DATE:	January 27, 2022
SUBJECT:	New Resources to Support the STAAR Redesign
CATEGORY:	Student Assessment
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

The purpose of this communication is to inform superintendents, district and campus administrators, and teachers about the release of updated resources to support the redesign of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). Note: these changes are NOT being implemented this school year. Implementation takes effect with the 2022–2023 school year.

STAAR Redesign Overview
House Bill (HB) 3906, 86th Texas Legislature, 2019, requires significant changes to the design of the state summative assessment. These changes were confirmed by HB 3261, 87th Texas Legislature, 2021, and will go into effect during school year 2022–2023.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has collaborated with hundreds of educators and administrators, including the Assessment Education Advisory Committee, to ensure that the changes to STAAR will achieve the goal of more closely aligning the state summative assessment with classroom instruction. The STAAR redesign has the following components:

- The incorporation of cross-curricular passages in reading language arts (RLA) tests so that test questions reference topics students have learned in other classes.
- The addition of non-multiple-choice questions that are more like the type of questions teachers ask in class and allow students to express their knowledge in multiple ways.
- The elimination of standalone writing tests in grades 4 and 7 and the incorporation of evidence-based writing in all RLA tests to better support the way that reading and writing are taught.
- The transition to testing fully online enables students with specific learning needs to access a robust suite of accommodations.
- The transition to testing fully online also supports all of the redesign components listed above and provides faster test results that support accelerated learning.

The STAAR redesign webpage has been updated to reflect the information in this communication. Additionally, an updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is available to address common questions about the redesign.

Resources to Support Cross-curricular Passages, New Question Types, and Evidence-based Writing
As part of the redesign requirements, no more than 75 percent of the points available on a summative assessment may be attributed to multiple-choice questions. To determine the types of non-multiple-choice questions that will appear on the redesigned summative assessments, TEA worked closely with more than 600 educators who participated in focus groups. These non-multiple-choice questions have been rigorously reviewed to ensure that they meet TEA's standards of validity and to ensure alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), grade-level appropriateness, and accessibility requirements. Each question also undergoes a process of review and approval by groups of current Texas educators who verify that students should have the knowledge to answer the question by the end of the school year.

The resources linked below and available on the STAAR redesign webpage allow educators to familiarize themselves with the new question types and how these questions will be scored. The new question type samplers are accessible to educators, students, and families with no login credentials required.

- New question type samplers
- New question type overview by grade and subject
- Scoring and reporting guides
- Updated test blueprints

Resources to Support Online Testing and Accommodations
Beginning with the end-of-course (EOC) administration in December 2022, all students will be required to test online with the exception of students taking STAAR Alternate 2 and those who qualify for a paper test.

Special Paper Administration of an Online Test
The Special Paper Administration of an Online Test Policy provides districts with guidance as to which students may qualify for a special paper administration of a state assessment.

The full policy can be found on the STAAR redesign webpage, and a summary of its key points are noted below.

A student who may qualify for a special paper administration of an online test:

- requires an accommodation that cannot be provided in an online format;
- has a physical limitation that does not allow the student to interact with an online test; or
- is in an educational placement that does not permit the student to access the Internet.

TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant
Senate Bill 1171, enacted by the 87th Texas Legislature in 2021, authorized the creation of a $4 million matching grant program to ensure that all campuses across local educational agencies (LEAs) have the necessary infrastructure to administer assessments online.

The TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant is intended to fund one-time, network infrastructure upgrades, including the purchase and installation of last-mile fiber connection or the best available alternative that will achieve the required bandwidth speeds. The grant will also cover the purchase and one-time installation of internal connections necessary to achieve testing requirements. LEAs must submit a copy of their FCC Form 471 and have a bandwidth of less than 1 Mbps (megabits per second) per concurrent tester within at least one campus to be eligible to apply. Rural districts (per USAC classification) will be prioritized.

See the table below for important dates for the TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant.

Key Dates for the TEA Online Testing Infrastructure Matching Grant	
January 18, 2022	Grant posted to TEA's Grant Opportunities webpage
February 3, 2022	Last date to submit questions to be addressed in the grant webinar (send to StudentAssessment@tea.texas.gov)
February 16, 2022	Pre-recorded grant webinar posted to Grant Opportunities page
February 18, 2022	Final date to submit questions for grant FAQ document
February 25, 2022	FAQ posted to Grant Opportunities page
March 21, 2022	Grant applications must be emailed to loiapplications@tea.texas.gov by 11:59 p.m. (CT)
May 23, 2022	Awards are announced, and selected LEAs may begin grant-funded projects
December 30, 2022	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
March 31, 2023	End date of grant (if selected for funding)

Please submit any questions regarding these resources or the state summative assessment redesign via the Student Assessment Helpdesk.