

# State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## STAAR General Questions

### 1. What is STAAR?

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR, is the state testing program that was implemented in the 2011–2012 school year. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and Texas educators, developed the STAAR program in response to requirements set forth by the 80<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Texas legislatures. STAAR is an assessment program designed to measure the extent to which students have learned and are able to apply the knowledge and skills defined in the state-mandated curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Every STAAR question is directly aligned to the TEKS currently implemented for the grade/subject or course being assessed. The STAAR program includes STAAR, STAAR Spanish, STAAR L (a linguistically accommodated version), and STAAR A (an accommodated version).

### 2. In what grades, subjects, and courses are students assessed under the STAAR program?

At grades 3–8, students are tested in mathematics and reading. Students are also tested in writing at grades 4 and 7, science at grades 5 and 8, and social studies at grade 8. Students are tested at the high school level with STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments for Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history.

### 3. What are readiness standards?

Based on educator recommendations and as part of the development of the STAAR program, TEA identified, for each grade/subject and course assessed, a small percentage of eligible TEKS student expectations as the most critical to assess. These are called readiness standards and are defined as those student expectations that are not only essential for success in the current grade or course but also important for preparedness in the next grade or course. Readiness standards are emphasized on the assessments and are identified for each grade/subject and course tested in the Assessed Curriculum documents on the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

### 4. Are there any released test questions available for STAAR?

Yes. TEA has released selected test questions as well as administered test forms for all grades/subjects and courses. These questions can be found on the STAAR Released Test Questions webpage at

[http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Testing/State\\_of\\_Texas\\_Assessments\\_of\\_Academic\\_Readiness\\_\(STAAR\)/STAAR\\_Released\\_Test\\_Questions/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/State_of_Texas_Assessments_of_Academic_Readiness_(STAAR)/STAAR_Released_Test_Questions/).

### 5. Where can I go to find more information about the STAAR program?

For more information about the STAAR program, visit the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

## STAAR Testing Requirements

### 6. What are the general testing requirements for students in grades 3–8?

In most cases, students in grades 3–8 must be tested at their enrolled grade level as required in TEC 39.023(a). Exceptions to this requirement may exist for students receiving instruction above grade level; see the questions that follow.

**7. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are receiving instruction in subjects above their enrolled grade?**

These students will be required to take STAAR assessments for the subjects in which they are receiving instruction if an assessment exists. For example, a student in grade 7 who is receiving instruction in grade 8 science would take the STAAR grade 8 science assessment and the STAAR grade 7 mathematics, reading, and writing assessments.

**8. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course that has a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment?**

Students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course will take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment in place of their grade-level assessment in that subject area. These students must take all other STAAR grade-level assessments. For example, a grade 8 student enrolled in English I will take the STAAR English I assessment as well as the STAAR grade 8 mathematics, science, and social studies assessments.

**9. What are the testing requirements for students in grades 3–8 who are enrolled in a high school course that does not have a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment?**

- For mathematics, these students would still be required to take their grade-level STAAR assessment since there is not a STAAR EOC assessment to take and because students are required by federal law to be assessed annually in grades 3–8 in mathematics. For example, a grade 8 student enrolled in geometry will take the STAAR grade 8 mathematics assessment (since there is not a STAAR geometry assessment) as well as the other grade 8 assessments.
- For science, students in grades 5 and 8 would still be required to take their grade-level STAAR assessment if they have not already taken it since students are required by federal law to be assessed in science at least once in elementary and once in middle school.
- For social studies, students in grade 8 would not be required to take their grade-level assessment (unless they have not taken it yet) since there is no federal requirement to test in social studies.

**10. If students in grades 3–8 are receiving above-grade-level instruction (including instruction in a high school level course), are they required to take both the higher level and the enrolled-grade-level assessment in the same content area?**

No. Students in grades 3–8 are not required to take two tests in the same content area. The commissioner of education has discouraged districts from double-testing accelerated students.

**11. What are the testing requirements for students in kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2 who are receiving instruction in subjects above their enrolled grade level?**

There are no STAAR testing requirements for students enrolled in kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2, so these students do not test. STAAR testing requirements begin with students enrolled in grade 3.

**12. What are the general testing requirements for students enrolled in high school courses?**

Regardless of enrolled grade level, students should take STAAR EOC assessments (Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history) as they are completing the corresponding courses since these assessments are required for high school graduation based on TEC §39.025.

