STAAR Alternate is the state assessment for students with intellectual disabilities.

STAAR Alternate, as it was originally designed, was administered for the last time in Spring of 2014.
• House Bill 5 of the 83rd Legislative Session called for a redesign of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate assessment.

  • “The agency, in conjunction with appropriate interested persons, shall redevelop assessment instruments adopted or developed under Subsection (b) for administration to significantly cognitively disabled students in a manner consistent with federal law. An assessment instrument under this subsection may not require a teacher to prepare tasks or materials for a student who will be administered such an assessment instrument.”

• Portfolios and performance-based assessments would not be allowed under this legislation, because these types of assessments require the individualization of materials and task administration.

• Therefore, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) designed a standardized item-based assessment.
• House Bill 906 of the 83rd Legislative Session stipulates that “the agency may not adopt a performance standard that indicates that a student’s performance on the alternate assessment does not meet standards if the lowest level of the assessment accurately represents the student’s developmental level as determined by the student’s admission, review, and dismissal committee.”

• This legislation eliminates an assessment where the ARD committee or teacher decides the complexity level of the assessment based on individual needs.

• To meet these requirements, the redesigned assessment will not have complexity levels and will be a standardized assessment with items varying in difficulty throughout a single test.
Although state legislation changed, federal law regarding the alternate assessment did not change.

- No Child Left Behind requires an assessment for students with **significant cognitive disabilities** that can be applied to 1% of the tested population for AYP purposes.
- The assessment still needs to cover the state curriculum through prerequisite skills; thus our vertical alignment documents and curriculum framework documents will continue to be the basis for instruction and item development for the new test design.
The redesign must:

- Be appropriate for the wide range of students with significant cognitive disabilities that comprise this population

- Cover the state curriculum through prerequisite skills from the curriculum presented in earlier grades

- Consist of one assessment for each subject/grade or course that will be administered to all students

- Eliminate the need for a teacher to prepare tasks or materials for a student

- Be ready to administer to students as an operational assessment in spring 2015
Students with Intellectual Disabilities
• Intellectual quotient below 70 resulting in limited potential
• Student unable to academically reach grade level, regardless of the quality of instruction
• Poor social adaptability resulting in dependence on others for daily living and employment
• Differs from students with learning disabilities who have average intelligence, but have learning problems that make reaching their potential difficult
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Characteristic</th>
<th>Test Design Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty retrieving information</td>
<td>Items grouped together in a cluster to limit transitions, provide context, and help link back to previous learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty processing language</td>
<td>Limited use of names, lengthy scenarios, or too much language to set up a problem; simple noun-verb sentence and limited use of pronouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete level of learning; abstract thinking difficult</td>
<td>Application items may not be at the same level of abstraction as a non-disabled peer; answer choices may be a little more obvious than usual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of learning to a new presentation</td>
<td>Cluster design, extra text is added to help a student transition if one item is too different from the others in a cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited stamina to stay focused</td>
<td>Test can be given over multiple sessions; 24 test questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations in mobility and motor movement</td>
<td>Stimulus images from the student booklet can be copied and placed closer to the student or presented on a vertical plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem with organization of visual images</td>
<td>Stimulus images can be copied and placed on cards, put in calendar boxes or other organizational tools; majority of the images are boxed to help alert the student to the individual answer choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other specific needs due to individual disabilities</td>
<td>Approved accommodations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARD Committee Responsibilities
• ARD committees must determine whether the general assessment is the most appropriate for the student by reviewing the student’s present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).

• The PLAAFP should provide the committee members with a clear understanding of the student’s strengths, current areas of need, accommodations, needed supports, and how the student will access the grade-level/course curriculum.

• ARD Committees should review the student’s instructional plan and use this as the basis for making appropriate assessment decisions.

• If STAAR, with or without accommodations, is not appropriate for a student, the ARD committee must review the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate.

The General Assessment (STAAR) is the First Consideration
• The district personnel completing the form needs to be identified by name on the form, along with his or her position.

• The district personnel named in the form is responsible for making sure the ARD committee discusses each section.

• The district personnel completing the form should be a member of the ARD committee (e.g., special education teacher, ARD facilitator, administrator). These forms should be completed during the ARD committee meeting when assessment decisions are made.
### Students receiving special education services and who meet all of the participation requirements:

- **Have a significant cognitive disability (intellectual disability)**
- **Require specialized supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment**
- **Require intensive individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings**
- **Access and participate in the grade-level TEKs through prerequisite skills (student expectations from earlier grades)**

---

### STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Name of District Personnel Completing Form**

**Position**

---

#### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. **Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?**  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   
   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 affect the student’s intellectual potential and be documented as such in the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). A student with a significant cognitive disability has limited potential to reach grade-level expectations; whereas, a student with a learning disability has the potential to reach grade-level expectations, but has difficulty doing so due to his or her disability.

   **Justification:**

2. **Does the student require specialized supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment?**  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   
   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 Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), a student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized academic instruction as well as support throughout the day in areas such as organizing his or her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.

   **Justification:**

3. **Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings?**  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   
   The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to ensure that he or she can learn, retain information, and transfer skills to other settings.

   **Justification:**

4. **Does the student access and participate in the grade-level TEKs through prerequisite skills?**  
   - Yes  
   - No  
   
   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.

   **Justification:**

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• All questions must be answered with “Yes” before the ARD committee can recommend STAAR Alternate 2 and complete the rest of the form.

