

STAAR Interim Assessments

Educator Guide



Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the [Student Assessment](#) website.

[Texas Educator Committees](#)

The Texas Education Agency encourages highly qualified educators to apply to participate in educator committees for the Texas Assessment Program. Click the link or scan the QR code for more information.



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Resources

- [Texas Assessment Program](#)
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- [Test Administrator Practice Site](#)
- [Student Practice Site](#)
- [District and Campus Coordinator Resources](#)
 - [Technology Resources](#)
 - [Test Information Distribution Engine \(TIDE\) User Guide](#)
 - [Test Delivery System \(TDS\) User Guide](#)
 - [Centralized Reporting System \(CRS\) User Guide](#)
- [Test Administration Resources](#)

Overview

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has created optional interim assessments that align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements. Test questions for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Interim Assessments are developed with input from Texas teachers. [STAAR Interim Assessments](#) provide actionable data that enable educators to monitor student progress and predict student performance on the STAAR summative assessments and are available for all subjects, grades, and courses that STAAR summative assessments test.

STAAR Interim Assessments, which are untimed and do not form part of the accountability system, are free of charge and available from the fall through the spring to any Texas public school district or open-enrollment charter school and may be administered at the district or school's discretion. No application or TEA approval is required to participate; district testing personnel just need to upload student records to the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE).

If you are a teacher who would like to administer STAAR Interim Assessments, contact your campus or district.

Purpose

STAAR Interim Assessments may be used to:

- monitor academic improvement, which may be especially helpful for students who are performing below grade level;
- predict summative performance and guide student groupings for differentiation; and
- serve as a benchmarking instrument at the campus or district level.

STAAR Interim Assessments are **not** an item bank for building classroom quizzes or assignments, a source of practice questions for small-group instruction, or a formative assessment tool designed to provide standards-level performance data.

Test Design

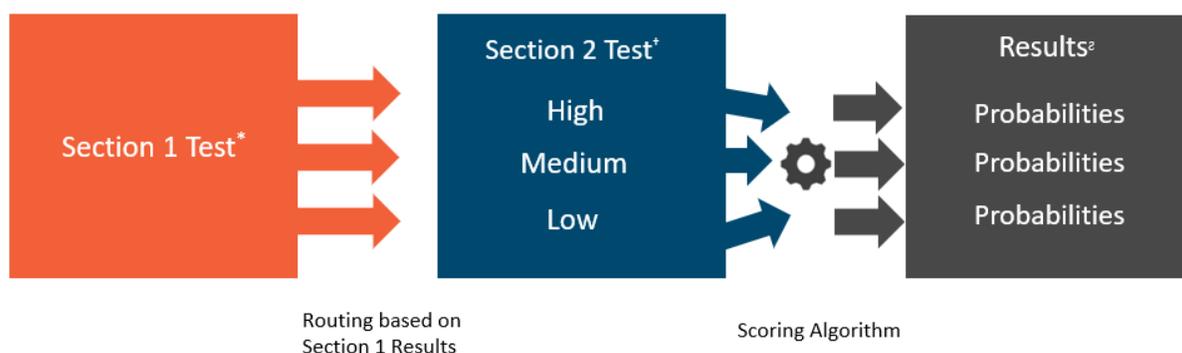
Question Types and Blueprints

Interim assessment questions include multiple-choice and non-multiple-choice questions. Like STAAR summative assessments, STAAR Interim Assessments contain questions developed with the help of Texas teachers. All questions on the interim assessments are field-tested on a STAAR assessment and are fully aligned to the TEKS.

NOTE: Blueprints for the STAAR Interim Assessments are located on the [STAAR Interim Assessments](#) webpage.

Linear Versus Multistage Testing

All mathematics and reading language arts (RLA) interim assessments are multistage adaptive test forms that begin with Section 1, which is the same for all students. Students are then routed to a Section 2 test form with a low, medium, or high level of difficulty corresponding to their performance on Section 1. It is important to remember that multistage tests for interims are on grade level. The benefit of multistage tests is that they provide the same level of accuracy as a linear test but with fewer questions.



* Students taking paper Section 1 tests that are not scored immediately are automatically provided the on-grade medium-difficulty Section 2 test.

† Students who never begin a Section 2 test receive only item-level data in the district data file.

² Results for Section 1 and Section 2 tests are reported as raw scores (in campus and district data files only) and as a predicted STAAR performance level.

All science and social studies interim assessments use a standard linear test design, meaning that all students are tested using a single form and receive the same questions.

Training

A recorded training specific to STAAR Interim Assessments is available on the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#).

