

Optional End of Year Assessments

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The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guidance is to provide Texas school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with information related to new, state provided, optional end-of-year (EOY) assessments for spring 2020. These assessments are an optional tool schools can use to measure student progress and understanding of the statewide curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), taught this school year. The EOY assessments have been built using released State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) test questions that measure the TEKS and will be available in early May 2020.

The EOY assessments are optional and intended to support district, campus, and classroom-level analysis of student learning. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will not use data from these assessments for any accountability purposes, and no results will be published by district or campus. Data will only be used to research the educational impact of the current crisis. Information on the optional EOY assessments and more detail on their uses will be discussed in a webinar scheduled for the morning of Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Specific information on accessing the webinar will be available soon.

In addition, TEA is working on an optional diagnostic tool for use at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year. The new beginning-of-year (BOY) assessments will be provided in addition to the interim assessments available next school year. More information will be available this summer regarding the optional BOY assessments.

1. Since state assessments have been waived this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, are the EOY assessments a new testing requirement for this spring?

No. The spring and summer STAAR administrations have been cancelled this year, and all accountability tied to STAAR has been waived for the 2019–2020 school year. The EOY assessments are being provided as an optional resource so teachers and parents may have a better understanding of the progress their students have made this year given classroom disruptions and new at-home learning environments.

2. What grades/subjects and courses are being provided for the EOY assessments?

The optional EOY assessments cover the same grades/subjects and courses that are provided for STAAR. They will include grades 3–8 mathematics and reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, grades 5 and 8 science, grade 8 social studies, Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. Spanish versions of EOY assessments will also be available for grades 3–5 mathematics and reading, grade 4 writing, and grade 5 science. Writing assessments will not include a writing prompt and will be multiple-choice only, and EOY assessments for Algebra II and English III will not be offered.

3. In what format will the EOY assessments be available?

The optional EOY assessments will be available online and in a printable PDF format. Students can access the online tests at home using a web browser. The online tests will be delivered via Pearson's testing platform known as TestNav. Districts may also print PDF versions of the tests from the testing platform. The PDF

versions of the tests, along with paper answer documents, may be sent to students for testing at home and returned to the district for scoring.

4. Will printing services for the EOY assessments be available?

Yes. Districts may order printed PDF versions of the EOY assessments, answer documents, and answer keys through Pearson and through most regional Education Service Centers (ESCs). Contact Pearson or your regional ESC for more information regarding printing and shipping EOY assessments.

5. What accessibility tools will be available for the EOY assessments?

Because these are optional assessments, districts may determine which accessibility tools are most appropriate for their students, whether the students are testing online or on paper. Districts may want to refer to the [Accessibility Features](#) that are available for STAAR. For online testing, most of the accessibility tools (e.g., highlighter, color contrast, and magnifier) that students are used to seeing in an online testing environment will be available in TestNav; however, the tools may look or behave slightly differently for these EOY assessments.

6. What accommodations will be available for the EOY assessments?

Whether the students are testing online or on paper, districts should determine which accommodations their students routinely and effectively use during classroom instruction and classroom testing. Refer to the [Spring 2020 Accommodation Policy Documents](#) that are available for STAAR. For online testing, some of the accommodations or designated supports (e.g., text-to-speech) that students are used to seeing in an online testing environment will be available in TestNav; however, the accommodations may look or behave slightly differently for these EOY assessments. Braille and some embedded supports will not be available.

7. Are the EOY assessments the actual spring 2020 STAAR tests that were not administered?

No. The optional EOY assessments are built from previously released STAAR test questions due to current item bank availability. Although students may have already seen some released test questions in the past, the EOY assessments are unique test forms that combine items from all years available across hundreds of questions to match the current STAAR blueprint. In this way, the tests are beneficial measures of student understanding.

8. Since the TEKS assessed on some of the released STAAR tests have been revised or streamlined, will the EOY assessments be aligned to the current TEKS?

Yes. The optional EOY assessment will be aligned to the TEKS in place for the 2019–2020 school year. Each released test question selected for the EOY assessments will be reviewed to ensure the question measures a student expectation from the current TEKS.

