

## **Chapter 15**

# **Plans and Calendar for Submission of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Program for Peer Review for Use in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), requires each state receiving Title I funds to satisfy certain requirements. The United States Department of Education (USDE) is required by statute to use a peer review process to assist in approving state achievement standards and assessment systems required under Title I. Trained peers (education state officials and educational assessment experts) review evidence and supporting material, provide written feedback to states regarding the review, provide technical assistance to states as needed, and offer a recommendation to USDE regarding the overall compliance with requirements of Title I. If a state's assessment system is not approved by USDE, conditions can be placed on the state's Title I grant award or the funds can be withheld. Each time a state develops a new assessment program or makes significant changes to an existing program (i.e., revisions to the content standards or performance standards), the state must resubmit its assessment program for peer review.

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) program received peer-review approval from USDE in October 2006. In June 2009, TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) and TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) were also approved. With the approvals of these assessments, USDE gave full approval with recommendations of the Texas assessment system. Texas was the first state to have its 2% modified assessment (TAKS–M) approved by USDE.

As the STAAR program becomes operational in 2012 and is subsequently used in AYP calculations, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will compile and submit data, analyses, and technical information in accordance with federal statutes and regulations. In order to meet current USDE requirements, three phases of submissions are planned for the STAAR program and are described below.

### **Phases of Peer Review Submissions**

The development of a new assessment system is a multi-year process, incorporating almost all aspects of content, item development, policy, achievement standards, and reporting. Information will be submitted to USDE in phases that coincide with the development and implementation of STAAR. TEA's plans may change based on consultation with USDE and/or as a result of potential reauthorization of ESEA. The timing of reauthorization is not known at this time, but once that has occurred, TEA will review the ESEA and determine what changes to the STAAR program, if any, are warranted to ensure compliance with federal law. Compliance will be monitored closely, as changes to federal law can have an impact on the development and implementation schedule, test design, assessment of special populations, and technical quality for the STAAR program. Information regarding the planned phases follows.

### ***Phase I***

The Phase I submission will occur before performance standards are established. TEA will submit evidence of test development activities for all STAAR assessments, including test specifications, accommodations, and participation requirements in the Phase I peer review submission.

### ***Phase II***

Phase II submissions will occur after performance standards are approved by the commissioner of education for the STAAR assessments. For more information regarding the timing of standard-setting activities, see Section 3 of this report. Documentation of technical quality, alignment of the assessment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), inclusion of all students in the testing program, and reporting procedures will be submitted.

### ***Phase III***

Phase III is a special submission. As stated in a February 28, 2008, USDE communication, Phase III of peer review will occur if a state “makes significant changes in its standards and assessment system.” To meet state legislative requirements, the academic achievement standards for the STAAR program will be reviewed at least once every three years and the standards may be adjusted based on that review. Because of this requirement of the STAAR program, a Phase III submission to USDE may be necessary. A Phase III submission may also be required if significant changes are made to content standards, test administration procedures, or test designs. TEA will work with USDE to submit any necessary evidence to demonstrate how the assessment program with changes continues to meet the requirements of the ESEA.