District and campus testing coordinators who administer the interim assessments should ensure that they have read not only this guide but also the applicable user guides and other resources listed in the table below to familiarize themselves with current testing guidelines and procedures.

Title	Who Should Review
Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) User Guide	Testing Coordinators
Test Delivery System (TDS) User Guide	Testing Coordinators
Setting Up TDS Workstations	Testing Coordinators
Centralized Reporting System (CRS) User Guide	Testing Coordinators and Classroom Teachers
STAAR Interim Assessments Overview	Testing Coordinators
STAAR Interim Assessments Educator Module	Classroom Teachers

Test Security and Confidentiality

STAAR Interim Assessments are secure assessments and must be handled in strict accordance with the instructions contained in the [Test Security](#) section of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources*. To ensure the validity of the interim assessments, district testing personnel must maintain the security of the test content. Although educators can view interim assessment questions within the Centralized Reporting System (CRS) as they are viewing student results, these secure questions should **NOT** be downloaded or printed and may not be shared with unauthorized users. The questions provided within [CRS](#) remain secure until they are released to the public. All testing irregularities for STAAR Interim Assessments must be reported using the appropriate forms available in TIDE under *Administration and Security Forms*.

Administration Information

Testing Windows

TEA offers the following STAAR Interim Assessments testing windows.

Window 1	Window 2	Window 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grades 3–8 mathematics• grades 3–8 RLA• Spanish grades 3–5 mathematics• Spanish grades 3–5 RLA• Algebra I• English I• English II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grade 5 science• Spanish grade 5 science• grade 8 science• grade 8 social studies• Biology• U.S. History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• grades 3–8 mathematics• grades 3–8 RLA• Spanish grades 3–5 mathematics• Spanish grades 3–5 RLA• Algebra I• English I• English II

TEA offers only one testing window for science and social studies and recommends that these assessments be administered after most of the TEKS have been covered in the classroom. The reason for this recommendation is that unlike the TEKS for mathematics and RLA, which tend to include similar skills that build in complexity, the science and social studies TEKS most often involve discrete skills, facts, and concepts.

TEA recommends administering Window 1 tests in November, Window 2 tests after most of the course content has been taught, and Window 3 tests in February, but teachers should consider local scope and sequence when scheduling STAAR Interim Assessments. STAAR performance predictions are more accurate when assessments are administered during the recommended months. Testing window dates are available on the [STAAR Interim Assessments](#) webpage.

District testing personnel should reserve the last two to three days of each testing window to enter student responses for paper administrations and submit data in the Data Entry Interface (DEI) and enter non-embedded supports and medical exclusions in TIDE.

Accommodations

Interim assessments contain embedded supports that include content and language supports and a text-to-speech (TTS) option (offered for English and Spanish tests). Refreshable braille tests are available for RLA (only English versions), grade 8 social studies, English I, English II, and U.S. History. TEA also offers a paper-based braille format for all English version tests during each corresponding window.

Accommodations and Subjects Offered

Content and Language Supports	Refreshable Braille	Paper Braille	Text-to-Speech
All English and Spanish assessments	RLA (only English versions), grade 8 social studies, English I, English II, and U.S. History	All English assessments	All English and Spanish assessments

NOTE: Paper-based braille testing will be provided only if it is a component of a student’s individualized education program (IEP).

Ordering Paper Braille Materials

Paper braille kits for all interim assessments can be ordered starting in November and will be delivered as each title becomes available. Select *Interim, Paper Orders* on the *Administration Task* dropdown menu to place an order for these materials in TIDE.

The screenshot shows the 'Administration Tasks' section of the TIDE interface. It includes a user profile icon and the text 'Administration Tasks'. Below this, there is a prompt: 'Select the User Role, Administration Task, Region, District, and Campus (as applicable):'. Two dropdown menus are visible: 'User Role' is set to 'District Testing Coordinatr' and 'Administration Task' is set to '- Select -'. The 'Administration Task' dropdown is open, showing a list of options: '- Select -', 'Texas 2023-24 School Year', 'STAAR December, Paper Orders', 'STAAR TAMs, Paper Orders', 'TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate, Paper Orders', 'STAAR Alternate 2, Paper Orders', 'STAAR Spring, Paper Orders', 'Interim, Paper Orders' (highlighted in blue), and 'STAAR June, Paper Orders'.

Designated Supports

The same pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials that are available on STAAR summative assessments can be enabled for STAAR Interim Assessments.

Sign language videos and speech-to-text (STT) are not available for interim assessments. Local committees are not required to meet for the purpose of establishing eligibility criteria for interim assessments. District testing personnel should determine which designated supports their students routinely and effectively use during classroom instruction and testing.

