House Public Education Hearing

86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Having These Conversations Is Important

Question 1

Are the passages on STAAR at the right grade level?

Question 2

Is the STAAR's declaration of "Meets Grade Level" accurate?

“If You Don’t Measure It, You Can’t Improve It”

Fitness

Weighing yourself regularly helps with hitting weight loss targets.

University of Pittsburgh, University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine.

Health

Food journals can dramatically reduce the progression of type 2 diabetes.

American Heart Association

Business

Firms who conduct routine budget audits have increased profitability.

Harvard Business Review

What Does STAAR Measure?

81st Legislature (2009)
House Bill 3

STAAR™

(1) STAAR assesses the **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)**

(2) STAAR was required to be **predictive of postsecondary readiness**

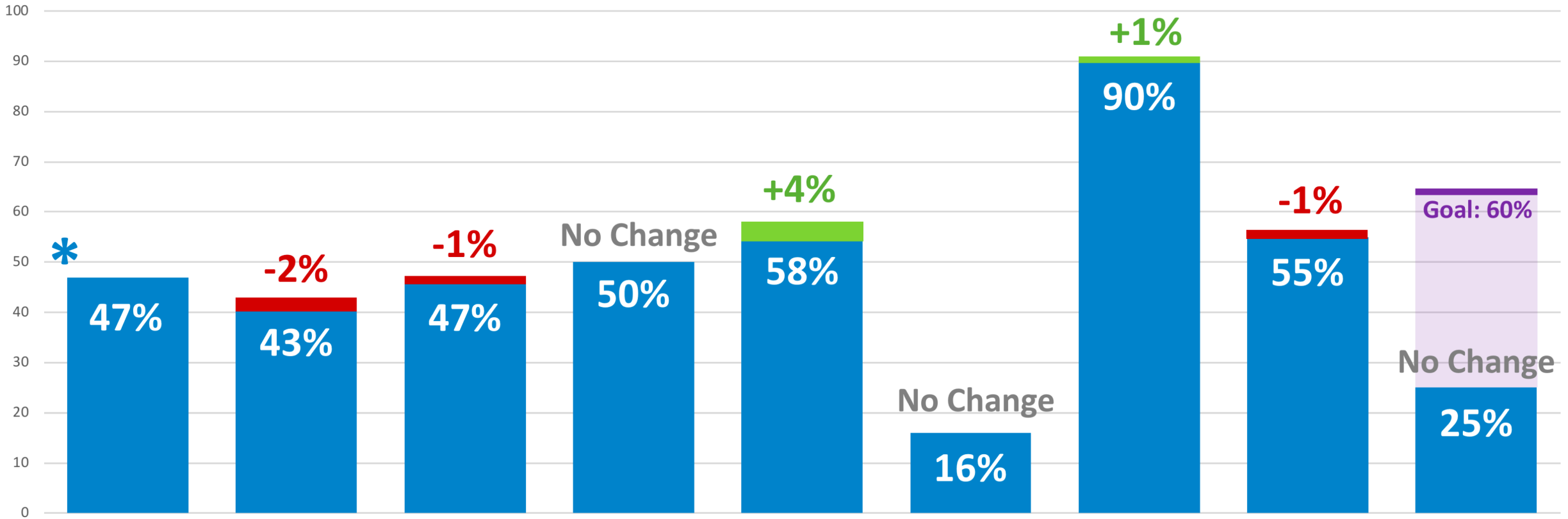
Postsecondary Readiness

39.024(b) - TEA and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall ensure that the Algebra II and English III end-of-course assessment instruments required under Section 39.023(c) are developed to be capable of, beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, measuring college readiness.

