



# House Bill 3 (HB 3) SAT, ACT, and TSIA Reimbursement Frequently Asked Questions

We've shared some of our most frequently asked questions to help you out!  
The HB 3 SAT, ACT, and TSIA Reimbursement FAQs will be modified periodically to ensure a consistently accurate document.

*Can't find the answer you're looking for? Please contact Advanced Academics at [advancedacademics@tea.texas.gov](mailto:advancedacademics@tea.texas.gov) for additional questions.*

**In which category does your question exist?** Sections are *bookmarked* for a category question index. You may select the category section title in the chart below for a bookmarked set of Q & As or select a specific question for a quick response.

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## **Section A: Policy Overview and Definitions**

### **A.1) What is the HB 3 reimbursement?**

A school district is entitled to reimbursement for the fees paid by the district for a college preparation assessment administration under Texas Education Code (TEC) §[39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#) and §48.155.

### **A.2) What is a "college preparation assessment" that is eligible for reimbursement?**

"College preparation assessments" include the ACT, SAT, or the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) for the 2019-2020 school year. ([TEC §39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#)). The reimbursement covers the basic SAT and/or ACT test, or the reading and math sections of the TSIA. Other additional costs or fees such as the writing test, subject areas tests, essay portion, or late fees are not eligible for reimbursement. Diagnostic tests and retests are also not eligible for reimbursement.

### **A.3) Who is getting reimbursed?**

The district is the entity that receives reimbursement from TEA for paying for eligible students to take an eligible assessment (TEC §48.155).

### **A.4) Who are the eligible students for which the district will be reimbursed?**

For the 2019-2020 school year beginning September 1, eligible students for reimbursement include:

- **Seniors** who take either the SAT, ACT, or TSIA from **September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020**.
- **Juniors** who take either the SAT, ACT, or TSIA from **January 1, 2020 – August 31, 2020**.

#### **A.5) How does this legislation impact accountability?**

The college preparation examination reimbursement is a separate process from accountability. A–F accountability measures the percentage of students who are College, Career, or Military Ready (CCMR) through [multiple indicators](#). Through this program, more students will take the assessment(s) and have the opportunity to meet the TSI criteria necessary for CCMR credit. This is an opportunity for districts to continuously improve their strategies to ensure that every child is CCMR and has the opportunity to pursue postsecondary options.

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## **Section B: SAT, ACT, TSIA Definitions and Cost**

### **B.1) What are the SAT, ACT, & TSIA?**

**SAT:** The SAT is an assessment administered by the College Board and is used by colleges and universities nationwide for admissions and scholarship opportunities. It tests on three subjects, scoring from 400-1600 and totaling 3 hours. It also contains an optional 50-minute essay.

**ACT:** The ACT is an assessment administered by ACT, Inc. and is used by colleges and universities nationwide for admissions and scholarship opportunities. It tests on four subjects, scoring from 1-36 and totaling 2 hours and 55 minutes. It also contains an optional 40-minute essay.

**TSIA:** The Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) is an assessment administered by the College Board on the ACCUPLACER platform and is used to determine the student's readiness to enroll in freshman-level academic coursework by institutions of higher education ([TEC §51.334](#)).

### **B.2) When are the SAT/ACT administrations?**

School day: please visit the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) webpages for more information.

National administration: Please visit the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) webpages for more information.

### **B.3) Why isn't the essay portion or writing test included in the reimbursement?**

Texas public institutions of higher education do not require the essay or writing test for admission. Therefore, the agency will not reimburse the cost of the essay or writing test.

### **B.4) Why is the TSIA included in the reimbursement?**

The TSIA is specifically referenced in [TEC §39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#) as an eligible assessment for reimbursement.

### **B.5) What are the costs of the assessments?**

TEA has negotiated a rate with both College Board and ACT, Inc. for school day administrations to cost \$35 per student. This rate replaces any prior negotiated rates and will be the cost for every school day assessment administered moving forward. This rate is also restricted to the basic assessment and does

not include the essay portion. The national administration fees will remain the same at \$49.50 for the SAT (no essay) and \$52.00 for the ACT (no essay). The TSIA costs are dependent on the institution that administers the assessment. Please note that only the reading and math portions will be reimbursed for each assessment (not writing or essay) and a student must take both reading and math in order to be eligible.

