STAAR Alternate 2

UPDATED STAAR Alternate 2 Test Administration
TETN# 33018
STAAR Alternate 2 is the state assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

STAAR Alternate, as it was originally designed, was administered for the last time in Spring of 2014.
House Bill 5 of the 83rd Legislative Session called for a redesign of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate assessment.

“The agency, in conjunction with appropriate interested persons, shall redevelop assessment instruments adopted or developed under Subsection (b) for administration to significantly cognitively disabled students in a manner consistent with federal law. An assessment instrument under this subsection may not require a teacher to prepare tasks or materials for a student who will be administered such an assessment instrument.”

Portfolios and performance-based assessments would not be allowed under this legislation, because these types of assessments require the individualization of materials and task administration.

Therefore, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) designed a standardized item-based assessment
House Bill 906 of the 83rd Legislative Session stipulates that “the agency may not adopt a performance standard that indicates that a student’s performance on the alternate assessment does not meet standards if the lowest level of the assessment accurately represents the student’s developmental level as determined by the student’s admission, review, and dismissal committee.”

This legislation eliminates an assessment where the ARD committee or teacher decides the complexity level of the assessment based on individual needs.

To meet these requirements, the redesigned assessment will not have complexity levels and will be a standardized assessment with items varying in difficulty throughout a single test.
Although state legislation changed, federal law regarding the alternate assessment did not change.

- The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires an assessment for students with *significant cognitive disabilities* that can be applied to 1% of the tested population for federal accountability purposes.

- The assessment still needs to **cover the state curriculum through prerequisite skills**; thus our vertical alignment documents and curriculum framework documents continue to be the basis for instruction and item development for the new test design.
• Meets the needs for the wide range of students with significant cognitive disabilities that comprise this population.

• Must cover a wide range of the state curriculum through prerequisite skills from the curriculum presented in earlier grades.

• Consists of one assessment for each subject/grade or course that will be administered to all students

• Eliminates the need for a teacher to prepare tasks or materials for a student
ARD Committee Responsibilities
Determining Eligibility
The General Assessment (STAAR) is the First Consideration

ARD committees must determine whether the general assessment is the most appropriate for the student by reviewing the student’s present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).

The PLAAFP should provide the committee members with a clear understanding of the student’s strengths, current areas of need, accommodations, needed supports, and how the student will access the grade-level/course curriculum.

ARD Committees should review the student’s instructional plan and use this as the basis for making appropriate assessment decisions.

If STAAR, with or without accommodations, is not appropriate for a student, the ARD committee must review the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate.
The district personnel completing the form needs to be identified by name on the form, along with his or her position.

The district personnel named in the form is responsible for making sure the ARD committee discusses each section.

The district personnel completing the form should be a member of the ARD committee (e.g., special education teacher, ARD facilitator, administrator). These forms should be completed during the ARD committee meeting when assessment decisions are made.

Form found at: http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt/
Students receiving special education services and who meet all of the participation requirements:

- Have a significant cognitive disability
- Require specialized supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment
- Require intensive individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings
- Access and participate in the grade-level TEKs through prerequisite skills (student expectations from earlier grades)
Students who have a significant cognitive disability:

May have an intellectual quotient (IQ) below 70 resulting in limited potential

Are unable to academically reach grade level, regardless of the quality of instruction

Display poor social adaptability resulting in dependence on others for daily living and employment

Differ from students with a specific learning disability who have average intelligence, but have learning problems that make reaching their potential difficult.
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements

- answered with “Yes” before the ARD committee can recommend STAAR Alternate 2 and complete the rest of the form.

- The justification section does not need to have page numbers from the IEP, but evidence must be provided for all “Yes” entries.

- Evidence of an intellectual disability must be verified by an assessment specialist and be based on valid assessment data.
Eligibility Criteria

Question: 1. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?  Yes  No

A significant cognitive disability is determined by the ARD committee and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team. The disability must affect the student’s intellectual potential and be documented in the student’s IEP.

A student with a significant cognitive disability has limited potential to reach grade-level expectations.

While a student with a specific learning disability may have academic challenges, he or she has the intellectual potential to reach grade-level expectations and, therefore, is not eligible to take STAAR Alternate.
Eligibility Criteria

Question: 2. Does the student require specialized supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment?  Yes  No

Federal regulations mandate that all students have access to and be assessed on grade-level curriculum.

To access the grade-level curriculum, a student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized academic instruction.

Additionally, a student eligible for STAAR Alternate requires support throughout the day in areas such as communicating needs, navigating the classroom or school building, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.

Justification (Example): Amy has difficulty attending to tasks and requires numerous redirections to stay focused. When in a large group for instruction, Amy is easily distracted and does not process language well. Her expressive language delays make it difficult for Amy to express her needs in a large group. Because of this, Amy requires specialized instruction in a small group setting for academic skills. Amy’s weak language skills also make it difficult for her to respond appropriately in social situations; therefore, she requires assistance during nonacademic school activities. Amy requires assistance to perform all self-care skills.
Eligibility Criteria

Question: 3. Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings? Yes No

The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to learn and retain information.

Instruction in a variety of settings is required in order for the student to transfer skills (generalize).
Eligibility Criteria

Question: 4. Does the student access and participate in the grade-level TEKS through prerequisite skills? Yes  No

Access to the grade-level curriculum is mandated by the federal government.