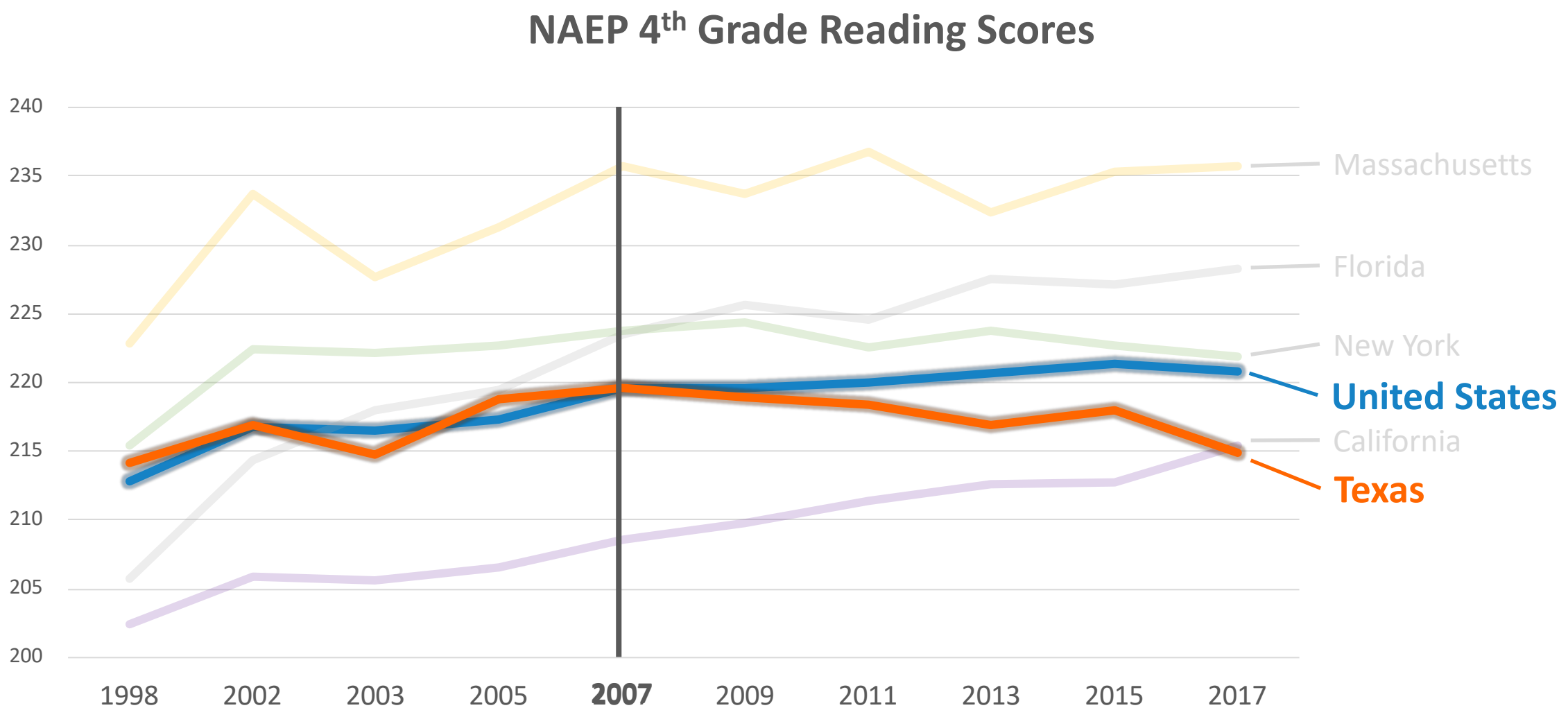
Readiness Starts Early

39.0241 (a-2) (5) - The performance standards on the assessment instruments in each of grades three through seven, as determined based on studies under Section 39.0242, that correlate student performance in the same content area on the assessment instrument for each grade with student performance on the assessment instrument in the succeeding grade.

