

STAAR to replace TAKS for Class of 2015 and beyond  
New state assessment goes into effect next school year

## **STAAR Q&A**

### **1. What is STAAR?**

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is the new state assessment for students in grades 3-12. It is replacing the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

### **2. How is the STAAR different from TAKS?**

STAAR will be more rigorous as it is aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The majority of the new STAAR assessments will test content students studied that year, as opposed to testing content studied over multiple years. Doing so will strengthen the alignment between what is taught and what is tested for a given course of study.

In grades 9-12, students may take up to 12 STAAR End of Course (EOC) tests throughout their years in high school. In order to graduate, students will be required to have satisfactory performance on all STAAR EOC tests and have a minimum cumulative total in the four core areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies, Math and Science. In addition to meeting cumulative score requirement in each of four core content areas, students on the recommended high school program have to perform satisfactorily on English III and Algebra II assessments, students on the distinguished achievement program have to perform satisfactorily on the college-readiness component of both the Algebra II assessment and English III assessment.

### **3. When will students start taking the STAAR?**

The new test will be introduced in the 2011-12 school year for students graduating in 2015 and beyond.

### **4. What are the tests for grades 3-8?**

- Math and Reading (grades 3-8)
- Writing (grades 4 and 7)
- Science (grades 5 and 8)
- Social Studies (grade 8)

## **5. What are the tests for grades 9-12?**

- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- English I
- English II
- English III
- World Geography
- World History
- U.S. History

## **6. How will the STAAR score affect my child's grade?**

The state requires that the STAAR EOC score will account for 15 percent of a student's final grade in the course.

Note, in the case of two-semester courses, it is unclear how the EOC will affect the overall grade since the first-semester grade would already be established. As soon as we have an answer from the state, we will let parents and students know.

## **7. What are the performance levels on STAAR?**

The state has established three performance levels:

- a. minimum
- b. satisfactory
- c. college readiness

The state has not yet announced the scores that correspond with the three performance levels. As soon as those decisions are made by the state, we will let parents and students know.

## **8. What is required for graduation?**

To receive a diploma and to participate in graduation ceremonies, the student must:

- Complete one of the Mesquite ISD Graduation programs.
- Meet passing requirements on the State of Texas Assessments (see table on next page)

<b>Graduating Class</b>	<b>State Testing Requirements</b>			
2011-14	Pass all sections of exit-level TAKS			
2015 and beyond	Meet minimum requirements on STAAR EOC exams and meet a satisfactory cumulative EOC passing score requirement in each of the four content areas (ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies)			
	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
	English I English II English III	Algebra I Geometry Algebra II	Biology Chemistry Physics	World Geography World History U.S. History

**9. What is required in grades 3-8 in order to advance to the next grade?**

Since the state has not established passing standards, promotion requirements will not include the use of STAAR results for the 2011-12 school year. Other academic information (student grades and teacher recommendations) will be used for promotion decisions.

After 2011-12, performance on the STAAR will be used for promotion decisions and as was true with TAKS, students in grades 5 and 8 must perform satisfactorily on reading and math in order to be promoted.

**10. In high school, do the requirements differ according to the graduation plan?**

Yes. Different levels of performance on English II and Algebra II EOC tests will be required for each of the three graduation plans (minimum, recommended and distinguished). The state has not released the specific guidelines.

**11. When will the state's requirements regarding graduation go into effect?**

The Class of 2015 will be the first class to undergo EOC testing, and therefore, the first class to be required to fulfill the state's new graduation requirements. Students graduating before 2015 will continue to take TAKS.

**12. Will students be allowed to retake STAAR tests?**

Yes. Students at the high school level will be able to retake any of the STAAR EOC assessments. Students in grades 5 and 8 will be able to re-test in reading and math in order to meet their promotion criteria beginning in 2013.

**13. How many more testing days will the STAAR assessment require?**

STAAR significantly increases the number of testing days at the high school level. Currently, there are 25 TAKS testing days, including exit-level retesting. STAAR EOC will require up to 45 testing days when it is fully implemented.

**14. How will the state modify STAAR for students with special needs?**

Testing accommodations will be made as needed according to each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

**15. How will the state modify STAAR for English Languages Learners (ELL)?**

ELL students will continue to take the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). There are plans to adjust items on TELPAS to align more closely with the rigor of the STAAR assessments. Plans are also being made for the development of linguistically accommodated versions of STAAR.

**16. Will STAAR replace AP exams?**

No. Students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses will be required to take both STAAR EOC and AP exams. AP exams are national exams tied to Advanced Placement courses. STAAR is tied to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, and under new state law, passage is required for graduation.

**17. Has TEA finalized the details regarding STAAR?**

No. As of this date of publication, the TEA is still developing policies and regulations with respect to STAAR. For example, final decisions have not been made regarding:

- Scores needed to pass STAAR
- Retesting schedules and guidelines
- Clarification regarding which policy decisions will be left to individual districts
- Tests required for students in middle school taking high school courses (i.e. Algebra I)
- How final grades will be calculated given the state requirement that 15 percent of each student's final grade be determined by their STAAR EOC score (see question #6)
- Specifics regarding special education modifications.