

STAAR EOC

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



January 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our freshman class has a challenge ahead. The State of Texas legislature recently changed the requirements for graduation. Starting with this year's freshman class, STAAR has replaced the TAKS test as the state's official testing tool. Students who are freshmen for the first time in the 2011-12 school year will be the first class to be tested under STAAR. The following document explains how these new tests will affect your child, what we know so far about scoring, and what your child needs to do to successfully pass STAAR. Please take some time to carefully read through this information. Because it is so important that all parents are aware of this testing change, we are requiring students to return the lower portion of this document with your signature. Please retain the top portion for your reference.

If you still have questions about STAAR after reading through this document, further information can be found on the Texas Education Agency website at www.tea.state.tx.us. EOC questions and answers from the Texas Education Agency are located at www.txetests.com/FAQS/index.asp. Sample EOC questions can be viewed at www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar.

Understanding STAAR EOC Exams

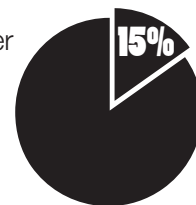
Instead of taking one all-encompassing TAKS test, high school students will now take a subject-specific and more difficult and intensive end-of-course (EOC) exam at the end of each of these core classes:

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

In other words, students will now be tested throughout their high school career, taking a state competency test for a particular subject upon completing that class. **If a freshman student's schedule currently includes any of the courses listed above, the student will take those EOCs this coming March (for English) and May (for all other EOCs). Your child will likely be taking tests in English 1, Algebra 1, Biology, and/or World Geography.**

EOC Test Score and Final Semester Grades

In classes with EOC exams, 15 percent of a student's grade for both the first and the second semester of the class will come from the score made on the STAAR EOC. This is a significant percentage – it can greatly raise or lower the grade earned in class. Also, since the EOC exam score must count 15 percent of the first semester grade as well as the second semester, grades for the first semester of a class will not be final until we have results from the STAAR EOC exam at the end of the year.



Failing and Retesting

If a student does not meet the minimum required score for an EOC exam, he or she will have to take a summer class and retake the exam in July. If the student still does not pass the EOC in July, he will have to give up an elective the next year to be enrolled in an EOC review course. **Students will have multiple chances to retest; however, it will come at the high cost of valuable elective classes.** So, please encourage and support your child to help him do his very best in his core classes so that he will be fully prepared to ace the EOC tests.

Understanding Scoring

The importance of these exams cannot be stressed enough. A STAAR EOC is an exit exam— a test that students must pass in order to graduate.

However, whether or not a student has achieved a “passing” score will be a little tricky to determine. STAAR actually takes all the scores from a particular subject area (English, math, science, and history) and combines them into one cumulative test score that determines whether or not a student will be allowed to graduate. There are four score levels: Unsatisfactory, Minimum, Satisfactory, and Advanced. If a student scores too low on an EOC exam, NONE of that score will be used to count toward the cumulative score.

Unfortunately, the State of Texas legislature has not yet decided what the range of scores will be for the exams. But, take the fictional numbers below in order to better understand the method that will be used to arrive at a cumulative score:

Pretend that the satisfactory score in science is 1000. A student taking all three science EOC exams (biology, chemistry, and physics) must therefore earn a cumulative science score of 3000 to graduate. (That is, a satisfactory score of 1000 times three science EOC exams equals 3000).

Use these pretend ranges of scores for our student examples:

Unsatisfactory: Score below 900 on an EOC — Student did not meet minimum; score will not count.

Minimum: Score between 900-999 — Student met minimum for use in cumulative score; score will count.

Satisfactory: Scores between 1000-1499 — Student met standard; score will count.

Advanced: Scores 1500 or above — Student’s score is advanced; score will count.

3000 total points are needed in science in order to pass.



STUDENT 1: Scores 1200 on biology; 800 on chemistry; 1100 on physics

The chemistry score of 800 did not meet the minimum score requirement and so cannot be used towards the cumulative score. The student’s cumulative score is therefore 2300 (1200 plus 1100). This does not meet the cumulative score requirement for graduation of 3000. Even if the student is passing all his classes, he must retake the chemistry EOC in order to graduate.



STUDENT 2: Scores 950 on biology, 1000 on chemistry ; 900 on physics

The student met the score minimum on all three EOC exams. However, even though all three test scores will count, the student’s cumulative score is only 2850. Since this student did not meet the cumulative score requirement of 3000, she will have to retest in at least one subject to bring up her cumulative score.



STUDENT 3: Scores 950 on biology; 1200 on chemistry; 900 on physics

This student met the minimum on all three EOC assessments, so all three test scores will count. The student’s cumulative score is 3050. The student does not have to retest because he has met the science cumulative score requirement for graduation.

Supporting Your Child

STAAR EOC exams will be challenging. Help your child stay on top of the material in all core classes by asking to see homework and discussing together at home the concepts your child is learning. Make sure your child knows you are interested and invested in what happens at school, and reinforce the message that school is a student’s job. If your child’s progress reports and six weeks grades are below what you expect, require him or her to attend tutoring.

On-going success in an EOC class will determine success on the EOC exam, so don’t wait until March to get involved in your child’s class work.