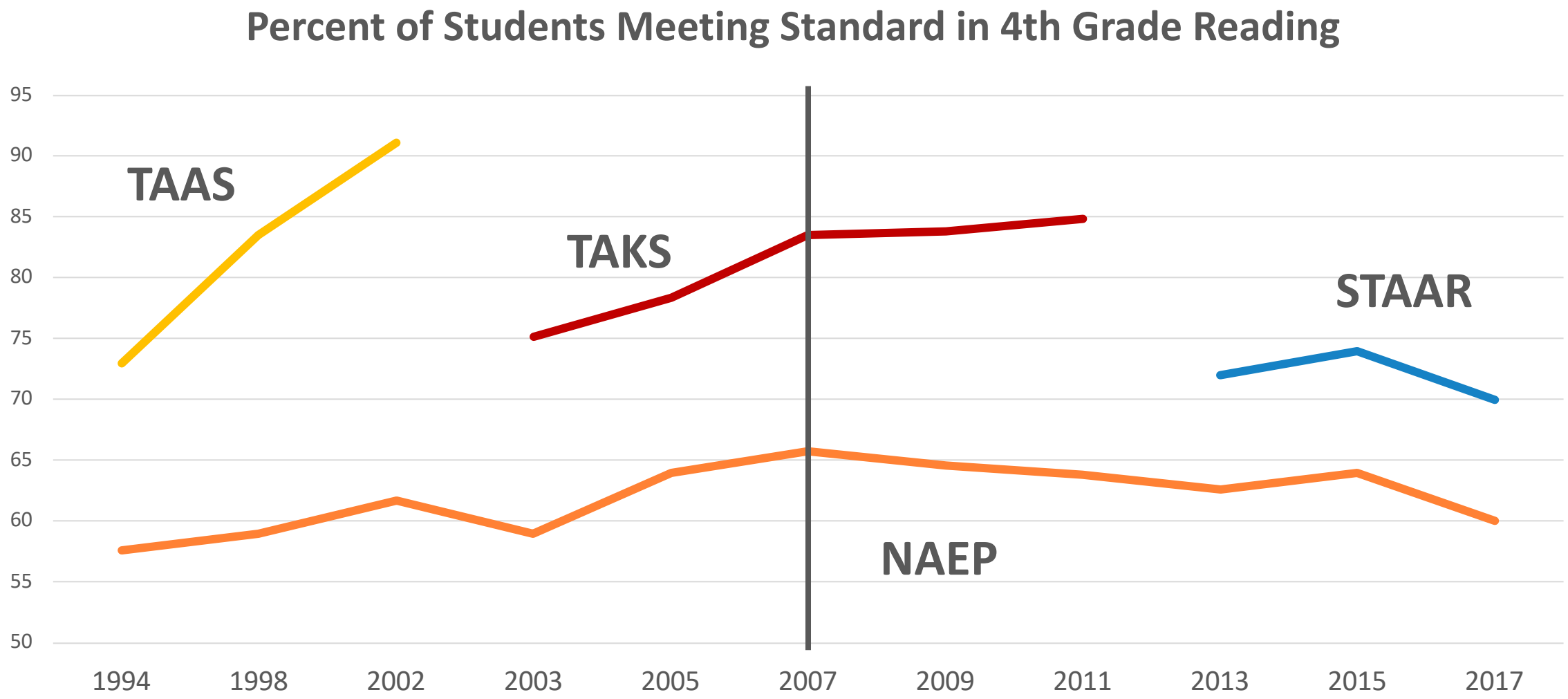
Texas Education Performance Indicators



Reading Performance Is Declining According To NAEP

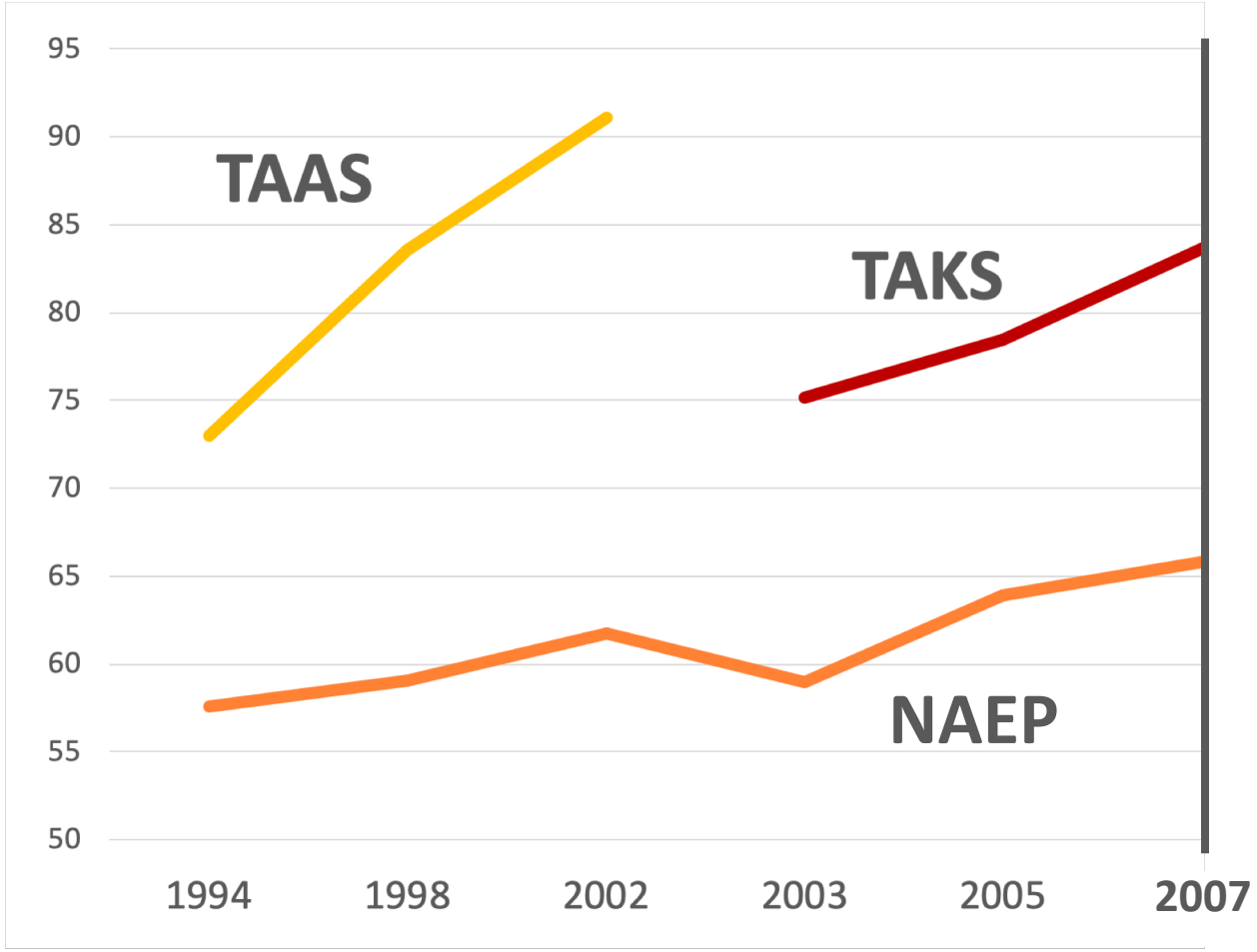


State Tests and NAEP Show Similar Trends



State Tests and NAEP Show Similar Trends

Percent of Students Meeting Standard in 4th Grade Reading

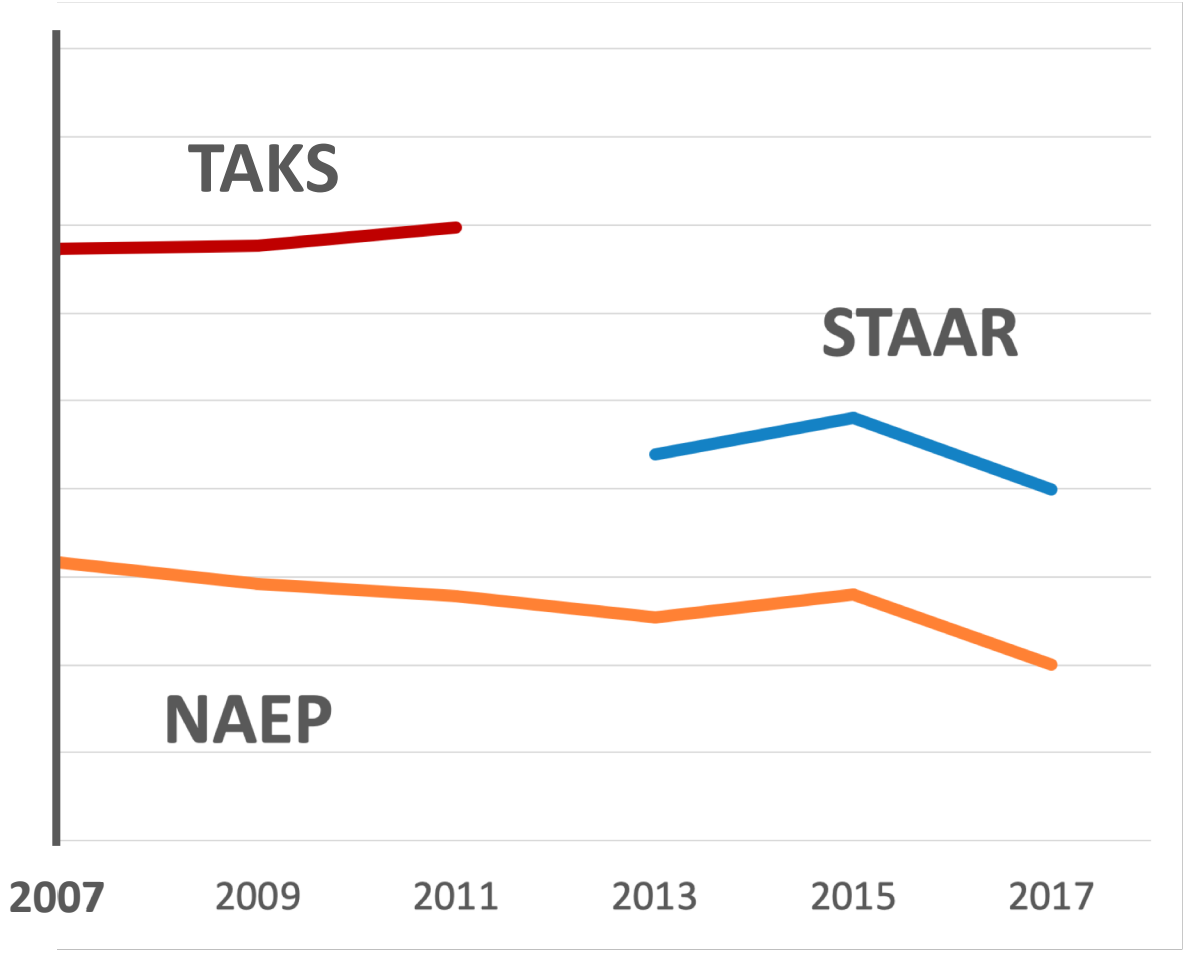


From **1994 to 2007**, there was consistent growth in reading performance at the minimum passing standard on state assessments (TAAS & TAKS), and this largely mirrored the trend from NAEP.

State Tests and NAEP Show Similar Trends

Percent of Students Meeting Standard in 4th Grade Reading

From **2007 to 2017**, there was largely flat or declining performance at the minimum passing standard on state assessments (TAKS & STAAR), and this largely mirrored the trend from NAEP.

