



SEC 39.02301 WRITING ASSESSMENT STUDY; PILOT PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is committed to developing an effective Writing Pilot Study to examine alternative methods for writing assessment. Below is the final project plan for the writing pilot

REQUIREMENTS

House Bill 1164 states that the proposed alternative assessment method be designed to assess:

- (1) a student's mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in writing through timed writing samples;
- (2) improvement of a student's writing skills from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year;
- (3) a student's ability to follow the writing process from rough draft to final product; and
- (4) a student's ability to produce more than one type of writing

In addition, the bill specifies:

(e) The agency shall establish the process for consolidating student writing assessments under the method developed under Subsection (a) to be submitted for scoring. This process may include the submission of a student portfolio for scoring.

(f) The individuals responsible for scoring student writing assessments under the pilot program shall be coordinated jointly by:

- (1) the school district in which the student is enrolled and that is participating in the pilot program;
- (2) a public junior college or institution of higher education that enters into an agreement with the participating school district; and
- (3) the regional education service center that serves the participating district.

(g) random sampling of scored student writing assessments, the size of which the agency shall determine, shall be delivered to the agency.

OVERVIEW

Assessment of writing development should include many factors related to student performance. In addition to the use of on-demand and published writing, educators consider a student's ability to generate ideas to produce writing, ability to incorporate new learning into writing, the organization of writing, growth over time, and understanding/usage of a writing process.

The writing assessment pilot study will incorporate the development of student writing process portfolios, which includes:

- **two timed writing samples** collected at the beginning and end of the school year
- **three process samples**, providing evidencing of different writing styles

- **instructional portfolio**, providing evidence of engagement in the writing process and integrated writing instruction throughout the school year, including, at a minimum, the five writing and process samples

Pilot districts, to be selected in accordance with the parameters outlined in HB 1164, shall include at least one large urban district, one medium-sized district, and one rural district. The selection of participating districts will be managed by Educational Service Centers and school districts, in association with representatives from the Texas Education Agency. The overall demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds of students comprising the pilot should be reflective of the diversity of students in Texas, ensuring inclusion of students identified as English language learners (ELLs). Staff development pertaining to use of the writing continuum in the assessment of writing, providing effective feedback for student writers, and use of student reflection in writing instruction for the pilot districts would be offered through the Education Service Centers.

For purposes of the assessment pilot, data from grades 4, 7, 9, and 10 will only be collected for analysis; however, districts may choose to extend to additional grade levels as a method of instructional support.

DESIGN

TIMED WRITING SAMPLES

Two **timed writing samples** will serve the purpose of determining student growth over the course of a school year. The first sample would be collected within the first six weeks of school in order to develop a baseline knowledge of the students' writing skills. To provide students time to get acclimated to the new school year routines, the first writing would be collected no earlier than the third week of school and no later than the sixth week. The second sample will be collected no earlier than eight weeks prior to the end of school and no later than four weeks prior to the end. This timeframe allows for maximum instructional time between assessments to facilitate student writing growth.

For each **timed writing sample**, students will have a choice of 3-4 prompts to which they can respond. The prompts will consist of narrative, informative, persuasive, and/or analytical options. Prompts will be selected from an electronic bank of prompts generated through a collaborative design process, inclusive of teachers, Education Service Centers (ESCs), and institutes of higher education. Providing students a choice of prompts will allow for ownership and relevancy in the writing. Each sample will be scored by trained scorers using a common rubric (more details in the scoring section). Timed writings should be collected within one class period. The time limits for each of the submissions shall be as follows:

Grade level	Time Limit
Kindergarten - 1st grade	25 minutes
2nd grade - 4th grade	35 minutes
5th grade - 8th grade	45 minutes
9th grade - 12th grade	60 minutes

