting process were based on student performance during the spring 2011 administration, during which the EOC assessments were not part of graduation requirements for students. Several factors contributed to the decision to set standards without high stakes motivated data.

- Without a defined course sequence, ninth-grade students may be taking any of the fifteen EOC assessments in the 2011–2012 school year. (Because the English I, II, and III reading and writing assessments are assessed and reported separately, they count as six rather than three EOC assessments.)
- Even after the first high-stakes administration, motivated data will be available only for the five EOC assessments typically taken by ninth-grade students (English I reading, English I writing, Algebra I, biology, and world geography).
- Performance standards need to be established before the end of the 2011–2012 school year so that summer remediation can be scheduled for those students who were unsuccessful on the EOC assessments in the spring.
- Statute requires that EOC assessment performance standards be linked for the English and algebra assessments, so standards for these assessments have to be set at the same time.

16. Will the STAAR EOC performance standards continue to be reviewed in the future as additional data are available?

Once the performance standards are approved and implemented, the commissioner of education and the commissioner of higher education will continue to review the reasonableness of the standards for English III and Algebra II on an annual basis. In addition, performance standards will be formally reviewed at least once every three years, as required by law. During standards review, TEA and the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB) will examine additional impact and validity-study data, including data from longitudinal studies and studies evaluating the relationship between performance on the STAAR English III and Algebra II assessments and success in military service or workforce training, certification, or other credential programs. In fall 2014, after the first cohort of students have taken all assessments within a content area under high-stakes conditions (e.g., Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II), the performance standards will be reviewed and possibly adjusted based on additional research studies and student performance under high-stakes motivated conditions.

STAAR EOC Performance Standards: What do they mean?

17. Why are the STAAR EOC performance standards presented as scale scores rather than raw scores?

As with all 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 the individual test questions in addition to whether or not a student answers the question correctly.

The basic score on any test 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 a test in any given year. A scale-score system allows every test to have exactly the same passing standard, or level of performance required, even though the raw score needed to pass the test may vary slightly from year to year.

When building new tests each year, it is not 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.

It is not informative to compare raw scores or percent of questions answered correctly across test administrations, school years, or tests within the same content area (e.g., Algebra I and Algebra II). When looking at passing standards, a lower raw score (or percent of questions correct) on one test does not necessarily mean that the test is easier than another test with a higher raw score. For example, on one administration of STAAR Algebra II, the passing standard might be at 60% of the questions correct, while in that same administration the passing standard on STAAR Algebra I might be at 63% of the questions correct. This does not mean that it is easier to pass STAAR Algebra II than it is to pass STAAR Algebra I.

18. Why isn't the passing standard for each STAAR EOC 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 that gets 50% of the questions correct on a very difficult test will likely demonstrate a higher mastery of course content than a student that gets 90% of the questions correct on a very easy test.

Consider the following scenario as another way to think about this. You are given a ten-question test on calculus, and you answer 7 out of 10 questions correctly, which equals 70%. Another student is given a ten-question test on multiplication and answers 7 out of 10 questions correct, 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 less than 70% of the questions correctly on a test does not necessarily indicate poor performance in terms of either scale scores or mastery of the assessed content.

STAAR EOC Performance Standards: When will results be reported?

19. When will school districts and parents know the results of the STAAR EOC assessments that were administered in spring 2012?

District and campus performance summaries, data files, and *Confidential Student Reports* (CSRs) will be sent in June 2012 for STAAR and STAAR L EOC assessments and in January 2013 for STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate EOC assessments.

20. What information will be reported to parents for the spring 2012 STAAR administrations?

For STAAR and STAAR L EOC assessments, parents will receive a *Confidential Student Report* (CSR) for each STAAR assessment their child took. The CSR is a report on a student's test performance, including test results for each reporting category and overall scale score and performance level achieved. The CSR will also include a unique access code for the student data portal which can be found at <http://www.TexasAssessment.com/students>. Through the student data portal, parents and students can see test results across administrations and years.

Parents will receive CSRs for the STAAR 3–8 assessments in January 2013.

21. What phase-in information will be on score reports for the 2011–2012 school year?

Score reports will include the phase-in 1 performance standards for Level II and the recommended standards for Level II. For Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing, the reports will include the phase-in performance standards for Level III. For all other STAAR EOC assessments, the reports will include the recommended performance standards for Level III.

Phase-in 2 performance standards for Level II and the recommended performance standards for Level III for Algebra II, English III reading, and English III writing will be included on score reports beginning in 2012–2013. Because report formats had to be locked in before final decisions were

made about the phase-in plan, it was not possible to include all this information on the spring 2012 reports.