Special Administration

When circumstances prevent a student from completing an interim assessment online, the student may, with the aid of a teacher, complete a paper-based administration of the assessment. District testing personnel may provide eligible students with a special paper administration.

District coordinators must review the criteria and verify that a student is eligible for a special administration of an assessment. For a student who meets the eligibility criteria, the district coordinator must ensure that either the *Section 504 Indicator Code* field or the *Special Ed Indicator Code* field is set to "Yes" in TIDE. To change a student's test mode in TIDE, the district coordinator must select "Paper" in the *Test Mode* field. For paper administrations, the district coordinator must select either "Regular Print," "Braille Contracted," or "Braille Uncontracted" in the *STAAR & TELPAS Paper Test Format* field.

District coordinators must also update the student's eligibility settings in TIDE before the student's responses can be entered in DEI. A student should be designated as eligible for a special administration only if a required accommodation that is documented in the student's IEP, individual accommodation plan (IAP), or Section 504 paperwork cannot be delivered in an online format. Careful consideration should be given to whether the paper mode will offer the necessary supports to allow the student to successfully demonstrate his or her understanding of the tested content. If the student has had previous experience receiving instruction or taking assessments online, it may be more appropriate to maintain consistency by providing the student with an online administration.

District coordinators place orders through TIDE by selecting *Interim, Paper Orders* on the *Administration Task* menu and verifying that the information provided meets the criteria for a special paper administration. Orders that have been reviewed and verified by the district coordinator may be submitted for processing. For students eligible for a special paper administration of an interim assessment, access to the .PDF and .ZIP files used for paper testing and the answer keys used for scoring will be provided through the Secure File Center in TIDE.

For further assistance, district coordinators should contact Texas Testing Support at (833) 601-8821 or TexasTestingSupport@cambiumassessment.com.

Testing Systems Information

System Requirements

Test administrators should verify that the devices to be used for Texas Assessment Program testing meet the specifications outlined on the [Minimum System Requirements](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources*. Refer to the Minimum System Requirements for a list of supported operating systems and devices.

A supported version of a web browser must be installed on devices that use the testing systems. Test administrators should be familiar with a spreadsheet application for the purpose of file uploads and extracts.

The following is a list of tasks that campus technology staff should complete:

- 1. Set up the administrator's device.** An administrator must have an approved version of a web browser installed on any device that will be used for testing. Approved web browsers are listed on the [Setting Up TDS Workstations](#) page.
- 2. Set up the students' devices.** Use of a secure browser for testing on the STAAR Interim Assessments is optional, but secure browsers must be installed on all devices used for testing. Secure browser applications are available for download from the [Secure Browsers](#) webpage. Refer to the in-browser testing guidance that follows when deciding whether to administer an assessment using the secure browser or the TDS in-browser.
- 3. Prepare network for testing.** Several network configuration tasks must be completed prior to testing, such as allowlisting, configuring filter systems, and enabling domain name resolution. Technology coordinators should read the information on the Setting Up TDS Workstations page for directions.
- 4. Run the network diagnostic tool.** Ensure proper configuration by running the [diagnostic tool](#) on all devices used for testing.

In-Browser Testing

TEA provides a TDS in-browser option. Students may use the in-browser option to access interim assessments via an approved version of most common web browsers. Approved web browsers are listed on the Setting Up TDS Workstations page. Students can access interim assessments using the in-browser option by entering the following URL into their browser's URL search bar: <https://tx.cambiumtds.com/student>.

The in-browser option can be used with any device that meets the minimum system requirements. The in-browser option includes all non-embedded supports available for interim tests except refreshable braille. Students testing with a refreshable braille display will need to install the latest version of the secure browser on a device that includes the JAWS 18 screen-reader application. Refer to the [Assistive Technology Manual for Windows & macOS](#) for more information on setting up devices to test with refreshable braille. Interim tests accessed through the in-browser option may differ slightly in appearance (depending on browser and browser version) from the secure browser. Tests taken using the in-browser option are more

sensitive to internet connectivity disruptions and to possible slowdowns with TTS audio voice-over caused by low bandwidth availability or weak Wi-Fi signal strength.

Permissions and User Roles

To administer the interim assessments or view test results, users must have an active TIDE account. Refer to the [User Role Permissions](#) page of the *Coordinator Resources* for a list of the system user roles and their corresponding permissions.

Technical Tasks

TIDE Platform and Tasks

TIDE is the user and student management system for all Texas assessments. Users should familiarize themselves well in advance of the test administration with the *TIDE User Guide* and the tasks they will need to complete.