A student with a significant cognitive disability requires access to the TEKS through prerequisite skills.

Prerequisite skills are student expectations from previous grades that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.

Justification (Example): Although Amy shows relative strengths in the areas of math calculation and math reasoning, she is performing skills that are several grade levels behind her grade 8 peers in all academic areas. Her access to the grade-level TEKS is through prerequisite skills.
If “Yes” is indicated for all of the eligibility questions for STAAR Alternate 2, the ARD committee must discuss the assurances in Step II, and the district personnel completing the form must initial each one as it is discussed in the ARD meeting.

- Assurances that the decision for testing is:
  - Documented in IEP
  - Based on educational records and not on previous state-wide test performance or AYP considerations
  - Not based on racial or economic background, excessive absences, amount of time or location of service delivery
The ARD committee should indicate the subject(s) or course(s) in which the student is enrolled, for which STAAR Alternate 2 assessments will be given. Students, for whom the ARD committee determines eligible for STAAR Alternate 2, will take an alternate assessment in ALL enrolled courses/subjects for that school year.
Eligibility Criteria

The document needs to be part of the IEP if the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is determined.

Dynamic fields have been added so that the form can be filled out locally on a computer.

All assessment information must be communicated to the campus testing coordinator.
Other ARD Responsibilities

• In addition to providing evidence that all participation requirements have been met and the assurances have been addressed, the ARD committee will determine and document the needed accommodations for both instruction and assessment.

• The test administrator will determine the accommodations that will be used for a specific assessment based on the documented accommodations in the student’s IEP and the TEA guidelines for allowable accommodations for STAAR Alternate 2.

• A student with a severe medical or cognitive impairment may not be able to complete any part of the assessment. For these exceptions, ARD committees can determine if a student’s assessment can be coded as a Medical Exception or as No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR).

• For both exceptions, the ARD committee will make the determination after reviewing medical and educational records. The decision must be documented in the student’s IEP along with evidence to support the determination.
Medical Exception

Students that are medically fragile and cannot attend to or tolerate any academic interaction can qualify for a medical exception for the following circumstances:

• The student is in the final stages of a terminal or degenerative illness.
• The student is receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency or serious injury in an accident.
• The student is unable to interact with peers or staff without risk of infection or contamination to himself/herself or others.
• The student is receiving non-academic homebound services due to medical issues and does not receive academic instruction.
The medical incident or condition must be so severe as to prevent the student from participating in instruction offered at school, at home, at a hospital, or at a residential facility.

The information used to make the medical exception determination must reflect the student’s situation just prior to and throughout the testing window.

The medical incident or condition must be identified and verified in writing by a licensed physician and kept on file by the school district.

At least one of the specific medical conditions listed should describe the medical condition of the student.

The ARD committee must discuss the three assurances and initial each one after they are discussed.

The medical exception should be documented in the student’s IEP and this form included in the IEP.

Students who meet this eligibility are not required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 for any courses or subjects for which they are enrolled in for the current year.

A score code of “M” must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.
No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR)

Students who are not able to respond authentically to any verbal, visual, or tactile stimuli during academic instruction due to level of cognition rather than a medical condition can qualify for a NAAR exception if one of the two following student descriptions is evident:

1. Because of multiple impairments, the student is unable to receive information during instruction and assessment. For example, the student may have a combination of visual, auditory, and/or tactile impairments.

2. The student is consistently unable to provide an authentic academic response during instruction. His or her behavior may be described by one or more of the following characterizations:
   
   - does not show any observable reaction to a specific stimuli
   - exhibits only startle responses
   - tracks or fixates on objects at random and not for a purpose
   - moves or responds only to internal stimuli
   - vocalizes intermittently regardless of changes in the environment
One “Yes” will need to be circled on the form.

The ARD committee must discuss the two assurances and initial them after they are discussed.

The NAAR designation should be documented in the student’s IEP and this form included in the IEP.

Students who meet this eligibility are not required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 for any courses or subjects for which they are enrolled in for the current year.

A score code of “N” must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.

The student is unable to receive information during instruction and assessment and/or the student is unable to provide an authentic academic response.

The NAAR designation is based on educational records and describes the student in all settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Authentic Academic Response Eligibility Criteria</th>
<th>Select Yes or No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because of multiple impairments, the student is unable to receive information during instruction and assessment. For example, the student may have a combination of visual, auditory, and/or tactile impairments.</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is consistently unable to provide an authentic academic response during instruction. His/her behavior may be described by one or more of the following characteristics:</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The student is unable to demonstrate any observable reaction to a specific stimulus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The student exhibits only simple responses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The student tracks or fixates on objects at random and not for a purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The student moves or responds only to internal stimuli.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The student vocalizes intermittently regardless of changes in environment around him/her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disclose and Initial Assurances

If the response of the student is described by at least one of the eligibility criteria, the ARD committee must discuss the following assurances. Both assurances must be initialed by district personnel for the student to be eligible for the STAAR Alternate 2 NAAR designation. The ARD committee must ensure the NAAR designation is documented in the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), and this form must be included in the IEP.

1. The student is unable to receive information during instruction and assessment. The student is unable to provide an authentic academic response.
2. The NAAR designation is based on educational records and describes the student in all settings.
Linking to the Grade-Level Standards

Vertical Alignment documents organize the state curriculum for each subject by similar knowledge and skills statements.

