

ATTACHMENT II

PLAN FOR MONITORING 1.0 PERCENT THRESHOLD ON STAAR ALTERNATE 2

PURPOSE

Federal regulations under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require all states to assess less than 1.0 percent of the total tested student population with an alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS), i.e., the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2. During the 2017–2018 school year, Texas gathered and analyzed district data, which was used to determine what training and oversight was needed to assist local education agencies (LEAs). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) believes that it can assist educators and parents in making the best assessment decisions through targeted training for Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams on the updated STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements, guidance on how to analyze local participation data, parent training on the implications of taking alternate assessments, and a statewide plan to monitor alternate assessment.

2017–2018 PROGRESS

With the intent of ensuring that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an AA-AAAS, Texas developed a plan for the 2017–2018 school year that included data analysis, training and oversight to LEAs, and revision of the STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements. An overview of the progress Texas has made on its 2017–2018 plan is provided below.

2017–2018 Plan	Timeline	Notes
Revise STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements	Updated document posted in May 2018 on STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage at https://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/STAAR_Alternate/STAAR_Alternate_2_Resources/ .	A revised definition of students with significant cognitive disabilities was embedded into the participation requirements and posted independently on STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage.
Enhance ancillary training materials	From May 2018 through February 2019, training materials have been presented and are posted on STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage at https://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/STAAR_Alternate/STAAR_Alternate_2_Resources/ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>STAAR Alternate 2 2018–2019 Participation Requirement Training</i> • <i>STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements Companion Document</i> • 2018 Fall Update STAAR Alternate 2 presentation • <i>STAAR Alternate 2 Educator Guide</i>
Provide statewide training opportunities	Statewide training and individual region and district training were provided from September 2018 through March 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide training was provided via telecommunication network in our annual STAAR Alternate 2 Update and in person during annual test administration training and Texas Assessment Conference. • Provided individual data analysis training for 11 of 20 education service center regions in Texas that included participation from approximately 700 out of 1200 LEAs.

2018–2019 OVERVIEW

To ensure that most students take the general assessment and only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities take an AA-AAAS, Texas is working collaboratively with its LEAs to confirm that all students are provided the most appropriate assessment. TEA has analyzed district- and state-level data to determine and notify districts who exceeded the 1.0 percent threshold. Texas is supporting and providing guidance to LEAs during the 2018–2019 school year to assure IEP teams, including general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, other applicable staff, and parents, receive the appropriate resources and training materials to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a student is most appropriately assessed with an AA-AAAS and to address the disproportionality in the participation data.

TEA is:

- Providing enhanced training materials and targeted outreach to LEAs
- Analyzing and making available data trends across the state
- Providing various resources and support to parents
- Adding a monitoring component

In addition, Texas is incorporating the 1.0 percent waiver requirements, including monitoring and addressing the disproportionality of the data, in its overall Corrective Action Plan for special education required by the U.S. Department of Education.

ACTIONS

PROVIDING ENHANCED TRAINING MATERIALS AND TARGETED OUTREACH

As part of Texas' plan submitted with the its 2017–2018 waiver request, the state, with input from stakeholder groups, revised the STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements. During the 2017–2018 school year, guidance on the revised participation requirements was presented in numerous trainings to LEAs throughout the school year and posted on the TEA website in preparation for the implementation in 2018–2019.

At the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year, LEAs were invited to set up training sessions with TEA that would focus on individual district data, trends in that data, and guiding questions that should be used when training their staff on assessment decisions for students receiving special education services. TEA has conducted multiple statewide trainings on these topics to staff from all twenty regions of Texas and some of the largest LEAs. Texas has begun targeted outreach to individual LEAs and regions, specific stakeholder groups, statewide evaluation staff, and statewide directors of special education to set-up training sessions. The first in a series of targeted outreach opportunities involved five LEAs from one region and staff from their testing and special education departments. Then, TEA prioritized the LEAs who had the highest participation rates for STAAR Alternate 2 and offered training to each region. Training for ten more regions, including over 400 LEAs, is planned for January–March 2019. Texas will continue these efforts during the next school year and use region and district participation data to provide targeted technical assistance and professional development to LEAs according to the level of need. The purpose of the training is to guide LEAs in their interpretation of the state's definition for significant cognitive disability and in their

implementation of the revised participation requirements so that Texas may meet participation rates that align with the 1.0 percent threshold for alternate assessments.

ANALYZING AND MAKING AVAILABLE DATA TRENDS ACROSS THE STATE

Initial data analysis for the past two years identified LEAs over the 1.0 percent threshold for participation in an AA-AAAS. On closer inspection, TEA recognized the need to parse out the data at a more granular level with regard to disability categories, subgroups other than special education, grade level, and subject area over the past two years. Disaggregating the state data from various perspectives and posting the results for LEAs to review and use provides additional topics for discussion and training. This data is incorporated into statewide and targeted LEA training that focuses on how to analyze participation data. Training for LEAs guides them to analyze data and detect unexpected or “exceptional” values in local data that may lead to the discovery of disproportionality in the identification of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Texas is also working with the State’s Technical Advisory Committee to determine ways to use the results most effectively in reducing disproportionality in AA-AAAS participation data and identifying additional research data.

