

Frequently Asked Questions

STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements



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5. Are local educational agencies (LEAs) penalized if they have more than one percent of their students participate in STAAR Alternate 2?

No. The one percent limitation is imposed on each state not each LEA. As part of the state's commitment that all students receive access to enrolled grade level academic curriculum standards and that there are high expectations for all students, the state is responsible for ensuring LEAs understand that an alternate assessment exists for students who meet the criteria as students with the most significant cognitive disability and who are taught alternate academic curriculum standards aligned with their enrolled grade level standards. Just as an ARD committee uses the student's data to drive the development and implementation of all other components of the student's individualized education program (IEP), the ARD committee reviews student's data to determine the most appropriate assessment within the context of the definitions and criteria set by the state. When an LEA has more than one percent of its student population participating in STAAR Alternate 2, federal requirements mandate the collection of information from the LEA assuring that testing decisions were made in accordance with the laws and the state's criteria as well as justification statements as to why it was necessary for the LEA to exceed one percent.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

6. How does an ARD committee determine if a student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2?

ARD committees should use a variety of data sources as they walk through the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. Key sources of data include the student's full and initial individual evaluation (IE) or reevaluation, present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), annual academic and functional goals and progress toward those goals. Other data may include current parent and teacher observations and information. The updated participation requirements allow the ARD committee to analyze the student's data to make the appropriate choice at each step of the form.

Additionally, the ARD committee should consider the chronological age of the student and the generalized expectations of that age group when making determinations regarding age appropriateness.

7. Why do students who are identified with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) or only a Speech Impairment (SI) no longer meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2?

The previous participation requirements indicated that students with only a high incidence disability, such as an SLD or SI, did not meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. As stakeholders reviewed the participation requirements, it became evident that these disabilities on their own do not meet the definition of the most significant cognitive disabilities based on the descriptions of these terms in federal and state law. To be identified with an SLD, a student's learning problems are not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, an intellectual disability, a emotional disturbance, or an environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. In addition, SI is a communication disorder that adversely affects a child's educational performance. These disabilities in isolation do not align with the state's definition of the most significant cognitive disabilities and the criteria for participation in STAAR Alternate 2.

Similarly, an ARD committee should not determine assessment participation based solely on other disability categories (e.g., autism) and automatically assume the student should or should not be assessed with STAAR Alternate 2.

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8. Based on the phrases “ongoing adult assistance” and “need for ongoing, individualized, specialized supports” does a student who demonstrates some level of independence in functional tasks meet the participation requirements?

It depends. The ARD committee must consider the adult [(408e)

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ARD COMMITTEE ACTIONS

12. If an ARD committee determined STAAR Alternate 2 participation for the 2023-2024 school year prior to the updated participation requirements, does the student's eligibility have to be reviewed?

Yes. The ARD committee must review and determine student participation in state assessments each school year. If the ARD committee has already reviewed and determined assessment participation for the 2023-2024 school year using the previous STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements, staff should review all eligible students to determine if any STAAR Alternate 2 decisions need to be re-evaluated based on the updated participation requirements.

For those students whose participation needs to be re-evaluated based on the updated requirements, assessment participation decisions may be made through an amendment by agreement in accordance with 34 CFR 300.324(a)(4)(i) or a full ARD committee meeting. Although determination through the amendment process is preferred, it is not required. (96.6-22.43(h)(2)(3)(4) (1)560-19-41 (1)223.3(25) 8225-3

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IMPACT OF CHANGES

16. Can a student who no longer meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 be "grandfathered" so that the student may continue to take STAAR Alternate 2?

No. The ARD committee must commit to the student's participation in STAAR Alternate 2 for the current school year and the following school year.

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21. Are there any implications on graduation options for a student who previously participated in STAAR Alternate 2 but no longer meets the participation requirements?

No. In accordance with [19 TAC §89.1070](#) an ARD committee may determine that satisfactory performance on a required EOC assessment is not necessary for graduation.

22. Do students who no longer meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 have to take STAAR EOC assessments for courses they have taken in the past?

No. Students are responsible for complying with state testing requirements based on their ARD committee's decisions for that particular school year. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, students who no longer meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 will not take STAAR EOC assessments for any courses they are enrolled in. However, students may have corresponding EOC assessments. As indicated in [19 TAC §89.1070](#), a student's ARD committee may continue to determine that satisfactory performance on a required EOC assessment is not necessary for graduation.

For example, during the 2022-2023 school year a student receiving special education services was enrolled in English I and met the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. The student complied with his state testing requirements by taking the STAAR Alternate 2 English I EOC assessment. Now, during the 2023-2024 school year, the student is enrolled in English II and no longer meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2. The student must take the STAAR English II EOC assessment to comply with state testing requirements. An ARD committee may determine that the student does not need to perform satisfactorily on the assessment to meet graduation requirements.

23. What certification does a teacher need to ensure