State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Progress Measure Questions and Answers

Defining the STAAR Progress Measure

1. What is the STAAR Progress Measure?

The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or growth that a student has made in a subject area. This measure is based on a comparison of a student's test score last year with his or her score this year. For STAAR, progress is measured as a student's gain score, the difference between the score a student achieved in the previous year and the score a student achieved in the current year. Individual student progress is then categorized as *Limited, Expected,* and *Accelerated* growth.

2. For what grades and content areas is progress measured for STAAR?

In 2017, progress measures are available for STAAR for reading in grades 4–8, mathematics in grades 4-8, English II, and Algebra I. There is no STAAR progress measure for grade 7 writing in 2017. The table below details current plans regarding when progress information will be reported (R) and used for accountability (A) in 2017.

		2017	
		General	Spanish
STAAR Mathematics	Grade 3"4	R/A	R/A
	Grade 4"5	R/A	R/A
	Grade 5"6	R/A	
	Grade 6"7	R/A	
	Grade 7"8	R/A	
	Grade 8"Algebra I	R/A	
	Accelerated Testing	R/A	R/A
STAAR Reading	Grade 3"4	R/A	R/A
	Grade 4"5	R/A	R/A
	Grade 5"6	R/A	
	Grade 6"7	R/A	
	Grade 7"8	R/A	
	Accelerated Testing	R/A	R/A
STAAR English	English I " English II	R/A	

In the table on the previous page, "Accelerated Testing" refers to students who do not test in consecutive grades/courses from year to year in a single content area.

3. ***How are the STAAR progress measure classifications (*Limited, Expected, *and* Accelerated*) determined?***

The STAAR progress measure classifications are determined by comparing a student's gain score — the difference between the student's current year score and previous year score — to a progress target.
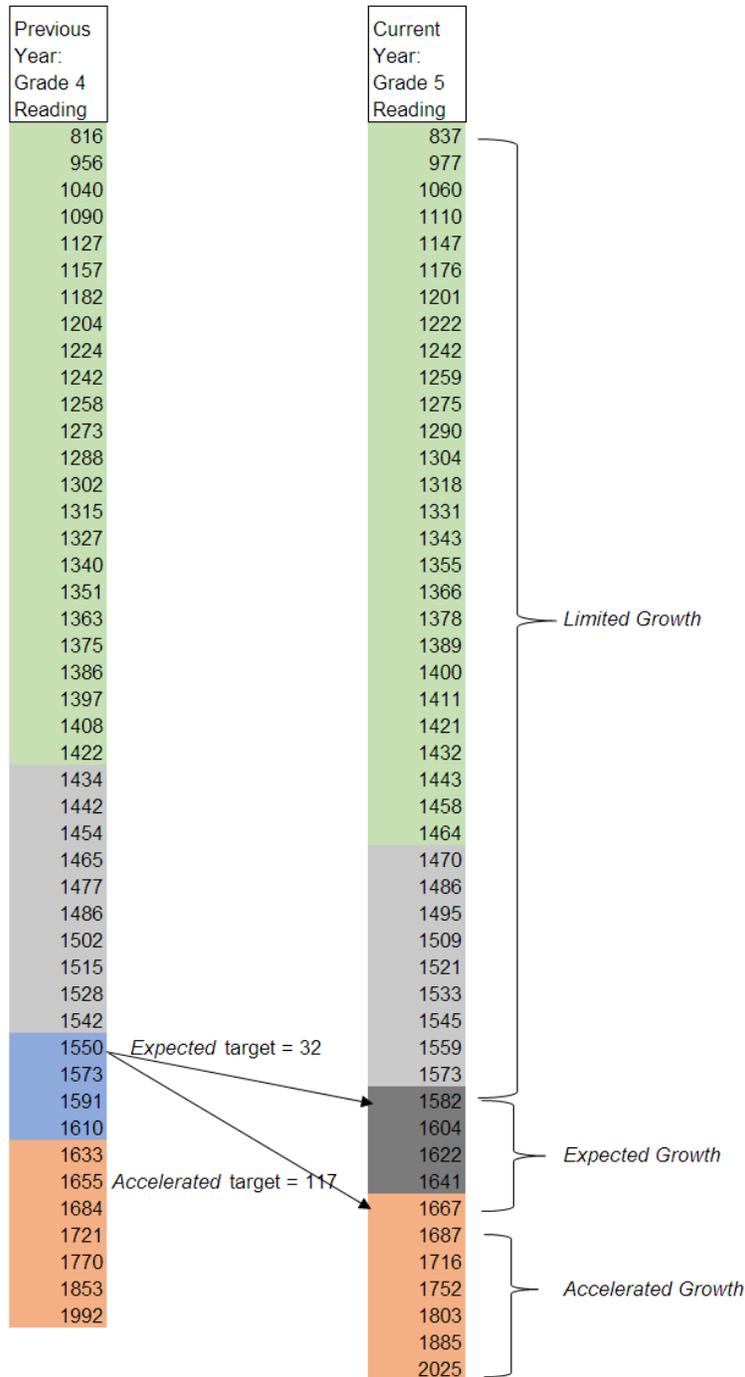
The STAAR progress measures and progress targets are grounded in the STAAR performance standards and the goals of having all students achieve at or above *Meets* performance and having high performing students maintain their achievement above *Masters* performance.

