

# Highlights of House Bill 3 Transition Plan

## Assessment

- The new, more rigorous *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* program will begin in the 2011–2012 school year. A new test design for the STAAR assessments will focus on readiness for success in subsequent grades or courses and, ultimately, for college and career.
- At grades 3–8, STAAR will include assessments in the following grades/subjects:
  - mathematics and reading at grades 3–8, including Spanish versions at grades 3–5
  - writing at grades 4 and 7, including Spanish version at grade 4
  - science at grade 5, including a Spanish version at grade 5
  - science at grade 8
  - social studies at grade 8
- For high school, STAAR assessments will be administered in Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, biology, chemistry, physics, English I, English II, English III, world geography, world history, and U.S. history. The STAAR EOC assessment scores will account for 15% of a student’s final grade in the course.
- The test design for English I, II, and III will require students to write two essays rather than the one that TAKS required. In reading, greater emphasis will be given to critical analysis rather than literal understanding. The test design will also allow for the reading and writing components to be calibrated, equated, and scaled separately so that the scores on the reading and writing components can be reported separately. This will allow a student to retake only the portion of the English EOC assessment on which he or she did not meet the minimum score requirements. Because of the length of these tests and the desire to embed field-test items to eliminate stand-alone field testing, each of the English EOC assessments will be administered over two days. All other EOC assessments will be administered on one day only during a scheduled assessment window.
- STAAR grades 3-8 assessments will be administered on paper only; STAAR EOC assessments will be offered in both online and paper formats.
- With the implementation of STAAR in the 2011–2012 school year, testing requirements for graduation will significantly increase. While TAKS represented four “hurdles” for students (requiring them to pass exit level tests in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies), STAAR represents 12 hurdles for students taking the recommended high school program. To graduate under STAAR, a student must achieve a cumulative score that is at least equal to the product of the number of EOC assessments taken in each foundation content area (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) and a scale score that indicates satisfactory performance.
- Performance levels on certain STAAR EOC assessments are now linked to a student’s graduation plan. Different levels of performance are required on the EOC assessments in English III and Algebra II for each of the three graduation plans: minimum, recommended, and distinguished.

- STAAR performance standards will be set so that they require a higher level of student performance than is required on the current TAKS assessments.
  - STAAR performance standards for STAAR EOC will be set in February 2012 and reports will be available in June 2012 after the first May 2012 administration.
  - Performance standards for STAAR at grades 3–8 will be set in fall 2012, after the first spring administration of STAAR. This standard-setting schedule will result in the following:
    - The Student Success Initiative (SSI) promotion requirements will not include use of the STAAR results in the 2011–2012 school year only, since passing standards will not yet be established. Statute continues to require the use of other academic information (teacher recommendations, student grades, etc.) in promotion decisions.
    - Reporting of STAAR grades 3-8 results will be delayed until fall 2012.
- Each general grade 3-8 and EOC STAAR assessment will have a satisfactory cut score and an advanced cut score. There will also be EOC minimum scores set below but within a reasonable range of the satisfactory scores which will be used to determine whether a student’s score on a particular EOC assessment may count towards his or her cumulative score in that content area. Performance at the highest cut score will be interpreted differently depending on the assessment. For example, this highest cut will indicate college readiness for Algebra II and English III. It will indicate advanced course readiness for Algebra I, English I, and II, and it will indicate advanced performance for the remaining courses.
- It is anticipated that the satisfactory performance standards for STAAR will be phased in over several years, but the highest performance standard (including the college and career readiness standards for Algebra II and English III) would not be phased in, but applied as approved when STAAR becomes operational.
- Performance standards will be reviewed at least every three years, as required by state statute.
- As with the current modified assessments, the STAAR Modified assessments will cover the same content as the general STAAR assessments, but will be modified in format and test design. Modified assessments will be developed for all content areas for grades 3-8 that are part of the general STAAR program and for nine of the twelve STAAR EOC assessments. Modified assessments are not being developed for Algebra II, chemistry, or physics as these courses are not required on the Minimum High School Program (MHSP) and all students taking STAAR Modified assessments are on the MHSP because they are receiving modified instruction. The new STAAR Modified assessments will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general assessments and now will include more rigorous item types. In addition, field-test items will be embedded in the modified assessments.
- The STAAR Alternate assessments will be very similar in design to the current TAKS-Alt assessments. Students will continue to perform standardized assessment tasks linked to the grade-level TEKS that measure student progress on skills aligned with the academic grade-level content standards. However, STAAR Alternate will incorporate a vertical alignment in the program’s assessment tasks, and the high school assessments will move from grade-level assessments to course-based assessments. The new STAAR Alternate assessments will reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general and modified assessments.