All the corresponding student expectations are ordered by grade level. Reading, writing, and math were reorganized. All were posted with the new names.
Curriculum Framework documents list all the available prerequisite skills for each essence statement.

- Four similar prerequisite skills were selected from this list and used to develop test items for a cluster.
- Remember that the items link to the essence statement and measure some part of the selected prerequisite skill at the appropriate grade level.
- All the Curriculum Framework documents will be updated and reposted.
In addition to the prerequisite skills, there are instructional terms that students will need exposure to during instruction. A list has been added to each Curriculum Framework document and includes the terms for all the essence statements and not just the ones selected for a given administration.

Students need to become familiar with these terms as the student is developmentally able to comprehend the content.

Each terms appears under the grade level it first appears in the assessment.

These lists can be found at the beginning of each framework.
There are also universal terms that students will need exposure to that are common to the presentation instructions across subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>activity</th>
<th>describe</th>
<th>relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beginning</td>
<td>find</td>
<td>represents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefit</td>
<td>graphic</td>
<td>statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best</td>
<td>mainly</td>
<td>stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completes</td>
<td>missing</td>
<td>symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conclusion</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td>true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct</td>
<td>probably</td>
<td>value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The essence statement documents are posted on the STAAR Alternate 2 resources page.

Ten or less essence statements per subject were used to create an assessment.

These documents will show which essence statements need to be reviewed in the Curriculum Framework documents to assist teachers when planning instruction for the assessment.
**Identifies the main idea and supporting details in informational texts.**

**Step 1 – Focus on the “big picture” of an essence statement by reviewing the Curriculum Framework document for the essence statement.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>TEKS Knowledge and Skills Statement/STAAR-Tested Student Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(3.13) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text</td>
<td>Identifies the main idea and supporting details in informational texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisite Skills/Links to TEKS Vertical Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>retell important events in stories in logical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish purposes for reading selected texts based upon context to enhance comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask literal questions of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell or act out important events in stories in logical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish purposes for reading selected texts based upon desired outcome to enhance comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make connections to own experiences, to ideas in other texts, and to the larger community and discuss textual evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitor and adjust comprehension (e.g., using background knowledge, creating sensory images, rereading a portion aloud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell or act out important events in stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make inferences based on the cover, title, illustrations, and plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask and respond to questions about text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss the purposes for reading and listening to various texts (e.g., to become involved in real and imagined events, setting, actions, and to enjoy language)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Under each heading the prerequisite skills are arranged from the highest grade level to the lowest grade level.

*These prerequisite skills were borrowed from different knowledge and skills bank(s) due to similar content.*
Step 2 – Look for common strands throughout the prerequisite skills that will lead a student to the “big picture” – i.e., main idea and supporting details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisite Skills/Links to TEKS Vertical Alignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create a list of facts or ideas in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>describe the order of events or ideas in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locate the facts that are clearly stated in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the main idea and distinguish it from the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell the order of events in a text by referring to the words and/ or illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify important facts or details in text, heard or read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell the main idea, heard or read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use titles and illustrations to make predictions about text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell important facts in a text, heard or read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the topic and details in expository heard or read, referring to the words and/ or illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/comprehension (figure 19)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitor and adjust comprehension (e.g., identifying sensory generating questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use text features (e.g., tables of contents, index, headings) to locate specific information in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use use text features (e.g., title, tables of contents, illustrations) to locate specific information in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use text features (e.g., title, tables of contents, illustrations) to locate specific information in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retell or retell important events in stories in logical order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establish a sequence for reading selected texts based on content to enhance comprehension</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Under each heading the prerequisite skills are arranged from the highest grade level to the lowest grade level.
Step 3 – Choose a strand to focus instruction. Using the prerequisite skills in the strand, determine the skills that your student already has, then try to move your student toward higher skills.

- locate the facts that are clearly stated in a text
- identify the main idea in a text and distinguish it from the topic
- identify important facts or details in text, heard or read
- restate the main idea, heard or read
- identify the topic and details in expository text heard or read, referring to the words and/or illustrations
- ask literal questions of text
- ask and respond to questions about text
- ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text
- ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts
- ask and respond to questions about text read aloud
- ask and answer appropriate questions about the book
Reviewing the Curriculum Frameworks

1. Review the essence statement or “big picture”
2. Choose a common strand from the Curriculum Framework document
3. Determine the skills that your student already has
4. Begin instruction at the next highest student expectation
5. Work on the other strands
Test Design

GRADE 3
Mathematics

STAAR Alternate 2

April 2016
10 essence statements are available for testing, 5 for the base test items and 5 for the field test items.

Each of the 6 essence statements is measured with 4 items presented together in a cluster.

6 clusters are tested: 24 items per test, 20 for the base test and 4 for the field test.

The cluster design requires the student to make 6 concept transitions throughout the test.

The four items per cluster range in difficulty, starting with the easiest item and moving toward the hardest item.

The difficulty of the items is based on the skill being tested, the selected prerequisite skill, and what the student is being asked to do.