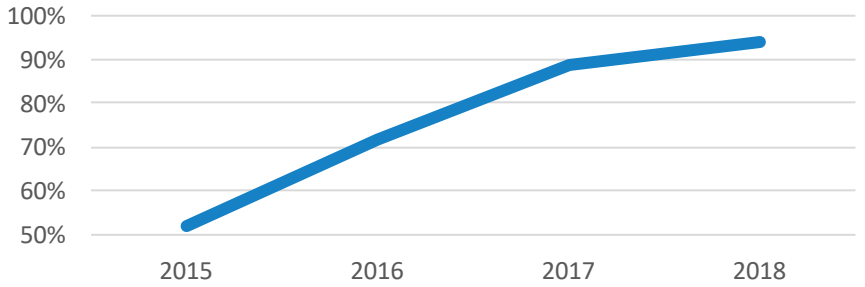


Districts Of All Kinds Are Bucking The Trend In Reading

La Pryor ISD

80% Eco. Dis

Enrollment: ~ 500



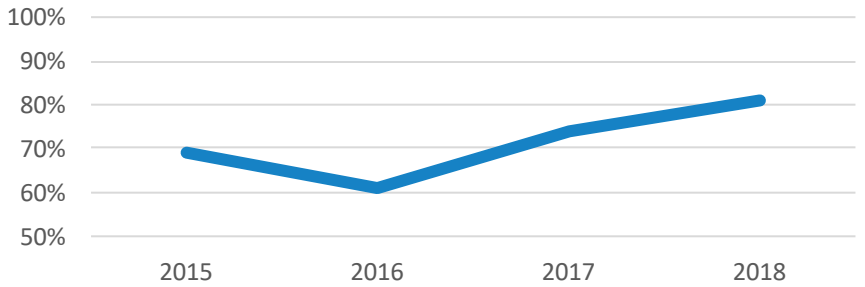
42 pts

3rd Grade Reading Approaches Grade Level

Laredo ISD

96% Eco. Dis

Enrollment: ~ 24,000



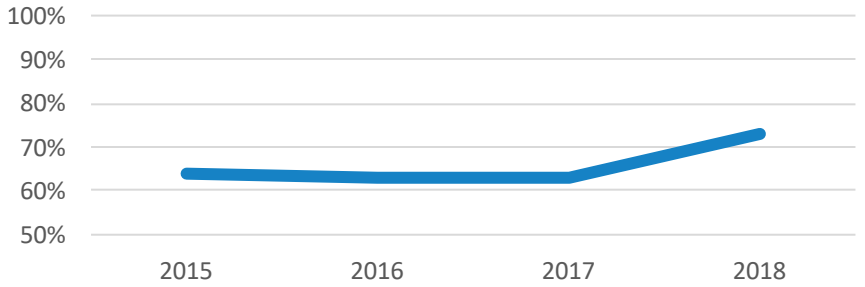
12 pts

3rd Grade Reading Approaches Grade Level

Dallas ISD

87% Eco. Dis

Enrollment: ~ 157,000



9 pts

3rd Grade Reading Approaches Grade Level

What Texas Expects For Reading Proficiency

The TEKS include highly specific building blocks of knowledge and skills designed to get kids postsecondary ready.

Background Knowledge

Student Expectation 3.6.E
Make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society

Literacy Knowledge

Student Expectation 3.9.B
explain rhyme scheme, sound devices, and structural elements such as stanzas in poems

Vocabulary

Student Expectation 3.3.C
Identify the meaning and use words w/ affixes as im- (into), non-, dis-, in- (not, non), pre-, -ness,.

Verbal Reasoning

Student Expectation 3.6.F
Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.

Learning To Read

Language Comprehension

Background Knowledge
facts, concepts etc.

Vocabulary
Breadth, precision, links etc.

Language Structures
Syntax, semantics etc.

Verbal Reasoning
Inference, metaphor etc.

