

Student Testing Program Guide



What is STAAR?

STAAR stands for State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, which is the state's student testing program. The assessments are based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, which are the state curriculum standards. Beginning in grade 3 through high school graduation, students will be tested in the core subject areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies.

What is the purpose behind STAAR or the standardized testing of my child?

STAAR tests show whether a student has mastered specific knowledge of a core subject at a certain grade level. Test results should provide parents assurance that their child is prepared to enter the next grade level within their school district or any Texas district. Finally, the results provide educators and administrators with uniform information about where to focus resources – especially in the core subjects being taught.

How many STAAR tests are there each year in elementary and middle school?

The number of tests taken each year will vary, depending on the grade level:

- Grade 3 – Mathematics, Reading
- Grade 4 – Mathematics, Reading, Writing
- Grade 5 – Mathematics, Reading, Science
- Grade 6 – Mathematics, Reading
- Grade 7 – Mathematics, Reading, Writing
- Grade 8 – Mathematics, Reading, Science, Social Studies

What are the five tests required in high school?

In order to graduate from a Texas public high school, students must pass five end-of-course tests:

- English I
- Algebra I
- U.S. History
- English II
- Biology

Unless a student is eligible for an accommodation, each student will have four hours to complete each assessment – except for the high school English I and English II end-of-course exams which have a five-hour time limit.

What if my child took one of these courses with a required end-of-course exam in middle school?

If a student is enrolled in grade 8 or below and takes a course for which there is a STAAR end-of-course assessment, that student is required to take the applicable STAAR end-of-course assessment. Though taken in middle school, the tests will count toward the state's high school graduation requirement.

How will STAAR be administered?

STAAR assessments for grades 3-8 are administered in a paper format only. The high school STAAR end-of-course assessments are offered in both online and paper formats.

How many days will be devoted to testing each year?

Most students will spend two to four days out of the 180-day instructional year taking state tests. These are the only days required by the state for testing. Students in fifth and eighth grades who must meet promotion requirements will have additional retesting opportunities, as will students who fail any end-of-course tests. Additionally, state law limits the amount of local benchmark testing that can occur.

Will students who receive special education services take the STAAR?

The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student who receives special education services will determine the appropriate test. Some students will take the general STAAR. An alternative test will be available for students with the most significant cognitive difficulties.

Where can I find more information about STAAR?

The latest information about STAAR can be found on the Texas Education Agency website at www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/.