

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>September 16, 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Texas Assessment Program Updates for the 2021–22 School Year</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Student Assessment</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Share with appropriate staff</b>

The purpose of this communication is to inform superintendents and district and campus administrators about updates to the Texas Assessment Program for the 2021–22 school year.

### **Elimination of SSI Promotion/Retention Requirements**

House Bill (HB) 4545, 87<sup>th</sup> Regular Legislative Session, became effective June 16, 2021, and eliminated Student Success Initiative (SSI) grade retention and retesting requirements for grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading. As a result, there will only be one administration of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) grades 5 and 8 mathematics and reading assessments. This administration will be in May to coincide with the administration of other STAAR grades 3–8 assessments.

In addition, HB 4545 established new requirements for accelerated instruction during the 2021–22 school year for students who did not achieve a passing score on the spring 2021 STAAR tests. Visit the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) [Accelerated Learning Resources](#) webpage for more information related to HB 4545 and accelerated instruction requirements. Questions regarding the new accelerated instruction requirements should be sent to [accelerated.instruction@tea.texas.gov](mailto:accelerated.instruction@tea.texas.gov).

### **Elimination of Postsecondary Readiness Assessments**

Another aspect of HB 4545 repeals Texas Education Code, §39.0238, regarding the adoption and administration of postsecondary readiness assessments. As such, the TEA will no longer provide optional STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments for Algebra II or English III.

### **Updated Test Administration Training Requirements**

Senate Bill 1267, 87<sup>th</sup> Regular Legislative Session, 2021, eliminates annual training requirements in test security and administration procedures for most testing personnel. Campus testing coordinators are still required to receive annual training and may require

annual training for other staff members. All testing personnel are required to receive training at least once in test security and administration procedures and are responsible for signing a test security oath and complying with state assessment requirements. Annual test administration training is strongly encouraged, especially for policies and practices that have changed.

In addition, the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) rater calibration activities now have similar restrictions. However, the law allows for required calibration activities based on significant changes to the program. Because the calibration activities are changing this year as they transition to the new Texas Learning Management System (LMS), rater calibration activities will continue to be required for the 2021–22 school year.

**Assessment Policy for Migrant Students**

Starting with the 2021–22 school year, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to test all eligible migrant students with STAAR. State and federal statutes indicate that all migrant students must be assessed using the same system of high-quality, yearly student academic assessments. Based on this requirement, STAAR will be administered to all identified migratory students. More information will be available in the 2021–22 Texas Migrant Interstate Program Test Administration Information when it is posted later this fall.

**2021–22 STAAR Reading Language Arts (RLA) Information**

As we transition to the redesigned STAAR RLA tests in 2023, a one-year modification to the RLA assessments will be necessary for the 2021–22 school year. This modification supports implementation of changes to the STAAR program made by HB 3906, 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session, 2019, which will be implemented for the first time in 2023.

The following table illustrates the modified implementation timeline of the 2017 RLA Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and related STAAR assessments.

School Year	STAAR Grades 3–8 RLA	EOC English I and English II
2021–22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess only the 2017 reading standards</li> <li>Field test 2017 reading and writing standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess only 2017 reading and writing standards</li> <li>Field test 2017 reading and writing standards</li> </ul>

2022–23 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess 2017 reading and writing standards</li> <li>• Field test 2017 reading and writing standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess 2017 reading and writing standards</li> <li>• Field test 2017 reading and writing standards</li> </ul>
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Updated assessed curriculum documents for the 2021–22 STAAR RLA assessments will be posted in the coming weeks. Blueprints for the STAAR RLA assessments are not changing for 2021–22.

Note that there will be no changes to the STAAR mathematics, science, or social studies assessments for the 2021–22 school year. However, more information about the STAAR redesign, including the transition to online assessments, will be provided in the coming months.

### **STAAR Online Testing Enhancements**

With the new Cambium testing platform known as the Test Delivery System (TDS), students will have both Desmos and Texas Instruments graphing calculators as embedded calculators to use for the online STAAR grade 8 mathematics and Algebra I EOC assessments.

Additionally, districts can now select two distinct levels of support for online oral administrations beginning in December 2021. The online embedded text-to-speech (TTS) tool allows an eligible student to have either of the following support options:

- Selecting any eligible test question and answer choice to be read aloud using the TTS tool, or
- Having all eligible parts of the test be automatically read aloud in the order they are presented.

### **TELPAS Reading Grades 2–12 Braille Option**

Beginning with the spring 2022 administration, TEA will now offer braille versions of TELPAS reading tests for grades 2–12. Any English learner may use this designated support if he or she routinely uses braille materials during classroom instruction and classroom testing.

### **Proposed TELPAS Standardized Writing Test**

Based on educator feedback, TEA is exploring the development of a standardized writing assessment for TELPAS grades 2–12 to reduce the administration requirements for

educators. As part of the standard test development process, new items must be field tested. As a result, the spring 2022 TELPAS reading assessments will include embedded field-test items for writing. Further guidance on the reading assessment will be provided well in advance of the TELPAS assessment window so that districts can prepare accordingly.

If you have questions about the information in this communication, please submit your inquiries to TEA using the [Student Assessment Help Desk](#).