Each item measures a specific prerequisite skill.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Student Characteristic</th>
<th>Test Design Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty retrieving information</td>
<td>Items grouped together in a cluster to limit transitions, provide context, and help link back to previous learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty processing language</td>
<td>Limited use of names, lengthy scenarios, or too much language to set up a problem; simple noun-verb sentence and limited use of pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete level of learning; abstract thinking difficult</td>
<td>Application items may not be at the same level of abstraction as a non-disabled peer; answer choices may be a little more obvious than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of learning to a new presentation</td>
<td>Cluster design, extra text is added to help a student transition if one item is too different from the others in a cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited stamina to stay focused</td>
<td>Test can be given over multiple sessions; 24 test questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations in mobility and motor movement</td>
<td>Stimulus images from the student booklet can be copied and placed closer to the student or presented on a vertical plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem with organization of visual images</td>
<td>Stimulus images can be copied and placed on cards, put in calendar boxes or other organizational tools; majority of the images are boxed to help alert the student to the individual answer choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other specific needs due to individual disabilities</td>
<td>Approved accommodations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All STAAR and EOC tested subjects have sample items on the STAAR Alternate webpage on the TEA website.

These samples should be used to become familiar with the test format, practice the presentation instructions and testing environment with students, and determine options for how your student may be able to access the stimulus images and the text.
Sample Questions

- Sample Test Questions can be found at:
  [http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/STAAR_Alt2/STAAR_Alt2_Sample_Test_Questions/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/STAAR_Alt2/STAAR_Alt2_Sample_Test_Questions/)

- Links to the pdf version of the teacher form and student form are found in a side by side format.

- Sample test questions are small subsets of test questions released from the STAAR Alt 2 field test banks

- Sample test questions appear as one complete cluster of four items

- Complete test forms will be released after the Spring 2016 administration of the STAAR Alternate 2
The prerequisite skills have been mapped out across all grades and subjects to ensure that the prerequisite skills increase in difficulty throughout the years.

Four similar prerequisite skills were selected when possible. There are times when the four items are not as cohesive due to the available prerequisite skills and the need to make sure that the items do not cue one another.
### Sample Items: Prerequisite Skills

#### Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Category 3</td>
<td>Geometry and Measurement: The student will demonstrate an understanding of how to represent and apply geometry and measurement concepts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Skill Statement 3.7</td>
<td>The student applies mathematical process standards to select appropriate units, strategies, and tools to solve problems involving customary and metric measurement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essence Statement</td>
<td>Solves problems involving perimeter, time, liquid volume (capacity), or weight.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill (Old Curriculum)</td>
<td>compare and order two or three concrete objects according to length (longer/shorter than, or the same) (K)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Solves problems involving perimeter, time, liquid volume (capacity), or weight.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill (Old Curriculum)</td>
<td>compare and order two or more concrete objects according to length (from longest to shortest) (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item 1 in a Cluster

The asterisk in the test administrator manual indicates the answer. If the asterisk is outside the box, the student can find any place in the box to get credit for the correct answer. If the asterisk is next to a specific part of the image, the exact part must be found.

Presentation Instructions for Question 1
- Present Stimulus 1.
- Direct the student to each pencil. Communicate: This pencil is longer than the other pencil.
- Communicate: Find the pencil that is longer.

Sometimes the student is asked to “find” the answer in one image or multiple images that vary in the amount of detail. Difficulty varies across clusters.

The first item establishes the context for number patterns that will continue throughout the other items in the cluster.

In this example, the concept is presented by stressing that one pencil is longer than the other meeting the “recognize compare heights and lengths” prerequisite. (slide #39)
Specific instructions are given for what the student must “find” and how to score the action. If an incorrect response is given, the test administrator is directed to remove the stimulus, wait at least 5 seconds, then repeat the presentation instructions for reduced credit.

No extra assistance is allowed, because the answer is provided in the presentation.
Item 2 in a Cluster

An exact or similar image or concept is brought over from Item 1.

Important components of the images are identified for the student during the presentation instructions.

The test administrator presents Stimulus “a” and “b” before asking the student to “find” what is requested.

For most item 2 questions, the student must “find” what is requested by matching something in the second stimulus to something in the first stimulus.

For this example, there has been an increase in complexity with the addition of another set of answer choices fulfilling the “recognize compare heights and lengths” prerequisite skill. (slide #39) the match is exact and other times the student is asked to match opposite ideas or the same concept presented with different images.
If the student is not able to “find” the correct answer, the test administrator models the desired student action and repeats the presentation instructions.

Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without modeling assistance.
Item 3 in a Cluster

Three answer choices are presented before asking the student to “find” what is requested.

The student must understand what is presented in Stimulus “a” and use the information to determine the answer from three answer choices in Stimulus “b.”

The student may be asked to integrate multiple pieces of information.

For this example, the tested concept still focuses on comparing lengths, but has been expanded to three answer choices and to focus on the new prerequisite skill “compare and order....objects by length (longer/shorter than).” (slide #40)

The difficulty varies from cluster to cluster depending on how close the relationship is between the Stimulus “a” and the answer choices.
### Scoring Instructions for Item 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Action</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the pen,</td>
<td>mark A for question 3 and move to question 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the pen,</td>
<td>provide one of these allowable teacher assists to the student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Allow the student to use a measuring tool. OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have the student move his or her finger across the length of each object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the selected teacher assistance, if the student finds the pen,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the selected teacher assistance, if the student does not find the pen,</td>
<td>mark B for question 3 and move to question 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mark C for question 3 and move to question 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other examples:

Demonstrate the action shown in the pictures.
Record the number after the student counts the models.
Allow the use of a math too

Only the teacher assists listed can be used.
If the student is not able to “find” the correct answer, the teacher is to pick one of two or three provided allowable teacher assists before repeating the presentation instructions.
Sometimes the teacher performs the action in the teacher assist and sometimes the student performs the action. In either case the student receives the correct information before moving on.