• The justification section does not need to have page numbers from the IEP, but evidence must be provided for all “Yes” entries.

• Evidence of an intellectual disability must be verified by an assessment specialist and be based on valid assessment data.
A significant cognitive disability is determined by the ARD committee and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team.

The disability must affect the student’s intellectual potential and be documented in the student’s IEP.

A student with a significant cognitive disability has limited potential to reach grade-level expectations.

While a student with a learning disability may have academic challenges, he or she has the intellectual potential to reach grade-level expectations and, therefore, is not eligible to take STAAR Alternate.

Justification (Example): Based on Amy’s most current FIE, her full scale IQ falls well below 70 indicating a limitation in intellectual functioning. Adaptive behavior scales indicate significant deficits in the following domains: self-care, socialization, and communication skills. The team agrees that she meets the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate as a student with an intellectual disability.
• Federal regulations mandate that all students have access to and be assessed on grade-level curriculum.

• To access the grade-level curriculum, a student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized academic instruction.

• Additionally, a student eligible for STAAR Alternate requires support throughout the day in areas such as communicating needs, navigating the classroom or school building, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.

**Justification (Example):** Amy has difficulty attending to tasks and requires numerous redirections to stay focused. When in a large group for instruction, Amy is easily distracted and does not process language well. Her expressive language delays make it difficult for Amy to express her needs in a large group. Because of this, Amy requires specialized instruction in a small group setting for academic skills. Amy’s weak language skills also make it difficult for her to respond appropriately in social situations; therefore, she requires assistance during nonacademic school activities. Amy requires assistance to perform all self-care skills.
• The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to learn and retain information.

• Instruction in a variety of settings is required in order for the student to transfer skills (generalize).

**Justification (Example):** Amy’s short attention span and distractibility require her to need numerous repetitions and drill in order to retain knowledge. Additionally, she acquires and retains knowledge best when skills are taught in the setting or situation in which the skill naturally occurs. For example, to address a social studies prerequisite skill involving economics, Amy was more successful in purchasing an item in the school store rather than in a classroom simulation.
• 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.

• Prerequisite skills are student expectations from previous grades that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.

Justification (Example): Although Amy shows relative strengths in the areas of math calculation and math reasoning, she is performing skills that are several grade levels behind her grade 8 peers in all academic areas. Her access to the grade-level TEKS is through prerequisite skills.
If “Yes” is indicated for all of the eligibility questions for STAAR Alternate 2, the ARD committee must discuss the assurances in Step II, and the district personnel completing the form must initial each one after it is discussed.

Assurances that the decision for testing is:

- Documented in IEP
- Based on educational records and not on previous state-wide test performance or AYP considerations
- Not based on racial or economic background, excessive absences, amount of time or location of service delivery
### Step III: Summarize Assessment Decisions

**The ARD committee should indicate the subject(s) or course(s) in which the student is enrolled and for which STAAR Alternate 2 assessments will be given.** The ARD committee must ensure the assessment decision and accommodations needed to measure the student’s academic achievement have been documented in the student’s IEP. Note: The student will take STAAR Alternate 2 for all required subjects or enrolled high school courses listed below. This form must be included in the IEP for students being assessed with STAAR Alternate 2.

**Indicate the STAAR Alternate 2 tests the student will take this school year.**

- [ ] Reading Grade ___
- [ ] Mathematics Grade ___
- [ ] Science Grade ___
- [ ] Social Studies 8
- [ ] Writing Grade ___
- [ ] Algebra I
- [ ] Biology
- [ ] U.S. History
- [ ] English I
- [ ] English II

- The ARD committee should indicate the subject(s) or course(s) in which the student is enrolled and for which STAAR Alternate assessments will be given.
- The student will take STAAR Alternate for **all** required subjects or enrolled high school courses.
• The document needs to be part of the IEP if the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 is determined.

• Dynamic fields have been added so that the form can be filled out locally on a computer.

• All assessment information must be communicated to the campus testing coordinator.
Other ARD Responsibilities

• In addition to providing evidence that all participation requirements have been meet and the assurances have been addressed, the ARD committee will determine and document the needed accommodations for both instruction and assessment.

• The test administrator will determine the accommodations that will be used for a specific assessment based on the documented accommodations in the student’s IEP and the TEA guidelines for allowable accommodations for STAAR Alternate 2.

• A student with a severe medical or cognitive impairment may not be able to complete any part of the assessment. For these exceptions, ARD committees can determine if a student’s assessment can be coded as a Medical Exception or as No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR).

• For both exceptions, the ARD committee will make the determination after reviewing medical and educational records. The decision must be documented in the student’s IEP along with evidence to support the determination.
Students that are medically fragile and cannot attend to or tolerate any academic interaction can qualify for a medical exception for the following circumstances:

- The student is in the final stages of a terminal or degenerative illness.
- The student is receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency or serious injury in an accident.
- The student is unable to interact with peers or staff without risk of infection or contamination to himself/herself or others.
- The student is receiving non-academic homebound services due to medical issues and does not receive academic instruction.
At least one of the specific medical conditions listed should describe the medical condition of the student.

The ARD committee must discuss the three assurances and initial them after they are discussed.

The medical exception should be documented in the student’s IEP and this form included in the IEP.

Students are not required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 for any courses or subjects for which they are enrolled in for the current year.