The *Expected* progress target is defined as the distance between the *Meets* performance standards from the previous year grade and the current year grade in the same content area. This definition is based on the goal that students in *Meets* and *Masters* performance will maintain their respective levels of performance. For example, if a student is currently in *Meets* for grade 4 reading, the expectation is that the student will at least maintain *Meets* performance in grade 5 reading. This means that the student who scored at least a 1550 in grade 4 reading (based on the *Meets* standard) would need to earn a score of 1582 on the grade 5 reading test (based on the *Meets* standard) or higher to maintain the *Meets* performance level in grade 5 reading. From grade 4 to grade 5, if the student's score increased by 32 points (1582 – 1550 = 32), then the student would have maintained *Meets* performance. Therefore, a student who was in *Meets* performance level in grade 4 reading would need to increase his/her score by 32 points or more in grade 5 to have the *Expected* growth. Because the *Meets* performance standards are not the same across grades and content areas (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Expected* progress target value will differ from grade to grade and across content areas.

The same concept applies to students who were in *Masters* (formerly *Advanced*) performance in the previous year. For these students the *Expected* progress target is defined as the distance between the *Masters* standards in the previous year grade and the current year grade in the same content area.

Students who were in *Did Not Meet* or *Approaches* performance in the previous year have the same progress targets as students who were in *Meets* performance level.

The *Accelerated* progress target is a designation reserved for those students who have demonstrated significant growth over the course of the year, beyond that of the *Expected* progress range. The *Accelerated* progress target defines the upper limit of the *Expected* range and is determined by calculating the distance between the *Meets* standard in the previous year and the *Masters* standard in the current year. For example, the *Meets* standard in grade 4 reading is 1550 and the *Masters* standard in grade 5 reading is 1667. Progress greater than this 117-point increase (1667 – 1550 = 117), which is significantly larger than the 32 point progress targets for *Expected* growth, would be classified as having *Accelerated* growth. Because the *Meets* and *Masters* standards are not the same across grades and content areas (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Accelerated* progress target value will differ from grade to grade as well as across content areas.

Previous Year: Grade 4 Reading	Current Year: Grade 5 Reading	
816	837	
956	977	
1040	1060	
1090	1110	
1127	1147	
1157	1176	
1182	1201	
1204	1222	
1224	1242	
1242	1259	
1258	1275	
1273	1290	
1288	1304	
1302	1318	
1315	1331	
1327	1343	
1340	1355	
1351	1366	
1363	1378	Limited Growth
1375	1389	
1386	1400	
1397	1411	
1408	1421	
1422	1432	
1434	1443	
1442	1458	
1454	1464	
1465	1470	
1477	1486	
1486	1495	
1502	1509	
1515	1521	
1528	1533	
1542	1545	
1550 — Expected target = 32	1559	
1573	1573	
1591	1582	Expected Growth
1610	1604	
1633	1622	
1655 Accelerated target = 117	1641	
1684	1667	
1721	1687	
1770	1716	
1853	1752	Accelerated Growth
1992	1803	
	1885	
	2025	

Note: The conversion tables used here are for illustration purpose and do not correspond to the actual ones used to report students' scores.