The allowable teacher assists vary from item to item and target different modalities without providing a direct answer.

Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without assistance.
Further clarification was given in the Fall 2015 TETN regarding scoring instructions for Item 3 questions. All allowable teacher assists should be reviewed and determined prior to administration of the test. Assists may be performed by either teacher or student unless otherwise designated in scoring instructions. Further guidance was given to make sure that the allowable accommodation of “highlighting,” as with all accommodations, does not lead the student directly to the correct answer.
Item 4 in a Cluster

The test administrator presents the images and answer choices before asking the student to “find” what is requested.

For item 4 questions, students are required to apply knowledge at varying levels of difficulty by
- comparing similarities and differences,
- evaluating a detailed stimulus, or
- inferring an idea or drawing a conclusion.

The student must compare several parts of the stimuli to determine the correct answer.

For this example, the tested concept still focuses on comparing lengths, this time “compare and order objects by length (longest to shortest).” (slide #40) The difficulty of the item depends on the level of application that is required.
If the student is not able to provide the correct answer, the initial presentation instructions are repeated. No other assistance can be provided, because the student must apply the information that has been provided. Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without having the instructions repeated.

After Item 4, the student moves to a new cluster starting with a less difficult item.

### Scoring Instructions for Item 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Action</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the set of objects in the order of “straw, knife, spoon, toothpick,”</td>
<td>mark A for question 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the set of objects in the order of “straw, knife, spoon, toothpick,”</td>
<td>replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the teacher repeats the instructions, if the student finds the set of objects in the order of “straw, knife, spoon, toothpick,”</td>
<td>mark B for question 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the teacher repeats the instructions, if the student does not find the set of objects in the order of “straw, knife, spoon, toothpick,”</td>
<td>mark C for question 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presentation Instructions for Question 1

- Present Stimulus 1
- Direct the student to the ball under the bed in Stimulus 1. Communicate the text.
- Communicate: Find the ball under the bed.

Stimulus 1

The ball is **under** the bed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the ball under the bed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the ball under the bed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student finds the ball under the bed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student does not find the ball under the bed,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ways a Test Administrator Can **Direct**

**Direct** the student to each answer choice by pointing to, tapping, or touching the answer choices individually or by saying or signing, “Look at the pictures.” – *the amount of time spent directing the student to each answer choice must be the same*

Pointing or touching the answer choices one time each is an appropriate way to **direct** the student. It would not be appropriate to tap or touch only the correct answer or to tap or touch the correct answer more times than the other answer choices.

**Direct** the student to the outline of the circle by guiding the student’s hand to the circle and moving it around the outline to emphasize the shape. – *make sure that directing the student does not inadvertently lead into the “find” statement*

Removing the student’s hand from the circle after directing him or her is appropriate. Leaving the student’s hand on the circle after directing and reading the “find” statement is not appropriate. In this instance, the student did not give an intentional response to the stimuli.
Presentation Instructions

- Present Stimulus 2a and 2b.
- Direct the student to the circle in Stimulus 2a. Communicate: This is a circle.
- Direct the student to the house in Stimulus 2b without naming the shapes on the house. Communicate: This is a house made of shapes.
- Communicate: Find the circle on the house.

**Stimulus 2a**

![Circle](image)

**Stimulus 2b** (Presented on the same page of the student booklet as Stimulus 2a.)

![House](image)

Each test is individually administered.
Students are not expected to read, write, or manipulate the test booklet.
The test administrator is given directions to *present* the item, specifically what to *direct* the student to, and what to *communicate* to the student. Sometimes a cautionary phrase such as “Direct the student to the house in Stimulus 2b without naming the shapes on the house,” is used to ensure that the answer is not revealed during the presentation.

It is important to read and practice the presentation instructions before administering the assessment, because the instructions are unique for each item.
The guidelines for “*present,*” “*direct,*” and “*communicate*” must be looked up in the test administrator manual and followed as outlined.
Present Direct Communicate

To **Present** is to introduce the stimuli in the student booklet with needed **Accommodations**

**Types of Allowable Accommodations:**
The way a test administrator *presents* a test item to a student is individually based on the needs of the student. Accommodations must be included in the student’s IEP and should **only** be made if the student is unable to access the test item without them. Accommodations are optional and should be applied **only** when needed.