PROVIDING VARIOUS RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO PARENTS

As part of Texas’ Corrective Action Plan, the state is enacting an outreach campaign to identify, locate, and evaluate students who should be receiving special education services. The Student Assessment Division is working collaboratively with the Special Populations Department to incorporate training on appropriately identifying students with significant cognitive disabilities so that appropriate assessment decisions can be determined. In addition, easy-to-understand parent resources are being created to aid LEAs in informing parents about the purposes of special education, the different pathways available, and the implications of each pathway. This information will help parents confidently participate in the decision-making process and be stronger advocates for their child.

ADDING A MONITORING COMPONENT

All LEAs whose spring 2018 data indicated they exceeded the 1.0 percent participation threshold received notification and completed an explanation and assurances form. In the explanation section of this form, LEAs were required to describe the training that was delivered to IEP teams and parents regarding participation in an alternate assessment. The State also requested information, such as special circumstances that are unique or specific to the LEA or small student enrollment, regarding why the LEA administered an alternate assessment to more than 1.0 percent of its assessed students. The following assurance statements were included.

- Your district/charter school implements clear and appropriate guidelines, consistent with the STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements, to use in determining when a student’s significant cognitive disability justifies participation in this alternate assessment.
- Your district/charter school will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup taking STAAR Alternate 2.
- Parents are informed when their student will be assessed based on alternate achievement standards, including information about the implications of participation in STAAR Alternate 2.
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are included, to the extent possible, in the general curriculum and assessments aligned with that curriculum.

- Your district/charter school disseminates information and promotes the use of appropriate accommodations to increase the number of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are tested against grade-level academic achievement standards.
- General and special education teachers and other appropriate staff are knowledgeable about the administration of assessments, including making appropriate use of accommodations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

To have effective supervision of the more than 1,200 LEAs and the students they serve, Texas significantly increased its monitoring capacity as part of its Corrective Action Plan and now ensures monitoring focuses on improvements for students. Beginning with the 2019–2020 school year, additional staff will conduct differentiated monitoring that will include periodic on-site reviews, regular desk audits, and cyclical oversight of LEAs. The Student Assessment Division will work in collaboration with the additional monitoring teams to evaluate LEAs that are consistently over the 1.0 threshold for participation in STAAR Alternate 2. Desk audits will include a review of participation requirement justification and evidence in a student’s IEP. This will serve as oversight to ensure that state guidelines are being followed, so that the most appropriate assessment for students receiving special education services may be determined. To aid in this process, the State is currently researching the feasibility of establishing an internal mechanism to highlight LEAs that are significantly over the 1.0 threshold for participation in an AA-AAAS. The new monitoring staff, using a set of pre-determined criteria, will identify the LEAs that need additional support, guidance, and monitoring to ensure all students are appropriately assessed and to address any disproportionality in the LEAs participation data. Until an automated method to identify LEAs needing support is implemented, the State will continue to focus on other forms of outreach as previously described.

The State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking an AA-AAAS as identified through the data provided by using existing monitoring systems. Under IDEA, the Texas Education Agency annually collects data and monitors LEA compliance through the Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS). The PBMAS is a district-level, data-driven monitoring system developed and implemented annually by Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) staff in coordination with other TEA divisions and departments.

One data source for PBMAS is student assessment data, which can be disaggregated annually by racial and ethnic student groups. Student assessment data, along with TSDS, PEIMS, and sub-categories information, are used to determine disproportionality according to racial/ethnic group or disability category. Every district receives an annual report that includes year 1, year 2, and year 3 indications of risk around the disproportionality of students with disabilities as it applies to placement, discipline, and representation of students with disabilities. Through this existing compliance process, the TEA will continue to monitor and provide technical assistance to LEAs in addressing disproportionality in students receiving special education services.

The 2018–2019 school year is the first full year of implementation of the state’s definition of significant cognitive disability as well as the state’s revised participation requirements for the alternate assessment. TEA anticipates that the number of LEAs exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold will decrease over the next few years, specifically for LEAs whose students may have previously participated in the alternate assessment but who do not meet the current definition for significant cognitive disability criteria for

participation requirements. TEA will continue to collect and analyze assessment and student enrollment data and make appropriate modifications to training and resource materials as necessary to address disproportionality.

TIMELINE

- Winter 2019—make available data analysis and trends
- Winter 2019—continue publishing resources and providing statewide and targeted training
- Spring 2019—monitor test administrations
- Summer 2019—analyze participation data
- Fall 2019—update and develop training and information materials for educators and parents
- Fall 2019—conduct statewide and targeted training to remaining nine Education Service Centers regions
- Fall 2019—provide differentiated monitoring to districts in collaboration with TEA’s Special Populations Department
- Fall 2019—announce process for new Data Validation Monitoring System