9. How many test questions are on the EOY assessments?

The optional EOY assessments are designed to mirror the blueprints for the STAAR tests. Each EOY assessment will have the same number and proportion of test questions as its related STAAR test. The exception to this is the Reading Language Arts (RLA) tests since the RLA curriculum has been recently revised. The EOY

assessments for RLA will be aligned to the RLA TEKS but may be slightly shorter than the corresponding STAAR test. In addition, the EOY assessments will not include writing prompts.

10. How much time do students need to complete the EOY assessments?

The EOY assessments mirror the STAAR tests, so students should need only a few hours to complete each test. However, since these are optional assessments, districts may set their own timing to fit their needs.

11. Will districts need to register or sign-up to use the EOY assessments?

Yes. A district that chooses to provide the optional EOY assessments in any available grade/subject or course must register by providing a student data file in the format currently used for STAAR. Registration is required for both online and paper testing.

12. How does the registration process work for the EOY assessments?

The registration process for the optional EOY assessments requires a district to complete two steps. The first is to notify Pearson of a district's choice to participate in the EOY assessments by submitting a [webform](#). The second is to provide a registration data file in the same format used for STAAR. However, the process for loading the data file via a district's current access to the PearsonAccess Next Training Site will be different than the process currently used for other assessment programs like STAAR Alternate 2. Districts will submit their registration data file as an attachment in a Support Request in the PearsonAccess Next Training Site. This alternate process will allow Pearson to upload the district's data into the EOY assessment testing platform so that student access can be created.

13. What do students do when they complete an EOY assessment?

Students testing online submit their test through the testing platform. Students testing on paper should send their answer documents back to their district (either hardcopy or electronically) following their local district's guidance.

14. How quickly can a parent or student see the student's test results for the EOY assessments?

Students who take the EOY assessments online will be able to see their test results immediately after submitting the test. Results will show how a student performed overall on the test, how he or she did on each test question, and the correct answer to each question. Parents and students can log back into the web browser at any time to review the student's test results. Note that student results for the EOY assessments will not be available in the Student Portal on the Texas Assessment website. For students who take the EOY assessments on paper, the timing of the test results will vary based on when the test is scored.

15. What types of scores will be available for the EOY assessments?

In addition to raw scores (the number of questions the student answered correctly), scale scores and performance levels will be available similar to those used for STAAR. For each EOY assessment, a raw score to scale score conversion table will be created so that scale scores and STAAR performance levels may be determined.

16. How will districts receive reporting information for students who take the EOY assessments online?

Districts will have access to reporting data files similar to those used for STAAR. A district may download the data files into its data processing systems.

17. How should districts use the student performance data from the EOY assessments?

The EOY assessments are optional for district use but may be helpful for district and campus leadership as they are analyzing the degree to which student learning was impacted by the disruption of COVID-19 school closures. Districts may use the student performance data from the optional EOY assessments as one of several data points to evaluate the progress their students have made during the 2019–2020 school year. As these assessments are comprised of previously released STAAR test questions and answers that are publicly available, the student performance data is not intended to be used for purposes such as accountability, staff performance, or compensation measures.

18. How may districts with campuses identified for required improvement through the state accountability system use the EOY assessments?

District and campus leadership may use the EOY assessment performance data as a baseline data point to drive the development of plans to provide targeted student-level learning supports, as well as campus-level focus areas for improvement. For campuses with identifications requiring improvement, this data analysis will be helpful for informing the actions in their Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs), ensuring these actions are reflective of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning.

19. How may districts with Texas Partnership (Senate Bill 1882) campuses use the EOY assessments?

As the EOY assessments are comprised of previously released STAAR test questions and answers that are publicly available, student performance data is not intended to be used for purposes such as Texas Partnership campus annual evaluations or contract renewal determinations. Since the EOY assessments are optional, districts may not require Texas Partnership campuses to administer the EOY assessments. Texas Partnership campuses may choose to administer the EOY assessments even if the district chooses not to administer the tests.