**B.6) Will any discount automatically occur on the College Board or ACT online registrations when a student is registered independently?**

No, the national administration price will remain the same to users unless they use a fee waiver. Information about fee waivers can be found [here](#) for SAT and [here](#) for ACT.

**B.7) Can a fee waiver be used for school day administrations?**

No, fee waivers are for national administrations only. Eligible students who participate in a school day administration can still use two fee waivers on national administrations. Information about fee waivers can be found on the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) websites.

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## **Section C: Student and District Requirements**

**C.1) What are the requirements for eligible students?**

There are no requirements of students other than to be eligible for reimbursement. To be eligible, students must be in the spring of their junior year or during their senior year when they take the assessment, be present for the exam, and take it in its entirety. Outside of these boundaries, students are welcome to take the assessments on their own time and pay for it themselves or use a fee waiver. ([TEC §39.0261\(c\)](#))

**C.2) Does a student have to meet the college readiness benchmarks for districts to receive reimbursement?**

No, the student does not have to meet college readiness benchmarks for the district to receive reimbursement. The reimbursement is given for an eligible student to take the exam one time in the spring of the junior year or during the senior year.

**C.3) What is the requirement for districts to comply with this law?**

Students may take one eligible assessment of their choosing at state cost (see question [A.2](#) for details on eligible assessments). Districts may implement this by either offering a school day administration or paying for national exams. Districts may not limit the student's choice of test. To assist with the financial burden, TEA frontloaded funds to each district in their September or October payment.

**C.4) Can districts restrict students to only taking the exam only on the school day administration?**

No, a district can't restrict which exams a student may take. Students may choose which exam they want to take at state cost. Each district will need to follow local policy to determine how to determine student choice and pay for administrations outside of the school day. Please note that if a district pays for a national administration, they must request reimbursement from TEA. See question [G.3](#) for more information.

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## Section D: Calendar Constraints

### D.1) When can a student take the assessment at state cost?

Please see the below table for example reimbursement eligibility scenarios. The scenarios follow student 1 (Johnny) in gray throughout his junior and senior year, and student 2 (Sally) in white throughout her senior year.

School Year	Example Scenario	District Reimbursement
2019-2020	The district paid for Johnny, a <b>junior</b> , to take an eligible assessment in the fall.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Johnny to take an assessment in the spring.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district did <b>NOT</b> pay for Johnny to take an assessment in the spring but <b>DID</b> pay for him to take an assessment in the summer.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2020-2021	The district <b>also</b> paid for Johnny to take an assessment fall (now a <b>senior</b> ).	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; the state can only pay for ONE eligible student for ONE student-chosen exam.
2020-2021	The district did <b>NOT</b> pay for Johnny to take an assessment spring/summer 2019 (junior year) but <b>DID</b> pay for Johnny to take an assessment in the fall 2020 (senior year).	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Sally, a <b>senior</b> , to take an assessment in the fall.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district also paid for Sally to take an assessment in the spring.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; the state can only pay for ONE eligible student for ONE student-chosen exam.
2019-2020	The district did <b>NOT</b> pay for Sally to take an assessment in the fall 2019 but <b>DID</b> pay for Sally to take an assessment in the spring 2020.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Sally (now <b>GRADUATED</b> ) to take an assessment in the summer.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.

### D.2) If eligible students have previously taken the SAT or ACT, are they still eligible to take an assessment at state cost?

It depends on when the student took the assessment. Districts will not be reimbursed for exams taken prior to September 1, 2019, since that is when the legislation went into effect. Therefore, any student who took an assessment prior to September 1, 2019 (and has not yet taken another assessment at state

cost), is currently eligible to take an assessment at state cost. Remember, the student is only eligible for one assessment at state cost, one time.

