

Transition to STAAR Online Assessments Implementation Guide

PURPOSE: Per [Texas Education Code 39.02341](#), all assessment instruments required under [Sections 39.023a](#) must be administered electronically beginning no later than the 2022-2023 school year. The purpose of this guide is to provide Texas public school systems with a list of prerequisites to online testing and next steps and resources to fulfill these requirements. The guide also includes additional criteria for a successful online implementation, next steps based on experiences from school systems that have already moved online, and links to resources and supports provided by the testing vendor and regional service centers.

AUDIENCE: District and Campus Administrators.

HOW TO USE: Step 1 of the chart below notes three prerequisites that must be in place for successful online assessment implementation. If a local education agency (LEA) does not meet all three prerequisites as laid out in the chart, they should refer to the action items in the ‘next steps’ column. Once everything in the Step 1 chart is met, LEAs can proceed to the Step 2 chart, which outlines success criteria and suggested actions for implementation success that are based on best practices from Texas public school systems that have already moved to online testing.

STEP 1: System-level prerequisites to implement full online testing

Prerequisite #1:	Key question	Next steps if goal not met
Adequate Network Infrastructure <i>To be completed before the start of SY 2022-23</i>	Does each campus have the network infrastructure necessary to support online testing?	ACQUIRE THE NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what is needed for recommended network minimums (i.e., additional bandwidth, routers, extenders, proper configuration, QoS optimization). Tap into existing networks for additional resources and support – many districts work with in-house technology personnel, third-party network consultants, and/or regional service center staff to determine what is needed and the steps to get there. ESCs can provide a range of services, such as technology consulting, E-Rate consortia, and serving as fiber internet service providers (ISPs). (See List of Vendor and Regional Supports for Transition to Online document for more information.) During testing, the district needs to provide sufficient bandwidth and resources to the devices used for testing. Because ISPs generally provide a fixed rate of bandwidth, reducing bandwidth to sections of the school or district that are not participating in testing may be required. If needed, contact ISP to see if additional capacity can be added during testing windows.
	Goal / Recommended Minimum	
	500 Kilobits per second (Kbps) per each concurrent tester. <i>Although this is the goal for online testing, the digital learning standard is 1 Megabits per second (Mbps) per student, as set by technology leaders across the nation (e.g., CoSN, SETDA).</i>	
	How to determine if you’ve met the goal	
	Check each campus’s network bandwidth using Cambium’s Bandwidth Diagnostic Tool . This tool will provide throughput estimates for a network based on the expected number of concurrent testers.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for matching grant from TEA for network infrastructure needs. (More info about this matching grant will be released by early 2022.) • Tap into other funding sources to reallocate efforts towards internal connections and bandwidth (i.e., Technology and Instructional Materials Allotment, Emergency Connectivity Fund). • Apply and use E-Rate federal funds – Category 1 for increased bandwidth or last-mile fiber, and/or Category 2 for internal connections. Applications for FY22 are open from January to March 2022, and announcements are typically made in the fall. There are two routes district take for application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Apply as standalone district. Some districts bring in an E-Rate consultant (independent or recommended by ESC), who can optimize the application process. Depending on the pricing model, consultants can sometimes be contracted to receive a small percentage of the reimbursement amount once funds are awarded. ○ Apply with an E-Rate consortia. Regional consortia are typically led by ESCs who help with buying power and ease of application. (See List of Vendor and Regional Supports for Transition to Online document for more information.)
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Prerequisite #2: Sufficient hardware <i>To be completed before the start of SY 2022-23</i>	Key question	Next steps if goal not met
	Does each campus have enough devices to support online testing?	CREATE A STAGGERED SCHEDULE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A staggered schedule allows all students to test within the administration window given the number of students that can test at the same time. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL DEVICES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap into other funding sources to reallocate efforts device acquisition (i.e., Emergency Connectivity Fund).
	Goal / Recommended Minimum	
	3:1 student-to-device ratio. <i>Although this is the goal for online testing, the digital learning standard is 1:1 student-to-device ratio, as outlined in the Long Range Plan for Technology 2018-2023.</i>	
How to determine if you've met the goal		