A score code of “M” must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.
Students who are not able to respond authentically to any verbal, visual, or tactile stimuli during academic instruction due to level of cognition rather than a medical condition can qualify for a NAAR exception if one of the two following student descriptions is evident:

1. Because of multiple impairments, the student is unable to receive information during instruction and assessment. For example, the student may have a combination of visual, auditory, and/or tactile impairments.

2. The student is consistently unable to provide an authentic academic response during instruction. His or her behavior may be described by one or more of the following characterizations:

   - does not show any observable reaction to a specific stimuli
   - exhibits only startle responses
   - tracks or fixates on objects at random and not for a purpose
   - moves or responds only to internal stimuli
   - vocalizes intermittently regardless of changes in the environment
• One “Yes” will need to be circled on the form.

• The ARD committee must discuss the two assurances and initial them after they are discussed.

• The NAAR designation should be documented in the student’s IEP and this form included in the IEP.

• Students are not required to participate in the administration of STAAR Alternate 2 for any courses or subjects for which they are enrolled in for the current year.

• A score code of “N” must be recorded for all tests the student would have taken.
Linking to the Grade-Level Standards

TEKS Curriculum Framework for STAAR Alternate 2

Grade 6 Reading

TEKS Vertical Alignment for STAAR Alternate 2

Reading

Pre-kindergarten through End-of-Course
Vertical Alignment documents organize the state curriculum for each subject by similar knowledge and skills statements.

- All the corresponding student expectations are ordered by grade level.
- Reading, writing, and math have been reorganized.
- All will be reposted with the new name.

Impact of Science and Technology on Society

- identify examples of technology used in the home and school (K)
- describe how technology helps accomplish specific tasks and meet people’s needs (K)
- describe how his or her life might be different without modern technology (K)
- describe how technology changes the ways families live (1)
- describe how technology changes communication, transportation, and recreation (1)
- describe how technology changes the way people work (1)
- describe how science and technology change communication, transportation, and recreation (2)
- explain how science and technology change the ways in which people meet basic needs (2)
- identify the impact of scientific breakthroughs and new technology in computers, pasteurization, and medical vaccines on various communities (3)
- describe how scientific discoveries and innovations such as in aerospace, agriculture, energy, and technology have benefited individuals, businesses, and society in Texas (4)
- predict how future scientific discoveries and technological innovations might affect life in Texas (4)
Curriculum Framework documents list all the available prerequisite skills for each essence statement.

- Four similar prerequisite skills were selected from this list and used to develop test items for a cluster.
- Remember that the items link to the essence statement and measure some part of the selected prerequisite skill at the appropriate grade level.
- All the Curriculum Framework documents will be updated and reposted.
In addition to the prerequisite skills, there are instructional terms that students will need exposure to during instruction. A list has been added to each Curriculum Framework document and includes the terms for all the essence statements and not just the ones selected for a given administration.

- **Students need to become familiar with these terms as the student is developmentally able to comprehend the content.**
- **Students in higher grades need to also know the terms presented in earlier grades.**
- **These lists can be found at the beginning of each framework.**
There are also universal terms that students will need exposure to that are common to the presentation instructions across subjects.

- completes
- probably
- activity
- best
- stem
- benefit
- mainly
- symbol
- value
- correct
- beginning
- relationship
- pair
- conclusion
- true
- describe
- statement
- graphic
- represents
- missing
- find
2015 ESSENCE STATEMENTS

The essence statement documents are posted on the STAAR Alternate 2 resources page.

Ten or less essence statements per subject were used to create an assessment.

These documents will show which essence statements need to be reviewed in the Curriculum Framework documents to assist teachers when planning instruction for the assessment.
Step 1 – Focus on the “big picture” of an essence statement by reviewing the Curriculum Framework document for the essence statement.

Identifies the main idea and supporting details in informational texts.
Step 2 – Look for common strands throughout the prerequisite skills that will lead a student to the “big picture” – i.e., main idea and supporting details.

- Retell facts or sequence important events
- Make predictions or inferences based on text
- Answer factual questions about a text
- Establish purposes for reading
Step 3 – Choose a strand to focus instruction. Using the prerequisite skills in the strand, determine the skills that your student already has, then try to move your student toward higher skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ask and answer appropriate questions about the book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask and respond to questions about text read aloud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask and respond to questions about text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the topic and details in expository text heard or read, referring to the words and/or illustrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locate the facts that are clearly stated in a text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify the main idea in a text and distinguish it from the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify important facts or details in text, heard or read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restate the main idea, heard or read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify important facts or details in text, heard or read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answering factual questions about a text

DRAFT
1. Review the essence statement or “big picture”

Identifies the main idea and supporting details in informational texts.

3. Determine the skills that your student already has

- locate the facts that are clearly stated in a text
- Identify the main idea in a text and distinguish it from the topic
- Identify important facts or details in text, heard or read
- restate the main idea, heard or read
- Identify the topic and details in expository text heard or read, referring to the words and/or illustrations
- ask literal questions of text
- ask and respond to questions about text
- ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts and support answers with evidence from text
- ask relevant questions, seek clarification, and locate facts and details about stories and other texts
- ask and respond to questions about text read aloud
- ask and answer appropriate questions about the book