The diagram uses two pseudo conversion tables to illustrate how the *Expected* and *Accelerated* targets are determined. The diagram shows the *Expected* and *Accelerated* targets, represented by the arrows, as well as the progress classifications for the current year grade 5 reading student who had a scale score of 1550 on the previous year grade 4 reading. If the student has a gain score less than the *Expected* growth target of 32, the student is classified as having *Limited* growth. If the student has a gain score greater than or equal to the

Expected growth target of 32, and less than or equal to the *Accelerated* growth target of 117, the student is classified as having *Expected* growth. If the student has a gain score greater than the *Accelerated* growth target of 117, the student is classified as having *Accelerated* growth.

For more details regarding the progress classifications, including the progress targets for all grades and content areas, see Calculating Progress Measures.

4. Are there any exceptions to the Expected *and* Accelerated *definitions described above?*

Yes. There are some places on the STAAR scale, specifically at the extreme high and low ends of the scale, where the application of the *Limited, Expected* and *Accelerated* definitions would not be appropriate. At the extreme ends of the scale, unlike the rest of the scale, answering one more question correctly results in large differences in scale scores. For this reason, several places on the scale have been identified as exceptions to the *Limited, Expected* and *Accelerated* definitions.

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Accelerated* growth.
- Students who maintained *Masters* performance from the previous year to the current year will be classified as having *Expected* or *Accelerated* growth. (The *Limited* classification will not be applied to these students.)
- Students scoring at or below chance in the current year will be classified as having *Limited* growth.

Chance represents the score that could be reasonably obtained by guessing alone. For the reading and mathematics tests, chance is defined as one fourth, or 25 percent, of the possible multiple-choice raw-score points since these questions have four answer options. The end-of-course (EOC) English tests include multiple-choice questions and essays. Chance on these tests is defined as one fourth, or 25 percent, of the possible multiple-choice raw-score points, plus the weighted value associated with summed scores of 2 on the essays.

All students, even those that meet the exceptions defined above, must meet several criteria in order to receive a progress measure. See question 14 for these criteria.

5. Why are some of the progress targets zero?

It is possible to have zero value for the *Expected* progress target with assessments reported on horizontal scales. For grades 3–8 reading and mathematics, scores are reported on a vertical scale. This means that one continuous scale is used to report scores for all tests within the same content area for grades 3–8. The lower end of this scale includes the scores for the lower-grade tests (grades 3 and 4), while the higher end of the scale includes the scores for the higher-grade tests (grades 7 and 8). As an example, the *Meets* standard for grade 3 English reading is 1468, and the *Meets* standard for grade 4 English reading is 1550. Because of the vertical scale, the higher value in grade 4 reflects increased performance and knowledge expectations as compared to grade 3. The *Meets* standard for grade 8 reading is larger still, 1700, again reflecting increased performance and knowledge expectations within the same vertical scale.

Because scores on a vertical scale increase across grades, progress target values are positive. For example, the *Expected* progress target for grade 4 English reading, for students who achieved *Meets* performance on grade 3 English reading, is 82 (1550 − 1468 = 82).