### **D.3) What if a student transitions to another district?**

Since students can only take an assessment at state cost once, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, [TReX](#) will include a field for a district to indicate that they have been reimbursed for a student.

### **D.4) If a student transitions to another district in the middle of the school year and both districts paid for that student to take an assessment, which district will be reimbursed?**

TEA will use vendor data to try to accurately attribute students to the correct district at time of testing. If two districts paid for an eligible student, the earlier test (the first district) will be selected for reimbursement.

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## **Section E: Reimbursement Timeline**

### **E.1) When will districts be reimbursed?**

TEA advanced funds to districts in September 2019. Districts will reconcile eligible expenditures during the settle-up process in April 2021.

### **E.2) Is the reimbursement retroactive, or can it only be used on students taking the exam during the school year it was given?**

Frontloaded funds must be applied to students in the same school year and cannot be carried over into the next school year. Districts will receive funding annually. The funds may not be used to pay for assessments before September 1, 2019 or during the summer (June 1-August 31).

### **E.3) What is the reimbursement process?**

TEA will collect vendor data from SAT and ACT to determine which students took an exam and the date(s) of administration. Through that process, TEA will verify eligible students that participated in school day administrations and allocate accordingly. No additional action is needed by districts that administered school day testing of the ACT and/or SAT. **If a district wishes to be reimbursed for a National administration or the TSIA in lieu of school day administration, a request must be submitted to TEA for reimbursement.** Please see question [G.3](#) for more information.

### **E.4) Does the district pay the student or the vendor?**

If the district is paying for a school day administration, they pay the vendor. It is local policy how the district chooses to pay for national administrations or the TSIA.

### **E.5) Can districts charge students for the assessments before the exam is taken & reimburse students later?**

The intent of the legislation was to remove all barriers (including financial) to allow students in the spring of their junior year or during their senior year to take a college preparation exam so they may have increased access to postsecondary options. Districts may need to create local policy on how to provide a free assessment to students.

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## **Section F: School Finance**

### **F.1) How was the advanced funding calculated?**

TEA calculated the advanced funding by funding 100% of expected juniors and 50% of expected seniors at \$35 per student. This is not a budget, but rather an estimate of expected expenditures. Any amount unexpended will be returned and any eligible amount overspent will be reconciled in April 2021 during settle-up.

### **F.2) Will the \$35 school day administration price be automatically applied for Texas schools?**

Districts will receive a custom invoice from vendors reflecting the \$35 price for eligible students.

### **F.3) Is the September 2019 SAT/ACT/TSIA funding that districts received going to be distributed annually? Meaning, should districts expect to receive another set of front-loaded funds with the same guidelines in September 2020?**

Yes, districts will receive advance funding in the fall of each school year with reconciliation happening in the spring of the next school year. The funding amount will vary as it is based on projected enrollment for the upcoming school year.

### **F.4) Can the original expense of the assessments be used to meet the 55% College, Career, or Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus (CCMR OB) spending requirement?**

No. Districts have been frontloaded funding to pay for a college preparation assessment for each eligible student and should use those funds for that purpose. However, districts may elect to pay for additional college preparation/readiness assessments using the CCMR OB funds.

### **F.5) Can the CCMR OB pay for additional college preparation/readiness assessments?**

Yes, college preparation/readiness assessment administrations qualify under an approved use of the minimum 55% CCMR OB spending requirement since it supports the district in earning the bonus. Districts can pay for additional assessments such as PSAT, PSAT 8/9, ACT Aspire, TSIA, etc.

### **F.6) Where is the advanced funding and how do we code expenses?**

The funding can be found in the Foundation School Program general allotment in September 2019. Your district must track the expenses as there is no separate code or line item for tracking.

### **F.7) Is there a minimum or maximum amount that TEA will reimburse?**

There is no minimum or maximum amount. The \$35 school day administration is the automatic rate that TEA will reimburse for students who tested during school day administration. If a district pays for a national administration or TSIA and would like reimbursement for this instead, they will have to request reimbursement from TEA. Please note that the highest cost exam will be reimbursed. See question [G.3](#) for more information.

