

# Chapter 1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas



## Timeline

### Assessment Provisions in State Law and Administrative Rule

### Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

## Timeline

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program was administered to Texas students in grades 3–9 for the first time in 2011–2012. However, Texas has a long history of student assessment dating back to 1979, when the state instituted its first statewide testing program. Over the years, the assessment program has grown in size, scope, and rigor as a result of periodic changes in legislation and policy. This chapter provides an overview of these changes, starting with a timeline of key events, followed by a summary of changes in state law (as represented in Texas Education Code or TEC) and accompanying administrative rules (as represented in the Texas Administrative Code or TAC), and concluding with a review of changes in the state curriculum.

### 1979

The Texas assessment program began when the 66<sup>th</sup> 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.



### 1993

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

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.

### 1994

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

Algebra I and biology end-of-course (EOC) assessments were administered to students who had completed these courses.

### 1995

The Texas legislature passed a new law that required the development of English II and U.S. history EOC assessments (in addition to Algebra I and biology) as an option for meeting graduation requirements.

### 1996

The Spanish-language TAAS tests for grades 3–6 were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 (for grades 3 and 4 reading and mathematics) and 1997 (for grades 5 and 6 reading and mathematics and grade 4 writing).

### 1998

The English II and U.S. history EOC assessments were first administered to students who had completed these courses. The four EOC assessments were administered as state-mandated assessments and an option for graduation requirements through 2002.

Reading  
Proficiency  
Tests in English  
(RPTE)

### 2000

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

State-Developed  
Alternative  
Assessment  
(SDAA)

### 2001

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



## 2002

The 76th legislature passed a law that replaced TAAS with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). As a result 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.

## 2003

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 to be administered in two additional grades. As required 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

In order to fulfill requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Texas Observation Protocol (TOP) was developed. The TOP assessment program provided training and guidelines for raters so that English language proficiency ratings could be holistically developed for students based on observations during regular instructional time. These holistic ratings were developed 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, TOP formed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).



## 2005

In response to NCLB regulations, TEA first reported assessment results using a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) administration process in order 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

State-Developed  
Alternative  
Assessment II  
(SDAA II)



enrolled in grades 3–10 who received special education services and who 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.

In response to the Governor’s 2004 Algebra Incentive Program, the Algebra I EOC assessment was revised to align with the TEKS and was administered on a voluntary basis to students who completed Algebra I coursework.

The Governor issued an executive order calling for the development of voluntary EOC assessments to enhance college readiness programs in Texas public schools.



## 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

TAKS–I and SDAA–II were administered for the final time.

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.

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.



## 2008

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.

EOC assessments in geometry and biology were first administered on a voluntary basis in response to the Governor’s 2005 executive order.



**TAKS**  
**(Accommodated)**

To fulfill federal accountability requirements, the TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) assessment was implemented. The TAKS–Alt assessment was an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The TAKS (Accommodated) assessment replaced TAKS–I for students receiving special education services who met 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 questions 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 required for federal accountability. 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.

## 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 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 also eliminated the grade 6 Spanish versions of TAKS, effective in the 2009–2010 school year.

EOC assessments in chemistry and U.S. history were first administered.

## 2010

EOC assessments in physics and world geography were first administered.





## 2011

A new assessment program—the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)—was initiated, and test development activities began for grades 3–8. New STAAR 3–8 field-test items were embedded in most TAKS operational test forms, with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing, which were field-tested using stand-alone field tests.

The STAAR 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.

## 2012

In spring 2012, the STAAR program replaced TAKS. The STAAR program at grades 3–8 assesses the same subjects and grades that were assessed on TAKS. At high school, however, grade-specific assessments were replaced with 15 EOC assessments: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I reading, English I writing, English II reading, English II writing, English III reading, English III writing, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

Depending on their graduation program, students are required to meet the passing standard, Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance (or at least achieve a predetermined minimum score), on eleven to fifteen STAAR EOC assessments. In order to graduate, a student must achieve a cumulative score requirement in each content area.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate replaced TAKS–M and TAKS–Alt at grades 3–8 and at high school. At grades 3–8, STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate assess the same subjects and grades as STAAR. At high school, STAAR Modified will include twelve EOC assessments: Algebra I, geometry, biology, English I reading, English I writing, English II reading, English II writing, English III reading, English III writing, world geography, world history, and U.S. history. STAAR Alternate includes nine EOC assessments at high school: Algebra I, geometry, biology, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.