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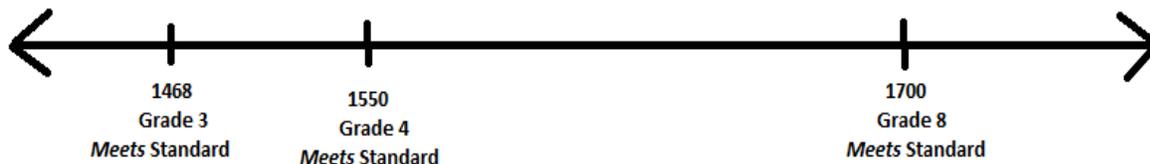
In contrast, the EOC assessments are on horizontal scales. For the tests that use horizontal scales, the progress targets may be zero. For example, the *Meets* standard for both English I and English II are 4000. The *Expected* progress target for English II for students who achieved *Meets* performance on English I is 0 (4000 − 4000 = 0).

While it may seem odd to have progress targets that are zero, these values are an expected product of a horizontal scale. Despite the small values of some progress targets, they still represent increased performance from one year to the next because of the increased difficulty in content reflected on the tests.

6. *Can a high-achieving student still demonstrate progress?*

Yes. Students who consistently earn high scores, even those in *Masters* performance level, have the opportunity to earn the *Expected* and *Accelerated* progress classifications. Exceptions to the *Expected* and *Accelerated* definitions have been developed specifically for high-performing students. These exceptions are as follows.

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Accelerated* growth.
- Students who maintained *Masters* performance from the previous year to the current year will be classified as either having *Expected* or *Accelerated* growth. (The *Limited* growth classification will not be applied to these students.)

7. *How are progress measures different from performance levels?*

Performance levels describe and classify students' performance in the current year. The STAAR performance levels are:

- Masters Grade Level
- Meets Grade Level
- Approaches Grade Level
- Did Not Meet Grade Level

In contrast, progress measures provide information about the improvement or growth that students have achieved between the previous year and the current year within the same content area. Individual student growth is compared to progress targets so that progress can be classified as *Limited, Expected,* or *Accelerated.*

8. Can a student have increased performance levels but not have Expected growth?

Yes. A student can move to a higher performance level without having *Expected* growth. Typically this occurs when a student earns the highest score in a performance level in the previous year and then earns the lowest score in the next performance level in the current year. In these cases, while the student crosses the threshold and achieved the higher performance level, the gain score (the difference between the current year score and the previous year score) is not greater than or equal to the *Expected* progress target.

9. Does the STAAR progress measure change a student's passing status on STAAR?

No. Passing status, which is determined by performance level, is independent from progress measures.

Applying the STAAR Progress Measure

10. Is progress measured the same way for all students in Texas?

Progress is measured differently for different assessments. In 2017, progress is measured in the same way for STAAR and STAAR Spanish. Progress for students who take STAAR Alternate 2 will be measured differently by STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure. Qualifying English language learners (ELLs) who test in English receive the separate ELL progress measure.

11. How is progress measured for students who took STAAR Alternate 2?

Because of the unique characteristics of STAAR Alternate 2 and the students who take it, a different progress measure is developed specifically for this population. For STAAR Alternate 2, progress is measured based on a student's stage change from the prior year to the current year. More information about STAAR Alternate 2 Progress Measure, see STAAR Alternate 2 Progress Measure.

12. How is progress measured for ELLs?

A separate ELL progress measure is used for qualifying ELLs who test in English. This measure takes into account students' years in U.S. schools and their Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) proficiency level in determining appropriate progress targets. For additional details about this measure, see ELL Progress Measure.

ELLs who tested with Spanish language tests will receive the STAAR progress measure rather than the ELL progress measure.

13. How can I calculate my student's STAAR progress measure?

In order to calculate a student's progress measure, the following information is needed:

- Test information from the current year, including
  - Grade level
  - Content area
  - Test language (English or Spanish)
  - Scale score
  - Raw score
  - Performance level
- Test information from the previous year, including
  - Grade level

- Content area
- Test language (English or Spanish)
- Scale score
- Performance level

■ Gain score = Current-year scale score – Previous-year scale score

For step-by-step instructions for calculating STAAR progress using this information, see Calculating Progress Measures.