**13. What are the testing requirements for a foreign exchange student?**

A foreign exchange student is required to take STAAR EOC assessments for courses in which he or she is enrolled. However, the student is not required to retest unless he or she is planning to earn a Texas high school diploma.

**14. Are districts required to provide accelerated instruction to students who do not pass the STAAR assessments?**

Yes. TEC §28.0211(a-1) requires school districts to provide accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area each time a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an assessment administered in grades 3–8 (i.e., who does not achieve Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance). Similarly, TEC §39.025(b-1) requires school districts to provide accelerated instruction to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR EOC assessment.

## **STAAR Student Success Initiative Requirements**

**15. What are the Student Success Initiative (SSI) promotion requirements?**

Under the SSI promotion requirements, students are required to pass (meet or exceed Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance) the STAAR grade 5 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to sixth grade. Additionally, students are required to pass (meet or exceed Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance) the STAAR grade 8 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to ninth grade. More information about these requirements can be found on the SSI webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ssi/>.

**16. What is the purpose of the Student Success Initiative?**

SSI, enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, is a system of supports for on-grade-level student achievement in mathematics and reading at grades 5 and 8. This system of supports includes early intervention activities, research-based instructional programs, targeted accelerated instruction, and multiple testing opportunities. More information about supports can be found in the SSI Manual on the SSI webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ssi/>.

**17. How many testing opportunities are there for SSI?**

There are three testing opportunities for students in grades 5 and 8 to pass STAAR mathematics and reading assessments in order to be promoted to the next grade. The first SSI administration is typically in early April. This administration is earlier than other STAAR mathematics and reading administrations to allow sufficient time in the school year for targeted accelerated instruction and another testing opportunity. The second testing opportunity occurs in mid-May. The third testing opportunity for SSI is in late June. The specific testing dates each year can be found on the student assessment testing calendar at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/calendars/>.

**18. Which students do the SSI promotion requirements apply to?**

SSI promotion requirements apply to students taking STAAR grade 5 or 8 mathematics and/or reading assessments, including STAAR Spanish, STAAR L, and STAAR A if

- the students are enrolled in grade 5 or 8 and
- are receiving on-grade-level instruction in mathematics and/or reading.

**19. Do SSI promotion requirements apply to students in grades 3, 4, 6, or 7 who are receiving mathematics or reading instruction above their enrolled grade and who take the grade 5 or 8 assessment?**

No. Because these students are not enrolled in grade 5 or 8, the grades that SSI applies to, they are not subject to the SSI promotion requirements.

**20. Can students who are receiving mathematics or reading instruction above their enrolled grade and who will take the above-grade-level assessment at grade 5 or 8 participate in the second or third administration of the mathematics or reading assessments?**

No. Only students enrolled in grade 5 or 8 who are subject to SSI promotion requirements and who have not passed the first administration of an SSI test are eligible to participate in the second and/or third administrations of the mathematics or reading assessments.

**21. Do SSI promotion requirements apply to a student who is repeating grade 5 or 8?**

Yes. If the student is enrolled in grade 5 or 8 and receiving instruction in grade 5 or 8 mathematics or reading, SSI requirements apply, even if the student passed the corresponding assessment the previous school year.

## **STAAR Graduation Requirements**

**22. What STAAR tests are required for high school graduation?**

In general, students must pass (meet or exceed Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance) the five STAAR EOC assessments—Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history—in order to earn a high school diploma from a Texas public or charter school as required in TEC §39.025.

**23. Which students have to meet the STAAR graduation requirements?**

Students who were first enrolled in grade 9 or below in the 2011–2012 school year, the first year of the STAAR program, have to meet the STAAR graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma from a Texas public or charter school. Students who repeated grade 9 or were enrolled in grade 10 or above in the 2011–2012 school year have to meet the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) graduation requirements. Districts that determined a student who was reported in PEIMS in grade 9 during the 2011–2012 school year is a TAKS graduate because of prior grade 9 attendance outside the Texas public school system must be able to provide documentation, upon request from TEA, to substantiate the district's designation of the student as a TAKS graduate.

Note that the STAAR testing cohort and the graduation rate cohort may differ. Cohort assignment for graduation rate purposes is determined by the grade level submitted by the district in PEIMS. Grades attended outside Texas public schools are not collected in PEIMS and therefore cannot be considered when determining cohort assignment for graduation rate purposes. Detailed information about graduation rate cohort assignment may be found in the technical documentation associated with graduation rate processing available at [http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/dropcomp\\_index.html#documentation](http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/dropcomp_index.html#documentation).

For questions about cohorts, call the Accountability Research and Analysis Division of TEA at 512-475-3523.

