

December 16, 2020

Subject: Request Participation in New Item Type Cognitive Lab

To the ESC and District Testing Coordinator Addressed:

This communication is a request for your participation in cognitive labs designed to study new item types for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®).

House Bill 3906, 86th Texas Legislature, 2019, establishes a cap so that no more than 75 percent of the items on any STAAR test can be presented in a multiple-choice format. This change is scheduled to take effect in the 2022–2023 school year. The cap on multiple-choice questions has resulted in the need for the state to develop new item types. Educators began providing input during summer 2019 to help inform the new item types, and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is continuing to collect feedback on potential new item types.

As announced at the 2020 Texas Assessment Conference, TEA will conduct cognitive labs to gather evidence supporting the criteria used in determining what item type(s) will be used to measure specific content standards. Through these cognitive labs, TEA will investigate the processes students use when responding to test items. Your students' participation in these cognitive labs will help inform the selection of new item types that will appear on future state assessments.

Request for District Participation

The 2021 STAAR cognitive labs will take place from February 8–19, 2021, and will include new item types for all content areas assessed on the statewide assessment—reading/writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Two approaches will be used for the cognitive labs: a think-aloud activity and an independent activity. Each participating student will take part in one of the activities. Public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that volunteer will have an opportunity to indicate the grade(s) and subject(s) desired for participation. In total, TEA is seeking up to 70 students or 4–5 students per subject and grade to participate in the think-aloud activity and up to 350 students or 20 students per subject and grade to participate in the independent activity. Participating students must be attending class in person.

Participant Commitment

All cognitive lab activities will be designed so they can be completed within one class period. In the think-aloud activity, students will be required to attend a virtual meeting in which they will share their screen while completing 4–5 test items within Pearson's TestNav platform. While the students are working, observer(s) will collect information about the students' interactions with the test items. Students will then participate in a think-aloud protocol and a retrospective interview. Students will engage with one researcher to gather the protocol and one or two observers who will take notes during the observation. These teams will consist of staff from TEA and Pearson.

To gather a larger sample of data on the new items, a different group of students will be asked to participate in an independent activity. These students will respond to a set of items in TestNav without

any think-aloud or interview protocol. The independent activity will include up to ten items and a questionnaire.

Registration

Public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools that would like to volunteer can [register online](#) now through **January 15, 2021**. After the registration window closes, Pearson will contact participating districts and charters schools with additional information, including detailed schedules for the cognitive labs.

For questions and assistance regarding the information in this communication, contact Pearson's Customer Service Center using the [live chat feature](#), the [Pearson Customer Support Form](#), or by calling 800-627-0225.

Thank you in advance for your support and participation in the development of STAAR new item types.
October 8, 2020

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