2. Choose a common strand from the Curriculum Framework document

Answering factual questions about a text

4. Begin instruction at the next highest student expectation

5. Work on the other strands

Make predictions or inferences based on text

Retell facts or sequence important events

Establish purposes for reading
Test Design

GRADE 3 Mathematics

STAAR Alternate 2

February 2015
• 10 essence statements are available for testing, 5 for the base test items and 5 for the field test items.
• Each of the 6 essence statement is measured with 4 items presented together in a cluster.
• 6 clusters are tested: 24 items per test, 20 for the base test and 4 for the field test.
• The cluster design requires the student to make 6 concept transitions throughout the test.
• The four items per cluster range in difficulty, starting with the easiest item and moving toward the hardest item.
• The difficulty of the items is based on the skill being tested, the selected prerequisite skill, and what the student is being asked to do.
• Each item measures a specific prerequisite skill.
• Each student regardless of ability is expected to attempt all questions.
Sample Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporting Category 2</td>
<td>Patterns, Relationships, and Algebraic Reasoning: The student will demonstrate an understanding of patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Skill Statement 4.7</td>
<td>The student uses organizational structures to analyze and describe patterns and relationships.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essence Statement</td>
<td>Recognizes relationships between sets.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill Question 1</td>
<td>use patterns to predict what comes next, including cause-and-effect relationships (K)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill Question 2</td>
<td>use patterns to predict what comes next, including cause-and-effect relationships (K)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill Question 3</td>
<td>use patterns to develop strategies to solve basic addition and basic subtraction problems (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite Skill Question 4</td>
<td>use patterns to develop strategies to solve basic addition and basic subtraction problems (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The prerequisite skills have been mapped out across all grades and subjects to ensure that the prerequisite skills increase in difficulty throughout the years.
- Four similar prerequisite skills were selected when possible. There are times when the four items are not as cohesive due to the available prerequisite skills and the need to make sure that the items do not cue one another.
Item 1 in a Cluster

- The test administrator will be instructed to present the images and concept to the student. Options for how to “present,” “direct,” and “communicate” will be provided in the test administrator manual.

- The student is required to find what is requested in a manner of response that is appropriate for the student.

- For Item 1, the answer is provided to the student during the presentation and modeled by the test administrator.

- The student’s correct response shows that he or she has followed the explanation and can “find” by responding to what the test administrator has just presented.

- This first item establishes the context for number patterns that will continue throughout the other items in the cluster.

- In this example the concept is presented by stressing the number of the cars and which comes next in the pattern.

Sometimes the student is asked to “find” the answer in one image or multiple images that vary in the amount of detail. Difficulty varies across clusters.

The asterisk in the test administrator manual indicates the answer. If the asterisk is outside the box, the student can find any place in the box to get credit for the correct answer. If the asterisk is next to a specific part of the image, the exact part must be found.
### Scoring Instructions for Item 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Action</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the three cars,</td>
<td>mark A for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the three cars,</td>
<td>• remove the stimulus;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• wait at least five seconds; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student</td>
<td>mark B for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finds the three cars,</td>
<td>mark C for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does not find the three cars,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Specific instructions are given for what the student must "find" and how to score the action.
- If an incorrect response is given, the test administrator is directed to remove the stimulus, wait 5 seconds, then repeat the presentation instructions for reduced credit.
- No extra assistance is allowed, because the answer is provided in the presentation.
Item 2 in a Cluster

- An exact or similar image or concept is brought over from Item 1.
- Important components of the images are identified for the student during the presentation instructions.
- The test administrator presents Stimulus “a” and “b” before asking the student to “find” what is requested.
- For most item 2 questions, the student must “find” what is requested by matching something in the second stimulus to something in the first stimulus.
- For this example, the number pattern concept has been expanded to increase focus on the prerequisite skill, “use patterns to predict what comes next, including cause-and-effect relationships.”

Test Administrator Instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Stimulus 2a and 2b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct the student to Stimulus 2a. Communicate: One ball. Two balls. Three balls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct the student to each answer choice in Stimulus 2b. Communicate: Four balls. One ball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate: Find the next number in the pattern.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes the match is exact and other times the student is asked to match opposite ideas or the same concept presented with different images.
Scoring Instructions for Item 2

- If the student is not able to “find” the correct answer, the test administrator models the desired student action and repeats the presentation instructions.
- Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without modeling assistance.
Item 3 in a Cluster

- Three answer choices are presented before asking the student to “find” what is requested.
- The student must understand what is presented in Stimulus “a” and use the information to determine the answer from three answer choices in Stimulus “b.”
- The student may be asked to integrate multiple pieces of information.
- For this example, the tested concept still focuses on number patterns but has been expanded to focus on the new prerequisite skill, “use patterns to develop strategies to solve basic addition and subtraction problems.”

The difficulty varies from cluster to cluster depending on how close the relationship is between the Stimulus “a” and the answer choices.
If the student is not able to “find” the correct answer, the teacher is to pick one of two or three provided allowable teacher assists before repeating the presentation instructions.

Sometimes the teacher performs the action in the teacher assist and sometimes the student performs the action. In either case the student receives the correct information before moving on.

The allowable teacher assists vary from item to item and target different modalities without providing a direct answer.

Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without assistance.
The test administrator presents the images and answer choices before asking the student to “find” what is requested.

For item 4 questions, students are required to apply knowledge at varying levels of difficulty by:
- comparing similarities and differences,
- evaluating a detailed stimulus, or
- inferring an idea or drawing a conclusion.

The student must compare several parts of the stimuli to determine the correct answer.