**24. When should students take a STAAR EOC assessment?**

Students should take a STAAR EOC assessment during the spring, summer, or fall administration, as close as possible to the completion of the corresponding course. Most students will have received instruction in an entire course or a significant portion of the course by the testing date or by the end of the school year, so they would participate in the spring administration. However, if by the end of the school year students have received instruction in only part of the course (the first half or the second half), then they would take the STAAR EOC assessment in whichever subsequent administration is closest to the time they are completing the course.

For students who are taking courses outside of the typical semester sequence, districts should carefully evaluate the timing of the course instruction as it relates to the STAAR EOC assessment schedule to ensure that students are provided the best opportunity to demonstrate their

understanding of the course content. For example, because the spring administration of STAAR English I and English II typically occurs a month earlier than the administration of the other EOC assessments, districts should evaluate the extent to which students taking English I or English II in an accelerated block of instruction during the spring are able to complete their testing requirements. Students who do not participate in the spring STAAR administration may not be able or willing to return to school in July to take the assessments and will not have another opportunity to test until December of the following school year, months after they have completed the course.

**25. How many testing opportunities do students have to pass the STAAR EOC assessments?**

All five STAAR EOC assessments required for graduation—Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history—are administered at the end of the first semester (fall), at the end of the second semester (spring), and in the summer, giving students three testing opportunities each year. The number of testing opportunities students have prior to high school graduation is dependent on when students take the corresponding course. For example, most students take biology during their freshman year. That means students have ten testing opportunities before they are scheduled to graduate. In contrast, most students take U.S. history during their junior year, giving them four testing opportunities prior to high school graduation. The specific testing dates each year can be found on the student assessment testing calendar at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/calendars/>.

**26. What types of substitute assessments can students use to fulfill their STAAR graduation requirements?**

To satisfy their testing requirements for graduation, students can use multiple assessments (e.g., AP, IB, SAT, ACT) in place of STAAR EOC assessments. Details on which assessments can currently be used for this purpose are provided in TAC §101.4002 at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter101/ch101dd.html>.

**27. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through distance learning programs, correspondence courses, or dual credit courses?**

Students who earn Texas high school course credit through distance learning programs (e.g., the Texas Virtual School Network), correspondence courses, or dual credit courses are required to pass all five STAAR EOC assessments to fulfill their testing requirements for graduation.

**28. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses?**

Students who earn Texas high school course credit through an AP or IB course that is substituting for a TEKS-based course required for graduation (e.g., AP biology instead of TEKS-based biology) are required to take the STAAR EOC assessment. However, if the student is taking the AP or IB test, the student may be able to use the AP or IB test score instead of the STAAR EOC assessment score to fulfill his or her biology testing requirements for graduation. See the substitute assessments question above.

**29. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who earn course credit through credit by examination (CBE)?**

If a student uses CBE to gain credit for a course in which he or she has had some prior instruction based on TAC §74.24(c)(9), the student is required to pass the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her STAAR graduation requirement. However, if a student uses CBE to gain credit for a course in which he or she has had no prior instruction based on TAC §74.24(c)(5), the student is not required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her STAAR graduation requirement. More information about CBE can be found in TAC §74.24 at

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074c.html> or by calling the Curriculum Division of TEA at 512-463-9581.

**30. What are the STAAR graduation requirements for students who completed a high school course prior to spring 2012, the first high-stakes administration of STAAR EOC assessments?**

A student who is graduating on the Minimum High School Program, the Recommended High School Program, or the Distinguished Achievement Program and who has completed a high school course prior to spring 2012 (e.g., a grade 8 student who completed Algebra I during the 2010–2011 school year or a grade 9 student who completed English I in the first semester of the 2011–2012 school year) is not required to take the corresponding STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirement.

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

No. Once a student passes (meets or exceeds Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance) a STAAR EOC assessment, the student has fulfilled that part of his or her graduation requirement and cannot retest.

**32. If a student fails the course and fails the STAAR EOC assessment, does the student have to wait until he or she completes the entire course before retesting?**

No. The student has already received instruction in the entire course and is eligible to retest. The district must ensure that the student is provided an opportunity to test to meet his or her graduation requirement each time the assessment is offered.

## **STAAR Test Administration**

**33. Which STAAR assessments are offered on paper and which are offered online?**

The general STAAR grades 3–8 assessments, as well as STAAR Spanish at grades 3–5, are available only on paper. However, a version of STAAR for grades 3–8 is offered online as a standardized oral administration (SOA). More information is available on the SOA webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/soa/>. STAAR EOC assessments are administered in both paper and online formats.