The following is a list of seven essential TIDE tasks:

- 1. Add users to TIDE.** Users authorized to administer the interim assessments or review results will need a TIDE account before they can access any part of the system. Instructions on how to add users can be found in the *TIDE User Guide*.
- 2. Add students to TIDE.** Students must be added to TIDE to participate in an interim assessment via TDS. Students are eligible for an assessment in their enrolled grade by default, but the assessment's grade level may be changed for interim assessments. Students will not be eligible to take end-of-course (EOC) interim assessments until the courses have been selected in TIDE. Descriptions of how to complete these tasks can be found in the *TIDE User Guide*.
- 3. Indicate designated supports for eligible students.** Students eligible for accommodated versions of the test must have the designated supports updated in the *Test Attributes* panel in TIDE. These supports will be based on the student's IEP and may require approval from TEA.
- 4. Create and modify rosters.** Rosters represent classes or other groups of students for reporting and can be associated with teachers. After testing, TIDE sends data to [CRS](#) so that the system can display scores at the classroom, campus, and district levels.
- 5. Receive accommodation materials.** Requests for paper test materials will be fulfilled through the Secure File Center in TIDE.
- 6. Print test tickets.** Students need the information on their test ticket in order to enter the test session.
- 7. Clean up test data.** After testing, authorized TIDE users can clean up test data as needed.

TDS Platform and Tasks

TDS is used to deliver all Texas online assessments. TDS has three components: the Test Administrator Interface, the Student Interface, and DEI. The Test Administrator Interface is used to schedule or start test sessions, and the Student Interface allows students to take the interim assessments. Test administrators use DEI to enter student responses for those students who tested on paper.

Test administrators should familiarize themselves with the *TDS User Guide* and the tasks they must complete during testing.

The following list describes five key administrative tasks:

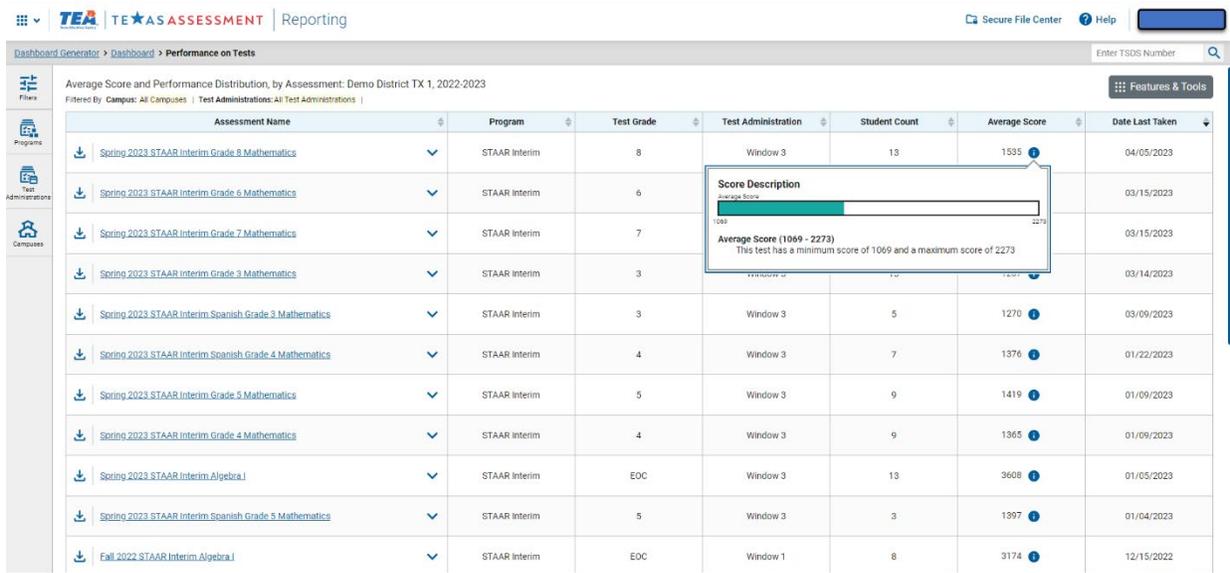
- 1. Schedule or start a test session.** Test administrators will need to schedule a test session or plan to start a session on the day of testing using the Test Administrator Interface.
- 2. Launch the secure browser (or open TDS in-browser).** Ensure that the application is launched on each student's device.
- 3. Assist students in logging in.** Students must enter their first and last name and their Texas Student Data System (TSDS) ID, as found on their test tickets, as well as the session ID in order to log in to the test. The test administrator must provide students with the session ID.
- 4. End testing.** Students must click the *Submit Test* button when they complete the test in order for their test results to appear in [CRS](#).
- 5. Enter responses in DEI.** For students testing on paper, a test administrator must enter student responses in DEI.

