



Commissioner Mike Morath

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**To the Administrator Addressed:**

The purpose of this communication is to provide information about important changes to the Texas Assessment Program for the 2018–2019 school year.

**Resources and Training**

Beginning in 2018–2019, in an effort to improve the testing coordinators' user experience, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will be providing the *District and Campus Coordinator Manual* on a digital platform as the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* (DCCR). This resource will not be printed and shipped to districts. It will be available online only and separated into sections so testing coordinators can find the information they need in an efficient manner. In addition, the security oaths have been combined, and the new version will be available as a fillable PDF file in the *Coordinator Resources*. The digital *Coordinator Resources* will be available to districts next week at <http://txetests.com/dccr>.

For the 2018–2019 school year, the Education Service Center (ESC) training covering all the components of the Texas Assessment Program is scheduled for October 3, 2018. ESCs must train district testing coordinators in the fall prior to the December State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) administration. It is recommended that district coordinators complete their training by November 9, 2018.

District coordinators must train campus testing coordinators who are administering the December STAAR assessments prior to the December administration. It is recommended that these campus coordinators complete their training by November 16, 2018. Campus coordinators must train test administrators who are administering the December STAAR assessments prior to the December administration. It is recommended that test administrators complete their training by November 30, 2018. Note that the 2018–2019 STAAR EOC Test Administrator Manual will be shipped with test materials the week of November 12, 2018.

Campus coordinators and test administrators who are administering STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and TELPAS Alternate in spring 2019, and did not train for the December STAAR administration, must complete their training by the dates listed in the [Calendar of Events](#).

## TRAINING DATES

Event	Date
District and Campus Coordinator Resources (available online)	By end of September 2018
ESC Training	October 3, 2018
District Testing Coordinator Training	*November 9, 2018
Campus Testing Coordinator Training (for December 2018 STAAR administration)	*November 16, 2018
Test Administrator Training (for December 2018 STAAR administration)	*November 30, 2018
Campus Testing Coordinator Training (all other assessments and administrations)	See dates listed in Calendar of Events
Test Administrator Training (all other assessments and administrations)	See dates listed in Calendar of Events

\*Recommend training completed by date listed.

### **STAAR Accessibility Enhancements**

Beginning in spring 2019, TEA will be offering three additional accessibility enhancements as the personal needs and preferences (PNP) options available in the STAAR Online Testing Platform (SOTP). First, an online basic calculator will be available to students who are eligible for the designated support of Calculation Aid and take STAAR online at grades 3–7 mathematics or grade 5 science, including STAAR Spanish online at grades 3–5 mathematics or grade 5 science.

Students who are eligible for a braille administration of STAAR will be able to use a screen reader software application that will enable the use of refreshable braille display devices. This PNP option will be available for online administrations of STAAR grades 3–8 reading (English only), grades 4 (English only) and 7 writing, grade 8 social studies, English I, English II, and U.S. History. For more information about setup and administration for this PNP option, contact the Texas Assessment Support Center at 855-333-7770.

Additionally, students eligible for an oral/signed administration will have access to American Sign Language (ASL) videos through the SOTP. This PNP option will be available for online administrations of STAAR grades 3–8 reading and mathematics, grades 4 and 7 writing, grades 5 and 8 science, grade 8 social studies, English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History (only English versions of these assessments). Students with access to this PNP will click on an ASL icon at the top of the screen and a video of a person signing applicable test content will appear. Students will have the ability to play the video as many times as necessary and will also be able to pause, fast forward, and rewind the video. Additional information will be available in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Oral Administration documents on the Accommodations Resources webpage at <https://tea.texas.gov/accommodations/>.

These new PNP functionalities will be available in the practice tests. Districts will indicate in the student data file upload or manually in the STAAR Assessment Management System which students will have PNP codes, including basic calculator, refreshable braille, or ASL videos, for STAAR online tests. Refer to the *2018–2019 Data File Format for Student Registration*, available at <https://texasassessment.com/administrators/technology/>.