For this example, the tested concept still focuses on, “use patterns to develop strategies to solve basic addition and subtraction problems.”
### Scoring Instructions for Item 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Instructions</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds 1+7=8 and 1+9=10,</td>
<td>mark A for question 4 and move to question 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not 1+7=8 and 1+9=10,</td>
<td>replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the teacher repeats the instructions, if the student finds 1+7=8 and 1+9=10,</td>
<td>mark B for question 4 and move to question 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the teacher repeats the instructions, if the student does not find 1+7=8 and 1+9=10,</td>
<td>mark C for question 4 and move to question 5.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If the student is not able to provide the correct answer, the initial presentation instructions are repeated.
- No other assistance can be provided, because the student must apply the information that has been provided.
- Full credit is only given if the student is able to supply the correct answer without having the instructions repeated.

After Item 4, the student moves to a new cluster starting with a less difficult item.
Presentation Instructions

Presentation Instructions for Question 1
- Present Stimulus 1.
- Direct the student to the ball under the bed in Stimulus 1. Communicate the text.
- Communicate: Find the ball under the bed.

Stimulus 1

The ball is under the bed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Instructions</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the ball under the bed,</td>
<td>mark A for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the ball under the bed,</td>
<td>remove the stimulus; wait at least five seconds, and replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student finds the ball under the bed,</td>
<td>mark B for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the five-second wait time, if the student does not find the ball under the bed,</td>
<td>mark C for question 1 and move to question 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Each test is individually administered.
• Students are not expected to read, write, or manipulate the test booklet.
• The test administrator is given directions to *present* the item, specifically what to *direct* the student to, and what to *communicate* to the student.
• Sometimes a cautionary phrase such as “Direct the student to the house in Stimulus 2b without naming the shapes on the house,” is used to ensure that the answer is not revealed during the presentation.

It is important to read and practice the presentation instructions before administering the assessment, because the instructions are unique for each item.

The guidelines for “*present,*” “*direct,*” and “*communicate*” must be looked up in the test administrator manual and followed as outlined.
The way a teacher presents a test item to a student is individually based on the needs of the student. Accommodations must be included in the student’s IEP and should only be made if the student is unable to access the test item without them. Accommodations are optional and should be applied only when needed.

**Types of Allowable Accommodations:**

- Accommodations to the two-dimensional stimulus images
- Accommodations to limit number of images shown at one time
- Accommodations to language used in the test administrators instructions
Accommodations to the two-dimensional stimulus images

- Place color overlays on images or text
- Photocopy and cut out stimulus images to the student’s test booklet – can be affixed to slant boards, poster board or card stock
- Add braille labels to images or text
- Enlarge images by copying or using magnification devices
- Attach textured materials to images in the student’s test booklet
- Raise or darken outlines in stimulus images
- Describe images (for students with visual impairments only)
- Color or highlight stimulus images or answer choices
- Pair images or text with photographs, real objects of the same content, or picture representations
- Demonstrate concepts or relationships in images
Accommodations to limit number of stimulus images shown at one time

- Place images on separate paper presented one at a time
- Cover or isolate each image until it is addressed

Accommodations to language used in the test administrators instructions

- Use routine picture representations for key words in verbal directions
- Reread sections of text as requested by the student

Any accommodations not listed can only be used after guidance/approval from a STAAR Alternate 2 team member at the Texas Education Agency.
Ways a Teacher Can Present

Caution – A presentation should allow a student to access the test question but not provide an answer to the question. Students must intentionally respond to the question in order to receive credit for a correct answer.

- Pair the images in the student booklet with objects of the images – objects must resemble the images as much as possible and be oriented the same ways as in the images.

- Attach a tactile representation for the image to the student booklet – representation must be pertinent to the task and not just something that the student likes.

A piece of fur on the dog is an appropriate tactile representation for this question. Shiny pink glitter would not be appropriate because it could be difficult to determine what the student is responding to – the dog as required by the “find” statement or the glitter.

Grade 3 Reading Test – STAAR Alternate Redesign SAMPLE

Presentation Instructions for Question 1
- Present Stimulus 1.
- Direct the student to Stimulus 1. Communicate: The dog was trained to do tricks for a show on a stage in front of many people.

Stimulus 1

Dogs on Stage
This dog was trained to do tricks for a show on a stage in front of many people.

Grade 8 Science Test – STAAR Alternate Redesign SAMPLE

Presentation Instructions for Question 2
- Present Stimulus 2a and 2b.
- Direct the student to Stimulus 2a. Communicate: The hot chocolate produces heat and keeps the girl’s hands warm.
- Direct the student to each answer choice in Stimulus 2b.
- Communicate: Find another source of heat.

Stimulus 2a

Stimulus 2b

A piece of fur on the dog is an appropriate tactile representation for this question. Shiny pink glitter would not be appropriate because it could be difficult to determine what the student is responding to – the dog as required by the “find” statement or the glitter.
• Enlarge the answer choices – follow all security and confidentially procedures for copying secure testing materials
• Copy and cut out the answer choices – ensure confidentiality of materials and that answer choices are presented in the same order as in the student booklet; 2-part boxed answer choices must be presented together
• Pair the answer choices with pictures – all images must be equally viable
• Rearrange the answer choices – answer choices can be presented horizontally or vertically; however, must be presented in the same order as the student booklet
Ways a Teacher Can *Present* Images to a Student with a Visual Impairment

- Describe the images in the stimuli – *verbal descriptions must be objective and can only provide information that the teacher sees on the page; no additional information or comments can be provided*

“A girl is sitting on a big log outside. It is night time. She has made a campfire by putting rocks in a circle. Inside the circle are some sticks that are on fire. She is rubbing her hands together.”