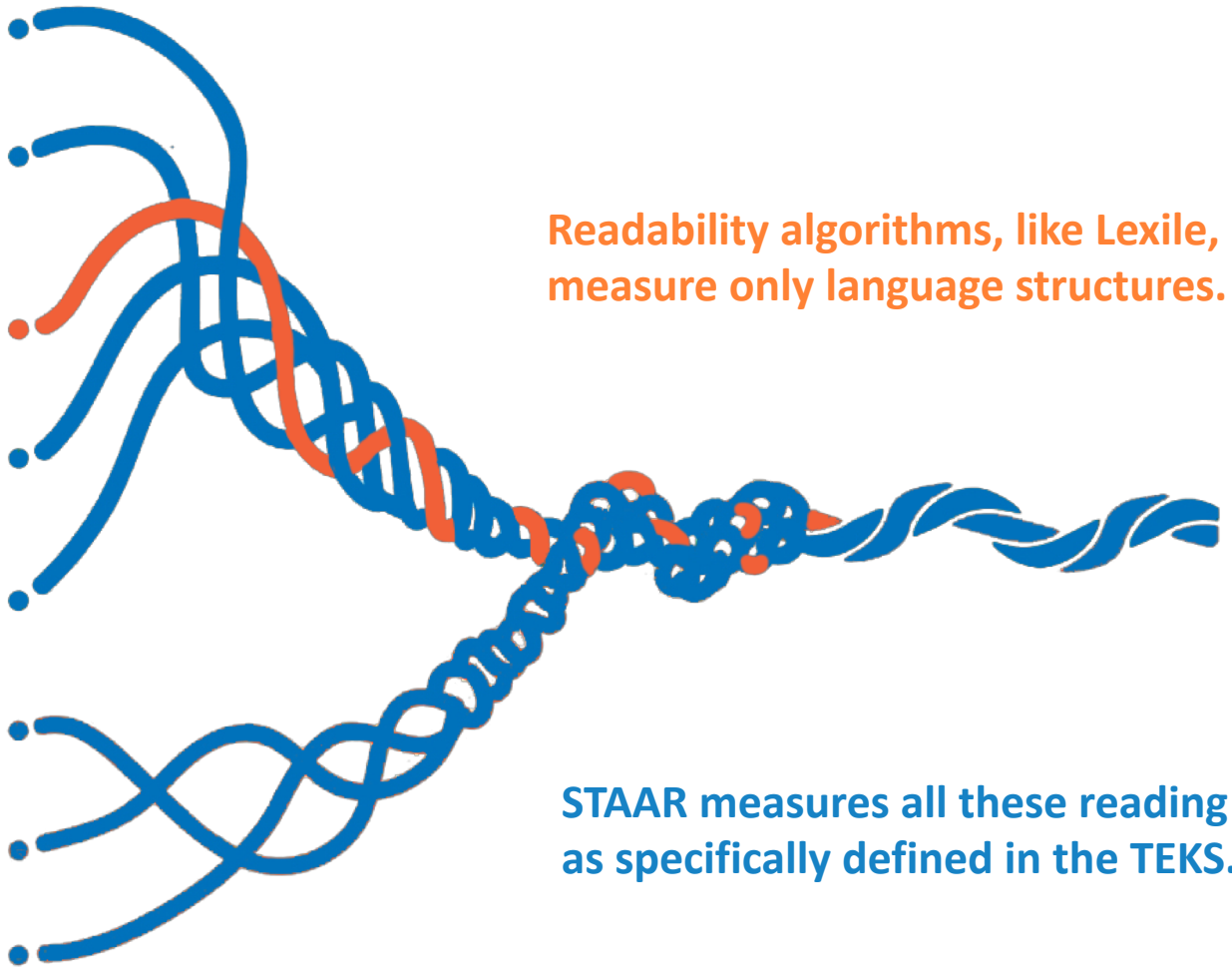
Literacy Knowledge
Print concepts, genres etc.

Word Recognition

Sight Recognition
of familiar words

Decoding
alphabet, sound correspondences

Phonological awareness
syllables, phonemes etc.



Readability algorithms, like Lexile, measure only language structures.

Reading Proficiency

STAAR measures all these reading skills as specifically defined in the TEKS.

Selecting Grade-Level Texts Is Complicated

"The sun is a ball of gas."

- **Simple** language structures
- **Complex** language comprehension

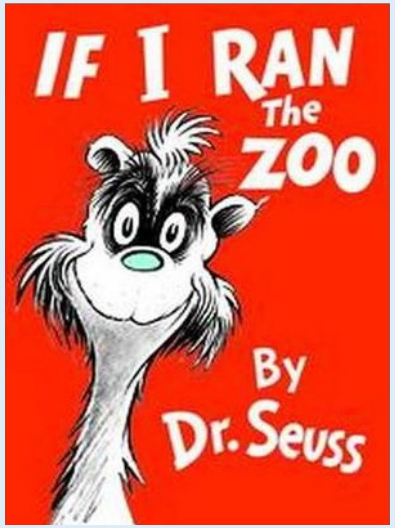
"So while the children swam and played and splashed water at each other, Wilbur amused himself in the mud along the edge of the brook, where it was warm and moist and delightfully sticky and oozy." – Charlotte's Web

- **Complex** language structures
- **Simple** language comprehension

Language Structure Algorithms Are Inappropriate to Use as the Sole Measure of Being on Grade-Level

If I Ran The Zoo

By Dr. Seuss



Lexile Level

870L

Flesch Kincaid

5.1

VS.

The Grapes of Wrath

By John Steinbeck

Lexile Level

680L

Flesch Kincaid

3.4

What does it mean to know how to read on “grade-level”?

STAAR

Where students **need to be** based on the entirety of reading proficiency

Masters Grade Level
Chance of student passing freshmen level courses

75%

Meets Grade Level
Chance of student passing freshmen level courses

60%

Lexile

Where students and texts **currently are** based solely on language structure

75%

Chance of comprehending texts based only on language structures

How do we select passages and questions that are on grade-level?