- For eligible English language learners (ELLs) in grades 3-8 and high school, plans are being made for the development of computer-based linguistically accommodated versions of STAAR, currently referred to as STAAR L. Spanish versions of STAAR will be implemented for eligible ELLs in grades 3-5. TELPAS will be adjusted as needed to ensure a strong link between academic language proficiency as defined by TELPAS and academic achievement as defined by STAAR.
- TEA is evaluating all testing accommodations to determine which ones will continue in the STAAR program and which accommodations will be added or discontinued. With the STAAR program, TEA is considering the elimination of the separate accommodated form and instead building in some specific accommodations to the general STAAR assessments for these students. Also, TEA is exploring the possibility of standardized oral administrations for the STAAR program using an online testing format.
- Performance standards, test score interpretations, and the uses of STAAR assessment data will be supported by validity evidence that will be obtained by correlating the STAAR assessments with other tests or measures of student performance. To provide external validity evidence based on test content, an analysis will be conducted to compare the assessment content standards on the STAAR assessments with other nationally and internationally administered assessments.
- STAAR significantly increases the number of testing days at the high school level because of the increase in the number of assessments students will be taking. Currently on TAKS there is a total of 25 testing days, including exit level retest administrations. With three testing opportunities each year (fall, winter, and spring), STAAR EOC will require up to 45 testing days when it is fully implemented. Students are allowed by statute to retest for any reason.
- TEA is considering adopting policies to limit the time a student spends taking a STAAR assessment on a given day. This consideration is based on advice from advisory committees to align Texas' testing policies with other state and national assessments and better prepare students for timed tests such as SAT, ACT, and AP.
- Because of the number of high stakes EOC assessments that will be administered at the same time and the provision in statute to allow students to retest an EOC assessment for any reason, there will be much greater security challenges associated with the STAAR program.
- Beginning in 2011-2012, TEA will annually use statistical analyses to identify irregular patterns of test answers that may indicate cheating to augment other detection methods already in use, such as multiple mark analysis. The use of statistical methods will take place within a larger investigative process that includes the collection of additional evidence, such as locally maintained seating charts, reports of testing irregularities, and records of test security and administration training for campuses.
- Districts are required to provide remediation to any student who fails a STAAR assessment, whether in grades 3–8 or high school. This requirement has significant implications for districts, especially at the high school level. Students who pass a course but fail the assessment for that course may require additional instruction in that course even after they are no longer enrolled. Delivering remediation/instruction to students in these instances will present districts with both scheduling and staffing challenges.
- Students, parents, and teachers will be able to access results through a data portal, a secure system that will provide the ability to view reports, track student progress, provide assessment data to institutions of higher education, and provide information to the general public.

- As Texas transitions its assessment program from TAKS to STAAR, different measures of student progress will likely be implemented. Texas will implement a multi-step process to identify the student progress measures that will be used for the STAAR assessment program.
- The overall field-test burden of STAAR on students and school districts has been significantly reduced from that of TAKS through the embedding of field-test items whenever possible beginning with operational assessments in 2012.
- In 2011, 2012, and 2013, selected test items representative of selected grades and subjects assessed on STAAR will be released. The first full release of primary test forms of STAAR will occur in 2014.

## **Accountability**

- A new accountability system based on the STAAR grades 3–8 and STAAR EOC assessments will be developed during the 2011–2012 school year and implemented in 2012-2013.
  - Accountability ratings will not be released in 2011-2012 while student performance standards are set on the STAAR and the new accountability system is developed.
  - Reporting in 2011-2012 will be modified based on the availability of student performance data.
- The new accountability rating system will include the following indicators and other features.
  - Student performance on the STAAR grades 3–8 and EOC assessments, measured against both student passing standards and college-readiness standards. Student progress is also factored in, allowing more students to be identified as meeting or progressing toward meeting these standards.
  - Accountability standards defined by the commissioner of education for the current year and projected for the next two years. Standard for the college-ready performance indicator increases so that by 2019-2020 Texas ranks in the top ten among states nationally on two measures – the percent college-ready and the percent graduating under the recommended or advanced high school program, with no gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
  - Dropout rates (including district completion rates) for grades 9 through 12 and high school graduation rates.
  - Student group performance based on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status is evaluated.
  - Required Improvement over the prior year is a required feature.
  - Average performance of the last three years is a required feature.
  - Performance on 85 percent of the measures meeting the standard is an optional feature.
  - Accountability rating labels assign districts and campuses to one of two rating categories: “Unacceptable” and “Acceptable.”

- Distinction designations will recognize high performance by students in academics and on broader indicators of excellence beyond results based on state assessments.
  - Recognized and Exemplary ratings are distinction designations for meeting higher college- and career-ready performance standards, rather than higher performance on the same indicators used for accountability ratings.
  - Campus distinction designations will be awarded for campuses in the top 25 percent in annual improvement, campuses in the top 25 percent of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps, and for academic performance in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
  - Campus distinction designations will also be awarded in four new areas: fine arts, physical education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce development program, and second language acquisition program.
- The intent of the accountability development process is to design a new accountability system rather than modify the current system. The new system may look very different from the current state accountability system. Following are some of the design options that will be explored for the new system.
  - Longitudinal EOC performance measure that tracks a cohort or class of high school students as they progress toward meeting the EOC graduation requirement.
  - Performance Index that combines performance across assessment performance levels and subjects as well as grades, languages, and tests (regular and alternative).
- Accountability development in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 will include several coordinated efforts to simultaneously develop the new state accountability rating system, new federal AYP system, new state distinction designations, a new Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS), new state accountability reports, and possibly new alternative education accountability procedures.
- Development of the new federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system for 2012 and beyond will take place during the 2011-2012 school year as the new state accountability system is developed. The primary consideration that will guide development of the new AYP system will be alignment with the state accountability system to the greatest extent possible. TEA will monitor the ESEA reauthorization process closely but development of the new AYP system will begin and may be completed under the requirements of the current ESEA.
- Phase-in of the new accountability system will begin with the 2013 and 2014 accountability ratings.
  - Final decisions for 2013 ratings will be released in spring 2013. Districts and campuses will not receive advanced notice of performance under the new accountability system.
  - The 2013 ratings will be based on percent of students meeting the satisfactory student performance standard. College-ready performance will be reported in 2012-2013.
  - The 2014 ratings will be based on college-ready performance on STAAR as well as satisfactory performance. Distinction designations for which performance on the college-ready indicator is an eligibility requirement will be introduced with the 2014 ratings.
  - Campus and district ratings and distinction designations will be issued by August 8 beginning with the 2013 ratings. Notification to districts and campuses previously rated “Unacceptable” of a subsequent unacceptable rating will be done as early as possible in 2013 and by June 15 beginning in 2014.