

# Chapter 1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas

## Timeline

### Assessment Provisions in State Law

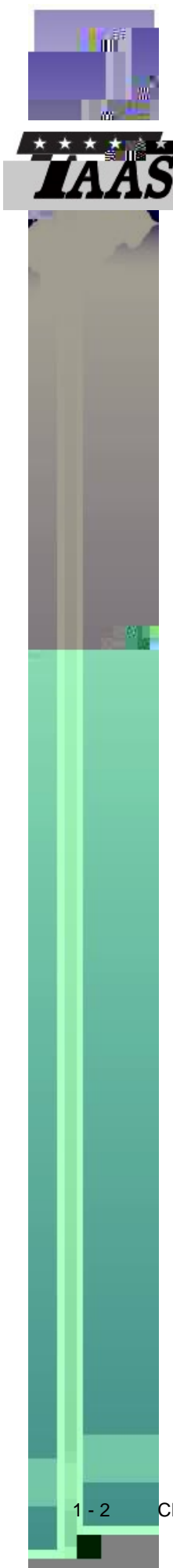
### Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

## Timeline

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) program was administered to Texas students for the first time in 2011–2012. However, Texas has a long history of student assessment dating back to 1979 when its first statewide testing program was implemented. Over the years, changes in legislation and policy have generated changes in the size and scope of the assessment program. This chapter provides an overview of these changes, starting with a timeline of key events, followed by a summary of recent changes in state law, and concluding with a review of changes in the state curriculum.

### —1979

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—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

The administration of 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 was 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 had completed those courses.

—1995

As part of Senate Bill (SB) 1, 74th Texas Legislature, 1995, TEA was required to develop English II and U.S. History EOC assessments to be first administered by the 1998–1999 school year. In addition to 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 to fulfill the assessment graduation requirements instead of TAAS.

—1996

The Spanish-language TAAS assessments for grades 3–6 were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 for grades 3 and 4 mathematics and reading, and in 1997 for grades 5 and 6 mathematics and reading.

—1998

Per SB 1, 74th Texas Legislature, 1995, English II and U.S. History EOC assessments were first administered to students who had completed those courses. Including Algebra I and Biology, these four

EOC assessments were administered as state-mandated assessments and as an option for meeting graduation requirements through 2002.

### —1999

With passage of SB 103, the 76th Texas Legislature, 1999, required the development of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in grades 3–10, and in grade 11 to replace TAAS as the assessment graduation exit-level requirement. The TAKS assessments were administered beginning in 2003.

SB 103 also required the development of a system to assess the reading proficiency and language acquisition of English learners (ELs). As a result, the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) system was developed.

### —2000

The RPTE system was first administered in 2000 to ELs in grades 3–12.

### —2001

The State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) was introduced and administered to eligible students receiving special education services in grades 3–8.

### —2002

Due to the replacement of TAAS with TAKS, as required by SB 103, 76th Texas Legislature, 1999, TAAS was administered for the last time in grades 3–8. Exit-level TAAS remained the graduation requirement for students who were in gra(n)10.5.007 T2 (vi 5 (-)Tj -0.012.672-5..707 0 Td [(wa)dd [(s)-2 [(8.)-62.6 (



The Student Success Initiative (SSI), enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, made satisfactory performance on the grade 3 reading assessment, the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments, and the grade 8 mathematics and reading assessments a promotion requirement for Texas students. The first cohort of students affected by this law was the grade 3 class of 2002–2003. Student performance on the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year. Grade 8 promotion requirements became effective in the 2007–2008 school year. In 2009, the Texas Legislature amended the SSI to remove the grade 3 promotion requirement.

—2004

In order to fulfill requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Texas Observation Protocol (TOP) was developed. The TOP assessment program provided training and guidelines so that holistic English language proficiency ratings could be assigned to students based on observations during regular instructional time. These holistic ratings were developed in the language domains of listening, speaking, and writing in grades K–12 and in reading in grades K–2. Together, TOP and the RPTE assessments for grades 3–12 formed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).

—2005

In response to NCLB regulations, TEA first reported assessment results using a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) administration process in order to include eligible recent immigrant ELs in the state’s mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 and 10.

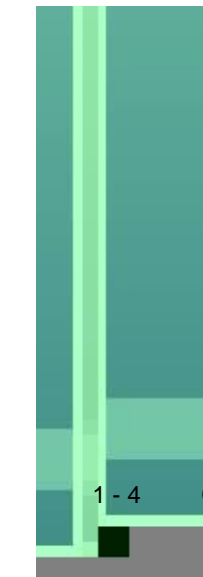
In order to align SDAA to the statewide TAKS testing program, TEA developed SDAA II and administered it for the first time in spring 2005. SDAA II, offered in mathematics, English language arts, reading, and writing, was available to students enrolled in grades 3–10 who received special education services and who were instructed in the state-mandated curriculum, but for whom TAKS was an inappropriate measure of their academic achievement and progress.

Student performance on the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments was included as an SSI requirement for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year.

In response to the Governor’s 2004 Algebra Incentive Program, the Algebra I EOC assessment was revised and was administered on a voluntary basis to students who completed Algebra I coursework.



**State-Developed  
Alternative  
Assessment II  
(SDAA II)**







## —2009

The TAKS–M assessment was administered for all grades and subjects.

Exit-level TAAS was administered for the final time.

A vertical scale was implemented for TAKS mathematics and reading assessments in grades 3–8, as required by the Texas Legislature.

With passage of House Bill (HB) 3, the 81st Texas Legislature, 2009, 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 vertical linking along with the phase-out of TAKS at the exit level necessitated the design of a new series of assessments to ultimately indicate college-readiness.

HB 3 also removed the SSI requirement for students in grade 3 to pass the TAKS reading assessment to be promoted to grade 4.

EOC assessments in Chemistry and U.S. History were first administered.

## —2010

EOC assessments in Physics and World Geography were first administered.

## —2011

New STAAR 3–8 field-test items were embedded in most TAKS operational test forms, with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing, which were stand-alone field tests.

EOC assessments in English I and Algebra II were administered for the first time. In addition, the other EOC assessments—Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, and U.S. History—were administered as operational assessments.

## —2012







## —2015

STAAR 3–8 mathematics assessments aligned to the revised TEKS were administered in spring 2015. A standard-setting committee was convened, and new performance standards were established.

The online assessment STAAR A was administered for the first time in spring 2015. This assessment provided embedded accommodations designed to help students who meet eligibility requirements access the content being assessed. STAAR A had the same performance standards as STAAR.

STAAR Alternate 2 was administered for the first time in spring 2015. Although the assessment has standardized administration materials, test administrators may apply appropriate accommodations to test items in order to help students access the content being assessed.

In 2015–2016, the Commissioner of Education decided to replace the performance standards phase-in approach with a standard progression approach from 2015–2016 through 2021–2022, the year final standards are scheduled to be in place.

## —2016

To meet the legislative requirements of HB 743, 84th 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 ELLs 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, 84th 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 Support in 2017. The change was made to offer a wider range of accommodations and accessibility features according to the needs of each student.

In 2017, the STAAR reading grades 6–8 assessments were linked with the Lexile Framework.

The new STAAR Report Card was launched to offer Texas parents greater individualized student information. This information includes how a student performed on a specific STAAR assessment, how a student progressed from the previous school year, and the appropriate level of reading difficulty for a student.

In spring 2017, STAAR performance standards were frozen and relabeled. The STAAR performance labels were changed to Masters Grade Level; Meets Grade Level; Approaches Grade Level; and Did Not Meet Grade Level.

TAKS was administered for the final time.

## —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 directly log in to the Student Portal to view their child's test results.

As required by HB 1164 from the 84th Texas Legislature, TEA completed a pilot study in 2018 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 ELs in grades 2–12 with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in general English language proficiency assessments, even with allowable accommodations.

## —2019

In the 2018–2019 school year, STAAR signed administration and braille administration were administered online for the first time in American Sign Language (ASL) and refreshable braille. STAAR grades 3–5 Spanish assessments were offered online for the first time.

Two operational interim assessment opportunities were offered for teacher and student use in grades 3–8 mathematics and reading, grades 3–5 Spanish mathematics and reading, Algebra I, English I, and English II.

The TELPAS Alternate assessment for students in grades 2–12 was administered operationally for the first time in 2019. The standard-setting was completed, and the results were approved by the Commissioner of Education.

In 2019, a STAAR English Learner Performance Measure was calculated for all eligible students on all STAAR grades 3–8 and EOC assessments, except for Algebra II and English III.

## —2020

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. As a result, 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, for the 2019–2020 school year.

The agency helped coordinate the flow of COVID-19 related information from the state to ( A)1.9 (l) Tc (ei)2.6l.9 6 ( f) 2.163 s1(s)-2 (5)-6. 0 Tc 0 Tw 31.7.6.6 ( f)4.3 (r)-6 (o)





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**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 80th Texas Legislature enacted **SB 1031**, requiring changes to the assessment program. These changes included the implementation of an EOC assessment program, changes to the administration window for the assessments, 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 81st 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 in apartments











