Q: What are the STAAR interim assessments?

The STAAR interim assessments are offered as a free optional online tool for school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. The tool provides actionable data to help educators monitor progress and help predict student performance on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®).

The STAAR Interim Assessments are

- a way to monitor academic improvement, especially for students who are consistently performing below grade-level
- a tool to inform interventions for students or groups of students based on predictions of STAAR performance
- a benchmarking instrument at the campus or district level

The STAAR Interim Assessments are NOT

- an item bank intended for building classroom quizzes and assignments
- a source of test questions for tutoring or small-group instruction
- a classroom formative assessment tool designed to provide performance data on specific student expectations
STAAR Interim Assessments FAQ

Q: What are the differences between classroom formative, interim, and summative assessments?

- **Classroom formative assessments** measure student performance on specific student expectations to inform a teacher’s instructional choices, immediate adjustments to unit plans, or changes to lessons (Examples: class quizzes, exit tickets).

- **Interim assessments** measure a student's understanding of a broader span of student expectations to monitor progress, predict summative performance, and identify students for intervention (Examples: benchmarks, STAAR interim assessments).

- **Summative assessments** measure student mastery of a broader span of student expectations at the end of an instructional unit to determine the effectiveness of the program (Examples: student portfolios, STAAR summative assessment).

Q: Does my district need permission from the TEA to participate in STAAR interim assessments?

Permission or confirmation from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is **NOT** required. The assessment tool is free and open for any district or charter school to use at their discretion. STAAR interim assessments can be made optional for schools and teachers. Teachers who choose to administer these assessments, when not required by their district, are not subject to the twice-per-school year benchmark limitation.

Q: How can my district successfully implement STAAR interim assessments?

For more information regarding STAAR interim assessments best practices, please visit *Best Practices: How to Successfully Implement STAAR Interim Assessments*.

Q: How are the STAAR interim assessments administered?

The STAAR interim assessments are delivered in an online format through the STAAR Online Testing Platform (SOTP). In order to administer STAAR interim assessments, schools or districts should check that their device and online network systems are adequate for testing, install and configure the Secure Browser for testing devices, review testing resources, register students for interim testing, print test tickets, and prepare students for testing. For detailed information, please see Section 4.1 of the *Interim Assessments User Manual*.
Q: What grades and subjects are tested?

**Two testing opportunities**
(Available during Opportunities 1 and 2)

• grades 3 through 8 mathematics
• Spanish grades 3 through 5 mathematics
• Algebra I
• English I
• English II

**One testing opportunity**
(Available during Opportunity 2 only)

• grades 3 through 8 reading
• Spanish grades 3 through 5 reading
• grade 5 science (new)
• Spanish grade 5 science (new)
• grade 8 science (new)
• grade 8 social studies (new)
• Biology (new)
• U.S. History (new)

Q: Why do some subjects have two opportunities while others have one?

For grades 3 through 8 reading/language arts (RLA) assessments, one opportunity is available because the RLA Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) have been revised, and only overlap standards will be assessed. TEA is planning to only offer one testing opportunity for science and social studies and recommends that it is administered after the majority of TEKS have been covered, because unlike the TEKS for reading and math that tend to include similar skills over the grades but build in complexity, the science and social studies TEKS tend to contain discrete skills, facts, and concepts.

Q: What are the STAAR interim assessments' items like?

STAAR interim assessments include test questions developed with Texas teachers and STAAR summative test questions from previous years. STAAR interim assessments’ test questions have been field tested and are fully aligned to the TEKS. The STAAR interim assessments use mostly multiple-choice items and some “griddable” items (in certain mathematics and science assessments only).

Q: What online supports are available?

The STAAR interim assessments include online content and language supports, the same pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials available on STAAR online tests. Text-to-speech and refreshable braille (for reading/language arts and social studies only) are also available.
Q: When are the testing windows and registration for the interim assessments?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First testing window (Opportunity 1)</th>
<th>Second testing window (Opportunity 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Opens: August 12, 2019</td>
<td>Registration Opens: November 15, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment window: August 15, 2019-March 31, 2020</td>
<td>Assessment window: November 22, 2019-March 31, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEA recommended testing windows: November for Opportunity 1 and February for Opportunity 2, but teachers should consider local scope and sequence when scheduling STAAR interim assessments. STAAR performance predictions are more accurate when assessments are administered during the recommended windows.

Q: How do I register my students?

Students can be registered in the STAAR Assessment Management System through a student data file upload or through individual registrations for each student. Specific instructions for registering students for STAAR interim assessments are included in the Interim Assessments User Manual.

Q: Will training for STAAR interim assessments be available?

Yes, three webinar trainings specific to STAAR interim assessments will be held on August 13 (Interim Assessment Overview, Updates, and Best Practices), August 20 (Getting Ready for Interim Testing and Student Registration), and August 27, 2019 (A Deep Dive into the Online Reporting Suite for Interim Testing). Registration and a recording of each training will be available on the Texas Assessment site.

Q: What reports of student performance are available?

Immediate results for the STAAR interim assessments are available in a special section of the Texas Assessment Management System called the Online Reporting Suite (ORS), a dynamic real-time reporting system. Immediately after tests are submitted, the ORS will display district-level, campus-level, and student-level reports with user-friendly graphs and customization. Users can filter results by specific student groups. The student-level report allows educators to perform item analysis based on individual student performance. This feature displays the student’s score, the student’s responses, and the student expectation for each test question. The student-level report also includes pop-up windows showing each test question and a percentage probability of a student achieving Approaches, Meets, and Masters Grade Level on the STAAR. Results are also available via weekly district downloads that can be imported into local student information systems.
Q: How should districts interpret results from the STAAR interim assessments?

For guidance on how to interpret results from STAAR interim assessments, please see the *Interim Assessments User Manual*.

Q: Are the STAAR interim assessments part of STAAR accountability?

No. The STAAR interim assessments are a tool that districts and educators can use to improve outcomes for students in Texas. The optional assessments are delivered through the SOTP, and the reports include a percentage likelihood of achievement on STAAR, but the assessments are NOT tied to accountability.

Q: What will TEA do with the data from the STAAR interim assessments?

TEA will not have access to the student data. The state dashboard will provide an overview of schools and districts that are participating, but it will not provide specific score information or any student-level data.

Q: Who can I contact for more information?

For technical questions related to registration in the Assessment Management System, using the SOTP, or reports of student performance, contact the Texas Assessment Support Center at 855-333-7770 or STAAR3-8@ets.org. For all other questions about interim assessments, contact the Student Assessment Division at StudentAssessment@tea.texas.gov.