STAAR

Developed with Texas teachers

STAAR items and passages are developed through a rigorous process. Committees of Texas teachers approve items and passages based on four key criteria.

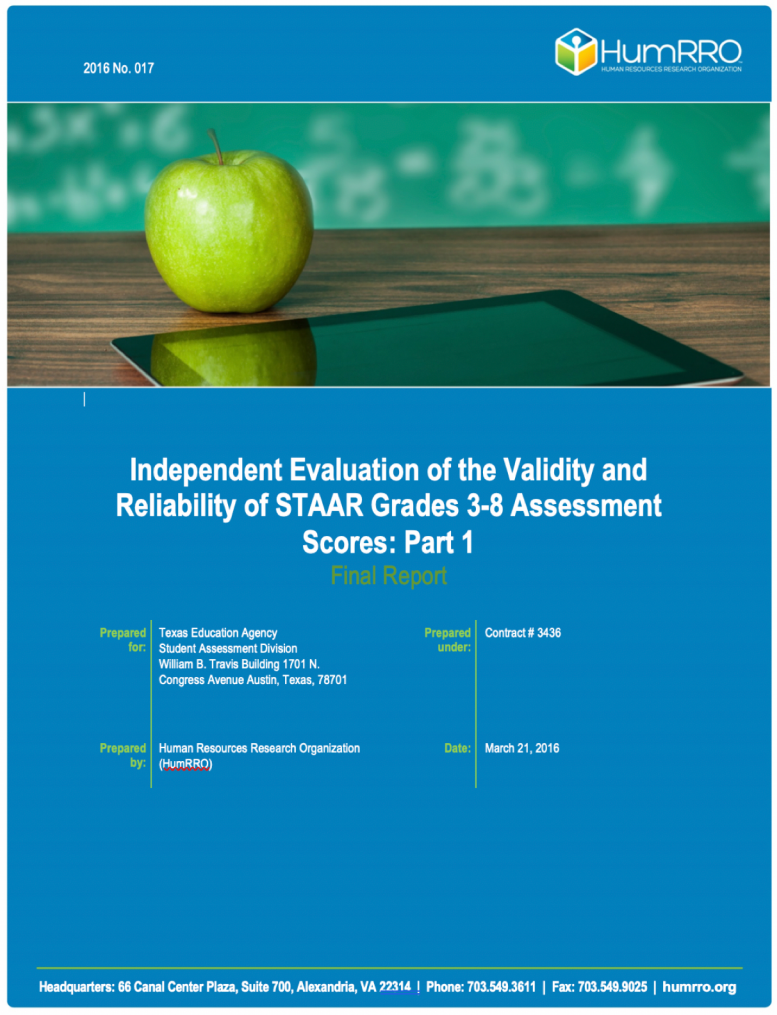
- **Aligned w/ Student Expectation**
- **Grade-level Appropriate**
- **Fairness of Item**
- **Opportunity to Learn**

Lexile And Their Peers

Computer-based Algorithm

Quantitative analysis of words per sentence and word frequency, etc., based on the middle 50% of texts and students today.

Grade Level Has Been Independently Validated



STAAR Validity Has Been Verified, Including Grade-Level Appropriateness

House Bill 743, Huberty – 84th Legislature

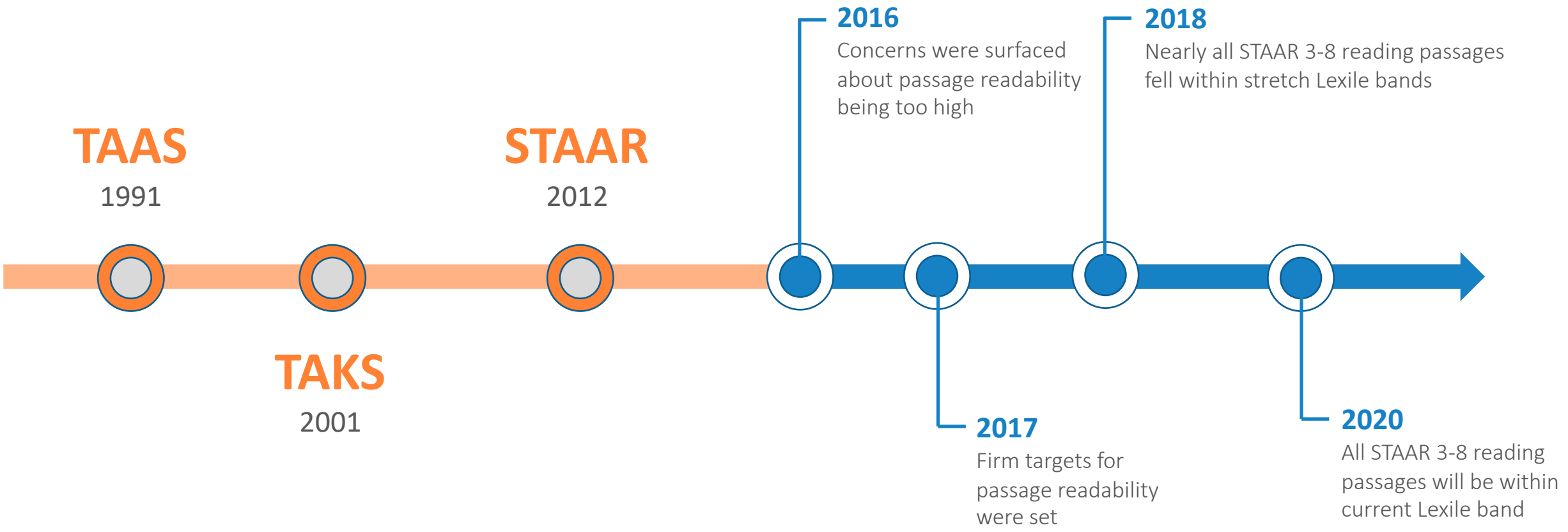
§39.023(a-11) - "The assessment instrument must, on the basis of empirical evidence, be determined to be **valid and reliable** by an entity that is independent of the agency and of any other entity that developed the assessment instrument."