### **F.8) What is the settle-up process?**

The settle-up process is a well-known process in school finance during which the district reconciles funds with TEA. TEA plans to get SAT/ACT data from the vendors to determine final funding. If districts would like to receive reimbursement for a national testing date or TSIA, they will have to request that funding separately. Please see Question [G.3](#) in order to receive information on that process.

### **F.9) How will TEA determine a district's final reimbursement amount?**

Every summer, TEA will collect vendor data from the prior school year to determine students who took an assessment and when that assessment was taken. TEA will automatically consider school day administration for reimbursement. The district must submit formal requests for reimbursement IF:

- The district wishes to be reimbursed for a national administration
- The district wishes to be reimbursed for TSIA administration

Please see question [G.3](#) for more information on this process.

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## **Section G: National Administrations and TSIA**

### **G.1) Can the district be reimbursed if they pay for a student to take an assessment on a national testing date?**

Yes. During the 2019-2020 school year, a district may be reimbursed if they pay for a student to take the ACT or SAT on one of the national testing dates. However, TEA will not automatically calculate reimbursements to districts if they pay for national administrations. Districts will need to submit a request to TEA that they wish to receive reimbursement for this. Please see question [G.3](#) for more information on this process.

### **G.2) If the district pays for a student to take a national administration, can they tell the student they can't take the school day administration (or make the student pay for it) and vice versa?**

Yes. Students can choose which assessment they would like to take at state cost. If the student has already taken one exam at state cost, they are not eligible to take another assessment at state cost. The students can still use a fee waiver for national administrations if they are eligible, pay for the assessment themselves, or the district may choose to pay. It is a local decision how the district determines student choice. (([TEC §39.0261\(e\)](#))).

### **G.3) How can the district request reimbursement for the TSIA or national administrations of the SAT/ACT?**

TEA has developed two separate processes for reimbursement of these fees.

- **National Administrations:** Districts requesting reimbursement for national administration days should be prepared to do so in late fall 2020. Districts need to be prepared to know specifically for which students and which national administration dates in the 2019-2020 fiscal year that they would like reimbursement.
- **TSIA:** Districts requesting reimbursement for the TSIA should be prepared to do so beginning June 2020. TEA will release a To the Administrator Addressed letter with more information closer to the release date. To request reimbursement, districts must provide the student's name, unique ID, and date of birth, along with the location, TSIA administrative site ID, date, and cost of both reading and math administrations.

TEA will analyze and process all requests. Please note the highest cost exam per student will be reimbursed.

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## **Section H: Title I and Non-Traditional ISDs**

### **H.1) Do Title I schools still receive the discounted rate of \$8?**

No. TEA has established a state-negotiated rate of \$35 per exam administered for school day testing across both vendors (SAT & ACT). However, districts participating in school day administrations can still opt to receive benefits for income-eligible students when placing the order.

### **H.2) Can private schools receive reimbursement?**

No, private schools are not eligible for reimbursement.

### **H.3) Can charter schools receive reimbursement?**

Yes, public, open-enrollment charter schools are eligible for reimbursement.

### **H.4) Can homeschooled students receive reimbursement?**

No, homeschooled students are considered private school students in the state of Texas; therefore, they are not eligible for reimbursement.

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## **Section I: Student Absences**

### **I.1) What if a student misses a school day administration?**

Sometimes, students are not able to attend a school day administration. In these rare cases, students should still be provided every opportunity to take the administration such as a retest day or during one of the national administration dates.

### **I.2) What if a student misses a national administration?**

The student must take the assessment in its entirety for the district to receive reimbursement.

### **I.3) What is the absentee/unused test policy?**

TEA has established a formal agreement with ACT and SAT that will prevent the vendors from charging districts for absent students or unused tests. However, districts and campuses should be conscious of the number of exams they are ordering so not to return an abundance of unused exams. Districts may want to institute a preregistration process to ensure an accurate count of tests to order.