14. Why do some students not receive a progress measure?

While progress measures are available for most students, there are circumstances in which progress measures are not calculated. Students will not receive a STAAR progress measure in 2017 if they do not meet ALL of the following criteria within the same content area (mathematics, reading, or English):

■ Have a valid score from the previous year and the current year
■ Have tested in successive grade levels or EOC tests in the previous year and the current year. Students who took the same grade-level or EOC test in the previous year and the current year will not receive a progress measure. Students who take STAAR assessments and have skipped a grade level between the previous year and the current year will receive a progress measure.
■ Have taken a STAAR, STAAR L, or STAAR A test in the previous year and a STAAR test in the current year.
■ For STAAR reading assessments, have taken tests in the same language in the previous year and the current year (i.e., English or Spanish).
■ For STAAR Algebra I and English II, have taken the test for the first time.

Note that students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and that took Spanish language versions of the test must also meet the criteria above. LEP students that took English language versions of the test and are eligible for the ELL progress measure will not receive a STAAR progress measure.

If a student does not meet one or more of these criteria, the student will not receive a STAAR progress measure. Some students may meet the criteria and receive a progress measure for one content area but not another.

15. Do students receive progress measures for retests?

Progress measures are calculated for students who take the grades 5 and 8 reading and mathematics retests in May and June. For these students, progress measures are calculated using students' previous year scores and the retest scores for the current year. For EOC, progress is measured from the first administration of one test to the first administration of the next test (even if a student takes a test for the first time in the summer or fall). For example, progress would be calculated from the first time the student took English I to the first time the student took English II.

If a student retested in the previous year in grades 5 or 8 (e.g., current grade 6 student who retested in grade 5 or current Algebra I student who retested in grade 8 mathematics), the higher valid score between the primary administration and the May administration is used for progress measure calculation. Previous year June administration retest scores for grades 5 and 8 are not used for progress measure calculations. Regardless of whether a student retested in the previous year for an EOC test, the first administration of the

previous year test is used to calculate progress. Retest results are not used to compute progress measures for EOC.

16. Why does it appear as if more progress is required from grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I?

The number of scale score points needed to have *Expected* growth is defined in the same way for all grades and content areas and references the number of scale score points needed to move from the *Meets* standard at one grade to the *Meets* standard at the next grade (or in some cases *Masters* to *Masters*). This is true as we look at STAAR grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I as well. The difference between *Meets* standards for grade 8 mathematics and Algebra I is 2300 scale score points. While for grades 3-8, the biggest difference between *Meets* standards for the adjacent grades is around 100. The change from a vertical scale at grade 8 (*Meets* standard = 1700) to a horizontal scale at Algebra I (*Meets* standard = 4000) is largely responsible for these differences.

Reporting the STAAR Progress Measures

17. When will STAAR progress measures be available?

Progress measures (including the ELL progress measure) are provided on Confidential Student Reports (CSRs) for STAAR. This information will also be included in district accountability files and within the student and district data portals.

Interpreting the STAAR Progress Measures

18. How is the STAAR progress measure useful to parents, teachers, and administrators?

Scale scores and performance levels convey information about how a student performed in the current year. Progress measures provide additional information by communicating how much the student has improved from the previous year to the current year. When used together, this information provides a more complete picture of the student's achievement.

For example, while a student may have achieved the *Approaches* standard and passed the test, the student may not have met the *Expected* progress target. This information could help parents, teachers, and administrators identify students for early interventions to prevent them from falling behind in the future.

In contrast, a student may not have achieved the *Approaches* standard, but the progress measure may indicate that the student made significant gains from the previous year to the current year. The progress measure allows parents, teachers, and administrators to recognize such gains. Additionally, because progress measures are included within accountability, campuses and districts can also receive credit within Index 2: Student Progress for these student improvements, even if the student has yet to achieve *Approaches* performance and pass the test. (Refer to the "STAAR Progress Measures and Accountability" section for more information.)

19. If state, district, or campus pass rates haven't changed from one year to the next, does that mean that students did not make progress?

STAAR performance levels and progress measures provide different information about student performance. Pass rates indicate the percent of students who achieved *Approaches* or above performance on a test in a particular year. In comparison, progress measures indicate the amount of improvement or growth that

students have made between the previous year and the current year. Students may make progress but remain in the same performance level. In this case, pass rates may not change even though students have made progress.