STAAR L and STAAR A are both administered online for all grades/subjects and courses. Paper versions of these assessments are available in rare cases based on specific circumstances. Information about requesting paper administrations of STAAR L and STAAR A can be found at [http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Testing/Student\\_Assessment\\_Overview/Request\\_for\\_Paper\\_Administrations\\_of\\_STAAR\\_L,\\_STAAR\\_A,\\_TELPAS\\_Reading,\\_and\\_TAKS/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Testing/Student_Assessment_Overview/Request_for_Paper_Administrations_of_STAAR_L,_STAAR_A,_TELPAS_Reading,_and_TAKS/).

**34. What type of flexibility do districts have in scheduling the STAAR assessments?**

The STAAR grades 3–8 assessments should be administered on the state-assigned days listed on the student assessment testing calendar. TEA recognizes that districts sometimes have conflicts and are unable to administer tests on the dates scheduled. If a conflict arises, a district may adjust the testing dates, with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing, as long as they administer all the scheduled assessments in the time frame provided.

STAAR EOC assessments are offered during a testing window. For Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history, districts have the flexibility to schedule testing sessions anytime within the testing window.

However, districts must administer English I and English II on the state-assigned days listed on the student assessment testing calendar.

**35. What if a student is not able to test on the scheduled date?**

STAAR assessments must be administered during specific testing weeks. If a student is not able to test on the scheduled test date, the district should provide an opportunity for the student to test later in the testing week. This is especially important for assessments that are required for grade promotion or for high school graduation.

**36. Is there a time limit for STAAR assessments?**

Yes. All STAAR assessments have a four-hour time limit with the exception of English I and English II. These two assessments have a five-hour time limit. The time limits were established as the maximum amount of time allowed to complete the assessment, although most students should be able to complete the assessment in less time. Accommodations for extra time or an extra day are available for students who meet eligibility criteria for their use.

Once a student has completed the test, he or she may be dismissed from the testing room and resume normal school activities. More information can be found in the STAAR Time Limits Policies and Procedures document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/>.

**37. Are breaks allowed during STAAR assessments?**

Yes. Students are allowed to take breaks during the administration of STAAR assessments. Some breaks, such as water and snack breaks, are included in the time limit. Other breaks, such as those needed for medical reasons, may require the test administrator to stop the testing time and restart the time clock when testing resumes. More information can be found in the STAAR Time Limits Policies and Procedures document at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/>.

**38. Are special test administration procedures or materials allowed?**

Yes. During the administration of STAAR assessments, certain test administration procedures, such as small-group administrations, and certain materials, such as scratch paper, may be provided to any student who regularly benefits from the use of these procedures or materials during instruction. A list of allowable procedures and materials is available at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/manuals/dccm/>.

**39. Are testing accommodations allowed?**

Yes. Accommodations are changes to instructional materials, procedures, or techniques that allow students who have disabilities and English language learners to participate more meaningfully in instruction and testing activities. Information regarding allowable accommodations for STAAR can be found on the Accommodation Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/>.

## **STAAR Performance and Reporting**

**40. How is student performance described on STAAR?**

There are two cut scores on STAAR assessments, which separate student performance into three categories. For the general STAAR program, STAAR Spanish, STAAR L, and STAAR A, the labels for the performance categories are

- Level III: Advanced Academic Performance

- Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance
- Level I: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

**41. What is the passing standard for STAAR?**

The passing standard for STAAR assessments is Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance. A student who scores within Level II or III has passed the STAAR test, but a student who scores within Level I has not passed. More specific information about the passing standards is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

**42. Is there a phase-in of the STAAR performance standards?**

Yes. The commissioner of education has established a phase-in of the STAAR performance standards to provide school districts with time to adjust instruction, provide new professional development, and close knowledge gaps. More specific information about the phase-in is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

**43. Where can I find more information about the STAAR performance standards?**

For more information about the STAAR performance standards, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

**44. Is there a progress measure for STAAR?**

Yes. The STAAR progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or growth a student has made from year to year. For STAAR, progress is measured as a student's gain score, the difference between the score a student achieved in the prior year and the score a student achieved in the current year. Individual student progress is then categorized as Did Not Meet, Met, or Exceeded.