Accommodations to the two-dimensional stimulus images
Accommodations to limit number of images shown at one time
Accommodations to language used in the test administrators instructions
Accommodations to provide structured reminders
Present Direct Communicate

Accommodations to the two-dimensional Stimulus images
Place color overlays on images or text
Photocopy and cut out stimulus images to the student’s test booklet – can be affixed to slant boards, poster board or card stock
Raise or darken outlines in stimulus images
Describe images (for students with visual impairments only)
Pair images or text with photographs, real objects of the same content, or picture representations
Add braille labels to images or text
Enlarge images by copying or using magnification devices
Attach textured materials to images in the student’s test booklet
Raise or darken outlines in stimulus images
Color or highlight stimulus images or answer choices
Demonstrate concepts or relationships in images
Present Direct Communicate

Accommodations to limit number of stimulus images shown at one time

Place images on separate paper presented one at a time
Cover or isolate each image until it is addressed

Accommodations to language used in the test administrators instructions

Use routine picture representations for key words in verbal directions
Reread sections of text as requested by the student
Any accommodations not listed can only be used after guidance/approval from a STAAR Alternate 2 team member at the Texas Education Agency.
Ways a Test Administrator Can **Present**

**Caution** – A presentation should allow a student to access the test question but not provide an answer to the question. Students must intentionally respond to the question in order to receive credit for a correct answer.

Attach a tactile representation for the image to the student booklet. The representation must be pertinent to the task and not just something that the student likes.

A piece of fur on the dog is an appropriate tactile representation for this question. Shiny pink glitter would not be appropriate because it could be difficult to determine what the student is responding to – the dog as required by the “find” statement or the glitter.

Pair the images in the student booklet with objects of the images – objects must resemble the images as much as possible and be oriented the same ways as in the images.

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**Presentation Instructions for Question 1**
- Present Stimulus 1.
- Direct the student to Stimulus 1. Communicate: The dog was trained to do tricks for a show on a stage in front of many people.

**Stimulus 1**

**Presentation Instructions for Question 2**
- Present Stimulus 2a and 2b.
- Direct the student to Stimulus 2a. Communicate: The hot chocolate produces heat and keeps the girl’s hands warm.
- Direct the student to each answer choice in Stimulus 2b.
- Communicate: Find another source of heat.

**Stimulus 2a**

**Stimulus 2b**
Ways a Test Administrator Can Present

Enlarge the answer choices – follow all security and confidentiality procedures for copying secure testing materials

Copy and cut out the answer choices – ensure confidentiality of materials and that answer choices are presented in the same order as in the student booklet; 2-part boxed answer choices must be presented together

Pair the answer choices with pictures – all images must be equally viable

Rearrange the answer choices – answer choices can be presented horizontally or vertically; however, must be presented in the same order as the student booklet
Ways a Test Administrator Can **Present** Images to a Student with a Visual Impairment

- Describe the images in the stimuli – *verbal descriptions must be objective and can only provide information that the teacher sees on the page; no additional information or comments can be provided*

- “A girl is sitting on a big log outside. It is night time. She has made a campfire by putting rocks in a circle. Inside the circle are some sticks that are on fire. She is rubbing her hands together.”

- **Caution** – *When providing a student with a verbal description of an image, it is important for the teacher to plan ahead. During the preview period, the teacher should script out the language while using caution not to inadvertently provide the student with an answer to the “find” statement.*
To Direct is to Focus your student on the test materials.

The term *direct* refers to the way the teacher brings the stimulus components to the student’s attention. This can be done in a variety of ways and should be done in a way that keeps the student’s strengths and needs in mind.

- Guide the student’s hand to specific places in the stimuli as instructions are given.
- Color code, number, or label answer choices with letters to direct the student to a specific place.
- Cover up parts of the stimulus until explained in the instructions.
- Point to or highlight sections of the stimuli as they are mentioned in the instructions.
- Alert the student orally or through sign as to where to look or focus.
- Place objects representing the stimuli in the student’s hand.

**Caution** – *When directing a student to the stimuli, equal time must be spent on each component or answer choice so that a correct answer is not cued.*
Ways a Test Administrator Can **Present** Images to a Student with a Visual Impairment

Direct the student to text by focusing the student’s attention on one line at a time or by minimizing the amount of text seen at one time – **all text must be read exactly as written in the presentation instructions; paraphrasing, changing vocabulary terms, and embellishing text is not allowed**

Direct the student to each answer choice one at a time by using a card with a window to isolate the options – **all answer choices must be isolated for an equal amount of time**
Ways a Test Administrator Can Direct

Direct the student to each answer choice by pointing to, tapping, or touching the answer choices individually or by saying or signing, “Look at the pictures.” – the amount of time spent directing the student to each answer choice must be the same.

Pointing or touching the answer choices one time each is an appropriate way to direct the student. It would not be appropriate to tap or touch only the correct answer or to tap or touch the correct answer more times than the other answer choices.

Removing the student’s hand from the circle after directing him or her is appropriate. Leaving the student’s hand on the circle after directing and reading the “find” statement is not appropriate. In this instance, the student did not give an intentional response to the stimuli.

Direct the student to the outline of the circle by guiding the student’s hand to the circle and moving it around the outline to emphasize the shape. – make sure that directing the student does not inadvertently lead into the “find” statement.
Ways a Test Administrator Can Direct

Direct the student to the answer choices by highlighting, numbering, or labeling with letters. – **make sure that directing the student does not inadvertently give the student the answer**
The term *communicate* means to share information with and request information from the student in a way that the student will understand. A teacher can communicate in many ways depending on the student’s needs.

Orally read bolded text in the presentation instructions and answer choices
Pair key words in the instructions with picture icons or objects

Use sign language to communicate the questions
Pair text with picture icons so that the student can follow along as the text is read

Point to the words as the student reads and correct any errors the student makes
Turn the “find” statement into a question
The term *communicate* means to share information with and request information from the student in a way that the student will understand. A teacher can communicate in many ways depending on the student’s needs.
Communicate the word “find” by replacing it with one of the following: “Show me,” “Point to,” “Touch,” or “Tell me”.

