

Chapter

1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas



Timeline

Assessment Provisions in State Law and Administrative Rule

Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

In 1979 the state of Texas instituted a statewide testing program that, through periodic changes in legislation and policy, has grown in size, scope, and rigor. The timeline illustrates changes made to the assessment program over the years.

1979

The Texas assessment program began when the 66th Texas Legislature enacted a law requiring basic skills competencies in mathematics, reading, and writing for grades 3, 5, and 9.



1980

As required by statute, Texas assessed minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing with the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) tests.



1986

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) implemented the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) examinations. TEAMS was the first statewide assessment that students were required to pass to be eligible to receive a high school diploma.



1990

The implementation of another criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), shifted the focus of assessment from minimum skills to academic skills. The TAAS reading, writing, and mathematics tests were administered in the fall to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Spanish versions of the grade 3 tests were administered to eligible English language learners (ELLs).

1993

The administration of TAAS was shifted to the spring, and the grades and subjects assessed were reconfigured.





1994

TAAS was administered every spring until 2002 to students in grades 3–8 and 10 in reading and mathematics; grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing; and grade 8 in science and social studies. Passing the exit level tests in reading, writing, and mathematics at grade 10 was a requirement for graduation.

The State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted a plan to develop Spanish-version assessments for grades 3–6.

The biology end-of-course (EOC) assessment was administered to students who had completed biology at the end of the fall semester.

1995

A number of EOC examinations were offered between 1995 and 2002 as an option for meeting graduation requirements.

The Algebra I and biology EOC assessments were administered to students who had completed these courses at the end of the spring semester.

1996

Spanish-language TAAS tests for grades 3–6 were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 and 1997.

1998

The English II and U.S. history EOC assessments were first administered in the fall to students who had completed these courses.

2000

The Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) were implemented to evaluate English language acquisition of ELLs in reading in grades 3–12.

2001

The State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) was introduced and administered to eligible students receiving special education services in grades 3–8.

2002

TAAS was administered for the last time in grades 3–8. Exit level TAAS remained the graduation requirement for students who were in grade 9 or above on January 1, 2001.

Reading
Proficiency
Tests in English
(RPTE)

State-Developed
Alternative
Assessment
(SDAA)

State-mandated EOC assessments were administered for the last time in English II, Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history.



2003

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced TAAS as the primary statewide assessment program. TAKS was designed by legislative mandate to be more comprehensive than its predecessors and to measure more of the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and administered in two additional grades. By law, students for whom TAKS is the graduation testing requirement must pass exit level tests in four content areas—English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—to graduate from a Texas public high school. Spanish versions of TAKS were administered in grades 3–6.

The Student Success Initiative (SSI), enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, made satisfactory performance on the grade 3 reading assessment, the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessments, and the grade 8 reading and mathematics assessments a promotion requirement for Texas students. The first cohort of students affected by this law was the grade 3 class of 2002–2003. Student performance on the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year. Grade 8 promotion requirements became effective in the 2007–2008 school year.



2004

Additional assessments of English language proficiency were implemented to fulfill requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These new assessments were administered in the language domains of listening, speaking, and writing in grades K–12 and in reading in grades K–2. Together with the RPTE tests for grades 3–12, these assessments formed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).



State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II)

2005

In response to NCLB regulations, TEA first reported assessment results using a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) process to include eligible recent immigrant ELLs in the state's mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 and 10.

In order to align SDAA to the statewide TAKS testing program, TEA made changes to SDAA. The first administration of SDAA II occurred in spring 2005. SDAA II, offered in mathematics, English language arts, reading, and writing, was available to students enrolled in grades 3–10 who received special education services and were instructed in the state-mandated curriculum but for whom TAKS was an inappropriate measure of their academic achievement and progress.





Student performance on the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year for SSI requirements.

2006

TAKS-Inclusive (TAKS-I) was offered for the first time in 2006 for students receiving special education services and for whom TAKS, even with allowable accommodations, was not an appropriate measure of academic progress. TAKS-I met the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requirements for those subjects and grade levels that were assessed with TAKS but not with SDAA II. TAKS-I was administered in science at grades 5, 8, 10, and at exit level; in science in Spanish at grade 5; in social studies at grades 8, 10, and at exit level; and in English language arts and mathematics at exit level.

2007

SDAA II was administered for the final time in spring 2007.

The following TAKS tests were available in both paper and online formats in 2007: grade 7 reading and mathematics; grade 8 reading, mathematics, science, and social studies; grade 9 reading and mathematics; grade 10 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; and (July) exit level English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

In response to NCLB regulations, LAT administrations of the state's reading and English language arts assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 3–8 and 10.

TAKS-I was administered for the final time.



The Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill (SB) 1031, requiring the replacement of the TAKS assessments in grades 9–12 with a series of EOC assessments, beginning with the entering grade 9 class of 2011–2012.

EOC assessments in geometry and biology were field-tested in response to the governor's 2005 executive order calling for the development of EOC assessments to enhance college readiness programs in Texas public schools.



2008

To fulfill federal accountability requirements, the TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) assessment was implemented, replacing SDAA II and locally developed alternate assessments (LDAA). The TAKS–Alt assessment is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.