**45. Where can I find more information about the STAAR progress measure?**

For more information about the STAAR progress measure, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

**46. What reports are provided for the STAAR program?**

TEA provides Confidential Student Reports (CSRs), Confidential Student Labels, Confidential Campus Rosters, Campus and District Summary Reports, and data files to districts. Districts are required to report individual results to parents according to the timeline indicated on the calendar of events. Districts are also required to provide overall assessment results to their local school board at a regularly scheduled meeting.

**47. Does TEA provide additional information about the test questions on STAAR?**

Yes. For the first spring administration of each general STAAR assessment, TEA provides the TEKS student expectations assessed in each test question. In mathematics, science, and social studies, process standards are also provided if the test question incorporates a process skill. This information can be found on the STAAR Student Expectations Tested webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/exptested/>.

When STAAR assessments are released to the public, TEA also provides Confidential Student Item Analysis Reports. These reports provide detailed student-level results for each assessment, including the answer choice the student selected and the correct answer for each question.



**48. What reporting data are available to students and their parents?**

A student data portal is available to students and their parents through the Texas Assessment Management System. A student is able to see his or her test results from previous school years. Each student is provided a unique access code to log in to the data portal. The access code is found at the bottom of the student's Confidential Student Report. The student data portal is available at <http://www.TexasAssessment.com>, and there is no charge for students or parents to use it.

**Assessments for English Language Learners****49. What testing options are available for English language learners (ELLs)?**

Spanish versions of STAAR are available for eligible students in grades 3–5. In addition, STAAR L, a linguistically accommodated version of STAAR, is available for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school. ELLs not eligible to take STAAR Spanish or STAAR L will take the general STAAR assessments in English but may be eligible to receive certain linguistic accommodations. Language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) must meet annually to make and document state assessment decisions for ELLs on an individual student basis. More information about the LPAC decision-making process is available on the LPAC Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/lpac/>.

**50. What is STAAR Spanish?**

STAAR Spanish is designed to measure the knowledge and skills of students who receive academic instruction in Spanish and can best demonstrate their learning through a Spanish language assessment. STAAR Spanish assessments include passages and questions for reading and writing that are originally written in Spanish, as well as transadapted questions for mathematics and science. The mathematics and science questions are translated from English and adapted as necessary to ensure cultural and linguistic accessibility. Passages and questions for the reading and writing tests are developed uniquely in the Spanish language so that the Spanish language arts curriculum can be assessed in a more authentic and meaningful manner.

The English and Spanish versions of STAAR have the same test blueprint and assess the same TEKS student expectations. These documents can be found on the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

**51. What tests are available for STAAR Spanish?**

STAAR Spanish is available in mathematics and reading at grades 3–5, writing at grade 4, and science at grade 5 for students whom an assessment in Spanish provides the most appropriate measure of academic progress.

**52. What is the passing standard for STAAR Spanish?**

Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance is the passing standard for all STAAR Spanish assessments. However, the Level II performance standards have been determined differently for mathematics and science than for reading and writing.

- For mathematics and science, the Level II passing standard for the English-version assessments has been applied to STAAR Spanish, since the Spanish assessments contain questions that have been transadapted from the English assessments.

- For reading and writing, the Level II performance standards for Spanish-version assessments have been set separately from English-version assessments, since Spanish and English assessments have been developed uniquely.

A student who scores within Level II or Level III has passed the STAAR Spanish test, but a student who scores within Level I has not passed. More specific information about the passing standards is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

### **53. What is STAAR L?**

STAAR L is a linguistically accommodated version of the general STAAR assessments for ELLs who meet participation requirements for a significant degree of linguistic accommodations. STAAR L is administered online with accommodations embedded in the online system, such as clarification of unfamiliar terms in English and text-to-speech functionality. More information is available on the STAAR L Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/staar/>.

### **54. What tests are available for STAAR L?**

ELLs who meet participation requirements can take STAAR L in mathematics at grades 3–8, science at grades 5 and 8, and social studies at grade 8. STAAR L is also available for Algebra I, biology, and U.S. history. STAAR L is not offered for reading, writing, English I, or English II assessments.

### **55. What is the passing standard for STAAR L?**

The passing standard for STAAR L assessments is the same as the passing standard for the general STAAR assessments—Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance. A student who scores within Level II or Level III has passed the STAAR L test, but a student who scores within Level I has not passed. More specific information about the passing standards is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

### **56. Is there a progress measure for ELLs?**

Yes. The Texas English Language Learner Progress Measure provides information about whether a student has made academic improvement or progress toward passing STAAR. This progress measure is based on the student's first TELPAS composite score and the amount of time he or she has attended school in the United States. For more information about the ELL progress measure, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the STAAR Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>.