PROCESS SAMPLES

In the months between the two timed writing samples, a digital student portfolio of writing will be developed that includes evidence of a writing process (e.g. planning, drafts, revision, editing, reflections, feedback, final product, etc.). To provide students with the opportunity to develop and deepen their own process through multiple writing styles, the portfolio will include a minimum of three **process samples** indicative of the following writing styles:

- Personal Narrative
- Expository
- Persuasive
- Analytic

These writing styles are representative of what students are asked to write in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills in English language arts but also indicative of the kinds of writing tasks necessary in content areas, career and technical education classes, and higher education. Cross-curricular samples will be considered in the evaluation of the portfolio (A cloud-based digital platform with the capability of retaining copies of revised drafts, evidence of teacher and peer feedback, and student reflections will be used). The overall portfolio may contain more than the required number of writing samples, but the five required samples must be included. Texas currently requires on-line testing in certain content areas and grade levels, which has required districts to equip schools with the infrastructure necessary for such testing. Therefore, we believe most school districts will be able to support a cloud-based digital platform, however this will be a consideration further explored during the pilot phase. In the event that a digital platform approach prevents some districts from participating in the pilot study, the writing portfolio assessment will be modified to provide districts pencil/paper options.

Timeframes for collecting submissions will be designated, and student samples will be time stamped within the digital platform to ensure samples were collected at established times. Teachers will choose the writing style to collect during each submission window. Submission windows and choice of style will allow teachers the flexibility to align assessment with the scope and sequence of their local curriculum. This promotes the connection between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

INSTRUCTIONAL PORTFOLIO

Student instructional portfolios will be comprised of timed writing samples and process samples. The instructional portfolio scores will be reflective of student growth, mastery, and the type of writing instruction occurring on each campus/district

SCORING

TIMED WRITING SAMPLES

The **timed writing samples** will be scored based on:

- a writing continuum/rubric designed to reflect developmental stages of writing (e.g., emergent, early, developing, competent, sophisticated) generated through a collaborative design process, inclusive of teachers, Education Service Centers (ESCs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and TEA.

- a rubric that outlines writing traits (i.e. ideas, organization, word choice, conventions, etc.) necessary for effective written communication in any mode, generated through a collaborative design process, inclusive of teachers, ESCs IHEs, and TEA.

All timed writings will receive two locally-produced scores that represent the teacher of record, another trained writing teacher, or an automated scoring engine. Each timed writing response will receive one combined score that is a sum of both rater scores. These responses will be used to assess the student’s mastery of the essential knowledge and skills in writing through timed writing samples, and improvement of a student’s writing skills from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year, as required by the legislation.

The purpose of this scoring design is to compare the reliability and validity of different scoring methods involving teacher of record scores, non-teacher of record scores, and/or automated scores for future decisions regarding the pilot. TEA will evaluate a sample of timed writings for validity purposes.

Scoring of Timed Responses	
Rater 1	Teacher of Record
Rater 2	Automated Score OR Local, Non-Teacher of Record
TEA Evaluation of a Sample of Responses	

PROCESS SAMPLES

The **process samples**, reflective of different writing styles, will be scored based on:

- a writing continuum/rubric designed to reflect developmental stages of writing (e.g., emergent, early, developing, competent, and sophisticated), generated through a collaborative design process, inclusive of teachers, ESCs, IHEs, and TEA.
- a rubric that outlines writing traits (i.e. ideas, organization, word choice, conventions, etc.) necessary for effective written communication in any mode, generated through a collaborative design process, inclusive of teachers, ESCs, IHEs, and TEA.

The process samples will be given:

- rater score (1), determined by a certified Texas educator, with a background in writing instruction, trained in the writing continuum who may or may not be the student’s classroom teacher
- rater score (2), 50% of the process samples will be given a second rating determined by a certified Texas educator, with a background in writing instruction, trained in the writing continuum, who is not the student’s classroom teacher.