**Caution** – *When providing a student with a verbal description of an image, it is important for the teacher to plan ahead. During the preview period, the teacher should script out the language to be used using caution not to inadvertently provide the student with an answer to the “find” statement.*
To Direct is to Focus your student on the test materials

The term *direct* refers to the way the teacher brings the stimulus components to the student’s attention. This can be done in a variety of ways and should be done in a way that keeps the student’s strengths and needs in mind.

- Guide the student’s hand to specific places in the stimuli as instructions are given
- Color code, number, or label answer choices with letters to direct the student to a specific place
- Cover up parts of the stimulus until explained in the instructions
- Point to or highlight sections of the stimuli as they are mentioned in the instructions
- Alert the student orally or through sign as to where to look or focus
- Place objects representing the stimuli in the student’s hand

**Caution** – When directing a student to the stimuli, equal time must be spent on each component or answer choice so that a correct answer is not cued.
Ways a Teacher Can Direct

- Direct the student to text by focusing the student’s attention on one line at a time or by minimizing the amount of text seen at one time – *all text must be read exactly as written in the presentation instructions; paraphrasing, changing vocabulary terms, and embellishing text is not allowed*

- Direct the student to each answer choice one at a time by using a card with a window to isolate the options – *all answer choices must be isolated for an equal amount of time*
Ways a Teacher Can **Direct**

- **Direct** the student to each answer choice by pointing to, tapping, or touching the answer choices individually or by saying or signing, “Look at the pictures.” – the amount of time spent directing the student to each answer choice must be the same.

- **Direct** the student to the outline of the circle by guiding the student’s hand to the circle and moving it around the outline to emphasize the shape. – make sure that directing the student does not inadvertently lead into the “find” statement.

  Removing the student’s hand from the circle after directing him or her is appropriate. Leaving the student’s hand on the circle after directing and reading the “find” statement is not appropriate. In this instance, the student did not give an intentional response to the stimuli.

  Pointing or touching the answer choices one time each is an appropriate way to direct the student. It would not be appropriate to tap or touch only the correct answer or to tap or touch the correct answer more times than the other answer choices.
Ways a Teacher Can Direct

- Direct the student to the answer choices by highlighting, numbering, or labeling with letters.  
  – make sure that directing the student does not inadvertently give the student the answer
The term *communicate* means to share information with and request information from the student in a way that the student will understand. A teacher can communicate in many ways depending on the student’s needs.

- **Present**
- **Direct**
- **Communicate**

**To Communicate** means to Share information

- Orally read the bolded text in the presentation instructions and answer choices
- Pair key words in the instructions with picture icons or objects
- Use sign language to communicate the questions
- Pair text with picture icons so that the student can follow along as the text is read
- Point to the words as the student reads and correct any errors the students makes
- Turn the “find” statement into a question
Ways a Teacher Can Communicate

• Communicate the word “find” by replacing it with one of the following: “Show me,” “Point to.” “Touch,” or “Tell me.”

• Communicate the text in the answer choices by pairing the words with pictures/icons to reinforce understanding of the sentence.

 Grade 7 Writing Test – STAAR Alternate Redesign
SAMPLE

Presentation Instructions for Question 2
 – Present Stimulus 2a and 2b.
 – Direct the student to Stimulus 2a. Communicate the text.
 – Direct the student to each answer choice in Stimulus 2b. Communicate the text in each answer choice.
 – Communicate, “Find the sentence that tells that the ball is under the bed.”

Stimulus 2a

The ball is under the bed.

Stimulus 2b

The ball is under the bed.
The ball is on the bed.

• Turn the “find” statement into a question – “Where is the sentence that tells that the ball is under the bed?” or point to each answer choice and ask “Is this the sentence that tells that the ball is under the bed?”
Test administrators have the option of reading a passage again or repeating sections of the passage from earlier questions in a cluster if they feel that the student needs to hear the previous sections of the passage before the “find” statement is given. To accomplish this, the test administrator can do one of the following:

- Turn back to previous questions in the cluster and read the sections for the student from the test administrator manual without the student looking at the text
- Photocopy previous sections of the text to combine with the next section of the passage as the student proceeds through the cluster

Caution- At no time can the student go back to previous questions in the student booklet and change answers after the question has been scored and the student has moved to the next question.
Presenting Reading Passages

• Some questions in the student test booklet are presented with a stem and some appear as complete sentences.
• Test administrators can communicate the stem once, then communicate each answer choice.
• Or, the test administrator can communicate the stem each time before communicating each answer choice.

The dog trained to be Sandy was found-
in movies
at an animal shelter
on a stage

The dog trained to be Sandy was found in movies.
The dog trained to be Sandy was found at an animal shelter.
The dog trained to be Sandy was found on a stage.
Students can be alerted back to the task or materials or be encouraged to stay focused at any time during testing.

Students can request to have information repeated.

The test administrator can repeat sections of the presentation instructions without a student request if the student is distracted during the presentation, up until the answer choices and the “find” statement are given.

Once the answer choices and “find” statement are given, the test administrator must wait for the student to respond.

Once a student gives an answer, the test administrator must follow the scoring instructions to determine how to proceed.

If no response is given, after a reasonable wait time, the answer choices and “find” statement can be repeated once more.

The order in which the bullets for the answer choices and “find” statement in the presentation instructions are communicated can be reversed from the order listed in the instructions.
Repeating the Presentation Instructions

These instructions can be repeated as needed including reading passages.