Communicate the text in the answer choices by pairing the words with pictures/icons to reinforce understanding of the sentence.

“Where is the sentence that tells that the ball is under the bed?” or point to each answer choice and ask “Is this the sentence that tells that the ball is under the bed?”
Presenting Reading Passages

Test administrators have the option of reading a passage again or repeating sections of the passage from earlier questions in a cluster if they feel that the student needs to hear the previous sections of the passage before the “find” statement is given. To accomplish this, the test administrator can do one of the following:

**Turn back to previous questions in the cluster and read the sections for the student from the test administrator manual without the student looking at the text.**

**OR**

- **Photocopy previous sections of the passage to combine with the next section of the passage as the student proceeds through the cluster.**
- **Caution- At no time can the student go back to previous questions in the student booklet and change answers after the question has been scored and the student has moved to the next question.**
Presenting Reading Passages

Some questions in the student test booklet are presented with a stem and some appear as complete sentences.
Test administrators can communicate the stem once, then communicate each answer choice.
Or, the test administrator can communicate the stem each time before communicating each answer choice.

The dog trained to be Sandy was found-
  in movies
  at an animal shelter
  on a stage

The dog trained to be Sandy was found in movies.
The dog trained to be Sandy was found at an animal shelter.
The dog trained to be Sandy was found on a stage.
Students can be alerted back to the task or materials or be encouraged to stay focused at any time during testing.

Students can request to have information repeated.

The test administrator can repeat sections of the presentation instructions without a student request if the student is distracted during the presentation, only until the answer choices and the “find” statement are given.

Once the answer choices and “find” statement are given, the test administrator must wait for the student to respond.

Once a student gives an answer, the test administrator must follow the scoring instructions to determine how to proceed.

If no response is given, after a reasonable wait time, the answer choices and “find” statement can be repeated once more.

The order in which the bullets for the answer choices and “find” statement in the presentation instructions are communicated can be reversed from the order listed in the instructions.
No response--- repeat the answer choices and the “find” statement once more
Correct response---mark A and move to the next question
Incorrect response---apply one of the scripted teacher assists and replicate the presentation instructions from the beginning

Wait an appropriate time for the student to respond.

These instructions can be repeated as needed including reading passages.
These instructions must be given once the first time. The order of these two bullets can be reversed.
Student Response Options

Students need to be given an opportunity to respond to test questions using a mode of response that is typical of the way the student responds during instruction. It is not important how a student responds – only that the teacher is able to discern the student’s preferred answer. Response modes do not need to be predetermined as in the past.

Response mode can be:

- verbal
- visual
- physical
Verbal Response Modes

A student can . . . Indicate a preferred answer by positively or negatively vocalizing when answer choices are presented one at a time — *vocalizations must be clear and understandable; a student can only receive a correct answer if the teacher is confident of the student’s choice*

Say or sign “yes” or “no” when presented answer choices one at a time and being asked, “Is this the _____?”

Respond with the answer when choices are labeled by the teacher — i.e., “Pink,” “Blue,” or “Green”

Orally state responses in the student’s primary language, including signs and word approximations

Orally state responses in the student’s primary language, including signs and word approximations

Describe the location of the answer — i.e., “top,” “first,” or “last”

Use a communication device with preprogrammed answer choices or vocabulary — *all test information programmed into a communication device must be kept secure during the testing window and be immediately erased after testing*
Physical Response Modes

A student can.
Pick up an answer when choices are paired with manipulatives by the teacher – i.e., “A,” “B,” or “C” plastic letters
Highlight, color, or mark a response
Nod, smile, or gesture to indicate “yes” or “no” when presented answer choices one at a time and being asked, “Is this the ____?”
Use or manipulate math tools to create an answer
Place an adhesive note on the correct answer
Manipulate words, sentences, or sections of an answer choice
Write or type responses with or without adaptive writing equipment
Sign the correct answer
Point to, reach for, or touch an answer
Visual Response Modes

• A student can . . .
• Gaze, wink, blink or fixate on stimuli and answers
• Turn his or her head toward stimuli and answers when presented individually in a section organizer
Assistive technology that is documented in the student’s IEP and is used routinely in instruction may be used to provide the student access to the assessment.

The use of technology should be used primarily for communicating an answer by the student or presenting answer choices by the test administrator.

Because the assessment is secure, the use of some devices is not allowable.

Instances when a device or procedure would not be allowed include:
- **Tablets or computers with Internet access that cannot be turned off**
- **Inputting answer choices into a device that has stored memory that cannot be erased**
NEW format highlights each item cluster.

After the student responds to each question, the test administrator will evaluate the response according to the scoring instructions.

The test administrator will record the score on this document and use the information to complete the online transcription form in TestNav.

The A, B, C determinations for each question, along with the accommodations used during the assessment, must be entered into TestNav.

The form shown here is provided in the test materials and is required to ensure that the student performance is accurately transcribed into TestNav.

Once the information has been transcribed, the test administrator will turn in the form to the testing coordinator or transcribe information.

The form must be returned in the nonscorable shipment.
Recording Responses

Scoring documents can be found:

at the final page of 2016 STAAR Alternate Test Administrator Manuals.