STAAR Progress Measures and Accountability

20. When will STAAR progress measures be used for state accountability?

STAAR progress measures were first included in accountability in 2013. In 2014, STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate and ELL progress measures were also included in state accountability. In 2015 and onwards, STAAR progress measures and ELL progress measures are included in state accountability. In 2016 and onwards, STAAR Alternate 2 progress measures are included in state accountability.

21. How are STAAR progress measures used for state accountability?

Student progress on STAAR will be evaluated in Index 2: Student Progress in the accountability system. This index is designed to give districts and campuses one point credit for tests that met the *Expected* progress target and two point credit for tests that met the *Accelerated* progress target. Detailed information about Index 2: Student Progress is available online in the *2017 Accountability Manual*.

See information about how the ELL progress measure is used in state accountability.

Development of STAAR Progress Measures

22. Why did Texas develop and implement a measure of student progress?

Progress measures are legislatively mandated for the STAAR program (Texas Education Code §39.023, §39.034, and §39.053). To meet these requirements, Texas developed the STAAR progress measure. In doing so, the goal was to provide additional information about student performance that is easy to understand and helpful to students, parents, and teachers.

The STAAR progress measure is also used within accountability, allowing campuses and districts to receive credit for students who have made progress even if they have yet to achieve *Approaches* performance and pass the tests. In this way, the STAAR progress measure credits the hard work of teachers, campuses, and districts who have helped students improve from one year to the next.

23. What process was used to develop the STAAR progress measure?

The development of the STAAR progress measure began before the first STAAR tests were administered. A thorough investigation of progress measures was done to review the various approaches that could be used to measure student progress. As part of the development of the STAAR progress measure, many factors were considered, including the following:

- Different models for measuring student progress to determine the model best suited for STAAR
- Content relationships between STAAR tests to determine where progress measures are appropriate
- Federal and state requirements that determine how progress measures can be used for accountability
- Reporting options that allow information about progress to be communicated most effectively

Throughout the development of the STAAR progress measure, advice was sought from a number of advisory groups, including the Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a group of national psychometric experts. In addition, progress measures were discussed with the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), which are groups made up of educators from various Texas campuses and districts as well as parents, higher education representatives, and legislative representatives.

From this research and advice, the STAAR progress measure was developed and refined. The goal of providing additional information about student performance that was both meaningful and easy to understand was at the forefront of all development activities.

24. *How is the STAAR progress measure different from the Texas Projection Measure (TPM) that was used with TAKS?*

While the TPM used calculations to predict future progress, the STAAR progress measure classifies the progress that students have already achieved. Through statistical techniques, the TPM used student scores from several years to predict if the student was expected to pass the test in the future. The STAAR progress measure does not predict future performance. Rather, student scores from the previous year and the current year are compared to calculate the amount of improvement or growth the student has already made. This growth is then classified as *Limited, Expected, or Accelerated.*

25. *How does the change in the performance levels impact the STAAR progress measures?*

In spring 2017, the performance levels are changed from three levels (*Unsatisfactory*, *Satisfactory*, and *Advanced*) to four levels (*Did Not Meet*, *Approaches*, *Meets*, and *Masters*). The progress targets are set using the *Meets* and *Masters* standards which were formerly known as the final recommended Level II and Level III standards. The basic calculation of STAAR progress measure is therefore consistent with the previous years.

26. *How does the change in the test blueprints impact the STAAR progress measures?*

In spring 2017, grades 3-8 tests were shortened to meet the requirement of House Bill 743. In addition, the test blueprints for English I and English II are also changed by removing the short answer items and adding additional multiple-choice items. The change in the test blueprints will not change the procedure to compute the progress measure. However, the values in the table used to determine the progress measures (see Table 1 in Calculating the Texas STAAR Progress Measure) will need to be updated because the maximum raw score and chance raw score students can obtain have changed.