

January 8, 2018

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Interim Assessment Pilot Available for Educators

The purpose of this communication is to notify public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools of the availability of a pilot for free, optional interim assessments. The STAAR Interim Assessments are a TEA-provided tool to help educators tailor instructional practice to address students' needs. The interim assessments are being launched in spring 2018 on a pilot basis for districts who choose to participate. Feedback from the pilot will be incorporated into the full launch of the interim assessments, which will be available in two administrations during the 2018–2019 school year.

Participation in all interim assessments is voluntary; districts may elect to use these interims district-wide or schools and educators may choose to administer them locally. Educators who would like to participate in the spring 2018 pilot should contact their districts. School districts that choose to participate in the pilot will be asked to provide feedback via a survey. Additionally, TEA will conduct on-site cognitive labs to get first-hand information from students and educators regarding their experience with the tool. Results of the survey and cognitive labs will inform improvements, including faster and more detailed reporting, before the full launch of the interim assessments in 2018–2019. The STAAR Interim Assessments include the following features.

- Items for the STAAR Interim Assessments are developed with Texas teachers and fully aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The assessments include some former STAAR items.
- Interim assessments for grades 3–8 mathematics and reading are offered through the STAAR Online Testing Platform.
- Results are reported in the STAAR Assessment Management System.
- Reports for the pilot include percentages representing the statistical probability of achieving “Approaches” and “Meets” grade level expectations on STAAR. This information is available immediately after a student’s assessment is submitted.
- Information about students’ relative strengths or weaknesses in STAAR reporting categories will be available in a data file. For students who have completed and submitted tests by February 23, a data file will be available on March 5. A final data file for all students participating will be available two weeks after the testing window closes.
- The interim assessments pilot testing window is January 29–March 23, 2018.
- Districts register students in the Texas Assessment Management System. Registration begins January 9, 2018.
- An informational webinar is required for all educators participating in the 2018 interim assessment pilot. ETS is hosting an initial webinar on Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 10:00–11:00 a.m. (CT). A recorded version of the webinar will be posted for educators who are not able to participate the scheduled webinar.

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.

If you are interested in participating in the 2018 interim assessment pilot, please contact the TEA Student Assessment Division via email at StudentAssessment@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education