STAAR Accessibility Updates

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TETN Event #293
Student Assessment Division - Texas Education Agency
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Disclaimer

- These slides have been prepared by the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency.

- If any of the slides are changed for local use, please remove the TEA footers.

- This training is not intended to replace the review of required manuals and additional information on the TEA website.
Agenda

- STAAR Accessibility Updates for 2018
- Accessibility Within the STAAR Program
- Technology Use Guidelines
- Special Paper Request Process
- Accommodation Request Process
- Special Situations
- Online Tutorials and Practice Tests
- Questions from the Field
STAAR Accessibility Updates for 2018

- New and updated online embedded supports and tools

Policy changes:
- Dictionaries for reading and writing no longer a designated support, part of the STAAR Dictionary Policy now
- Projection devices and amplification devices moved to accessibility features
- Authority for decision for math manipulatives and supplemental aids has been expanded to include additional campus level teams (e.g., RTIs)
- Photocopy
- “GA” accommodation bubble on answer documents changed to “DS”
- New email address for special populations
Accessibility Within the STAAR Program
Ensuring that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response mode of the test.

Assessments should allow all test takers to demonstrate their knowledge of the content being tested without the format of the assessment, non-tested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers.

In order to meet this goal, various features and supports are made available on paper and online tests to students who use the same or similar supports during classroom instruction.
Accommodation Resources Webpage

- http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/

- Every year in the fall, the Accommodation Resources webpage is updated with policy documents and training materials that apply to the state assessments for the current school year.

- The training schedule is posted on TEA’s Student Assessment TETN Schedule webpage at http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/training/tetn-schedule/
Accommodation Resources Webpage

Accommodation Resources

Accommodations, or designated supports, are changes to materials or procedures that enable students to access learning and testing. It is important to keep in mind that while some accommodations may be appropriate for individual students, they may not be allowable on a statewide assessment. The accommodation resources are available through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for districts to use in relation to STAAR and TELPAS.

- 2017 Accessibility Resources
- 2018 Accessibility Resources

Applicable to Dec. tests
Accessibility Features

- Can be found in the District and Campus Coordinator Manual and the Accommodations Resources webpage.
- Available to any student who regularly benefits from the use of these procedures or materials during instruction.
- No need to document use of Accessibility Features in student paperwork or answer document/Assessment Management System.
- A student may need to complete the test in a separate setting in order to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the test is maintained.
- A student cannot be required to use them during testing.
- Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials.
Accessibility Features

- Signing test administration directions
- Translating test administration directions
- Bilingual dictionary (word-to-word translations; no definitions or examples) for mathematics, science, and social studies assessments
- Read test aloud to self (e.g., PVC pipe, recording device)
- Reading aloud or signing the expository or persuasive writing prompt
- Reading assistance on the grade 3 mathematics test
- Scratch paper (or any medium that can be erased or destroyed)
- Color overlays or online color setting
- Blank place markers or online guideline tool
- Magnifying devices or online zoom feature
- Highlighters (including online tool), colored pencils, or crayons
- Tools to minimize distractions or to help maintain focus (e.g., stress ball, headphones, instrumental music)
- Individual or small-group administrations
- Reminding students to stay on task

New for 2018:

- Sticky notes tool added to the online system
- Use of amplification devices (e.g., speakers, frequency-modulated [FM] systems)
- Use of projection devices (e.g., closed-circuit televisions [CCTVs] or LCD projectors for online tests)
Locally-Approved Designated Supports

- These include twelve supports that may be made available to students who meet eligibility criteria.
- Eligibility decisions are made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level based on the eligibility criteria and are documented in the appropriate paperwork.
- Each document is organized the same way:
  - Description of Accommodation
  - Assessments
  - Student Eligibility Criteria
  - Authority for Decision and Required Documentation
  - Examples/Types
  - Special Instructions/Considerations
Locally-Approved Designated Supports

2. **Designated Supports**: These are locally-approved supports for students who meet eligibility criteria.