Findings: STAAR was found to be valid. The evaluation included confirming **"test bears a strong association with on-grade curriculum requirements."**

Using Readability Algorithms When Selecting Passages

Pre 2016, multiple readability algorithms, including Lexile, were consulted to inform passage selection.

Post 2016, the agency adopted specific Lexile goals.



Lexile Is Valuable To Help Parents Find Books

Find A Book Tool

Step 1: Enter your Lexile®

Tell us your Lexile® measure and find the books you'd like to read.

My Lexile® measure is...

Lexile®
400 L

Lexile® Range

Lexile® Start: 300 L — To — Lexile® End: 500 L

OR

I don't know my Lexile® measure...

My current grade is: 3rd

- I find the books I read for school difficult.
- I find the books I read for school just right.
- I find the books I read for school easy.

SUBMIT →

Lexile Is Valuable To Help Teachers Select Books

Classroom Leveled Libraries

Teachers can use Lexile to build useful classroom tools such as leveled libraries. Lexile scores are also tied to guided reading levels, DRA, and other tools.

Leveled Text Chart

Grade Level	Guided Reading	DRA	Reading Recovery	Lexile
Kindergarten	A	A-1	1	BR-220
Kindergarten-Grade 1	B	2-3	2	
	C	4	3-4	
Grade 1	D	6	5-6	220-500
	E	8	7-8	
	F	10	9-10	
	G	12	11-12	
Grades 1-2	H	14	13-14	450-500
	I	16	15-17	
Grade 2	J	18	18-20	450-620
	K	20		
Grades 2-3	L	24		550-620
	M	28		
Grade 3	N	30		550-790
Grades 3-4	O	34		770-790
	P	38		

We Must Do More To Support Our Educators

Where We Need To Be

College, Career, Military Readiness

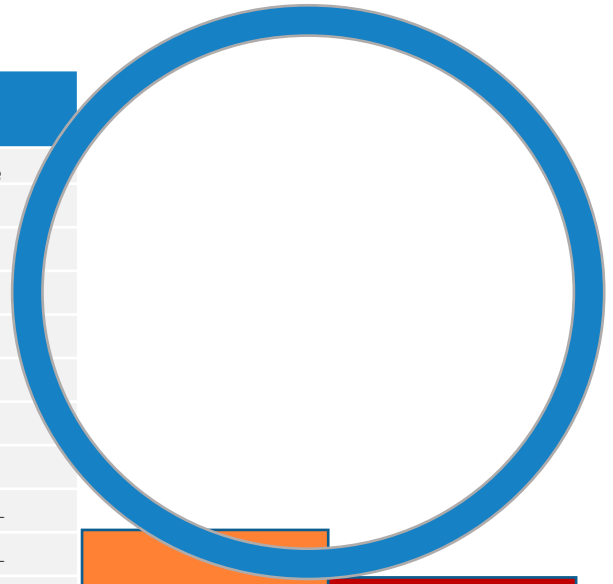
3rd Grade Reading

STAAR Score	Lexile Score
1970	1300L
1890	1300L
1750	1240L
1666	1090L
1615	1000L
1577	930L
1555	890L
1521	820L - 825L
1498	760L - 785L
1468	730L - 765L
1457	710L - 720L
1440	680L
1423	650L
1406	615L
1391	590L
1375	560L
1360	520-523L
1345	505L
1302	425L
1295	415L

Masters Grade Level

Meets Grade Level

Approaches Grade Level



Our support of educators must bridge this gap

Where We Are

Midrange of texts and readers today*
(based on language structures)

*Text Range as of 2012
*Reader Range as of 2016