These instructions must be given once the first time. The order of these two bullets can be reversed.

Wait an appropriate time for the student to respond.

No response---repeat the answer choices and the "find" statement once more

Correct response---mark A and move to the next question

Incorrect response---apply one of the scripted teacher assists and replicate the presentation instructions from the beginning

Presentation Instructions for Question 3

- Present Stimulus 3a and 3b.
- Direct the student to Stimulus 3a. Communicate the text.
- Direct the student to the underlined word. Communicate: In this sentence the word "above" does not describe the location of the boy.
- Direct the student to each answer choice in Stimulus 3b. Communicate the text in each answer choice.
- Communicate: Find the word that edits the sentence to describe the location of the boy.

Stimulus 3a

The boy running above the finish line thought he might win.

Stimulus 3b

* toward  below  under

Scoring Instructions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Action</th>
<th>Test Administrator Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the student finds the word &quot;toward&quot; in Stimulus 3b,</td>
<td>mark A for question 3 and move to question 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student does not find the word &quot;toward&quot; in Stimulus 3b,</td>
<td>provide one of these allowable teacher assists to the student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have the student identify what the boy is doing in the picture. OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Have the student touch the boy in the picture and the finish line in the picture. OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Read the sentence, inserting each answer choice for the underlined word. Replicate the initial presentation instructions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A  B  C

DRAFT
Student Response Options

Students need to be given an opportunity to respond to test questions using a mode of response that is typical of the way the student responds during instruction. It is not important how a student responds – only that the teacher is able to discern the student’s preferred answer. Response modes do not need to be predetermined as in the past.

Response modes can be:

- **verbal**
- **physical**
- **visual**
Verbal Response Modes

A student can...

Indicate a preferred answer by positively or negatively vocalizing when answer choices are presented one at a time — vocalizations must be clear and understandable; a student can only receive a correct answer if the teacher is confident of the student’s choice.

Orally state responses in the student’s primary language, including signs and word approximations.

Describe the location of the answer — i.e., “top,” “first,” or “last.”

Say or sign “yes” or “no” when presented answer choices one at a time and being asked, “Is this the _____?”

Respond with the answer when choices are labeled by the teacher — i.e., “Pink,” “Blue,” or “Green.”

Use a communication device with preprogrammed answer choices or vocabulary — all test information programmed into a communication device must be kept secure during the testing window and be immediately erased after testing.
Physical Response Modes

A student can... 

- Highlight, color, or mark a response
- Pick up an answer when choices are paired with manipulatives by the teacher – i.e., “A,” “B,” or “C” plastic letters
- Nod, smile, or gesture to indicate “yes” or “no” when presented answer choices one at a time and being asked, “Is this the _____?”
- Use or manipulate math tools to create an answer
- Place an adhesive note on the correct answer
- Manipulate words, sentences, or sections of an answer choice
- Write or type responses with or without adaptive writing equipment
- Sign the correct answer
- Point to, reach for, or touch an answer

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Visual Response Modes

A student can... 

Gaze, wink, blink or fixate on stimuli and answers

Turn his or her head toward stimuli and answers when presented individually in a section organizer
• Assistive technology that is documented in the student’s IEP and is used routinely in instruction may be used to provide the student access to the assessment.
• The use of technology should be used primarily for communicating an answer by the student or presenting answer choices by the test administrator.
• Because the assessment is secure, the use of some devices is not allowable.
• Instances when a device or procedure would not be allowed include: 

  tablets or computers with Internet access that cannot be turned off
  inputting answer choices into a device that has stored memory that cannot be erased
Recording Responses

- After the student responds to each question, the test administrator will evaluate the response according to the scoring instructions.
- The test administrator will record the score on this document and use the information to complete the online transcription form in TestNav.
- The A, B, C determinations for each question, along with the accommodations used during the assessment, must be entered into TestNav.
- The form shown here is provided in the test materials and is required to ensure that the student performance is accurately transcribed into TestNav.
- Once the information has been transcribed, the test administrator will turn in the form to the testing coordinator.
- The form must be returned in the nonscorable shipment.
Testing Policy

TEST ADMINISTRATOR MANUAL

GRADE 3 Mathematics
STAAR Alternate 2

February 2015
Form 01
Secure

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Testing Window Guidelines

• The testing window will be from February 9, 2015 until February 20, 2015.
• A 10 day preview period prior to February 9th is allowed for the test administrators only once the testing materials have arrived in the district.
• Test administrators can preview the student booklets and test administrator instructions for specific questions during this period to become familiar with the instructions, practice manipulating the test materials, planning teacher assists, and preparing accommodations to the student booklet.
• All accommodations should be in place prior to February 9, 2015.
• Testing materials must be checked out from the testing coordinator each day of the preview period and the testing window and returned at the close of each day.
• This includes all photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet.
• A form to record daily checkout of materials is provided in the DCCM.
• Inputting performance data into TestNav can be done from February 9, 2015 until February 27, 2015.
• Every attempt must be made to complete the assessment during the window.

• If the assessment cannot be completed within the window, enter the score for the portion of the testing the student was able to complete into the online transcription form in TestNav.

• If a student cannot complete testing within the window due to his or her disability, contact TEA for guidance.

• A test administrator not having enough time is not a reason to contact TEA for guidance.

• If the district has an extended student holiday during the window, the district may request an alternate testing date from the security team at TEA.

• If the student is absent for the entire assessment window, his or her assessment should be marked with a score code of “A” for absent.
Who Can Administer the Test

• The test administrator should be the student’s teacher for the subject tested.