22. What is a STAAR EOC cumulative score, and how does it relate to high school graduation?

Students will receive scores on each STAAR EOC assessments they are administered. A student's cumulative score is obtained by combining the individual test scores within each of the four foundation content areas (English reading/writing, mathematics, science, and social sciences). For example, think about a student whose test scores in mathematics are as follows:

- Algebra I: 4200
- Geometry: 3800
- Algebra II: 4100

This student would have a cumulative score of 12100, since the scores for all three mathematics assessments would be added together. In order to graduate, students must reach or exceed their cumulative score target, which is based on the Level II performance standard for each content area. The specific cumulative score target for each student will vary depending upon the student's graduation plan and when he/she started taking high school courses in Texas. For many students who begin taking STAAR EOC assessments in 2012 or 2013, the cumulative score target will be 10500 for mathematics, science, and social studies. This cumulative score is based on 3500, the phase-in 1 performance standard for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance, for each of the three tests within the content areas. However, the cumulative score target is 11250 for English. This cumulative score is based on 1875, the phase-in 1 performance standard for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance, for each of the six tests within the content area (English I reading and writing, English II reading and writing, and English III reading and writing).

23. Why are the scale scores required to achieve Level II different for the STAAR English EOC assessments than for the mathematics, science, and social studies assessments?

The recommended scale score required for Level II is 2000 for all STAAR English EOC assessments (as opposed to 4000 for all other STAAR EOC assessments) because the scales for the English assessments have about half the range of the scales for all other assessments in mathematics, science, and social studies. This difference exists so that the cumulative score requirement for English is the same as the requirement for the other content areas, even though there are six English assessments (reading and writing for English I, II, and III) compared to three assessments in every other content area.

24. How well do students need to perform on STAAR to graduate from high school?

There are three high school graduation programs in Texas: the Minimum High School Program (MHSP), the Recommended High School Program (RHSP), and the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP). The graduation testing requirements differ for the three high school programs; however, all three programs include a cumulative score requirement for high school graduation. This requirement is outlined below.

- A student is required to achieve a cumulative score that is at least as high as his/her cumulative score target.
- The cumulative score target is calculated by multiplying the scale score for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance that is in effect for the student (phase-in 1, phase-in 2, or recommended) by the number of tests he/she is required to take in each content area.

- A student must achieve a score that is at least as high as the minimum score in order for his/her score to count towards the student's cumulative score.
- A student's cumulative score is determined using the student's highest score on each STAAR EOC assessment he/she is required to take for graduation purposes.

More details about the curriculum and testing requirements for graduation, starting with the incoming freshmen class of 2011–2012 can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506323>. The document also provides illustrations of how the cumulative score requirement would apply under the three different high school programs.

25. What minimum score does a student need on STAAR EOC assessments in order to count his/her score in the cumulative score calculation?

A student taking a STAAR EOC assessment must reach or exceed the minimum score. The minimum score is the scale score needed for a student to be able to include his/her test score in the cumulative score. The minimum score varies by assessment and phase-in period as shown at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506325>. For example, a first time grade 9 student taking biology in spring 2012 needs to get a minimum scale score of 3367 (for phase-in 1) to be able to include that test score in his/her science cumulative score.

Minimum scores have been determined statistically for each STAAR EOC assessment based on the scale scores required to achieve Level II. Minimum scores were set at one conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) below the respective Level II cut scores (phase-in or recommended).

The phase-in 1 minimum score is

- 3371 for Algebra I, 3362 for geometry, and 3350 for Algebra II
- 3367 for biology, 3348 for chemistry, and 3346 for physics
- 3383 for world geography, 3326 for world history, and 3372 for U.S. history
- 1813 for English I reading, 1806 for English II reading, and 1808 for English III reading
- 1798 for English I writing, 1807 for English II writing, and 1808 for English III writing

The phase-in 2 minimum score is

- 3626 for Algebra I, 3619 for geometry, and 3604 for Algebra II
- 3621 for biology, 3600 for chemistry, and 3600 for physics
- 3632 for world geography, 3576 for world history, and 3624 for U.S. history
- 1887 for English I reading, 1880 for English II reading, and 1882 for English III reading
- 1872 for English I writing, 1880 for English II writing, and 1881 for English III writing

The final minimum score is

- 3872 for Algebra I, 3868 for geometry, and 3852 for Algebra II
- 3868 for biology, 3846 for chemistry, and 3848 for physics
- 3874 for world geography, 3822 for world history, and 3869 for U.S. history
- 1936 for English I reading, 1929 for English II reading, and 1932 for English III reading
- 1921 for English I writing, 1928 for English II writing, and 1929 for English III writing

How do the STAAR EOC assessments and performance standards compare to TAKS?

