

Frequently Asked Questions about Interim Assessments

1. **What is the interim assessment?** The interim assessment is a **free optional online tool** for school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. The tool provides actionable data to help educators improve instruction and help predict student performance on the STAAR. The spring 2018 interim assessments were a pilot administration. Feedback from the pilot was incorporated into the full, operational launch of the interim assessments, which is available in two administrations during the 2018–2019 school year.
2. **Why should I use the the interim assessment?** STAAR Interim Assessments provide the flexibility for districts to assess students below their enrolled grade level. Testing below a student's enrolled grade may be appropriate for students who are consistently performing below grade-level expectations on classroom assignments and assessments. For students performing on grade level, it can be given six to eight weeks before STAAR to help identify targeted areas of support and to predict performance.
3. **How can my school or district participate in the interim assessments?** Unlike the spring 2018 pilot, the assessment tool is open for any district or charter school to use at their discretion. Permission or confirmation from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is not required.

Districts can require schools to participate in these assessments, but state law limits district-required benchmarks to twice per school year. Teachers who choose to administer these assessments when not required by their district are not subject to the same limitation.

4. **What grades and subjects are tested?** For the 2018–2019 school year, grades 3–8 mathematics and reading, Spanish grades 3–5 mathematics and reading, Algebra I, English I, and English II interim assessments are available.
5. **How are the interim assessments administered?** The interim assessments are delivered in an online format through the STAAR Online Testing Platform (SOTP).
6. **What are the interim assessments items like?** Interim assessment items are a mixture of former STAAR summative test items and additional items developed with Texas teachers. All items are fully aligned to the TEKS. The interim assessments use multiple choice items and a type of open-ended question known as a “griddable item” (in mathematics assessments only), which provide students opportunities to derive answers independently without being influenced by answer choices provided with the questions. The interim assessments are delivered in an online format.

In addition to the text-to-speech feature that was available in the spring 2018 pilot, the 2018–2019 interim assessments will include content and language supports. These supports will be available in all English-language interim assessments.

7. **What are the testing windows for the interim assessments?** For the 2018–2019 school year, two different administration opportunities are available (Opportunity 1 and Opportunity 2). TEA recommends testing windows: November for Opportunity 1 and February for Opportunity 2, but these are recommendations only. Districts can choose when to schedule these testing opportunities. The assessment tool will be available for districts from the beginning of the school year through the spring. Opportunity 1 will be available starting on August 31. Opportunity 2 will be available later in the school year. Both opportunities will be available through March 29, 2019
8. **When can I register students?** Registration for Opportunity 1 interim assessments begins August 13, 2018. Registration for Opportunity 2 interim assessments will be available later in the fall.
9. **How do I register students?** Educators register students in the STAAR Assessment Management System via a student data file upload or individually. Specific instructions for registering students for interim assessments are included in the *Interim Assessments User's Guide*.
10. **Will training for interim assessments be available?** Yes, three webinar trainings specific to interim assessments will be offered on August 13, August 15, and August 21, 2018. ETS will be sending an invitation with registration information to districts. A recording of the training will also be available on <https://www.texasassessment.com/administrators/training/> after the trainings are completed.
11. **What reports of student performance are available?** For the 2018–2019 interim assessments, the Assessment Management System has been enhanced to include a new Online Reporting Suite (ORS), which is a dynamic real-time reporting system. Immediately after tests are submitted, the ORS will display district-level, campus-level, and student-level reports, with user-friendly graphs and customization. Users will be able to filter results by specific student groups. The student-level report will allow educators to perform item analysis based on individual student performance. This feature will display the student score, the student responses to each test question, and the student expectation for each test question. The student-level report will also include pop-up windows showing each test question.

The Assessment Management System will continue to display the probability results immediately after testing is completed. These results show a percentage probability of achieving *Approaches*, *Meets*, and *Masters* on STAAR. District data file reports will also continue to be available. For students who have completed and submitted tests by December 14, 2018, a data file will be available on January 2, 2019. A final data file for all students will be available two weeks after the test window closes.

12. **How should districts interpret results and reports from the interim assessments?** For guidance on how to interpret results from interim assessments, there will be an interim assessments results guide for districts to reference, available at <https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/IA/>.
13. **Are the interim assessments part of STAAR accountability?** No. The interim assessment is a tool that districts and educators can use to improve outcomes for students in Texas. The optional assessments are delivered through the STAAR Online Testing Platform, and the interim reports include a percentage likelihood of achievement on STAAR, but the assessment is NOT tied to accountability.
14. **What will TEA do with the data from the interims?** TEA will not have access to the student data. The state dashboard will provide an overview of schools and districts who are participating, but it will not provide specific score information or any student-level data.
15. **Will there be technology-enhanced items (TEI) on the interim assessments?** TEA continues to work to improve the STAAR testing experience for students. One way of doing this is by introducing technology-enhanced items (TEI) that create more engaging content and allow for demonstration of higher order thinking skills. In 2018–2019, a small number of TEI items will be available in the English-language grades 3–8 mathematics and reading interim assessments. The TEI items will be optional for students to view and respond to if they choose and will **NOT** be counted in their final score on the interim assessment. These items are available for student awareness and practice only. The TEI items will display at the end of the interim assessment.
16. **Who can I contact for more information about interim assessments?** For technical questions related to registration in the Assessment Management System, using the STAAR Online Testing Platform, and reports of student performance, contact the Texas Assessment Support Center at 855-333-7770 or STAAR3-8@ets.org. For all other questions about interim assessments, contact the Student Assessment Division at StudentAssessment@tea.texas.gov.