

# Chapter 1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas

## Timeline

### Assessment Provisions in State Law

### Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

## Timeline

### —1979

The Texas Assessment Program began in 1979 when the 66<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature enacted a law requiring basic skills competencies in mathematics, reading, and writing for grades 3, 5, and 9.

### —1980

As required by statute, Texas assessed minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing with the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) assessments.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) implemented the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) examinations. TEAMS was the first state assessment that students in Texas were required to pass to be eligible to receive a high school diploma.

### —1990

The implementation of another criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), shifted the focus of assessment from minimum skills to academic skills. The TAAS mathematics, reading, and writing assessments were administered in the fall to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.



—1993

Administration of the TAAS assessments was shifted to the spring, and the grades and subjects assessed were reconfigured.

Until 2002, TAAS was administered every spring to students in grades 3–8 and 10 in mathematics and reading; grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing; and grade 8 in science and social studies. Passing the exit-level tests in mathematics, reading, and writing at grade 10 became a requirement for high school graduation.

—1994

The State Board of Education (SBOE) approved a plan to develop Spanish-language versions of assessments for grades 3–6.

Algebra I and Biology end-of-course (EOC) assessments were administered to students who completed these courses.

—1995

As part of Senate Bill (SB) 1, enacted by the 74<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 1995, TEA was required to develop English II and U.S. History EOC assessments to first be administered by the 1998–1999 school year. In addition to the Algebra I and Biology EOC assessments that were administered beginning in 1994, the new English II and U.S. History EOC assessments could be used instead of TAAS to fulfill the assessment graduation requirements.

—1996

The Spanish-language TAAS mathematics and reading assessments were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 for grades 3 and 4 and









placed emphasis on postsecondary readiness by requiring that the performance standards for mathematics and reading assessments in grades 3–8 be linked from grade to grade to the college readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments. The required







## —2016

To meet the legislative requirements of HB 743, 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 2015, the length of each STAAR grades 3–8 assessment was reduced by five to eight questions by removing all embedded field-test items.

STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests were also redesigned for completion in one four-hour administration.

In 2016, the STAAR reading grades 3–5 assessments in English and Spanish were linked with the Lexile Framework and El Sistema Lexile, respectively. These are tools that can help teachers, parents, and students locate challenging reading materials. English Lexile measures typically range from 200L to 1600L; Spanish Lexile (El Sistema Lexile) measures typically range from 200L to 1400L.

TEA provided the STAAR L for the student group referred to as EBs in 2016. STAAR L was a linguistically accommodated English version of the STAAR grades 3–8 and EOC mathematics, science, and social studies assessments. STAAR L was an online testing program.

## —2017

In the 2016–2017 school year, to meet the legislative requirements of HB 743, 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 2015, the total length of each STAAR grades 3–8 assessment was reduced so that 85% of students in grades 3–5 could complete each test within 2 hours, and 85% of students in grades 6–8 could complete each test within 3 hours.

STAAR A and STAAR L were replaced by STAAR online with the accommodations referred to in 2017 as Content Supports and/or Language and Vocabulary Supports in 2017. The change was –8

## —2018

In the 2017–2018 school year, the new interim assessments were piloted for grades 3–8 mathematics and reading.

The STAAR Report Card was provided in Spanish, and the Texas Assessment website was enhanced to allow parents to log in directly to the Student Portal to view their child’s test results.

As required by HB 1164 from the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, TEA completed a pilot study to examine alternative methods of assessing writing. The pilot study included the collection and scoring of a range of student writing samples produced throughout the school year.

In 2018, TELPAS holistic ratings for the language domains of listening and speaking in grades 2–12 were replaced with standardized online item-based assessments.

In addition, the TELPAS reading assessment was redesigned based on a shortened blueprint.

TELPAS standard setting was conducted for listening, speaking and reading. The new standards were first implemented with the 2018 spring administration.

To meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), TEA completed a cognitive lab and pilot study for TELPAS Alternate, an assessment for



—2020

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Greg Abbott used his statutory authority under Texas Government Code, [§418.016](#), to suspend annual academic assessment requirements for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year. Therefore, the STAAR and STAAR Alternate 2 assessments were not administered in spring and summer 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the administrations of TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate had already begun, completion of these assessments was optional for districts. TEA received approval from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to waive statewide assessment and accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the ESSA, 2015 (ESEA) 100 c.0.Tw 6.543 0 Td ( )Tj -0.Aat and S



## Assessment Provisions in State Law

### Texas Education Code

State law pertaining to the statewide student assessment program is found in [TEC Chapter 39, Subchapter B](#). Assessment provisions relating to grade promotion requirements are located in [TEC §28.0211](#).

In May 2007, the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [SB 1031](#), requiring changes to the assessment program. These changes included the implementation of an EOC assessment program, changes to the assessment administration window, limitations on the frequency of stand-alone field testing, provisions for accelerated instruction based on assessment results, and a revised release schedule for test questions and answer keys for most Texas assessments.

In June 2009, the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [HB 3](#), which made further changes to the assessment program. These included requiring TEA to develop assessments in a manner that allows for the measurement of performance across grades culminating in postsecondary readiness performance standards in Algebra II and English III. These performance standards set by the Commissioner of Education are part of the STAAR program, which encompasses the EOC assessments mandated by SB 1031 and the new grades 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3.

Changes resulting from HB 3 that took effect during the 2008–2009 school year included eliminating the requirement that assessments administered for the purpose of retesting were subject to mandatory release; specifying that TEA was no longer required to develop assessment study guides; eliminating exit-level testing under the TAAS program; and requiring the Commissioner of Education, rather than SBOE, to determine performance levels for assessments.

In 2011, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature passed [HB 2135](#), which stated that students enrolled in and taking the assessment for an above-grade-level course were not required to take the grade-level assessment. The bill also addressed the use of STAAR EOC performance results of students below grade 9 who take a STAAR EOC assessment, including how those results must be included in accountability performance indicators. HB 2135 also amended the SSI so that a student was not required to take the corresponding SSI assessment in grades 5 and 8 if the student was enrolled in either

a course in the subject for which the student received high school academic credit and was administered a STAAR EOC assessment; or

a course in the subject intended for students above the student's enrolled grade and was administered the corresponding assessment instrument.

HB 2135 also prohibited a student in an SSI grade from being denied promotion on the basis of performance on an assessment if the student was taking an above-grade-level assessment instead of the grade-level assessment.

In June 2013, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [HB 5](#), which reduced the number of STAAR EOC assessments required for graduation from 15 to 5: Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. The administration of Algebra II and English III was delayed until 2015–2016 and became optional based on the decision of each district. In addition, the separate reading and writing assessments for English I and English II were required to be combined into a single assessment for each course with a single reported score. HB 5 removed the requirement to provide a cumulative and minimum score and to include the STAAR EOC assessment results as 15 percent of a course grade. In addition, HB 5 required a conversion table to reflect STAAR EOC scale scores on a 100-point scale.

HB 5 also impacted the STAAR Alternate assessments. The legislation stated that, beginning in 2014–2015, teachers may not be required to prepare tasks or materials for alternate assessments. In order to meet this requirement, the STAAR Alternate assessments were redesigned. STAAR Alternate 2 was administered for the first time in spring 2015.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, 2013, enacted [SB 906](#), which also impacted the STAAR Alternate assessments. SB 906 stated that the adopted performance standard may not “[indicate] that a student’s performance on the alternate assessment does not meet standards if the lowest level of the assessment accurately represents the student’s developmental level.” To meet this requirement, TEA maintained the STAAR Alternate adjusted performance standard in 2013–2014 rather than applying the final recommended standard.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, 2013, established the new Foundation High School Program as the default graduation program for all students entering high school beginning in 2014–2015.

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed [SB 149](#), which added TEC §28.0258 to revise the assessment graduation requirements. A student who has not met the EOC assessment graduation requirements for no more than two courses may receive a Texas high school diploma if the student qualified to graduate by means of an individual graduation committee (IGC). The assessment provisions of SB 149 were effective beginning with the 2014–2015 school year.

[HB 743](#), passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in 2015, required that the STAAR assessments be designed so that 85 percent of students taking an assessment in grades 3–5 can complete a test in two hours and 85 percent of students taking a test in grades 6–8 can complete an assessment in three hours.

In response to HB 743, for the spring 2016 administration TEA reduced the overall length of every STAAR assessment in grades 3–8 by five to eight questions. Additionally, TEA redesigned the two-day grades 4 and 7 writing tests into single-day tests that can be completed in one four-hour administration. TEA also collected time-to-administer data during the spring 2016 administration to determine which grades 3–8 assessments were in compliance with the timing requirements of HB

administration, TEA redesigned the grades 3–8 assessments by reducing the total number of questions and the number of field-test questions on most assessments to meet HB 743’s timing requirements. Redesigned assessments were administered beginning in spring 2017.

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed [HB 2349](#), which requires a school district or charter school to report to TEA whether a student assessed with a STAAR assessment transferred into a Texas school or district from out of state during the current school year. HB 2349 also revised the state’s assessment requirements for students to be eligible to receive a Texas diploma. Effective with the 2015–2016 school year, a student who earned high school credit for a course for which there is an EOC assessment prior to enrolling in a Texas public school, and for which a Texas public school district accepted the credit, is not required to take that EOC assessment to receive a Texas diploma. Prior to HB 2349, a student on the



questions included on the EOC assessment must align with the TEKS for United States History Studies Since 1877. HB 1244 applies to students beginning those entering grade 9 during the 2019–2020 school year.

[HB 4545](#) passed in the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session and became effective as of June 2021. The statute establishes new requirements for accelerated instruction for students who do not pass the STAAR. The legislation includes:

Elimination of grade retention and retesting requirements in grades 5 and 8.

For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grade 3, 5, or 8 in mathematics or reading, a new LEA requirement to establish an accelerated learning committee to develop an individualized education program for the student and monitor progress.

For any student who does not pass the STAAR test in grades 3– 8 or STAAR EOC assessments, clarification of prior supplemental accelerated instruction requirements, specifying that it must include either being assigned a classroom teacher who is a certified master, exemplary, or recognized teacher, i n

In 2017, SBOE adopted new English and Spanish reading language arts TEKS to be implemented in classrooms beginning with the 2019–2020 school year for grades K–8 and beginning with the 2020–2021 school year for high school.

In 2017, SBOE adopted streamlined science TEKS for grades K–8 science and four high school science courses. The streamlined TEKS were implemented in classrooms beginning with the 2018–2019 school year.

In 2018, SBOE adopted streamlined social studies TEKS for grades K–8 social studies and five high school social studies courses. The streamlined TEKS for middle school and high school were implemented in classrooms beginning with the 2019–2020 school year. Alignment with these TEKS will be reflected in the 2019–2020 STAAR.6 (l)2.62 Tc 0 (e ))(as) 2052a/6.01002.717 0 Td [(T)-2.7