Chapter 5 STAAR Alternate 2

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Overview

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the testing window for State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2 was extended to allow a local education agency (LEA) to complete testing. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) created the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Guidance webpage

assessments. Each “Yes” answer must be justified by evidence that the student meets the criterion.

1. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability? A significant cognitive disability is determined by the ARD committee and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team. The significant cognitive disability must follow the Texas definition of a significant cognitive disability. A student with a significant cognitive disability has limited potential to reach grade-level expectations, and evidence must be documented in the Participation Requirement information as supported by the student's most recent fully independent evaluation (FIE).
2. Does the student require specialized, extensive supports to access the grade- level curriculum and environment? Federal regulations mandate that all students have access to, and are assessed on, grade-level curriculum. To access the state-mandated grade-level or course curriculum, the TEKS, a student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized academic instruction as well as support throughout the day in independent living skills such as expressing his or her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and taking care of personal needs. Specialized supports are not temporary and are required across all environments that the student accesses.
3. Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in all instructional settings? The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques that are more intense than their other peers with disabilities. A student with a significant cognitive disability not only accesses instruction through non-traditional methods but also classroom assessments.
4. Does the student access and participate in the grade- level TEKS through prerequisite skills? Access to the grade- level curriculum is mandated by the federal government. A student with a significant cognitive disability requires access to the TEKS through prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum. These prerequisite skills are listed in the STAAR Alternate 2 TEKS Curriculum Framework Documents. Students eligible for STAAR Alternate 2 may be performing between 3–9 grade levels below their peers.
5. Is the STAAR Alternate 2 assessment determination based on the student’s significant cognitive disability and NOT on any other factors? The decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is NOT based on a student’s racial or economic background, English learner (EL) status, excessive or extended absences, location of service delivery, anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional distress, or any other such factors.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

With the passage of the 2009, 81st Texas Legislature, House Bill (HB) 3

based approach to the assessment was implemented for the STAAR Alternate 2. The issues of validity, reliability, fairness, accessibility, and consistency in score interpretations were carefully considered. In addition, the principles of universal design were incorporated in the early stages of test development to develop accessible, non-biased items. Consideration was also given to students' individual response modes, which allow students to show what they know during the assessment in a way that is most consistent during routine

Training

Resources were provided by TEA, outlining administration procedures, sample items, and online activities prior to the testing window. It was recommended that all personnel who planned to administer STAAR Alternate 2 review thes

3. Observe and score student performance.
4. Enter scoring information into the Texas Assessment Management System so that each student's assessed performance is recorded.

In rare cases, a student with a severe medical or cognitive impairment may not be able to complete the assessment. For these exceptions, ARD committees determined prior to the administration whether a student's assessment should be coded as a Medical Exception or as a No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR). For both exceptions, the ARD committee makes the determination after reviewing medical and educational records. The decision is documented in the student's IEP, along with evidence to support the determination. A decision not to assess a student is rare. Descriptions of the two categories are provided below. The STAAR Alternate 2 and TELPAS Alternate Med

Allowable Accommodations

- **Color or highlight images or text**
- **Place color overlays on images or text**
- **Pair images or text with photographs, picture representations, or real objects of the same content**
- **Attach textured materials to images or text**
- **Demonstrate concepts or relationships in images or text**
- **Raise or darken the outline in images or text**
- **Enlarge images or text**
- **Add braille**

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the ability to determine relationships, integrate multiple pieces of information, extend details, identify concepts, and match concepts that are similar. With continued support, students in this category have a reasonable likelihood of showing progress in the next grade or course.

Level III: Accomplished Academic Performance

Performance in this category indicates that students are well prepared for the next grade or course with instructional supports for accessing the curriculum through prerequisite skills. Students demonstrate a strong understanding of the knowledge and skills that are linked to content measured at this grade or course. Students exhibit the ability to use higher-level thinking and more complex skills, which includes making inferences, comparisons, and solving multi-step problems. With support, students in this category have a high likelihood of showing progress in the next grade or course through prerequisite skills.

Standard -Setting Process for STAAR Alternate 2

Standards were set for STAAR Alternate 2 in spring 2015. Standard setting for STAAR Alternate 2 involved a process of combining considerations regarding policy, the TEKS content standards, educator knowledge about what students should know and be able to do, and information about how student performance on state assessments aligns with student performance on other assessments. TEA used an evidence-based standard-setting approach (O'Malley, Keng, & Miles, 2012) for the STAAR Alternate 2 program. Using this approach, TEA defined and implemented a nine-step process to establish performance standards for all the STAAR Alternate 2 grades 3–8 and EOC assessments.

Table 5.2 provides high-level descriptions and timelines for the steps in the STAAR Alternate 2 standard-setting process. This nine-step process is modeled after the nine-step STAAR standard-setting process, however some steps happened in a different chronological order than STAAR based on the administration timing and availability of data.

Standard -Setting Committees

TEA selected K–12 educators who have had experience with the population of students for whom STAAR Alternate 2 is appropriate and have had content knowledge and classroom experience to serve as standard-setting committee members. The goal of each standard-setting committee was to recommend two cut scores that would define the three performance levels for each of the STAAR Alternate 2 assessments.

In April 2015, educator committees were convened to recommend performance standards for all STAAR Alternate 2 assessments. Committees reviewed STAAR Alternate 2 test booklets, policy definitions, and PLDs. The panelists also received training in the evidence-based standard-setting process that incorporated aspects of the extended Angoff method, where panelists make judgments about the score needed on each item to demonstrate proficiency (Angoff, 1971; Hambleton & Plake, 1995).

Committee members were provided reasonable ranges within which performance standards should be set. The ranges were determined using a content review of items,

Table 5.3. STAAR Alternate 2 Performance Standards

Subject Area	Grade/Course	Level II: Satisfactory	Level III:

HORIZONTAL REPORTING SCALES

Table 5.4. Horizontal Scaling Constants for STAAR Alternate 2

Subject Area	Grade/Course	A	B
Mathematics	Grade 3	43.9599	297.2305
	Grade 4	42.3406	297.9677
	Grade 5	42.9221	293.4758
	Grade 6	47.3082	293.8972
	Grade 7	45.0653	292.6994
	Grade 8	45.9897	283.5357
	Algebra I	46.1042	287.8285
Reading/English Language Arts	Grade 3	43.5388	283.9777
	Grade 4	45.6246	277.9633
	Grade 5	49.4951	276.0444
	Grade 6	45.0369	277.0312
	Grade 7	45.2817	278.5818
	Grade 8	42.5894	277.6406
	English I	46.1127	288.1951
	English II	46.9087	292.0724
Writing	Grade 4	49.1207	286.3444
	Grade 7	45.6246	276.9140
Science	Grade 5	43.8943	291.6601
	Grade 8	38.5892	298.4950
	Biology	38.2614	293.1129
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Pre-Equating

The pre-equating process takes place prior to test administration. It links a newly developed test form onto the scale of the item bank using a set of items that appeared previously on one or more test forms. This permits the difficulty level of the newly developed form to be closely determined even prior to its administration. Thus, the anticipated raw scores that correspond to scale scores at performance standards can be identified. Pre-equating is conducted for all STAAR Alternate 2 tests as part of the test construction process. The pre-equating model is also used in STAAR Alternate 2 when a test form is re-used in a subsequent administration.

Post

content defined by the TEKS. The STAAR Alternate 2 test-development process plays an integral role in providing validity evidence based on test content for the assessment. The test development process and the evidence collected related to test content support the use of STAAR Alternate 2 scores in making inferences about students' knowledge and understanding of the TEKS.

Relationship to the Statewide Curriculum

At the inception of the STAAR Alternate 2 assessments, a steering committee was convened to review and provide feedback on the alignment of STAAR Alternate 2 assessment tasks to the TEKS. Educator reviews and focus group meetings continue to be a part of ongoing content development with revisions to the STAAR Alternate 2. Both focus groups and educator review meetings have occurred to review and provide feedback on alignment of items and content view rssewoll astrevieew p6 (gr)-6 (o)109 (ov)-2 (i)2.6 (de)]TJ t gr.

personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, or disability?" Committee members affirmed that STAAR Alternate 2 items are free from bias.

Test Developer Input

Item writers and reviewers, who include content experts and special education experts, follow test-development guidelines and item specifications that explain how the content of the assessed TEKS should be measured. At each stage of development, writers and reviewers verify the alignment of the test items with the assessed reporting categories.

Evidence Based on Response Processes

Response processes refer to the cognitive behaviors that are required to respond to a test item. Texas collects evidence to show that the way students respond to items on the STAAR Alternate 2 assessments reflects accurate measurement of the construct.

Items

Texas gathers theoretical and empirical evidence that support the expectation that the way students respond to test items does not add construct-irrelevant variance. Every year, during item reviews, educators evaluate whether the content for a given item is being appropriately assessed and whether students will be able to accurately demonstrate their knowledge of the construct given the items' planned format. When items are field tested, additional student response data is gathered. Data such as item difficulty, item-total correlations, and item fit are all evaluated. For additional information, see the Item Analyses section of chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes."

Scoring Process

The process used to score items can provide additional validity evidence based on response processes. This type of validity evidence is predicated on accurate scoring. Within the test administrator booklet, test administrators are provided exact scoring rules and scripted instructions for how to present every item to a student. Test administrators are provided resources to prepare for a STAAR Alteoeed ins.Link-2 (es)8.(l)2.6 (tA)-6.6 (")]T

performance achieved, and then 2) comparing the stages from year to year. Student progress is then categorized as ' L G 1 R W, 0 H W W ([F H H G H G.

Because STAAR Alternate 2 testing was canceled for spring 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, the STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure calculation in 2020–2021 differed slightly from previous years, measuring progress across two years, from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021. The progress measure indicator was also adjusted to give a fairer indication of student progress across a longer period of time. Compared with the historical progress measure indicator, this model includes more 0 H W values to account for students making two years of gains.

Steps for calculating a student's stage change and progress indicator for the STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure can be found in the "STAAR Alternate 2 Progress