

DATE:	March 18, 2020
SUBJECT:	Cancellation of STAAR Testing for the Remainder of the School Year
CATEGORY:	Student Assessment
NEXT STEPS:	Share with Appropriate Staff

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) continues to work with the Office of the Governor, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to coordinate and plan the state's response to COVID-19.

Given the impact of COVID-19, Governor Greg Abbott is using his statutory authority as the governor of Texas under Texas Government Code, §418.016 to suspend annual academic assessment requirements for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year. TEA will work with the United States Department of Education to request waivers from federal testing and accountability requirements for the 2019–2020 school year.

The Texas Assessment Program serves as an invaluable tool to accurately and reliably diagnose how well students have learned their grade-level and course content. Parents use this information to support the academic growth of their children, and educators use the assessment data to adjust how they approach teaching to maximize student learning. While the typical state assessment data will not be available this year due to the cancellation of testing, TEA will continue to support schools by making other tools available to diagnose student learning. More information will be provided as these tools become available.

STAAR Grades 3–8 Assessments

All State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) administrations scheduled for April, May, and June 2020 are cancelled. Student Success Initiative promotion/retention requirements found in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §28.0211 are waived for the 2019–2020 school year. Districts will have local discretion on whether students in grades 5 and 8 should advance to the next grade, just like students in all other grades. In alignment with TEC, §28.021, criteria that should be considered include the following:

- The recommendation of the student's teacher,
- The student's grade in each subject or course, and
- Any other necessary academic information, as determined by the district.

STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

Most students have already completed courses that have corresponding EOC assessments before their senior year. Normally, a student who has not passed up to two of his or her required STAAR EOC assessments may graduate through the individual graduation committee (IGC) process. For students who are still working to meet assessment graduation requirements as seniors in the 2019–2020 school year, required performance on academic assessments to

graduate under TEC, §28.025(c) and §39.025(a) are being waived for spring 2020. Effectively, this means that current seniors may graduate through the IGC process regardless of the number of EOC assessments they still need to pass.

Districts will need to determine if a student has met all other graduation requirements under TEC, §28.025(c), including successfully completing curriculum requirements or successfully completing an individualized education program.

In waiving the required performance on academic assessments under TEC, §28.025(c) and §39.025(a) for spring 2020, the following applies:

- If a student is on schedule to complete instruction in the entire curriculum in spring 2020 for a course that has a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment, the student is not required to pass that specific test to fulfill graduation requirements.
- If a student is on schedule to complete graduation requirements in spring 2020 but does not have the opportunity to retake a STAAR EOC assessment prior to graduation, the student is not required to pass that specific test to fulfill graduation requirements but will need to complete the IGC process.

For students graduating in future years but taking one of the five courses with a corresponding STAAR EOC assessment this year, those students will not be responsible for meeting that EOC assessment graduation requirement if they earn course credit this year.

STAAR Alternate 2

The STAAR Alternate 2 administration window required under TEC, §39.023(b) and scheduled for March 30 through April 21, 2020 is cancelled. For all students receiving special education services, the admission, review, and dismissal committee will continue to make educational decisions, including decisions related to required performance on academic assessments.

TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and TELPAS Alternate administration windows are currently open and are being extended to remain open through May 29, 2020, for a district to complete optionally if it chooses. Scoring data will be provided for each TELPAS domain a student completes. TEA is looking at exit criteria for English learners to determine what adjustments may be made this year for this determination. These discussions are ongoing, and more information will be provided as it develops.

STAAR Interim Assessments

Both testing windows for the [STAAR Interim Assessments](#) are currently open and will continue to be open through May 29, 2020, for districts to use as a resource to monitor student progress. As a reminder, the interim assessments are available at no cost to districts and charter schools, and they are not tied to accountability.

The decisions outlined in this communication are based on the state's commitment to our districts and students, with the priority of ensuring that those impacted by this virus can make instructional decisions that are in the best interest of students.

Thank you for the work you do for the school children of Texas.