	Determine the ratio of student testers to devices. Check the minimum system requirements to determine which devices meet the hardware specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices provided for remote instruction can also be brought in for online testing.
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Prerequisite #3: Up-to-date software <i>To be completed before the start of EOC testing in Dec 2022</i>	Key question	Next steps if goal not met
	Is the correct software installed on all testing devices?	UPDATE EACH TESTING DEVICE’S SOFTWARE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the operating system for each device that does not meet the minimum system requirements. • Download a secure browser for online testing. • Configure the assistive technologies using the Assistive Technology Manual. • Refer to the DCCR for a timeline on system checks. • For more information, visit the Texas Assessment Learning Management System page for Technology Staff to access videos and FAQs such as the Technology Requirements Overview.
	Goal	
	All conditions have been met for each device audited	
How to determine if you’ve met the goal		
	Conduct an audit to ensure that each of the following conditions are satisfied on each device used for testing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating system meets the minimum system requirements • Cambium’s secure browser has been installed (pages 1-5) • All assistive technologies have been installed and configured (pages 6-8) 	

 **If LEA already meets all the prerequisites above, move on to Step 2. Otherwise, LEA should ensure that there are plans in place to complete Step 1 prior to moving forward.**

STEP 2: Suggested actions to take for a successful online testing implementation

Instructions: If district meets the recommended minimums under Step 1, review key characteristics under each success criteria. If key characteristics are not present, suggested next steps are laid out on the last column of each table. Sub-bullets represent best practices that Texas districts have undertaken in ramping up for online testing.

Success criteria #1: Strategic planning	
Key characteristics	Suggested next steps if key characteristics are not present
<input type="checkbox"/> District leadership is clear on what is required for full online testing implementation and why it is important.	ALIGN ADMINISTRATORS AROUND A SHARED VISION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up strategic planning meeting for online assessment. When creating the strategic plan, ensure that the district connects its online assessment plan to its digital learning goals. Refer to the Long Range Plan for Technology 2018-2023 for technology planning guidance. Ensure that administrators clearly articulate the role of technology, inclusive of online assessments, in their overall vision and mission. Assign clear initiative lead on transition to online to serve as point person and oversee end-to-end process, with district leadership backup.
<input type="checkbox"/> District leadership has established a plan and timeline for moving online and has communicated this across staff.	CREATE A LAUNCH PLAN: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators create a detailed launch plan with timeline, milestones, and goals to transition to online testing (e.g., grade by grade, campus by campus). Plan includes increasing staff and students' familiarity with the system during the school year. Plan includes system-wide load and performance testing prior to administration, for example, using STAAR Interim Assessments or STAAR practice tests. Before administration, ensure that teachers have the chance to give feedback and proactively troubleshoot issues for online testing for their classroom. After test administration, ensure that teachers have the chance to give feedback on testing logistics and environment.

Success criteria #2: Training and Familiarity	
Key characteristics	Suggested next steps if key characteristics are not present
<input type="checkbox"/> There is awareness around online testing expectations and benefits across all stakeholder groups (i.e., teachers, test administrators, campus leads,	COMMUNICATE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the benefits of online testing and information about the transition to parents/guardians and other community stakeholders. Publish publicly available documents on the website (e.g., a list of FAQs, plans or goals associated with transition to online administration). Ensure that all parties have access to STAAR practice tests so that parents can see the online accommodations created for students with special needs.

