



State Assessments: Past, Present, and Future

COMMISSION ON NEXT GENERATION ASSESSMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Gloria Zyskowski, Director, Student Assessment Division

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Brief History of Assessment

TABS to STAAR

1980 to Present

1980-2011

State Required Assessment	Years	Grades and Subjects	Intent	High Stakes
Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS)	1980-1985	February administrations for grades 3, 5, 9 in mathematics, reading, and writing	Assess basic competencies	No
Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS)	1986-1989	February administrations for grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9. October and May for grades 11/12 in mathematics, reading, and writing	Assess minimum skills. Implement high stakes at high school level.	Yes. Students required to pass grade 11 test to receive a high school diploma

State Required Assessment	Years	Grades and Subjects	Intent	High Stakes
Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)	1990-1993	Fall administrations for 3, 5, 7, 9, 11	Shifted focus from minimum skills to academic skills that must assess problem-solving skills and complex thinking	Graduation exit-level requirement
TAAS	1994-2002	Spring administrations for 3-8 and 10 reading and mathematics; 4, 8, and 10 writing; 8 science and social studies.	More grades assessed. Grade 10 TAAS became the exit-level assessment	Graduation exit-level requirement

State Required Assessment	Years	Grades and Subjects	Intent	High Stakes
End of Course	1994-2002 and 1998-2002	Algebra I and biology (1994) English II and U.S. History (1998)	Administered to students at the end of a course	No. However, the EOC assessments could be used in place of the TAAS exit-level tests for graduation purposes
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)	2003-2011	Spring administrations. 3-8 reading and mathematics; 4 and 7 writing; 5 and 8 science; and 8 social studies. Exit-level (grade 11) ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.	Required to be more comprehensive than previous tests and had to measure more of the state curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)	Grade promotion requirements for reading and mathematics in grades 3, 5, and 8 (later amended to be 5 and 8 only). Graduation exit- level requirement

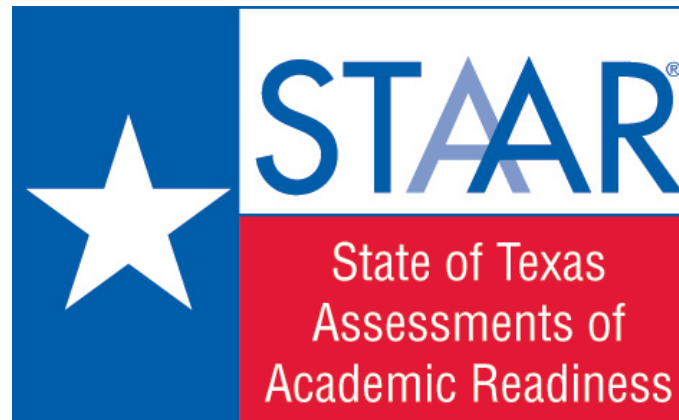
Developments Leading to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Actions, Orders, and Legislation 2004-2009

2004	2005	2007	2009
In response to the Governor's 2004 Algebra Incentive Program, the Algebra I EOC assessment was revised and was administered on a voluntary basis to students who completed Algebra I coursework.	Executive Order RP53 called for increased college readiness programs in Texas schools and authorized the development of a series of EOC assessments in subjects assessed by 11 th grade TAKS.	Senate Bill (SB) 1031 replaced 11 th grade TAKS with the EOC assessments. These assessments had to be administered beginning in 2011-2012.	House Bill (HB) 3 required that the mathematics and reading assessments in grades 3–8 be linked from grade to grade to the college readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments.

The STAAR Program

The required vertical linking in grades 3-8 along with replacing exit-level TAKS with twelve subject-area EOC assessments required the design of a new series of assessments to ultimately indicate college-readiness.



The STAAR Program (continued)

Years	Grades 3-8	EOCs	High Stakes
2012 to 2013	3-8 reading and mathematics; 4 and 7 writing; 5 and 8 science; and 8 social studies	Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry; Biology, Chemistry, Physics; English I, English II, English III (separate reading and writing); U.S. History, World Geography, World History	Grade promotion tied to grades 5 and 8 reading and mathematics Required to take each EOC and meet a cumulative score requirement to graduate

Legislative Changes to the STAAR Program

Between 2013 and 2015, the STAAR EOC program was amended by the Texas Legislature in the following ways:

- Most EOC assessments were repealed, leaving five EOCs: Algebra I, biology, English I, English II, and U.S. History
- The reading and writing assessments for English I and English II were combined into one test for each subject
- Students are now required to only pass each EOC for a course in which the student is enrolled in order to graduate
- Until September 1, 2017, a student who takes all of that student's required EOCs and fails up to two of them can graduate by means of an individual graduation committee

Legislative Changes to the STAAR Program (continued)

The Algebra II and English III EOCs became district-optional assessments beginning in 2016. These assessments cannot be used for purposes of accountability, graduation, or teacher evaluations.

Current State and Federal Assessment Requirements

Texas Education Code State Assessment Requirements

The Texas assessment program must comply with the following state statutes:

- TEC, §39.023(a): The assessments must be criterion-referenced and measure student learning of the TEKS curriculum standards

Texas Education Code (continued)

Required Assessments, Grades 3-8 and EOC

TEC, §39.023(a) requires the following grades 3-8 assessments:

- Reading and mathematics in grades 3-8
- Writing in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social studies in grades 8
- Any other federally required assessment

TEC, §39.025(a) requires for graduation that each student take and pass an EOC for a course in which the student is enrolled and that has an EOC.