**TAKS
(Accommodated)**

Student performance on the grade 8 reading and mathematics assessments was included for the first time in the 2007–2008 school year for SSI requirements.

The TAKS (Accommodated) assessment replaced TAKS-I for students receiving special education services who meet the eligibility requirements for specific accommodations. TAKS (Accommodated) is a general assessment based on the same grade-level academic achievement standards as TAKS, but its form includes format changes (larger font, fewer items per page) and contains no embedded field-test items.

The TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) assessment was administered for the first time for grades and subjects subject to federal accountability requirements. TAKS–M is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements.

In response to NCLB regulations, LAT administrations of the state's science assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 5, 8, and 10.

Revised TELPAS reading tests were first administered for grades 2–12 to more fully address NCLB goals for assessing English language proficiency. TELPAS is designed to be administered as an online testing program.

EOC assessments in geometry and biology were tested operationally; EOC assessments in chemistry and U.S. history were field-tested.

2009

The TAKS–M assessment was administered for all grades and subjects. Exit level TAAS was administered for the final time.

The Texas Legislature enacted House Bill (HB) 3. Among its provisions, HB 3 placed emphasis on postsecondary readiness, requiring that a new series of reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 be linked from grade to grade to the college- and career-readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments. HB 3 removed the SSI requirement for students in grade 3 to pass the TAKS reading test to be promoted to grade 4 and eliminated the grade 6 Spanish versions of TAKS, effective in the 2009–2010 school year.

EOC assessments in chemistry and U.S. history were tested operationally; EOC assessments in physics and world geography were field-tested.

2010

EOC assessments in physics and world geography were tested operationally; EOC assessments in English I and Algebra II were field-tested.





—2011

EOC assessments in Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, world geography, and U.S. history were tested operationally; EOC assessments in English II, English III, and world history were field-tested.

STAAR 3–8 field test items were “embedded” in the TAKS live test form with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing that were stand-alone field tests.

STAAR EOC English II, English III and world history assessments were field-tested for the first time in 2011. In addition, the other nine STAAR EOC assessments—Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, world geography, and U.S. history—were administered as operational tests.



Assessment Provisions in State Law and Administrative Rule

Texas Education Code

State law pertaining to the statewide student assessment program is found in the [Texas Education Code \(TEC\), Chapter 39, Subchapter B](#). Assessment provisions relating to grade promotion requirements are located in [TEC, §28.021](#) and [TEC, §28.0211](#). Additional provisions relating to the additional intensive instruction districts must provide to students who do not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment are located in [TEC, §28.0213](#).

In May 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature enacted [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1031](#), requiring changes to the assessment program, including implementation of an end-of-course assessment program; changes to the administration window for the assessments; limitations on the frequency of stand-alone field testing; provisions for accelerated instruction based on assessment results; and a revised release schedule for test questions and answer keys for most Texas assessments.

In June 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature enacted [House Bill \(HB\) 3](#), which made further changes to the assessment program. These included requiring TEA to develop assessments in a manner that allows the measurement of performance across grades culminating in college readiness performance standards in Algebra II and English III. The performance measures will be part of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program, which encompasses the 12 EOC assessments mandated by SB 1031 and the new grades 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3, and will be set by the commissioner of education. STAAR testing will begin with the 2011–2012 school year.

Changes resulting from HB 3 that took effect during the 2008–2009 testing year included eliminating the requirement that assessments administered for the purpose of retesting are subject to mandatory release; specifying that TEA is no longer required to develop assessment study guides; eliminating exit level testing under the TAAS program; and requiring the commissioner of education, rather than the SBOE, to determine satisfactory performance levels for assessment instruments. The 2011 82nd Texas Legislature passed HB 2135 to state that students are not required to take the grade-level assessment if taking an above-grade-level assessment in a course for which they are enrolled, and addresses use of EOC performance results of students below grade 9 taking an EOC assessment, including how those results must be included in accountability performance indicators. HB 2135 also amends the Student Success Initiative (SSI) so that a student will not be required to take the corresponding SSI assessment in grades 5 and 8 if the student is enrolled in either:

- a course in the subject for which the student receives high school academic credit and will be administered an EOC assessment; or
- a course in the subject intended for students above the student's grade level and will be administered the corresponding assessment instrument.





HB 2135 also prohibits a student subject to SSI grade promotion requirements from being denied promotion on the basis of performance on an assessment if a student is taking an above-grade level assessment instead of the grade-level assessment.

For purposes of accountability performance indicators, the performance measures on EOC assessments of students enrolled below grade 9 are required to be aggregated with the performance measures of other students enrolled at the same grade level.

Texas Administrative Code

The [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\)](#) includes rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) and the commissioner of education to address the legislative requirements of the TEC.

In November 2001 the SBOE adopted rules for student assessment that reflect the provisions of SB 103 enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature. These rules require the development and administration of tests, testing provisions for graduation, testing accommodations and exemptions, test security and confidentiality, reporting of test results, and the administration and reporting of group-administered achievement tests. These board rules appear in [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Assessment, subchapters A through E](#).