### **57. Are ELLs who are enrolled in an English I or English II for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL I or ESOL II) course required to take the STAAR English I or English II assessments?**

Yes. ELLs enrolled in ESOL I or ESOL II are required to take the corresponding STAAR English I or English II assessment. However, in accordance with TAC §101.1007, eligible ELLs only need to meet the passing standard on English II to fulfill their STAAR graduation requirements in English.

### **58. What is the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)?**

TELPAS assesses the progress that ELLs in kindergarten through grade 12 make in acquiring the English language in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS measures English language acquisition in alignment with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) that are part of the TEKS, the state-mandated curriculum. Title III, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires states to conduct annual statewide English

language proficient assessments. More specific information is available on the TELPAS Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>.

**59. What tests are available for TELPAS?**

TELPAS includes holistically rated observational assessments of listening, speaking, reading, and writing for kindergarten and grade 1. For grades 2 through 12, TELPAS also includes multiple-choice online reading tests, holistically rated student writing collections, and holistically rated observational assessments of listening and speaking.

**60. How is student performance described for TELPAS?**

TELPAS reports student performance in terms of four English language proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. For more information about the TELPAS performance standards, including a separate questions and answers document, visit the TELPAS Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>.

## **Assessments for Students with Disabilities**

**61. What testing options are available for students with disabilities?**

Most students with disabilities will take STAAR with or without allowable accommodations. Some students who are served under Section 504 and identified with dyslexia or related disorders as defined in TEC §38.003 may meet the eligibility requirements for STAAR A. Some students receiving special education services who need more significant accommodations may also meet the eligibility requirements for STAAR A. Students receiving special education services with significant cognitive disabilities who access the grade-level TEKS through prerequisite skills may meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. Education decisions for students who receive special education services are made by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, including which assessment is most appropriate for the student. More information is available on the Assessments for Students with Disabilities webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/special-ed/>.

**62. What is STAAR A?**

STAAR A is an online accommodated version of STAAR. This assessment provides embedded supports and accommodations that are designed to help students with disabilities access the content being assessed. These embedded supports and accommodations include visual aids, graphic organizers, clarifications of terms that are not related to the content being assessed, and text-to-speech functionality. STAAR A is available beginning in spring 2015 for students that meet eligibility requirements. More specific information is available on the STAAR A Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/STAARA/>.

**63. What tests are available for STAAR A?**

STAAR A is available in the same grades/subjects and courses as the general STAAR assessments.

- Grades 3–8 mathematics
- Grades 3–8 reading
- Grades 4 and 7 writing
- Grades 5 and 8 science
- Grade 8 social studies
- Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history

**64. What is the passing standard for STAAR A?**

The passing standard for STAAR A assessments is the same as the passing standard for the general STAAR assessments—Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance. A student who scores within Level II or Level III has passed the STAAR A test, but a student who scores within Level I has not passed. More specific information about the passing standards is available on the STAAR Performance Standards webpage at

<http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/performance-standards/>.

**65. Can an ARD committee decide that retesting is not required after a student has taken the first administration of an assessment?**

Yes. The ARD committee can decide that a student does not need to take a retest for any state assessment, including a general STAAR assessment.

**66. What is STAAR Alternate 2?**

STAAR Alternate 2 is an assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards and is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving special education services. STAAR Alternate 2 is a standardized item-based assessment administered to students in a one-on-one setting. Participating students will respond to questions provided in a test booklet, and answers will be submitted by the test administrator in an online form. STAAR Alternate 2 is available beginning in spring 2015 for students that meet eligibility requirements.

STAAR Alternate 2 has been developed to meet federal requirements of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ESEA requires that all students be assessed in specific grades and subjects throughout their academic career, whereas IDEA requires that students with disabilities have access to the same standards as their non-disabled peers and be included in statewide assessments. More specific information is available on the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage at

<http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt/>.

**67. What tests are available for STAAR Alternate 2?**

STAAR Alternate 2 is available in the same grades/subjects and courses as the general STAAR assessments.

- Grades 3–8 mathematics
- Grades 3–8 reading
- Grades 4 and 7 writing
- Grades 5 and 8 science
- Grade 8 social studies
- Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history

**68. How is student performance described on STAAR Alternate 2?**

STAAR Alternate 2 will report student performance in terms of three proficiency levels similar to the general STAAR program. Performance standards on STAAR Alternate 2 will be established in spring 2015 after the first administration of the assessment. Information about the performance standards will be posted to the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage as soon as it is available.