Test Results

Reports for STAAR Interim Assessments are provided through [CRS](#). Users must have a district, campus, or roster association with students in order to view student results. Teachers must have a roster association with students to view student results. User accounts and role assignments are determined by district coordinators. Refer to the [User Role Permissions](#) for a complete list of system roles and corresponding permissions. Parents do not have access to the reports online but may request test results from their child's campus.

Immediately after tests are submitted, CRS displays district-, campus-, roster-, and student-level reports. Users can filter results by specific student demographics.

Examples of student reports can be found in the *CRS User Guide*. The figures below show an example of a district-level report for all interim assessments that were administered in the district and an example of a district-level report for the interim grade 8 mathematics assessment.



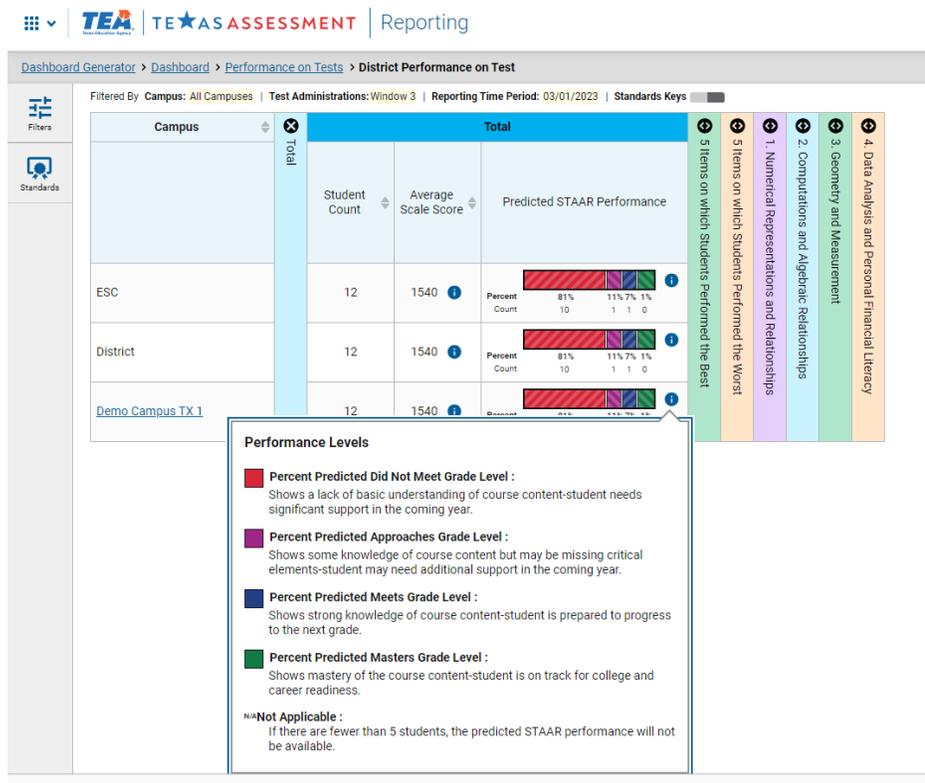
Data files can be generated in CRS so that district testing personnel may upload the data into the district's student information system. Results are also available in a .txt or .csv data file format that can be downloaded from CRS and imported into local student information systems.

CRS also provides individual student reports ([ISRs](#)). ISRs include the following elements:

- scale score
- raw score
- a form-routing identifier (Low, Medium, or High) for multistage tests
- the student's predicted STAAR performance level, which indicates the expected STAAR performance level the student is likely to achieve based on their current interim score, if their learning trajectory maintains a constant rate
- reporting category targets, aligned to the Meets Grade Level performance level, that indicate whether a student is Under Target, Near Target, or Above Target
- the TEKS student expectation for each test question
- points received and points possible for each test question

Using a student's interim scale score and STAAR summative assessment performance standards, a statistical prediction known as a probability score can be calculated. The probability score indicates how likely the student is to achieve a particular performance level on the corresponding summative assessment in the spring STAAR administration.

The figure below shows predicted STAAR performance at the campus level.



Students who complete an interim assessment receive a predicted STAAR performance level of Masters Grade Level, Meets Grade Level, Approaches Grade Level, or Did Not Meet Grade Level. If the student takes an interim assessment at a time other than November or February, the interpretation of their test score should take into consideration whether the student had more or less time to learn. Predictions represent one set of many possible data points to consider when determining which students need additional support.

TE★AS ASSESSMENT