Scoring of Process Samples	
Rater 1	Teacher of Record
Rater 2 (50%)	Local Non-Teacher of Record
TEA Evaluation of Selected Responses	

These student responses, and the rubrics associated with them, will be used to assess a student’s ability to follow the writing process from rough draft to final product, and a student’s ability to produce more than one type of writing, as required by the legislation. TEA will rate process samples for validity purposes. Scoring of some process samples in isolation will allow for comparison of scores between samples that are scored in isolation and samples scored holistically within an instructional portfolio, to guide future pilot decisions.

INSTRUCTIONAL PORTFOLIOS

Student **instructional portfolios** will be comprised of timed writing samples and process samples. The instructional portfolio scores will be reflective of student growth, mastery, and the quality of writing instruction occurring in each campus/district.

Local scoring of the instructional portfolios will be completed through use of a holistic rubric, assessing TEKS mastery, student growth, student ability to engage in a writing process, obtain feedback from teachers and/or peers, revise drafts, reflect on their own writing process, and produce multiple styles of writing.

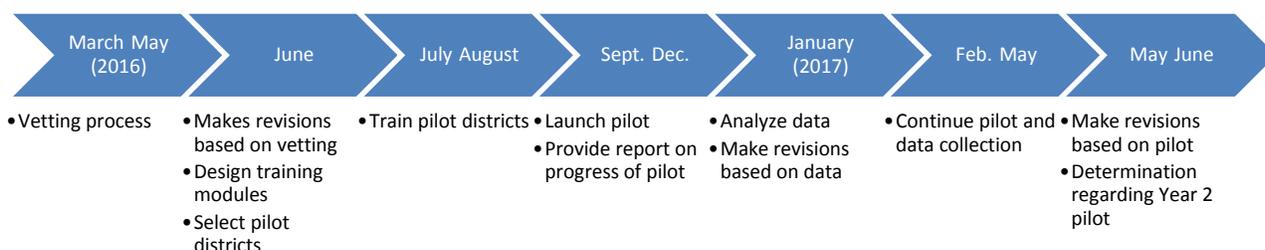
Each instructional portfolio will be scored by a certified Texas educator, with a background in writing instruction, trained in the writing continuum who may or may not be the student's classroom teacher. In addition, 50% of the instructional portfolios will be evaluated by a local, non-teacher/s of record. TEA will randomly sample instructional portfolios for validity purposes.

Scoring of Instructional Portfolios	
Rater 1	Teacher of Record
Rater 2 (50%)	Local, Non-Teacher/s of Record
TEA Evaluation of All Responses	

Holistic scores from instructional portfolios can be compared to scores given to process samples and timed responses in order to determine the relationship between responses scored in isolation and responses scored holistically as a portfolio.

TIMELINE

Implementation timeline for Writing Pilot.



CONCLUSION

A quality writing assessment is inclusive of multiple factors of development that evidence growth in writing. Through a portfolio approach, teachers are able to assess a writer's initiative, fluency, capacity to critique writing, habits and skills with revision, and the ability to learn from constructive feedback. Comparison of beginning and end of year timed writing samples allows for a quantitative measure of growth. The random sampling and evaluation of portfolios will allow correlations to be inferred about the relationship between instruction and assessment. The most important tools to increase the comparability of writing scores over time and across locations are carefully crafted rubrics (scoring rules) and extensive training in their use. Involving teachers in the scoring process also conveys confidence in the abilities of the educators who are responsible for the instruction of the students in the state.

Ultimately, well-designed assessment should inform and aid effective instruction. Therefore, the goal of this proposal is to support the growth of students as effective writers. The development of effective communication skills is vital for student attainment of postsecondary goals.

Components for Further Consideration

- Vetting and selection of writing continuums/scoring rubrics
- Collection of prompts for timed writing
- Selection of cloud-based digital platform
- Design of training modules and assessment guides
- Designation of criteria for selection of pilot districts
- Determination of sample size for data collection
- Consideration of reliability and validity measures
- Identification of scalability factors