• The test administrator must have a high level of familiarity with the student, so that testing accommodations can be prepared appropriately and the student’s typical response modes can be understood.

• Certified and non-certified paraprofessionals who are currently employed in the district and routinely work with the student can serve as test administrators or test administrator assistants.

• The test administrator assistant can provide assistance:
  - preparing allowable accommodations
  - manipulating materials during the testing session
  - translating or signing information to the student
  - managing behavior

• All test administrators and test administrator assistants must be trained in test security and administration procedures prior to the assessment.

• All test administrators and test administrator assistants must have signed the test administrator's oath of test security and confidentiality.

• Paraprofessionals must be supervised by a certified professional on the same campus throughout the test administration.
All STAAR Alternate 2 test administrators are required to attend district training sessions regarding:

- Understanding test administrator roles and responsibilities
- Maintaining security of test materials until returned to the coordinator each day after previewing or testing
- Implementing the test administration processes and procedures stated in the manuals
- Applying allowable accommodations appropriately
- Reporting any suspected violation of test security to the campus coordinator
- Accessing to and entering data into the online transcription form in TestNav
- Preparing testing materials for return to the testing coordinator at the end of the window including all photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet and the scoring document used to record student performance

Bring only the front matter of the test administrator manual to the training. The remainder of the test administrator manual provides specific test question instructions and student booklet images which can only be viewed by the test administrator and must remain secure at all times.
After training has been completed, each test administrator must sign the Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality.

The box titled “For Test Administrators Authorized to View Secure State Assessments” must also be signed, because all test administrators will be viewing the actual test questions in order to prepare allowable accommodations.

A signed oath is required for all test administrators and test administrator assistants.
• Students will need to be registered in TAMS for the 2015 administration of STAAR Alternate 2 through a registration file and set up into test sessions.
• Each test administrator will receive a test administrator manual, a student test booklet, and a scoring document for each assessment that will be given for each student.
• Each campus will administer the same form; therefore, materials cannot be shared between campuses or districts.
• STAAR Alternate 2 materials should not be shipped with test materials for other state assessments.
• All photocopies of the images and text in the student booklet must be returned in the nonscorable shipment.
• Any accompanying pictures, objects, textured materials, or instructional tools do not need to be returned.
• Scoring documents need to be returned in the nonscorable shipment.
• Make sure that all assessments scored as Medical Exception “M” and No Authentic Academic Response “N” are based on ARD decisions.
Resources
These samples can be used to become familiar with the test format, practice the presentation instructions and testing environment with students, and determine options for how your student may be able to access the stimulus images and the text.
Sample Questions

- The student booklet will not be posted with the sample questions.
- Stimulus “a” and “b” appear much larger in the student booklet than they appear in the presentation instructions section of the test administrator manual.
- Each stimulus is displayed in landscape format on a 8 ½” by 11” page.
- Stimulus “a” is usually at the top and Stimulus “b” on the bottom of an opened student booklet.
- During testing, any marking on the student booklet must not interfere with the stimulus presented on the back of the page.
There will be no more training modules for test administrators to view or qualifications that need to be passed prior to administering the assessment. All test administration information will be provided in the following manuals.

- **Detailed information for test administrators on how to administer each specific assessment**
- **General information about assessment options for students receiving special education services**
- **Specific information for testing coordinators on how to set up test students in TAMS**
- **Specific information for testing coordinators regarding test security, training, shipping, and handling of test materials under the new STAAR Alternate 2 section.**
- **Detailed information for test administrators regarding reporting student performance in the online transcription form in TestNav**
Upcoming Postings on the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources Page

- Front section of the STAAR Alternate 2 Test Administrator Manual
- Educator Guide
- Updated TEKS Vertical Alignment documents
- TEKS Curriculum Framework documents including instructional terms list for all grades and subjects
- Updated Essence Statement documents
- Sample test questions
- Allowable Accommodations Chart
- Participation Requirements Form
- Medically Fragile Exception Form
- No Authentic Academic Response Form
- Copy of this TETN presentation

Coming in Late October
Upcoming Postings on the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources Page

• The Texas Education Agency website is undergoing major changes. There will be a short time when resources will not be able to be posted as the website changes from one format to the other.

• Some resources will be posted in the next few days, others will have to wait until after the changes have been made.

• The current link to the STAAR Alternate 2 website will still be in place for awhile, but may be changed at a later date.

• All of the STAAR Alternate 2 resources will be updated with the new name and reposted.

• Reading and Writing Vertical Alignments and Curriculum Frameworks have had some minor changes to the organization of the prerequisite skills. Science and Social Studies have had no changes. All of the frameworks will be reposted with the new name and the instructional terms list.

• New math documents will be posted to reflect the new curriculum.
Standard Setting

- After the 2015 February administration of STAAR Alternate 2, student scores will be used to set standards for the new assessment.

- A team of administrators, educators, parents, and other stakeholders will be assembled in April to review the scoring results and set a passing standard.

- Districts will receive Confidential Student Reports for STAAR Alternate 2 at the same time as results are received for STAAR test takers.

- STAAR Alternate 2 score reports will include the individual performance level ratings of students, scaled scores, and number of questions answered correctly within each reporting category for each of the assessed grades and content areas.
For more information about STAAR Alternate 2

Call Student Assessment at 512-463-9536

Email a question to staaralt@tea.state.tx.us

Reference the website for STAAR Alternate 2 at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt