State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Testing Considerations

Timing and content coverage

- NCLB requires annual testing in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8 and once in grades 10–12. Science testing is required at least once in grades 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12.
- Core subjects tested should include: mathematics, reading, science, and writing.
- Testing could be conducted every other year instead of annually (at the risk of Title 1, Part A funding). It would be necessary to consider how this might affect instruction during years when subjects are not tested.
    - Alternate-years testing could be implemented for reading and mathematics
        - To support this decision, longitudinal data could be examined to determine how consistently students are classified into the same performance level in two consecutive years.
    - Performance on the current year's test could be used to determine whether subsequent year testing is required for individual students. For example, if, given a student's current year score, he or she has a high probability of passing the next year's test; he or she would not be required to take that test.
        - To support this decision, we would need to consider impacts to test results during years when high performers do not participate.
- At a minimum testing should be done at least once in elementary, middle, and high school.

Student-level consequences

Less frequent testing:

- Results of few opportunities to measure a student's strengths and weakness and plan interventions accordingly.
- Reduces the amount of available information about student progress.
- Could be detrimental to student retention of information.
- Reduces the amount of information available to make decisions about student advancement.
- Could reduce student testing anxiety.

State-level considerations

Less frequent testing:

- Reduces the amount of information available about how the educational system is working and whether educational dollars are well spent.
- Reduces the amount of information available about changes in achievement gaps between student groups and make it more difficult to plan targeted interventions.
- May reduce instructional coverage of the curriculum.
- Could result in increased time for instruction of non-tested subjects.
- Reduce the amount of information available to include in teacher evaluations.