<p>district leads, and broader community).</p>	<p>COMMUNICATE AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that district leadership, staff, and school board members can articulate the benefits, challenges, and rationale of transitioning to an online administration. <p>COMMUNICATE AT THE CAMPUS LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide time annually at the beginning of the school year to review the district’s plan, with additional supports provided for new instructional staff and leadership. <p>COMMUNICATE AT THE TEST ADMINISTRATOR LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train test administrators prior to each administration, providing information on how to use the Test Delivery System (TDS), as well as device trouble-shooting tips to use during online testing. <p>COMMUNICATE AT THE TEACHER LEVEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District/campus clearly communicate benefits of online testing and transition plan to teachers. Teachers are involved in the development of the online transition plan and the district/campus continues to gather teacher feedback once the plan is in use.
<p><input type="checkbox"/> District executes plans for students and teachers to build familiarity with testing and learning technology.</p>	<p>EXPOSE TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TO ONLINE TESTING PLATFORM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students and teachers multiple opportunities to use the TDS (e.g., STAAR Interim Assessments, STAAR practice tests, optional BOY assessments, formative assessments created using TFAR). <p>EMBED TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN THE CURRICULUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that students have regular access to technology resources embedded in curriculum to support digital learning and literacy. Many technology resources include formative checkpoints that provide students interactions with technology enhanced items. • Ensure fidelity of implementation of technology resources and technology applications through monitoring, feedback, and continuous improvement. • Have technology and curriculum teams collaborate to incorporate more digital learning in classroom, as well as procurement of online assessment-embedded curriculum. • Explore adopting high quality instructional materials (HQIM) that have digital learning embedded into curriculum. <p>PROVIDE DIGITAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and tailor professional development opportunities for teachers to promote technology literacy and technology use in instruction. • Set up troubleshooting and technology learning opportunities for teachers within weekly PLCs. • Train instructional strategists to serve as technology integrators – training teachers to utilize technology in the classroom seamlessly and effectively. • Actively shift teachers away from paper-specific test testing strategies.
<p><input type="checkbox"/> IEP and 504 paperwork do not have mode of delivery listed as an accommodation.</p>	<p>CONNECT WITH ARD COMMITTEE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update all IEP and 504 paperwork to ensure that the mode of delivery is not the accommodation. The mode determines which accommodations will be available to the student during testing.

Success criteria #3: Program maintenance

Key characteristics	Suggested next steps if key characteristics are not present
<input type="checkbox"/> The costs to maintain each campus's network infrastructure do not exceed each campus's technology budget across fiscal years.	PLAN FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the annual costs of maintaining each campus's network infrastructure and devices.• Identify tradeoffs by evaluating viable internal reallocation of funds in the district/campus plan to support growth and scale over time (e.g., shift in staffing ratios, shift of device ratios, shift in use of non-teacher instructional staff, strategic reassignment of positions).• Incorporate annual technology and training spending into overall budget, accounting for varying refresh cycles of equipment.• Revise budgets, as needed, to accommodate the ongoing maintenance of online testing. OUTLINE PROCESS FOR ITERATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline a process and timeline for iterating on cost assumptions throughout the school year. Be sure to plan for budget contingencies.• Revisit overall technology strategy, budget, transition, and metrics on an annual basis.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is a district-wide structure for continuous improvement of online testing implementation.	UTILIZE ANALYSIS TOOLS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create sufficient tools and/or templates that will give campus leaders a process, protocol, and structure for data collection, data analysis, insights, and changes to planning for the future.• Conduct an annual analysis of online administrations to identify successes and gaps in administration. Share the final analysis with relevant stakeholders. PROVIDE TARGETED TRAINING: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target district/campus level training based on highest needs to mitigate risks and challenges in future years.• Provide IT support (including training, as needed) to teachers and students and processes for improving technical support capacity.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is a district-wide plan for annual technology updates.	PERFORM SYSTEM MAINTENANCE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure thorough, regular checks that the operating systems on all devices used for testing are updated to the latest supported version.• Ensure refresh installation of Cambium's version of the secure browser application on every device used for testing. Any mid-year updates to the application will be communicated in a bi-weekly email. PERFORM HARDWARE REFRESH: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform an annual inventory of hardware and determine what needs to be replaced (budget should account for this).