

STAAR to replace TAKS for Class of 2015 and beyond

New state assessment goes into effect for the 2011-12 school year

This year, the state is launching STAAR, the new assessment replacing TAKS. This will affect the graduation plan for all HPISD students, starting with the Class of 2015.

This year's ninth-graders will be the first class to graduate under the new state system. All students in grades 3-9 will be taking the new tests this spring.

The updated Q&A gives an overview of the state's new assessment plan. [Much of the information is provided by the Texas Education Agency.](#)

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 that students studied during the current school year, as opposed to testing content studied over multiple years.

Beginning with the Class of 2015, high school students will take 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 12 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.

The high school STAAR EOC tests will focus solely on the curriculum covered in that course. In contrast, the TAKS measured overall knowledge of the general subject, along with some specific questions from course curriculum.

3. When will students start taking the STAAR?

The new test will be introduced this 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 about middle-school students who are enrolled in high-school level courses?

Those students will take the EOC test for the courses in which they are enrolled. For example, eighth-graders taking Algebra I will take the Algebra I EOC. Those students will take the eighth-grade-level STAAR for their other courses.

6. 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

7. 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. Each student must earn a final passing grade of 70 or higher in order to receive course credit.

HPISD will continue with its semester-based grading system and will add the state-mandated final grade to transcripts. Each student's grade point average (GPA) and will be determined by semester grades.

8. If a student fails the course but passes the STAAR EOC assessment, is the student required to retake when he or she retakes the course?

Districts are required to use STAAR EOC assessment scores for 15% of a student's final course grade, even when a student repeats a course. If a student is repeating a course, the student is not required to retake the assessment provided that he or she has received a score at or above the minimum score.

9. Does the 15% grading requirement apply to students who receive course credit through dual credit or correspondence courses?

Yes. A student receiving high school course credit through a dual credit or correspondence program will take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment. The score a student receives on the assessment is required to count for 15% of the student's final grade.

10. What is required for graduation?

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

- Complete one of the Highland Park High School Graduation programs.
- Complete at least 50 hours of community service.
- Meet passing requirements on the State of Texas Assessments (see table)

| Graduating Class | State Testing Requirements |
|-------------------------|--|
| 2011-14 | Pass all sections of exit-level TAKS |
| 2015 and beyond | Meet minimum requirements on all 12 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 | Algebra I | Biology | World Geography |
| English II | Geometry | Chemistry | World History |
| English III | Algebra II | Physics | U.S. History |

11. What are the performance levels on STAAR?

The state has established two performance levels:

- a. satisfactory
- b. advanced academic performance

The state has not yet announced the cut scores that correspond with the performance levels.

12. When will the performance cut scores be announced?

STAAR EOC performance levels will be set in the spring of 2012, and reports will be available in June 2012 after the first May 2012 administration.

Performance levels for grades 3-8 will be set in fall 2012 after the first spring administration of STAAR.

13. 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 this 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.

14. Do the requirements differ according to the graduation plan?

Yes. Different levels of performance will be required for each of the three graduation plans (minimum, recommended and distinguished). In order to remain on the distinguished graduation plan, students must score at the advanced academic performance level on the English III and Algebra II exams. The state has not released the specific cut scores (see #10).

15. When will the state's graduation requirements 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.

15. Will students be allowed to retake STAAR tests?

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

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

STAAR significantly increases the number of testing days at the high school level. Under TAKS, there

were 25 testing days, including exit-level retesting. STAAR EOC will require up to 45 testing days when it is fully implemented.

17. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students receiving special education services who take the general STAAR EOC assessments?

The assessment graduation requirements for students receiving special education services and taking general STAAR assessments are the same as those for general education students. However, the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee determines whether the student has to meet the assessment requirements for graduation. If the ARD committee determines that a student does not have to meet the requirements (e.g., the cumulative score), then that student can graduate only under the Minimum High School Program (MHSP).

Cumulative score requirements do not apply to students taking STAAR Modified or STAAR Alternate.

18. 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).

The STAAR Modified assessment will cover the modified curriculum that has been taught. Modified assessments are not being developed for Algebra II, chemistry or physics, as those courses are not required on the Minimum High School Program, and all students taking STAAR Modified assessments are on the MHSP.

The STAAR Alternate assessments will be very similar to the TAKS-Alt assessments. Students will continue to perform tasks linked to the appropriate grade-level TEKS. At the high school level, assessments will move from grade-level assessments to course-based assessments.

19. Will the dyslexia-bundled accommodations continue to be offered to eligible students taking the STAAR reading assessments?

Two of the three bundled accommodations will be available for students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities on the STAAR reading assessments in grades 3 through high school. On the reading assessment, those accommodations will include extended testing time and the oral reading of item stems/answer options. These accommodations do not need to be offered as a bundle; the needs of the student should be considered when determining which accommodations to use. A proper-nouns list like the one used in the TAKS assessments will no longer be provided.

20. Will dyslexic students be allowed extra time to test?

In most cases, students who are identified with dyslexia by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee or Section 504 placement committee will meet the eligibility criteria for the extra time accommodation. This accommodation provides students extra time to complete the test until the end of the regular school day.

21. How will the state modify STAAR for English Language 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. Linguistically accommodated versions of STAAR will be available.

22. 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.

If you have questions, please contact the following campus and district contacts:

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