- Basic Transcribing
- Braille
- Calculation Aids
- Content and Language Supports
  - Content and Language Supports Guidelines
- Extra Time
- Individualized Structured Reminders
- Large Print
- Manipulating Test Materials
- Mathematics Manipulatives
- Oral/Signed Administration
- Spelling Assistance
- Supplemental Aids
Locally-Approved Designated Supports

**New for 2018:**

- Content and language supports have been combined into one embedded support.
  - Dictionaries for reading and writing in grades 3-5 are no longer a designated support, part of the STAAR Dictionary Policy now.
    - [STAAR Dictionary Policy](#)
  - STAAR Calculator Policy now includes the use of calculators for grade 8 science.
    - [STAAR Calculator Policy](#)
  - Authority for decision for math manipulatives and supplemental aids has been expanded to include additional campus level teams (e.g., RTIs).
  - Photocopy no longer a designated support, but has been included within other policy documents (Large print, Other).
  - “GA” accommodation bubble on answer documents changed to “DS”.
Basic Transcribing

• If the student uses speech-to-text technology to indicate responses for multiple-choice questions, griddable questions, or the writing prompt, please refer to our technology use guidelines document.
Braille

• For students who take a braille test and are also eligible for Content and Language Supports, a request for a paper version of STAAR with embedded supports should be submitted to TEA.

• Specific information about administering braille tests is available in the General Instructions for Administering Braille State Assessments document, located on the TEA’s Accommodation Resources webpage.

• For Braille administrations, there is no need submit an Accommodation Request Form to request "Extra Day". (Included in "General Instructions for Administering Braille State Assessments" (PDF).
Calculation Aids

• Calculators used by eligible students as a designated support must adhere to the guidelines set forth in the STAAR Calculator Policy on the TEA’s STAAR Resources webpage.

• The STAAR Calculator Policy now includes Grade 8 Science
Content and Language Supports

- Content and language supports have been combined into one embedded support.
- Students for whom the LPAC recommends the use of this support for any reading or writing assessment, may not be considered for exit at the end of the school year.
Extra Time

• A student should be allowed to continue testing until the end of the regularly scheduled school day, but cannot be required to continue testing until that time. A student should be allowed to leave the testing room when he or she has completed the test.

• Students for whom the LPAC recommends the use of this support for any reading or writing assessment, may not be considered for exit at the end of the school year.
Individualized Structured Reminders

- Paperclips or adhesive notes used to divide the test into sections.
- More-frequent or less-frequent reminders of time left to test than required in the standard administration procedures.
- Personal timer or clock set to remind a student to move on to the next question, page, or section or to remind a student to stop at pre-established times during the test.
Large Print

- Specific information about large-print test materials, including the policy for students needing a test booklet in a larger print size than produced by the state, is available in the General Instructions for Administering Large-Print State Assessments document, located on the TEA’s Accommodation Resources webpage.

New for 2018:

- There is no longer a need to submit an Accommodation Request Form if larger than large print needed for student with Visual Impairment.
Manipulating Test Materials

• If a student needs his or her responses to test questions (i.e., multiple choice, griddable, writing prompt) transcribed onto an answer document or into the STAAR Assessment Management System for online administrations, refer to the Basic Transcribing or Complex Transcribing policies.
Mathematics Manipulatives

New for 2018:

- For a student not receiving special education or Section 504 services, the decision is made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level (e.g., RTI team, student assistance team) based on the eligibility criterion and is documented according to district policies.
Oral/Signed Administration

- Students for whom the LPAC recommends the use of this support for any reading or writing assessment, may not be considered for exit at the end of the school year.
Spelling Assistance

New for 2018:

- Spelling assistance tool available now as an online embedded support on STAAR
Supplemental Aids

New for 2018:

- For a student not receiving special education or Section 504 services, the decision is made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level (e.g., RTI team, student assistance team) based on the eligibility criterion and is documented according to district policies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Designated Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>This designated support allows a student to use paper-based resources that assist in recalling information.</td>
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<th>Assessments</th>
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<td>For a student who meets the eligibility criteria, this designated support may be used on</td>
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<tr>
<td>- STAAR</td>
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<td>- STAAR Spanish</td>
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<th>Student Eligibility Criterion</th>
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<td>A student may use this designated support if he or she routinely, independently, and effectively uses it during classroom instruction and classroom testing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Authority for Decision and Required Documentation</th>
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<td>- For a student not receiving special education or Section 504 services, the decision is made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level (e.g., RTI team, student assistance team) based on the eligibility criterion and is documented according to district policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- For a student who is an ELL, the decision is made by the LPAC based on the eligibility criteria and is documented in the student’s permanent record file.</td>
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<td>- For a student receiving Section 504 services, the decision is made by the Section 504 committee based on the eligibility criteria and is documented in the student’s IEP.</td>
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<td>- For a student receiving special education services, the decision is made by the ARD committee based on the eligibility criteria and is documented in the student’s IEP.</td>
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<td>- In the case of an ELL with a disability, the decision is made by the applicable group above in conjunction with the student’s LPAC. The decision is to be documented by the LPAC in the student’s permanent record file and by the other applicable group, as described above.</td>
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<td>- After state testing, DS must be recorded in the ACCOMM field on the student’s answer document or in the STAAR Assessment Management System for online administrations. This indicates that an allowable designated support was made available to the student.</td>
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Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval

- These include supports that may be made available to students who have a TEA-approved accommodation request form.

- First, eligibility decisions are made by the appropriate team of people at the campus level based on the eligibility criteria and then a request is sent to TEA for determination.

- Each designated support policy document located on the Accommodations Resources webpage contains an Eligibility Criteria section and an Authority for Decision and Required Documentation section.
Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval

New for 2018:

- No more “Photocopy” as designated supports that requires an Accommodation Request Form.
- If a student needs secure test material photocopied because he/she requires a print larger than what the state provides, then follow instructions in the General Instructions for Administering Large-Print State Assessments document, located on the TEA’s Accommodation Resources webpage.
- If a student needs photocopies for any other reason, then an Accommodation Request Form for “Other” must be submitted.
Complex Transcribing

- TEA will provide, with any approved Accommodation Request Form, specific guidelines about how to transcribe the student’s responses to the writing prompts.
- A test administrator who transcribes for a student must be trained in these guidelines so that he or she understands the boundaries of the assistance being provided.

New for 2018:

- For grades 2–12 TELPAS writing, an Accommodation Request Form does not need to be submitted for a student that meets the eligibility criteria for Complex Transcribing.

Description of Designated Support

This designated support allows a test administrator to record onto an answer document or in the STAAR Assessment Management System for online tests a student’s dictated or signed responses to the writing prompts when a student with a disability is unable to accomplish this task independently.

Assessments

For a student who meets the eligibility criteria, this designated support may be used on:
- STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing (written composition ONLY)
- STAAR Spanish grade 4 writing (written composition ONLY)
- STAAR English I, English II, and English III (written composition ONLY)
- TELPAS grades 2–12 writing

Student Eligibility Criteria

Submit an Accommodation Request Form to TEA if the student:
- Routinely and effectively uses this designated support during classroom instruction and classroom testing.
- Is unable to effectively use Basic Transcribing to address this need, and
- Meets at least one of the following:
  - The student has an impairment in vision (e.g., uncorrected vision, nystagmus, qualifies for special education services with a Visual Impairment [VI]) that necessitates the use of braille or large-print test materials.
  - The student has a physically disabling condition (e.g., muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, arthritis) that prevents him or her from independently and effectively recording responses on the lined pages of the answer document or in the space provided in the STAAR Assessment Management System for online tests.
Extra Day

- Receiving an extra day to complete the test is a designated support intended for an extremely small group of students with disabilities who have a TEA-approved Accommodation Request Form.
- Students will only be permitted to test over two regularly scheduled, consecutive school days. Each day of testing must not extend beyond seven hours.

New for 2018:
- For students who take the braille test and require an extra day, refer to the “General Instructions for Administering Braille State Assessments.” TEA approval is not required.
Mathematics Scribe

- The role of the mathematics scribe is to record the student’s dictated scratch work and computations exactly as the student indicates.
- TEA will provide, with any approved Accommodation Request Form, specific guidelines about how to carry out this designated support.
- A test administrator who serves as a Mathematics Scribe must be trained in these guidelines so that he or she understands the boundaries of the assistance being provided.
New for 2018:

- If a student requires double-sided test materials photocopied into single-sided sheets because they have a physical disability, or because they have a disability that necessitates test materials be presented in a printed format other than a test booklet in order to prevent severe behaviors that could interfere with completion of the test, an Accommodation Request Form for Other should be submitted to TEA. These cases should be rare.

- The district may now submit Other requests via the online Accommodation Request Form without contacting TEA first.
Technology Use Guidelines
Technology Guidelines

- Districts are required to have procedures in place to prevent the use of personal electronic devices during test administrations.

- When districts are using allowed or approved technology, including technology-based accommodations (i.e., accessibility features, designated supports), the following guidelines for test security and validity must be followed to review the technology prior to its use in an assessment.

- Appropriate review requires knowledge of both state curriculum (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for the specific grade level and subject, as well as the capabilities and functions of the device or software to be used during the assessment.

- Some technology may be useful during a daily academic setting. This technology cannot be used during a state assessment if it has functionality that creates an assessment concern that cannot be addressed.

- District or campus personnel must conduct additional reviews of technology, including technology-based accommodations, after an upgrade or update to determine if it continues to meet TEA guidelines for use during a state assessment.
A training presentation will be available soon on the 2018 Accommodation Resources webpage to assist districts in making appropriate decisions about technology-based accommodations for students taking state assessments.

Technology Guidelines
Special Paper Request Process
Special Paper Request Process

- Because Content and Language Supports are embedded accommodations presented in an online format, replicating these features in a paper version is not always possible.

- Technology-based supports enable most students to test online; however, in instances in which the use of an accommodation is not feasible or appropriate, or if the administration of an online test is inappropriate due to a student’s particular disability, a special request may be made to TEA for approval to administer a paper test booklet.
Content and Language Supports for Students Taking STAAR Braille

- Specific Braille Instructions for Content and Language Supports are available on the STAAR Assessment Management System.
- This document is meant to be used for students taking STAAR braille who are also eligible to receive content and language supports.
- It contains descriptions of pictures/images used as content and language supports and graphs/tables/charts that may be reproduced in Braille or other forms that are more accessible to the test taker.
- This document must be used in conjunction with the appropriate Specific Braille Instructions for the test being administered as well as with the supports tables in the paper administration guide for STAAR with Embedded Supports paper version.
Special Paper Request Process

- A link to the instructions and request form for a paper version of STAAR with Embedded Supports and TELPAS is posted on the TEA’s District and Campus Coordinator Manual Resources webpage.

- All requests must be received by TEA at least two weeks prior to testing so that testing materials can be ordered and shipped to districts.
If a student also needs a designated support requiring TEA approval, include it on this form. Do NOT submit a separate online accommodation request form.
Accommodation Request Process
The Accommodation Request Process

- Accommodation Request Forms should only be submitted for designated supports requiring TEA approval (i.e., complex transcribing, math scribe, extra day, other).

- The link to the online accommodation request form for 2018 will be on the Accommodation Resources webpage along with a training document.

- Accommodation Request Forms must be received by TEA at least one week prior to testing. Late requests will NOT be processed unless circumstances involving the student change after the deadline. Refer to the submission deadlines document.

Step 1: Determination of student eligibility
Step 2: Completion and submission of online form
Step 3: TEA review and decision
Step 4: Required communication within district
The district testing coordinator’s (DTC) information is automatically filled out in the Contact Information Section. If someone other than the DTC is completing this form, he or she will have to manually fill in contact information.

Submit ONE accommodation request per student, even if the student needs multiple accommodations and/or multiple subjects. You can enter up to 5 different administrations for one student.

All of your selections show up here.

It is important to include the Request ID from a previous year so that TEA can refer to it when making a determination.

A Local Tracking number may be entered so districts can keep track of accommodation requests within the district. TEA does not use this information.

You may submit supporting documentation such as writing samples. Do not submit confidential student information such as pages from an IEP or evaluations from physicians or diagnosticians. This information can be summarized above instead.
The Accommodation Request Process

- Accommodation requests must be approved by TEA before a student can use the accommodation on a state assessment. Documentation in the appropriate paperwork should state “pending TEA approval.”

- Do **NOT** include confidential student information (request will be deleted and you will be asked to resubmit)
  - Example: student’s first and last name, Social Security numbers, pages from an IEP, medical documents

- The expiration date for all approved requests is December 31st of the year the request is approved.

- The online accommodation request form for 2018 administration will open in January 2018.

- For December 2017 administration submit using the 2017 link (on the Accommodation Resources webpage)
Special Situations
Accommodations in Unexpected or Emergency Situations

- When an unexpected or emergency situation (e.g., broken arm, lost eyeglasses) occurs just prior to or on the day of the state assessment, it may or may not be necessary to contact TEA. After testing, document the accommodation used on the answer document or in the STAAR Assessment Management System.

- **Step 1: No need to contact TEA**
  - Make available Accessibility Features which are allowed for any student.

- **Step 2: No need to contact TEA**
  - Make available locally-approved Designated Supports. Consideration should be given to accommodations that the student can independently use.

- **Step 3: Contact TEA**
  - If the student’s needs cannot be met with Step 1 or 2, contact a member of the Accommodations Task Force. The district testing coordinator may need to submit an Accommodation Request Form.
For any grade 4 student who is taking the STAAR writing test online, the test administrator may transcribe (i.e., type) the student’s response to the written composition into the online test. The student does not have to be eligible for Basic Transcribing to receive this assistance and it does not need to be documented in the Assessment Management System.

- Note: This is not a requirement of the administration and decisions regarding this provision must be based on individual student need.

- The test administrator transcribing the student’s response must do so in accordance with guidelines for Basic Transcribing found on TEA’s Accommodations Resources webpage.

- Students in all other grades and subjects must meet the eligibility requirements for Basic Transcribing if this accommodation is needed.
Proctor Codes for Signed Online Administrations

- For students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing who are eligible for
  - Oral/Signed Administration, AND
  - Content and Language Supports
  
  Students will take the STAAR online but are not able to access text-to-speech.

- A signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud. Test administrators should be trained using the Oral/Signed Administration Guidelines and also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing document.
Proctor Codes for Signed Online Administrations

Similar to 2017 administration, proctor codes will be available to district testing coordinators and assistants in the STAAR Assessment Management System to download and distribute to test administrators providing a signed administration of an online STAAR test.

TEA’s Student Assessment Division works in conjunction with the Region 11 State Lead for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services to provide the most current and consistent information to districts about state assessments for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

https://www.smore.com/p53ab
Accommodation Recommendations for Reading and Writing: Impact on Exit Criteria for ELLs

- Students for whom the LPAC recommends the following designated supports for any reading or writing assessment, may not be considered for exit at the end of the school year.
  - Oral Administration
  - Content and Language Supports
  - Extra Time
Dictionary policy change and its impact on ELL exit criteria

- Use of dictionaries on grades 3-5 reading and writing assessments no longer an accommodation

- STAAR Dictionary Policy expanded to include these grades

- It is important for LPACs to consider the degree to which an ELL student relies on a dictionary during language arts instruction or testing when making exit decisions at the end of the year.
Online Tutorials and Practice Tests
When you open the STAAR online testing platform, you will see a menu of options, including “Tutorials.”
Once you select “Tutorials,” you will be taken to a screen with several drop-down menus. Choose the grade, subject, and test (i.e., available supports) you want to view.
You will know you are in the right place when you see the logo screen and title.
Tabs at the bottom of the screen act as a table of contents. Each tab contains a page that explains the online feature/tool and provides a short video.

Note: Videos do not have sound except for the Speak and Audio videos, which only read aloud the text on the screen.
17. Practice using Pop-up.

What happens when you click on Pop-up?

A. It moves you to the next question.
B. It gives you more information. (correct answer)
C. It changes the color of the text.
D. It reads the question aloud.

Note: The questions do NOT contain tested content but are only intended to practice using the feature/tool.
When you open the STAAR online testing platform, you will see a menu of options, including “Practice.”

Here you will find released tests for 2016 and 2017.
STAAR Practice

To practice taking the test with all supports (i.e., TTS, pre-reads, pop-ups and rollovers), select “All PNP”.

Click Login to begin.

Select from the options below to choose your practice test.

- 2017
- Grade 5
- Reading
- Select a Test
- Select a Test
- No PNP
- All PNP
Grade 5 Reading

Administered March 2017

RELEASED
Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

The article R2, Robot Astronaut from the magazine Science Time is about the invention of a humanoid robot named Robonaut 2, or R2. The robot was built by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the car company General Motors (GM). It contains vision equipment for seeing, a computer “brain,” and human-like hands for grasping objects. R2 is designed to do many things including gathering readings, or data, from the atmosphere, and testing air pressure. R2 helps with these routine and sometimes dangerous tasks without needing the constant supervision of other astronauts.

The robot is going through a series of tests that help astronauts orbiting Earth aboard the International Space Station. Read the article to find out more about R2, the robot astronaut.

Science Time

December 2013

In this issue: Robot travels to space
Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

The article R2, Robot Astronaut from the magazine Science Time is about the invention of a humanoid robot named Robonaut 2, or R2. The robot was built by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the car company General Motors (GM). It contains vision equipment for seeing, a computer "brain," and human-like hands for grasping objects. R2 is designed to do many things including gathering readings, or data, from the atmosphere, and testing air pressure. R2 helps with these routine and sometimes dangerous tasks without needing the constant supervision of other astronauts.

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Science Time

December 2013

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Additional Accessibility Resources (2018 updated posted soon)

Related Resources (coming soon)

- Accommodations in Unexpected or Emergency Situations (PDF)
- STAAR with Embedded SupportsNon-Secure Front Matter Grades 3-5 (PDF)
- STAAR with Embedded SupportsNon-Secure Front Matter Grades 6-8 (PDF)
- STAAR with Embedded SupportsNon-Secure Front Matter End-of-Course (PDF)
- General Instructions for Administering Large-Print State Assessments (PDF)
- General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (PDF)
- General Instructions for Administering Braille State Assessments (PDF)
- Oral/Signed Administration Guidelines (PDF)
- Educator Guide to Accessibility within the STAAR program (PDF)
- Font and Point Sizes Matrices for STAAR, STAAR Spanish, TELPAS, and TAKS (PDF)
- Transcribing Griddable Questions Training Document and Student Documents (PDF)
Contact Information

Contact the STAAR Accessibility Team at TEA’s Student Assessment Division for inquiries regarding:

- Information on assessments (3-8, and EOC) and accommodations for students with disabilities
- ELL policies for all assessments, including assessing students receiving special education services
- General questions about state-mandated assessments

(512) 463-9536
assessment.specialpopulations@tea.texas.gov
Questions from the Field
Do test administrators have to sign the additional part of the oath about viewing secure content and be trained on the Oral Administration Guidelines if they read aloud the prompt or provide grade 3 math reading assistance (accessibility features)?

- YES, anyone viewing secure test content must sign this part of the oath acknowledging that he or she understands the confidentiality requirements.

- According to the Oral Administration Guidelines, "For the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) program, every test administrator reading aloud secure test content must be trained on the guidelines in this document so that various types of test questions and answers are read aloud in a standardized manner."
Can students taking STAAR online also use a paper STAAR test to write down their notes and strategies?

No. Students taking an online test will use the online tools (e.g., notes, pencil) and various accessibility features (e.g., highlighter, scratch paper).

For a student who has a special situation and may need this type of accommodation, the district testing coordinator may submit an OTHER Accommodation Request Form to TEA.

This type of OTHER request should be extremely rare and will not be approved for personal preference or lack of familiarity with the online system.
Will JJ AEPs be able to request paper versions of STAAR with Embedded Supports?

- Yes, however, consider that the online version is best for students who need embedded supports. There are online supports that cannot be duplicated in a paper format.

- For these paper requests, it is important that the reason for the request is well documented.
  - The reason should be more than “difficulty in administering the online test.”
  - If the student is not allowed to access the internet, remember that when the online test is started, access to the internet is automatically blocked. The student has no way to access the internet.
Can you give examples of "visual sound cards" listed in the Spelling Assistance policy document?

- Cards might include pictures of a truck for the “T” sound or pictures that show lips making the “T” sound.

- Educators who work with students who need these cards (e.g., deaf educators, dyslexia educators) are a good resource for additional examples.
How will the spelling assistance tool be activated?

- The spelling assistance tool is one of the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) options available in the STAAR Assessment Management System for students who meet eligibility criteria for Spelling Assistance.
- It is available on STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, English II, and English III (written composition **ONLY**).
- Spelling assistance will only appear as an option in sections of the test for which it is allowed if it has been activated on the STAAR Assessment Management System.
Can the font size be increased in the spelling assistance tool?

- No, but the zoom tool can be used in combination with the spelling assistance tool. The zoom tool enlarges the screen size.
What word bank is used for the spelling assistance tool? Can the word bank be customized?

- The testing contractor has a license to use Merriam Webster as a source for the word bank.
- Currently the word bank cannot be customized.
- There are three levels of word banks used as sources for the spelling assistance tool: elementary, middle school, and high school.
- When the spelling assistance tool is engaged, up to five grade-appropriate words appear as spelling options.
Does the spelling assistance tool have text-to-speech or speech-to-text capabilities?

- No. These functions are not currently available in the spelling assistance tool.
If a student uses another device for spelling assistance, can that device be used instead of the spelling assistance tool?

- Yes. The student can use the support that best meets his or her needs.
- Consider making the decision after the student practices with the online spelling assistance tool.
In the online practice test, can student answers be saved and scored?

- The online practice test does not save student answers or have an online scoring capability.
- Student scores may be recorded on paper and scored by a teacher according to the answer key.
Does “DS” need to be marked for accommodations that are used in unexpected or emergency situations?

- Yes. This information should be recorded on the student’s answer document or in the STAAR Assessment Management System for online administrations.

- This information can be found on the Accommodation Resources webpage in the document titled, "Accommodations in Unexpected or Emergency Situations."
Is there a character limit in the new online sticky note tool?

- Currently, there is a 500-character limit in each sticky note.
Should an extra day accommodation be documented for Braille test takers?

- Even though there is no need to submit an Accommodation Request Form to TEA to request “Extra Day” for Braille test takers, the accommodation should still be documented in the appropriate paperwork.

- Refer to General Instructions for Administering Braille State Assessments (PDF) for more information. This document will be posted on the 2018 Accessibility section of the accommodations resources web page.
Is the writing checklist available for paper tests? What is the difference between this and a list of grade-appropriate grammar and mechanics rules?

- The writing checklist is a supplementary material for content and language supports and is available in the online versions (and special paper administrations) of grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, and English II only.

- The writing checklist are standardized lists, while the grammar and mechanics rules are student-specific supplemental aids.
Are electronic dictionaries with text-to-speech features allowed?

- Yes. Electronic dictionaries with text-to-speech features are allowed. However, electronic dictionaries that provide access to the Internet are **NOT** allowed. Please refer to STAAR Dictionary Policy for specific information.
Are dictionaries with examples, appendices with grammar rules, etc. allowed?

- Yes; however, please refer to STAAR Dictionary Policy for specific information.

**Note:** For mathematics, science, and social studies assessments, the use of a bilingual dictionary is allowed as an accessibility feature, however, such dictionary should only contain word-to-word direct translations (no definitions or examples).