“Resources for STAAR Alternate 2, TELPAS, and TAKS” at http://www.texasassessment.com/technology/
Testing Policy

TEST ADMINISTRATOR MANUAL

2016

STAAR Alternate 2

Non-Secure Front Matter
The testing window will be from April 4, 2016, until April 22, 2016.

A 10 day preview period prior to April 4, 2016, is allowed for the test administrators once the testing materials have arrived in the district.

Test administrators can preview the student booklets and test administrator instructions for specific questions during this period to become familiar with the instructions, practice manipulating the test materials, plan teacher assists, and prepare accommodations to the student booklet.

All accommodations should be in place prior to April 4, 2016, but accommodations can continue to be made until the test session begins.

Test materials must be checked in at the end of the day and kept in locked, secure storage throughout the day when not in use. Use the materials control form to ensure security of the test materials.

This includes all photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet.

Materials Control form must be used to record daily checkout of materials. This form is found in the STAAR Alternate 2 section of the DCCM.

Input performance data into TestNav 8 from April 4, 2016, until April 22, 2016.
Every attempt must be made to complete the assessment during the window.

If the assessment cannot be completed within the window, enter the score for the portion of the testing the student was able to complete into the online transcription form in TestNav 8.

If a student cannot complete testing within the window due to his or her disability, contact TEA for guidance.

A test administrator not having enough time is not a reason to contact TEA for guidance.

If the district has an extended student holiday during the window, the district may request an alternate testing date from the security team at TEA.

If the student is absent for the entire assessment window, his or her assessment should be marked with a score code of “A” for absent.
Test administrator assistants must receive training and sign the oath of test security and confidentiality.

Certified and noncertified paraprofessionals and related service staff who are currently employed by the district and routinely work with students in the classroom may serve as test administrators or test administrator assistants. The test administrator assistant can provide assistance to the test administrator such as preparing allowable accommodations, manipulating materials during testing session, translating or signing information for the student, and providing behavior management. All test administrator assistants must be trained in the test security and administration procedures prior to the assessment and must have signed the oath of test security and confidentiality.
All STAAR Alternate 2 test administrators are required to attend district training sessions regarding:

Understanding test administrator roles and responsibilities
Maintaining security of test materials until returned to the coordinator each day after previewing or testing
Implementing the test administration processes and procedures stated in the manuals
Applying allowable accommodations appropriately
Reporting any suspected violation of test security to the campus coordinator
Accessing and entering data into the online transcription form in TestNav
Preparing testing materials for return to the testing coordinator at the end of the window including all photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet and the scoring document used to record student performance

Bring only the front matter of the test administrator manual to the training. The remainder of the test administrator manual provides specific test question instructions and student booklet images which can only be viewed by the test administrator and must remain secure at all times.
After training has been completed, each test administrator must sign the Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality.

The box titled “For Test Administrators Authorized to View Secure State Assessments” must also be signed because all test administrators will be viewing the actual test questions in order to prepare allowable accommodations.

A signed oath is required for all test administrators and test administrator assistants.
Testing Coordinator Information

Students will need to be registered in TAMS for the 2016 administration of STAAR Alternate 2 through a registration file and set up into test sessions.

Each test administrator will receive a test administrator manual, a student test booklet, and a scoring document for each assessment that will be given for each student.

Each campus will administer the same form; therefore, materials cannot be shared between campuses or districts.

STAAR Alternate 2 materials should not be shipped with test materials for other state assessments.

All photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet must be returned in the nonscorable shipment.

Any accompanying pictures, objects, textured materials, or instructional tools do not need to be returned.

Scoring documents need to be returned in the nonscorable shipment.

Make sure that all assessments scored as Medical Exception “M” and No Authentic Academic Response “N” are based on ARD decisions.
Detailed information for test administrators on how to administer each specific assessment.

General information about the alternate assessment. Contains specialized information for testing unique student groups.

Specific information for testing coordinators on how to set up test students in TAMS.

Specific information for testing coordinators regarding test security, training, shipping, and handling of test materials under the new STAAR Alternate 2 section.

PearsonAccess Next Online User Guide can be found at www.TexasAssessment.com/technology
After the February 2015 administration of STAAR Alternate 2 student scores were used to set standards.

A team of administrators, educators, parents, and other stakeholders were assembled to review the scoring results and set a passing standard.

A result of standard setting committees were Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) which provide a snapshot of students’ academic characteristics based on performance on a given STAAR Alternate 2 assessment. PLDs are statements that describe the specific knowledge and skills students typically demonstrate at each performance level: Level III—Accomplished Academic Performance, Level II—Satisfactory Academic Performance, and Level I—Developing Academic Performance.

Performance Level Descriptors can be viewed at http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/STAAR_Alternate/STAAR_Alt2_Performance_Level_Descriptors/
Standard Setting

Districts will receive *Confidential Student Reports* for STAAR Alternate 2 at the same time as results are received for STAAR test takers.

STAAR Alternate 2 score reports will include the individual performance level ratings of students, scaled scores, and number of questions answered correctly within each reporting category for each of the assessed grades and content areas.
For more information about STAAR Alternate 2

Call Student Assessment at 512-463-9536

Email a question to staaralt@tea.state.tx.us

Reference the website for STAAR Alternate 2 at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt