Suggested training for region, district, and campus professionals
These slides have been prepared and approved by the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency.

If any slide is amended or revised for use in local or regional trainings, please remove this slide as well as the TEA footer at the bottom of each slide.
It is the intent of TEA’s Student Assessment Division that all resources created to clarify testing and accommodation policies be accessible to educators at the region, district, and campus levels, including classroom teachers.

This is a comprehensive training but does not take the place of reading the associated documents.

Relevant district and campus staff will need to read all of the policies and related resources once they are posted on the STAAR A webpage. These documents contain all the details.
Introduction to STAAR A
Eligibility Requirements
Test Development Process
Accessibility Features
Embedded Accommodations
Accommodation Guidelines
Classroom Accommodations and the Link to STAAR A
Special Situations
Test Results
Resources
Frequently Asked Questions
While the TEA website is being updated, information will be posted sporadically.

In the meantime, go to http://texasassessment.com/staara for information about STAAR A.

Once the new TEA website has been completed, you can access information about STAAR A on the STAAR A webpage.
- STAAR A is an accommodated online version of STAAR for students who meet eligibility requirements. STAAR A will be administered for the first time in spring 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>mathematics and reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>mathematics, reading, and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>mathematics, reading, and science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mathematics and reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>mathematics, reading, and writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>mathematics, reading, science, and social studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAAR A will be administered online and will include online tools, embedded accommodations to selections and test questions, and accessibility features.

*These tools are subject-specific and only appear in subject tests where they are relevant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Embedded Accommodations</th>
<th>Accessibility Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Eliminator</td>
<td>Pop-ups</td>
<td>Text-to-Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlighter</td>
<td>Rollovers</td>
<td>Zoom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eraser</td>
<td>Blank Graphic Organizers</td>
<td>Color and Contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pencil</td>
<td>Writing Checklists</td>
<td>Place Marker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notepad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dot Tool*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Tool*</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruler*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Calculator*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Materials*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAAR A will be the same as STAAR in the following ways:
- Same passing standards
- Same time limits
- Same assessed curriculum
- Same test blueprint
- Same progress measures

STAAR A will be different than STAAR in the following ways:
- No field test questions
- Online administration
- Embedded accommodations and accessibility features
STAAR, with or without allowable or approved accommodations*, should be the first consideration.

*Refer to the 2015 Accommodation Triangle
If a student cannot access STAAR with or without allowable accommodations, he or she must be receiving the following services in order to consider STAAR A:

- Students with identified disabilities who are receiving special education services
- Students identified with dyslexia or a related disorder (as defined in Texas Education Code §38.003) and are receiving Section 504 services

If a student falls into one of these categories and receives accommodations in instruction similar to those found in STAAR A, the STAAR A Eligibility Requirements should be reviewed. Additional eligibility criteria found in this document must be met in order for a student to take STAAR A.
Required documentation form

According to 19 TAC §101.27(b), school districts are required to follow the procedures specified in the applicable test administration materials. As a result, the ARD or Section 504 committee (in conjunction with the LPAC if the student is an ELL) must use this form to document eligibility for STAAR A.

A student may take STAAR in some subjects and STAAR A in other subjects, depending on eligibility.
Student Identification and Assurances

- The committee must complete the information about the student and the person completing the form and then read and agree to certain assurances prior to moving on to Step I.
  - STAAR does not best meet the student’s needs.
  - Classroom accommodations are documented.
  - Student meets eligibility criteria in Step I and Step II.
  - Assessment decision is documented.
Step I: Indicate Eligible Services

In this step, the services the student receives should be indicated. If a service cannot be indicated, the student is not eligible to participate in STAAR A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step I: Indicate Eligible Services</th>
<th>Indicate the service the student is receiving. If a student is not receiving either of these services, the student is not eligible to participate in STAAR A and must take one of the other state assessments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student has an identified disability and is receiving special education services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student is identified with dyslexia or a related disorder as defined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003, and is receiving Section 504 services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Step II: Review the Eligibility Criteria

The committee must circle the subject(s) for which STAAR A is being considered and check the accommodation(s) the student routinely receives in the classroom for that subject.

- If a particular subject is not applicable, circle **NA**.
- **Step II continued**
  - To be eligible to participate in STAAR A in a particular subject, **TWO OR MORE** accommodation must be checked in that subject.
  - If fewer than two accommodations are checked, the student is not eligible to participate in STAAR A in that subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics 3-8</th>
<th>Eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Eligible</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct student attention to specific information (e.g., parts of a graphic, parts of an answer choice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffold steps in a process (i.e., bullet each step, space out each step)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of generic and question-specific graphic organizers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of formula(s) to use with specific questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science 5/8</th>
<th>Biology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Eligible</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification or rewording of vocabulary, complex sentences, and concepts using definitions, similes, literal language, graphics, animation, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step III: Summarize Assessment Decision

The committee should indicate the STAAR A tests the student will take for the school year under consideration.

This form must be included in the student’s IEP or IAP to serve as the required documentation of the state academic achievement decision.

Additional testing accommodations may be allowed and must be documented in the student’s paperwork as well.

### Step III: Summarize Assessment Decision

The ARD or Section 504 committee (in conjunction with the LPAC if the student is an ELL) should indicate the STAAR A test(s) the student will take for the school year under consideration. This form must be included in the student’s IEP or IAP to serve as the required documentation of the state academic achievement decision. Additional testing accommodations may be allowed and must be documented in the student’s paperwork as well. Refer to the Accommodation Triangle on the TEA Student Assessment website for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate the STAAR A tests the student will take for the school year under consideration.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ Reading Grade ____  ❑ English II  ❑ Science Grade ____  ❑ U.S. History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ Writing Grade ____  ❑ Mathematics Grade 5 ❑ Biology  ❑ Social Studies Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ English I  ❑ Algebra I  ❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**September 2013:** STAAR A focus group (teachers, principals, district and region specialists, parents, advocacy groups)

- What are the most appropriate ways to provide access to the tested content for students with disabilities?
- How do classroom access methods apply to a standardized assessment?
- What are the practical constraints of administering an online assessment?

**December 2013:** First draft of STAAR A Accommodation Guidelines created

- Specify how to accommodate STAAR test questions while preserving the integrity of the knowledge and skill being assessed.
May 2014: Cognitive lab conducted with Texas students receiving special education services with the purpose of:

- Evaluating the usability and usefulness of accommodations provided on STAAR A.
- Determining whether the embedded accommodations provided the types of support students needed
- Determining how students used various tools

June 2014: STAAR A focus group

- Presented and discussed results from cognitive lab, accommodation guidelines, and eligibility requirements.
June 2014: STAAR A test development process started

- Selected STAAR test questions that had already undergone a rigorous 20-step test construction process and been determined to be aligned to the curriculum.

- Accommodation guidelines were applied to these STAAR test questions (and selections) in order to appropriately accommodate STAAR A in a standardized manner.

- Newly accommodated test questions were reviewed by special education and content specialists for accuracy and alignment.

- Began developing various STAAR A resources for teachers, parents, and students.
September 2014... exactly one year later

- Approval of STAAR A policy
- Training educators
- Continuation of test development process
Audio provided through a computer-generated read aloud functionality which highlights words as they are read

- Prereading text
- Revising selections
- Mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and revising test questions

Reads aloud individual words, lines of text, or entire pages at student choice.

- Pop-ups and rollovers are not read aloud. A test administrator will need to read these aloud if a student asks.
- A “do not read” icon has been placed on reading selections, editing selections, and editing test questions to indicate that these may NOT be read aloud by TTS or a test administrator. Pop-ups and rollovers associated with these pages may NOT be read aloud either.
- Enlarges or reduces the size of the screen
- When the screen is increased in size, the student can use the **Drag Screen** button to move and view any portion of the screen.
The student can select from six different presentation formats.

- Negative, Blue Background, Yellow Background, Purple Background, Green Overlay, Peach Overlay
- That format will apply to the screen for the entire test. The student may change the selection or turn it off at any time.

**Reset** changes the presentation back to the original white background with black text.
- Helps a student focus attention on specific lines of text.

- The student can move a yellow line up and down the screen.
- **Pop-ups**: Provide support for non-tested words and concepts
  - Definitions, synonyms, examples, formulas, plain language, pictures, animations, graphic organizers, etc.

- **Rollovers**: Reword or clarify larger portions of text or provide bulleted steps in a process

- **Exhibit Window**: Subject-specific graphic organizers and checklists that may be accessed if needed
Pop-ups

- Define or clarify construct-irrelevant words, phrases, and sentences using plain language, synonyms, definitions, examples, and consistent language.

- Provide a visual representation in the selection, question, answer choices, or in the writing prompt by adding graphics, photographs, or animations.

- Isolate specific information in a question that corresponds to each answer choice.

- Isolate specific text in a selection or information in a graphic or list that is referenced in the question or answer choices.
Pop-ups continued

- Apply an allowable supplemental aid (e.g., graphic organizer, place-value chart, t-chart, graphic of scientific concept, timeline, map) to specific questions or answer choices

- Include the formula from the grade-specific Reference Materials when the question specifies the measure or conversion to be performed

- Direct student attention to parts of the grade-specific Reference Materials

- Provide clarifying information for a graphic organizer, political cartoon, or map

- Provide scaffolded instructions for responding to short answer questions (English I & II)
**Rollovers**
- Reword complex questions, answer choices, or boxed text in a selection to condense text
- Bullet or separate steps in a process (e.g., multi-step problem, sequence of events)

**Exhibit Window**
- Commonly used blank graphic organizers
- Writing checklists for the writing prompts
Accommodations used on STAAR A offer new opportunities for students with disabilities to meaningfully access the required state assessment.

TEA accommodation policies and STAAR A Eligibility Requirements indicate that accommodations documented for use during a statewide assessment should
- be made on an individual basis,
- consider the needs of the student, and
- be routinely used during classroom instruction and testing.

Although students will not routinely use the computer-based STAAR A accommodations during classroom instruction, they may use variations of the accommodations.
Classroom Accommodation

- The teacher introduces a new book to a struggling reader prior to reading it aloud or independent reading. The topics discussed might include major concepts, difficult words, setting, characters, or prior knowledge of the subject.

Embedded STAAR A Accommodation

Tomato Harvest

In this poem the speaker, who is in the fourth grade, decides to grow tomatoes in a strip of clay usually used by children playing. Read the poem and find out how successful the speaker is with growing tomatoes.

STAAR A Eligibility Criteria

- Preview text before reading to activate prior knowledge, draw conclusions, and set a purpose for reading
Using a dictionary or thesaurus, the teacher points out the meaning or synonym of a word.

Clarification or rewording of vocabulary, complex sentences, and concepts using definitions, similes, literal language, graphics, animations, etc.

**STAAR A Eligibility Criteria**

**Embedded STAAR A Accommodation**

The mood of both selections is —

- **mood:** when the author makes the reader feel a certain way through words or details
  - A depressing
  - B bittersweet
  - C frightening
  - D carefree

- **bittersweet:** both happy and sad at the same time
- **carefree:** having no worries
### Classroom Accommodation

- The teacher provides visual aids to define vocabulary, identify people and places, or illustrates concepts.

### Embedded STAAR A Accommodation

Which of the following events in the water cycle is an example of solar energy being absorbed?

6. One girl named Becky rode a big brown thoroughbred mare in the race events. She always won the blue ribbons. Needless to say, she didn’t feel threatened when I competed. We didn’t feel threatened when I competed. She didn’t need to. I came in next.

7. The stinging memory of Becky’s smile haunted me for days. I was trying to beat her. For the whole next month I trained hard, and rode Cowboy five miles to the arena. I rode through the hot sun and then I walked Cowboy back to the barn. I would be so tired. I would be so tired. I would be so tired.

8. All of our horses were going to perform by the time the show came. I watched the horses. While I watched Becky and her horse dance the dance. I watched the course with excitement.

9. My turn finally came. As I nudged Cowboy forward he stumbled, and almost fell. Much to the delight of the other riders.
During classroom discussions, the teacher clarifies or rewords complex text or questions.

Clarification or rewording of vocabulary, complex sentences, and concepts using definitions, similes, literal language, graphics, animations, etc.
The teacher isolates specific information to focus the student on the core concept being taught.

Direct student attention to specific information (e.g., parts of the selection, parts of a graphic, parts of an answer choice)
Classroom Accommodation

- The teacher directs the student (e.g., highlight, bold, point to, flag the information) to the specific part(s) of the selection, diagram, map, or figure that is being discussed.

STAAR A Eligibility Criteria

- Direct student attention to specific information (e.g., parts of the selection, parts of a graphic, parts of an answer choice)

Embedded STAAR A Accommodation

Which line segment appears to be perpendicular to line segment PK?

- A  Line segment KS
- C  Line segment LM

In paragraph 6, what is the effect of the author’s use of figurative language?

Well, you could cut the silence with a knife.
The teacher asks guiding questions, prompting the student to go back to the text to justify his or her understanding of plot, conflict resolution, character development, etc.

Scaffold understanding of open-ended questions about texts (i.e., short answer English I and II questions)

What message do you think the speaker in “Sunday Morning Early” and the narrator of “I Wish I Was a Poet” are trying to convey? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from both selections.

1. Explain what message you think the speaker is communicating in the poem.
2. Explain what message you think the narrator is communicating in the story.
3. Find the place in the poem AND in the story that proves your answer is true.
4. In the box below, write your explanation and the text support you found.
The teacher reformat complex word problems by bulleting or spacing out each step required to solve the problem.

Scaffold steps in a process (i.e., bullet each step, space out each step)
**Classroom Accommodation**

- The teacher presents parts of a complex concept one at a time.

**Embedded STAAR A Accommodation**

A dog’s pituitary gland produces the hormone ACTH, which stimulates the adrenal glands to secrete cortisol. Cortisol helps regulate body weight, mineral balance, the structure of connective tissue, the production of white blood cells, and skin health. When cortisol levels are low, the pituitary gland secretes ACTH. When cortisol levels are high, the pituitary gland stops secreting ACTH.

Based on this information, which of the following would most likely be the cause of elevated levels of cortisol in a dog?

**STAAR A Eligibility Criteria**

- Scaffold steps in a process (i.e., bullet each step, space out each step)
The teacher provides the student with a specific supplemental aid (e.g., chart, table, graph, checklist, map, timeline) applicable to the question being posed, the assignment, or the task.

STAAR A Eligibility Criteria

- Use of generic and question-specific graphic organizers and checklists
The teacher provides the formula(s) that is needed to solve a problem.

Identification of formula(s) to use with specific questions

An adult human body contains about 10 pints of blood. How many fluid ounces is the equivalent of 10 pints?

Record your answer in the boxes below. Be sure to:

- 1 pint (pt) = 2 cups (c)
- 1 cup (c) = 8 fluid ounces (fl oz)
Because STAAR A contains embedded accommodations and accessibility features presented in an online format, replicating these features in a paper or braille version is not always possible.

- Technology-based accommodations enable most students to test online.

- When the use of an accommodation is not feasible or appropriate, or if the administration of an online test is inappropriate due to a student's particular disability, a special request may be made to TEA for approval to administer a paper test booklet. The paper administration request document can be found on the Coordinator Manual Resources web page.

- Braille versions of STAAR A will not be made available.
- STAAR A will only be offered in English.

- For students who are eligible for STAAR A but who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and cannot access the text-to-speech function, a signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud.
  - A student does not have to be eligible for an Oral Administration to receive a signed administration of STAAR A.
  - The test administrator should also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the document titled “General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing,” located on the Accommodation for Students With Disabilities webpage.
- STAAR A score reports will include the
  - individual performance level of students,
  - scale scores, and
  - number of questions answered correctly within each reporting category for each of the assessed grades and content areas.

- Grades 3-8
  - English and Spanish brochures, called *Understanding the Confidential Student Report*, explain STAAR A results to parents and are sent to districts with students’ test results and can be accessed online.

- EOC
  - The explanation of results is included in the student’s Confidential Student Report (CSR).

- Detailed information about STAAR A score reports will be provided in the TEA publication titled *Interpreting Assessment Reports*, which is updated annually and posted on the TEA Student Assessment Division website.
TEA recommends that teachers become familiar with STAAR A and help guide students through practice selections and test questions until they are comfortable with the STAAR A online testing interface and accommodations.

- Educator Guide for STAAR A and STAAR Alternate
- Demonstration video for teachers and test administrators
- Sample selections and test questions
- Student tutorials with practice selections and test questions
- Student tutorial administration directions
- STAAR A Accommodation Guidelines
- STAAR A Eligibility Requirements (English and Spanish)
- Introduction to STAAR A: A Guide for Parents
- A Parent’s Guide to State Assessments for Students with Disabilities
For the 2014-2015 school year, SSI retest and promotion requirements apply only to students in grades 5 and 8 taking STAAR, STAAR Spanish, and STAAR A **READING**.

- Do **not** apply to mathematics at grades 5 or 8 in the 2014-2015 school year.

Information about retest requirements for students receiving special education services who do not meet the standard on the first administration... to be determined.
For students receiving Section 504 services

- Students are required by TEC §28.025(c) to meet all curriculum requirements and pass all five EOC assessments in order to receive a Texas high school diploma.

For students receiving special education services

- The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee makes educational decisions for a student, including whether satisfactory performance on an EOC assessment shall also be required for graduation per Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1070(b).
  - The proposed revisions to this rule (graduation requirements for students receiving special education services graduating on the Foundation High School Program) have not been finalized as of September 2014.
For students receiving special education services graduating on the Minimum High School Program (MHSP), Recommended High School Program (RHSP), or Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP)

- Student must meet all curriculum requirements and pass all 5 EOC general assessments (STAAR or STAAR A) in order to graduate on the RHSP or DAP

- The MHSP is the only option if
  - The student did not meet the standard on at least one EOC general assessment, and the ARD committee determined no retesting is necessary
  - The student took at least one STAAR Modified EOC assessment

Questions about curriculum, the Academic Achievement Record (AAR), and graduation requirements should be directed to TEA’s Curriculum Division.
- PEIMS coding questions should be directed to TEA’s Curriculum Division.

- The modified PEIMS codes will apply to the 2014-2015 school year. If changes are made to the codes, they will not be effective till next school year.

- The modified PEIMS codes are NO LONGER associated with a state assessment.
  - A student receiving special education services may be taking a course that has a modified PEIMS code; however, this is not a requirement to take STAAR A.
  - In fact, modified PEIMS codes do not apply to students served only under Section 504.
For students receiving Section 504 services
- Students are required to pass all five EOC assessments in order to receive a Texas high school diploma.

For students receiving special education services
- The ARD committee makes educational decisions for a student, including whether satisfactory performance on an EOC assessment shall also be required for graduation.
Campuses should plan for STAAR A online administrations prior to the test dates.

TEA recommends that teachers become familiar with STAAR A and help guide students through practice selections and test questions until they are comfortable with the STAAR A online testing interface and accommodations.
- **Student Assessment Division**
  - 512-463-9536
  - [Assessment.studentswithdisabilities@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:Assessment.studentswithdisabilities@tea.state.tx.us)

- **Curriculum Division (and Dyslexia Contact)**
  - 512-463-9581

- **Division of Federal and State Education Policy (Special Education)**
  - 512-463-9414

- **Section 504 Contact Information**
  - 512-463-9290