26. How does the content assessed with STAAR compare to the content assessed with TAKS?

Both testing programs, STAAR and TAKS, closely align to the TEKS. However, at the high-school level TAKS is a comprehensive assessment that combines content from multiple grades and subjects (e.g., Algebra I, geometry, and grade 8 mathematics are all assessed on TAKS exit-level mathematics). STAAR EOC assessments are based solely on the content of the courses for which the tests are offered (e.g., the Algebra II assessment tests only Algebra II content). The test questions are written to measure specific student expectations found in the TEKS for each course. Committees of educators review the test questions both for their alignment to the TEKS and their appropriateness for students who have taken the course. There is no “off-level” content included on the STAAR EOC assessments, so students who are taught the curriculum for each course should be prepared to take the assessments.

27. Was the standard-setting process for STAAR different from what was done for TAKS?

Yes, the process for setting performance standards for STAAR was different in a number of ways. First, research studies were conducted over a three-year period to link performance on a STAAR assessment and performance on other assessments in the same content area. The results of these studies were used to inform various steps of the standard-setting process. Also, in TAKS, the standards were recommended primarily by Texas secondary teachers and administrators; for STAAR, the standard-setting process included not only secondary school teachers and administrators, but also educators from higher education, business and workplace leaders, policy experts, legislative staff, and community representatives from across Texas. A summary of the steps used in the STAAR EOC standard-setting process can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147506324>.

28. How does the difficulty of the STAAR assessments compare to the difficulty of the TAKS assessments?

The STAAR program represents an increase in rigor (in terms of difficulty and cognitive complexity) when compared with TAKS. The STAAR EOC assessments test the content students studied in that course, 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. However, it will also mean that students are assessed in more depth over the TEKS curriculum in each course.

Results from analyses comparing the difficulty of TAKS and STAAR questions indicate that, overall, the questions on STAAR are more difficult than those on TAKS. For this reason, it is likely that students will initially answer fewer questions correctly on STAAR than they did on TAKS.

29. Will TEA provide score information on STAAR that represents equivalent points to the TAKS passing standard?

TEA will provide equivalent score information on STAAR Algebra I (to TAKS grade 9 mathematics) and STAAR English I reading (to TAKS grade 9 reading) and will use this information in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations for schools in 2012. In addition, TEA will provide similar equivalent score information for the STAAR 3–8 assessments. However, TEA will not provide equivalent score information on other STAAR EOC assessments, as the change from an end-of-grade (TAKS) to an end-of-course (STAAR) assessment program at high school has limited the degree to which test content overlaps between TAKS and STAAR. When there is little overlap in the content assessed on different tests, the results of studies that link TAKS to STAAR are not meaningful for interpreting individual student performance or year-to-year trends in school performance. In other words, there is no such thing as an equivalent score without a sufficient degree of content overlap between the two tests. For example, Algebra II was not previously assessed on TAKS, so there is no content

overlap between STAAR and TAKS with regard to Algebra II. For this reason, no TAKS equivalent score information will be provided for STAAR Algebra II.

School districts will receive TAKS equivalent score information for STAAR Algebra I and English I, as well as for STAAR 3–8, as part of the data files in late June 2012.

30. Why are the performance standards on STAAR so much higher than they are on TAKS?

In TAKS, performance standards were set relative to the judgment of educators about the tested content and the expected relationship with other tests within the TAKS program. Although the performance standards on STAAR represent a significant increase in expectations from the performance standards on TAKS, they are, for the first time, set relative to other state and national assessments in addition to educator judgment about the tested content and expected relationship with other tests within the STAAR program. This allows TEA to be more confident that the performance standards are in the right place relative to our goal as a state to graduate students who are postsecondary ready. In addition, TEA will continue to monitor STAAR data relative to other state and national assessments and will review the performance standards in fall 2014 to make certain that the performance standards continue to provide meaningful information about student performance.

31. How do the number of testing days for students under STAAR compare to the number of testing days for students under TAKS?

The days allotted to STAAR testing are similar to testing days under previous assessment programs, including TAKS. Typically, high school students will have five testing days per year (one for reading, one for writing, one for mathematics, one for science, and one for social studies). Most students in grades 3–8 will have two to four testing days. This required testing should not be confused with a school's maximum number of days allotted to test. Schools are given up to 45 scheduled days, or groups of days, to administer all the STAAR assessments. No student will test for 45 days. Few will test more than five days. Other days will be used for students required to retake a test, those that elect to retake a test, and those that are taking more than one course in a content area during the same school year. A chart showing the details of the testing days for students in elementary, middle, and high school can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147503065&libID=2147503059>.

Questions about the 15% rule for incorporating STAAR EOC scores into course grades, testing time for the assessments, use of STAAR scores in accountability, as well as many other topics are covered in the general STAAR Questions and Answers document at <http://www.txetests.com/FAQS/index.asp>.

Additional information about the STAAR program can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/>.