

SUBJECT: Shortened Test Blueprints for STAAR Grades 3–8 Beginning in Spring 2017

The purpose of this communication is to inform school districts of several changes made to the test blueprints for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR[®]). Beginning with the assessments administered in spring 2017, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is decreasing the number of test questions on the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments based on the requirements in House Bill (HB) 743.

HB 743 added §39.023 (a-12) to the Texas Education Code, which requires STAAR assessments to be designed so that 85% of students can complete the grades 3–5 assessments within 2 hours and 85% of students can complete the grades 6–8 assessments within 3 hours. To meet legislative requirements for reducing the length of each assessment while maintaining valid and reliable assessments, TEA has decreased the number of test questions on each of the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments. Since the passage of HB 743 in 2015, STAAR test blueprints for grades 3–8 have been reduced by removing from 5 to 14 test items.

- In comparison to the 2015 tests, the STAAR grades 3–8 math tests have been shortened by 14 questions each.
- In comparison to the 2015 tests, the STAAR grade 3 reading test has been shortened by 6 questions, and the STAAR grades 4–8 reading tests have been shortened by 8 questions each.
- In comparison to the 2015 tests, the STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests have been shortened by 1 essay and changed from 2 days of testing to 1 day. In addition, these tests have been shortened by 4 and 10 multiple-choice questions for a total of 5 and 11 test items, respectively.
- In comparison to the 2015 tests, the STAAR grades 5 and 8 science tests have been shortened by 8 and 12 questions, respectively.
- In comparison to the 2015 test, the STAAR grade 8 social studies test has been shortened by 8 questions.

In general, the decrease in the number of questions for the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments was spread proportionally across the reporting categories for each test. The change in the number of test questions under each reporting category can be seen in the updated STAAR test blueprints available on the STAAR Resources webpage (<http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/>).

Because the blueprint reduction was applied proportionally across each test, the construct of what is assessed has not changed. Therefore, the shortened tests can be equated and scaled using the same performance standards. However, the raw score for each assessment will shift because the total number of test questions has shifted.

In 2017, TEA will resume embedding field-test questions for STAAR grades 3–8. However, the number of embedded field-test questions for mathematics, reading, science, and social studies has also been reduced from 8 to 6 questions. The STAAR grade 4 writing test will continue to have 5 embedded field-test questions, and the grade 7 writing test will continue to have 6.