Texas Education Code (continued)

TEC, §39.023(a-12) and (a-13) as added by House Bill 743

As added by the 84th Texas Legislature, TEC, §39.023(a-12) and (a-13) require the following for the grades 3-8 assessments:

- For grades 3-5 assessments, 85 percent of students must be able to complete the assessment instrument within 120 minutes
- For grades 6-8 assessments, 85 percent of students must be able to complete the assessment instrument within 180 minutes
- Assessments must be completed in a single day

Texas Education Code (continued)

TEC, §39.023(a-11) as added by House Bill 743

HB 743 also requires the TEA to independently verify the validity and reliability of the STAAR grades 3-8 assessments before the spring 2016 administration. The Student Assessment Division has contracted with the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) for the independent evaluation of the STAAR assessments.

Federal Requirements

Federal assessment requirements must also be considered when designing an assessment and reporting program.

Federally required assessments must assess the entire curriculum in the following:

- Reading and mathematics in grades 3-8;
- Science: once in grades 3-5 and once in grades 6-8;
- For high school, one assessment each for reading, mathematics, and science.

Item Types In Use or Piloted by the Texas Assessment Program

STAAR Test Items

STAAR assessments currently use the following four item types

- Multiple Choice – Students select answers from a list of options.
- Gridded Response -- Gridded-response items require students to determine a numerical answer and then record their answer using a griddable-item response box.
- Written Compositions -- Require students to construct (i.e., write) an original response to a given prompt.
- Passage-Based Multiple-Choice and Short Answer Responses -- Passage-based items can be an individual item or a group of items associated with a common stimulus, such as a literary selection or an informational passage.

Piloted Item Types

The TEA has also conducted pilot studies of two other item types

- Online Innovative Items (2006)
- Performance Tasks (1994)

Online Innovative Items

In 2006, TEA conducted an innovative science item pilot. Innovative items contained:

- color photos
- lead animation or video
- graphics with hot spots for student to click on as a response mechanism
- student interactivity

The items were administered at the end of the online grade 8 science assessment to a sample of approximately 800 randomly selected students

Online Innovative Items (continued)

Findings

Findings from the pilot:

- Students were very engaged
- Technical issues were minimal
- Psychometric results were generally positive

Online Innovative Items (continued)

Concerns

However, there were two main concerns:

- Difficult to figure in accommodations to ensure accessibility for all students (e.g., more color –more issues for color-blind students)
- Many districts and schools in Texas still do not have the infrastructure in place to accomplish online testing for the majority of Texas students

Performance Tasks

In spring 1994, a developmental field trial of science and social studies performance tasks in grades 4 and 8 science and social studies was conducted. Almost 600 districts participated and more than 700,000 students took one or more of the performance tasks.

Performance Tasks (continued)

Grade 4 Tasks

Social Studies - Cultures of Texas

- The task required each student to do research about one element of Texas culture (e.g., music, food, customs and traditions) for a specific group in Texas. Students shared their information with one another, then each student wrote an individual reflection about how the variety of cultures in Texas make it an interesting place to live.

Science - Design a Boat

- The task was a hands-on design and engineering problem in which students designed two boats of aluminum foil and tested how much mass the boats could hold when floated in a container of water.

Performance Tasks (continued)

Grade 8 Tasks

Social Studies - Manifest Destiny

- Required each student to do research about an example of territorial expansion by the United States between 1803 and 1867. Students shared their information with one another, then each student wrote a letter to a U.S. senator in which the student expressed an opinion about a hypothetical bill that would provide for annexation of the moon to the United States. Students were asked to support their positions by using specific references to historical events or decisions identified during the research phase of the task.

Science - Catsup

- The task was a hands-on inquiry problem in which students designed their own investigation for testing three brands of catsup for characteristics like viscosity, absorption, and color, then decided which was the best overall brand to buy.

Performance Tasks (continued)

Scoring

Teachers were trained to score the tasks by means of a trainer-of-trainer system in which ESCs assumed responsibility for sending a small group of educators from their region to Austin for training and for conducting similar training in their respective regions.

Once the trained teachers completed scoring their students' responses, a 20% sample of each campus's responses was scored again by TEA for verification.

The match between the district and the verification score: 50%.

Performance Tasks (continued)

Teacher Comments

Participating educators emphasized that the performance tasks took too much time and were burdensome to score at the local level. In addition, schools and districts were responsible for purchasing the material necessary to conduct the assessments.

Performance Tasks (continued)

COE Recommendation

Implementing the performance tasks had practical difficulties – scheduling, materials acquisition, and local scoring all proved burdensome at the local level. As a result, TEA leadership recommended a shift away from performance tasks to instead focus on clarification of the curriculum and implementing appropriate staff development.

Writing Pilot Program

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, TEC, §39.02301 establishes a pilot program for the assessment of writing.

- Prior to the 2016-2017 school year, TEA and its testing contractor are required to conduct a study to determine an alternative method to assess writing in place of the grades 4 and 7 writing assessments and the English I and English II EOC assessments developed under §39.023(a) and (c)
- For the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, the agency must designate at least one rural, one medium-sized, and one large urban school district to participate in the writing assessment pilot program

Writing Pilot Program (continued)

Methodology

The method to assess writing must measure:

- a student's mastery of the TEKS through timed writing samples;
- improvement in writing from beginning of year to end of year;
- a student's ability to follow the writing process from rough to final draft; and
- a student's ability to produce more than one type of writing.

Writing Pilot Program (continued)

Training

Following the approval of pilot study design, TEA will provide a trainer-of-trainer system for the scoring of assessments at the local level.

Writing Pilot Program (continued)

Final Report

At the conclusion of the pilot study, a comprehensive technical report will be submitted on or before September 1, 2018.