In September 2001, commissioner rules concerning the participation of limited English proficient (LEP) students in the state assessment program were adopted. In May 2002, commissioner rules concerning the SSI were adopted to reflect provisions contained in [SB 4](#), also enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature. In February 2003, commissioner rules were adopted to implement requirements for the new testing program as specified by [SB 103](#). Further commissioner rules were adopted in 2005 to clarify transitional issues related to the implementation of the new testing program, including different graduation requirements under TAAS and TAKS. In 2006 TEA adopted rules to implement procedures to ensure the validity, reliability, and security of assessments. These rules were amended in February 2008 to reflect the test security provisions of SB 1031, enacted in 2007 by the 80th Texas Legislature. The commissioner's rules for assessment appear in [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Assessment, subchapters AA through EE](#).

In 2009 the SBOE and commissioner rules for student assessment were reviewed as part of a four-year review cycle for all state agency rules. During this review process and in the months following the conclusion of the 81st legislative session, several amendments were made to the SBOE and commissioner rules for student assessment.

The SBOE amended the TAKS performance standards to implement the vertical scale designed to measure growth in student performance in grades 3–8 in TAKS reading and mathematics, required under [SB 1031](#). Although the new

performance standards did not take effect until September 1, 2009, TEA reported spring 2009 student assessment results using the vertical scale for informational purposes only. (The TAKS performance standards now appear as a commissioner rule under [19 TAC, §101.3004](#).)

The SBOE amended [19 TAC, §101.33](#), Release of Tests, to reflect the provision in HB 3 that excludes assessments administered for the purpose of retesting from the statutorily required three-year release schedule.

The Commissioner of Education amended [19 TAC, §101.3003](#), Assessment Requirements for Graduation, to reflect the provision in HB 3 that eliminates exit level testing under the TAAS program. Students who formerly were bound to exit level testing requirements under TAAS or TEAMS now fulfill requirements for graduation with the exit level TAKS under applicable performance standards established by the commissioner of education.

In December 2009 [19 TAC, §101.5](#), Student Testing Requirements, was amended to specify that Spanish versions of TAKS are available in grades 3–5 only.

In December 2009 [19 TAC, §101.9](#), Grade Advancement Requirements, was amended to include the provision that a school district or charter school shall provide accelerated instruction for students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance as specified in TEC, §28.0211(a–1) and (c).

Furthermore, both [19 TAC, §101.11](#) and the commissioner of education rule 101.2006, Remediation, were amended to require that school districts and charter schools provide remediation for students in grades 3–8 who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance on any section of the assessments of academic skills, as required by the TEC, §28.0211(a–1) and (a–2) and §28.0213.

In February 2010 [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA](#) was amended to reflect new testing requirements under HB 3 for unschooled ELL asylees and refugees.

In April 2010 [19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter BB](#) was amended to reflect new grade advancement and accelerated instruction requirements under SSI.





Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) were adopted by the SBOE in July 1997 and were implemented as the statewide curriculum for Texas in the 1998–1999 school year. The TEKS replaced the Essential Elements that were implemented in 1984. The TEKS were developed to be more specific and focused than the Essential Elements, with emphasis placed on the knowledge and skills students were expected to learn rather than on the delivery standards expected of teachers.

In the 1999–2000 school year, the TEKS were integrated into the existing statewide testing program (TAAS). The same year, work began on the development of the new TAKS testing program, as mandated by the 76th Legislature. Throughout the test development process for TAKS, attention was focused on ensuring a strong, direct, and effective link between the TEKS curriculum and the statewide assessments.

TAKS objectives and the corresponding TEKS student expectations that are eligible for testing are available in Appendix 3 of the *2005–2006 Technical Digest*.

In 2005 the SBOE adopted the refinements made to the elementary and secondary mathematics TEKS. All of the TAKS mathematics tests had been revised to ensure that they were fully aligned to the 2005 [refined mathematics TEKS](#). In January 2009 the SBOE adopted minor revisions to the secondary mathematics TEKS to incorporate the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

The state's standards for addressing the English language proficiency needs of ELLs were revised in 2006–2007 to explicitly require all teachers to address English language proficiency standards in the instruction of ELLs. The SBOE adoption of new grades K–12 [Texas English Language Proficiency Standards \(ELPS\)](#) for ELLs was effective in December 2007. The 2008 revised TELPAS reading tests were aligned to these standards.

In 2008 the SBOE adopted new TEKS for English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and Spanish language arts (SLA). The 2010 and 2011 TAKS reading, writing, and ELA tests were revised to ensure alignment with the new TEKS.

In 2009 the SBOE adopted revised science TEKS, and alignment with those TEKS was reflected in the 2011 TAKS science tests. [Revised social studies TEKS](#) were adopted in May 2010.

STAAR will replace TAKS beginning in fall 2011. The STAAR name will be used for the 12 end-of-course (EOC) assessments mandated by SB 1031 in the 2007 legislative session and the new grades 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3 in 2009.

Students first entering grade 9 in the 2011–2012 school year are the first group of students who will have STAAR EOC assessments as part of their graduation requirements.