

To the District and ESC Testing Coordinator Addressed:

The purpose of this email is to notify school districts and education service centers (ESCs) of the availability of new participation requirements for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2. Please share this information with special education personnel.

In response to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has been working with Texas educators to revise the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. Review and revision of the participation requirements are part of the state's monitoring plan for the 1.0 percent waiver for alternate assessments. Federal regulations require states to assess less than 1.0 percent of the total tested student population with an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards.

The newly revised participation requirements for the 2018–2019 school year include clarifying language that defines a significant cognitive disability and addresses factors related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior in a more targeted way. The new participation requirements also include an additional question that specifically addresses identification for reasons other than a significant cognitive disability. TEA will be posting an accompanying flow chart, which is intended to help parents and educators understand the new participation requirements.

The new STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements will be available at <https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/special-ed/staaralt/> on May 1, 2018. Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees should use the new STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements for determining assessment decisions for the 2018–2019 school year. A Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN) is scheduled for Wednesday, April 25 from 10:00–11:15 a.m. (CT) to discuss the new participation requirements. Contact your region's TETN site coordinator for registration information. In addition, TEA is planning a series of face-to-face trainings in fall 2018 in conjunction with annual ESC training. Specific information about dates and locations of these trainings will be available in summer 2018.

For questions regarding this information, contact TEA's Student Assessment Division at (512) 463-9536.