## Assessment Provisions in State Law and Administrative Rule

### Texas Education Code

State law pertaining to the statewide student assessment program is found in the [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 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 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [SB 1031](#), requiring changes to the assessment program, including the 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 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [HB 3](#), which made further changes to the assessment program. These included requiring TEA to develop assessments in a manner that allows for the measurement of performance across grades culminating in college readiness performance standards in Algebra II and English III. These performance measures are part of the STAAR program, which encompasses the EOC assessments mandated by SB 1031 and the new grades 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3, and were set by the commissioner of education. STAAR testing began 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 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature passed [HB 2135](#), which stated that students are not required to take the grade-level assessment if they are taking an above-grade-level assessment in a course for which they are enrolled. The bill also addresses the use of EOC performance results of students below grade 9 who take a STAAR EOC assessment, including how those results must be included in accountability performance indicators. HB 2135 also amends the 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 a STAAR EOC assessment; or
- a course in the subject intended for students above the student’s enrolled grade 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 the student is taking an above-grade-level assessment instead of the grade-level assessment.

### **Texas Administrative Code**

The [TAC](#) includes rules adopted by the SBOE and the commissioner of education to address the legislative requirements of the TEC.

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 81<sup>st</sup> 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.



Additionally, the commissioner of education made several changes to the TAC to reflect the implementation of the STAAR program as a result of HB 3 and HB 2135. In February 2010 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA was amended to reflect new testing requirements under HB 3 that changed the requirements governing the participation of certain ELL students in the state assessment program, including additional provisions for unschooled asylees or refugees. In April 2010 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter BB was amended to reflect new grade advancement and accelerated instruction requirements under SSI. In December 2011 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter AA was amended to reflect changes made to the state assessment program as a result of the implementation of the STAAR program. In May 2012 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter CC was amended to incorporate requirements for the STAAR EOC assessments as well as the associated cumulative score and graduation requirements. At the same time, this subchapter was amended to defer the requirement for schools to incorporate the STAAR EOC test score as 15% of the student's course grade for the 2011–2012 school year. In June 2012 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter BB was amended to clarify SSI requirements for students testing above grade level. In August 2012, 19 TAC, Chapter 101, Subchapter CC was amended to incorporate the performance standards for STAAR EOC.

## Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

The 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 had been 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. The TEKS are reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the SBOE. As revisions are made to the TEKS, changes are subsequently made to the assessment program to maintain a strong, direct, and effective link between the TEKS curriculum and the statewide assessments.

The TAKS assessment program was developed to have objectives that correspond to the TEKS student expectations that are eligible for testing. These are available on the [TAKS Resources](#) page on TEA's Student Assessment Division website. Similarly, the STAAR reporting categories and the corresponding TEKS students expectations that are eligible for testing are available on the [STAAR Resources](#) page on TEA's Student Assessment Division website.



## TEKS Revisions

Following the regular schedule for TEKS review, the SBOE most recently revised the TEKS as follows:

- In 2005 the SBOE adopted the refinements made to the elementary and secondary mathematics TEKS. All of the TAKS mathematics tests were subsequently revised to fully align to the 2005 refined mathematics TEKS.
- In 2008 the SBOE adopted new TEKS for English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and Spanish language arts (SLA), and alignment with the new TEKS was reflected in the 2010 and 2011 TAKS reading, writing, and ELA tests.
- In 2009 the SBOE adopted revised science TEKS, and alignment with those TEKS was reflected in the 2011 TAKS science tests.
- In 2010 the SBOE adopted revised social studies TEKS, and alignment with those TEKS was reflected in the 2012 STAAR social studies tests.

In addition to being reflected in the TAKS assessments, changes made between 2006 and 2011 were also reflected in the EOC assessments. In 2008 TEA and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) established vertical teams to develop College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) as required by House Bill 1. TEA and the THECB undertook an additional process of vertical alignment to link the CCRS to the TEKS in ELA/R, mathematics, science, and social studies. As part of the TEKS review process, the SBOE incorporated the CCRS into the TEKS, making Texas the first state in the country to adopt a curriculum aligned to college and career readiness. Additional information about this topic can be found in the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards report available on [THECB's website](#).

## English Language Proficiency Standards

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.