## **STAAR Spanish Tests Available Online**

Beginning with spring 2019 administrations of STAAR, Spanish versions of the grades 3–5 reading and mathematics, grade 4 writing, and grade 5 science tests will be available online. STAAR Spanish online assessments will include the same tools offered in the English versions of STAAR online tests. In addition, PNP options of text-to-speech, content and language supports, spelling assistance, and basic calculator will be available as embedded supports for eligible students. Eligibility requirements will be available in the *Coordinator Resources* at <http://txetests.com/dccr>. The user interface of the SOTP will be in Spanish for students logging in to a STAAR Spanish test. STAAR Spanish practice tests will also be available.

Districts can register students for Spanish versions of online tests and indicate PNP designated support codes through the student data file upload or manually in the Assessment Management System. Refer to the *2018–2019 Data File Format for Student Registration*, available at <https://texasassessment.com/administrators/technology/>.

## **STAAR Online Answer Document Packing List**

Beginning with the December 2018 administration, the answer document packing list (ADPL) will be an online document. District testing coordinators will use the online ADPL available in the Assessment Management System to provide answer document counts by campus and district. The online ADPL will allow campus and district testing coordinators to enter counts online, provide viewable counts, and store the information online. District coordinators will review the counts for final reconciliation and submission. In addition, a view of all answer document counts scanned and processed, and any discrepancies will be provided for correction. Instructions for using the online ADPL will be available in the *Coordinator Resources* at <http://txetests.com/dccr>.

## **STAAR Writing Prompt Field Test**

In spring 2019, writing prompts for grade 4 (English and Spanish), grade 7, English I, and English II will be field-tested in a separate paper-only administration February 11–14. For campuses selected to participate in the field test, all eligible students enrolled in the grade or course should participate. English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities should participate in the field test, unless a student requires an accommodation that is not available in the paper field test (e.g. content and language supports or braille). Documentation about participation in the field-test administration is not required in a student's paperwork. More information is available in the following communication: [February 2019 STAAR Writing Prompt Field Test](#).

## **STAAR Alternate 2 Registration**

Beginning with the 2019 administration of STAAR Alternate 2, TEA will require a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) identification number for each assessment kit ordered. To facilitate this requirement, the registration window will move to October 22 through November 9, 2018, to coincide with the submission window for participation counts. All students who will be assessed with STAAR Alternate 2 must be registered during this fall window. In addition, large-print enrollment counts must also be submitted in the STAAR Alternate 2 Assessment Management System. More information on using the Assessment Management System is available at <https://texasassessment.com/administrators/technology/>.

## **TELPAS Writing Audit**

To provide ongoing evidence of the validity and reliability of the holistically rated writing component of TELPAS, TEA periodically conducts writing audits. As the last writing audit was conducted in 2016, TEA will be conducting another audit of writing collections after the 2019 TELPAS administration. The TELPAS writing assessment requires raters to assemble a collection of each EL's writing from classroom instruction. As part of the audit, selected districts will be required to submit the writing collections. Approximately 2,000 student writing samples across grades 2–12 will be re-scored by Pearson to confirm validity of the ratings. In addition, questionnaires will be provided to district staff to gather information about the TELPAS training and qualification procedures. Districts selected to participate in the TELPAS writing audit will be notified in late spring 2019 after the TELPAS administration.

## **TELPAS Alternate**

Based on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the state is required to administer an alternate English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general ELP assessment, even with allowable accommodations. In response, TEA, in conjunction with various stakeholders, developed TELPAS Alternate, a holistic inventory aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). As with TELPAS, students assessed with TELPAS Alternate will be assessed in four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

In spring 2018, TEA conducted a pilot test of TELPAS Alternate. During the pilot test, TEA also conducted a cognitive lab with on-site observations to gain first-hand information from educators regarding their experience with TELPAS Alternate. Results from the pilot administration and school visits have informed improvements for the operational administration in spring 2019.

The 2019 TELPAS Alternate administration window will be on the same dates as the 2019 TELPAS window, February 25 through April 5, 2019. TELPAS Alternate training materials will be posted to the TELPAS Resources webpage later this fall. Standard setting will follow the 2019 TELPAS Alternate operational administration, with initial reports sent in May 2019, and final reports sent in late summer.

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