

Question: How much money could Texas save on STAAR if there were no paper-based testing?

Background: The current STAAR assessment program delivers approximately 10 million tests a year. Of those, only 10-15 percent are delivered online. Online testing is provided for end-of-course tests and accommodated forms of the STAAR test for grades 3-8. Districts can deliver online tests using desktop and laptop computers running Windows, Chromebooks, iPads, Macs, and Android tablets.

In 2008, TEA published a legislatively mandated report entitled “An evaluation of district readiness for online testing”. This report contains the most recent data on Texas districts’ ability to support online testing. ([9 OnlineReadinessReport link to report on Commission website here](#))

Answer: In the current contract for STAAR grades 3-8 and end-of-course assessments, \$16 million of the total contract amount of \$70 million annually is directly related to paper-based test administration. However, that amount taken in isolation can be misleading. Eliminating paper-based testing for STAAR in favor of a totally online assessment carries with it some additional cost elements and risks. For example:

- There are per-test costs related to the administration of computer-based testing. On other programs, these range between \$1 and \$4 per test. The actual costs will depend on assessment volumes and specific decisions made about the nature of the tests. It is likely that the test administration window would need to expand from the current schedule to a larger window. It is unlikely that all students in a district could take any given test on the same day. To assure test security, additional forms of each STAAR and end-of-course assessment would need to be developed.
- There may still be a need for some paper testing. Maximum savings will only be recognized if the amount of paper testing is modest enough that TEA and its contractors do not need to maintain parallel paper and computer systems.
- The transition from the current STAAR paper-based system to an all-online STAAR system would take several years to implement, primarily to allow districts time to build the necessary capacity.
- Savings can be increased if on-line tests are designed to take advantages of capabilities like Artificial Intelligence scoring.
- A change from the current STAAR online testing method to computer-adaptive testing would entail additional cost considerations.