

# Chapter 2 Building a High-Quality Assessment System

Test Development Activities

Groups Involved

Item Development and Review

Pilot Testing

Field Testing and Data Review

Security

Quality-Control Procedures



## Groups Involved

Several groups are involved in the Texas Assessment Program. Each of the following entities performs specific functions, and their collaborative efforts significantly contribute to the quality of the assessment program.

### Student Assessment Division

TEA's Student Assessment Division is responsible for implementing the provisions of state and federal law for the state assessment program. The Student Assessment Division oversees the planning, scheduling, and implementation of all major assessment activities and supervises the agency's contracts with Cambium Assessment, Inc. (CAI) and Pearson. TEA staff members in this division conduct QC activities for the development and administration of the assessment program, as well as the monitoring of the program's security provisions.

TEA's content team, part of the Student Assessment Division, is responsible for supporting the development and implementation of the TEKS in the foundation curriculum (mathematics, reading/language arts [RLA], science, and social studies), the enrichment curriculum (fine arts, health education, languages other than English, physical education, and technology applications), and the English Language Proficiency Standards (the ELPS). These TEA staff members provide content expertise during the item development and test development processes for all statewide assessments.

### Performance Reporting Division

TEA's Performance Reporting Division is responsible for compiling and analyzing data to develop and report meaningful accountability ratings that help Texas public schools meet the educational needs of all students. As part of administering the state's public school accountability system, the Performance Reporting Division publishes assessment reporting and accountability information. TEA staff members in this division conduct QC activities for the scoring and reporting of the assessment program. The division also provides guidance and resources to help school administrators, teachers, parents, and the general public understand and benefit from the state's accountability information.

### Cambium Assessment, Inc.

CAI is the test administration, scoring, and reporting contractor for the provision of support services for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) program, STAAR Alternate 2, the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and TELPAS Alternate. CAI also serves as the program integration contractor. This role includes working with Pearson to make sure that the entire state assessment program is managed per TEA requirements.





Texas classroom teachers (including general education teachers, special education teachers, and bilingual and English as a second language [ESL] teachers), and curriculum specialists, to work with TEA staff in reviewing newly developed test items.

TEA seeks recommendations for item review committee members from superintendents and other district administrators, district curriculum specialists, ESC executive directors and staff members, and staff from other agency divisions. In addition, TEA has developed an Educator Committee Application database where educators can self-nominate to participate on TEA educator committees. Item review committee members are selected based on their nomination on TEA's based on the 2016-2017 assessment database.

Passage and Item Review Guidelines

Opportunity to Learn

- The item is a good measure

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TEA conducts stand-alone field tests of new items (e.g., writing prompts) by administering them to a purposefully selected representative Texas student sample. In February 2022, a STAAR stand-alone field test occurred for new item types. Refer to [Chapter 4, “State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness \(STAAR\),”](#) for detailed information about stand-alone field testing.

Typically, six field-test questions are embedded in each form for mathematics, reading, science, and social studies in the STAAR grades 3–8 primary administrations. Thirteen field-test questions are embedded in each English I and English II form, and eight are embedded in each Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History form in the STAAR end-of-course (EOC) primary administrations. For 2021–2022, embedded field testing was conducted in both the paper-pencil and online forms. Multiple choice writing field test items were embedded in the Grades 3–8 reading tests and Grades 3–5 Spanish



expected differences in group performance on any single item by gender and ethnicity.

## Data Review Procedures

After field testing, TEA content assessment specialists provide feedback to Pearson

Table 2.2. Comparison of Readiness and Supporting Standards

Readiness Standards	Supporting Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are essential for success in the current grade or course</li> <li>• Are important for preparedness for the next grade or course</li> <li>• Support college and career readiness</li> <li>• Necessitate in-depth instruction</li> <li>• Address broad and deep ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be introduced in the current grade or course and emphasized in a subsequent year</li> <li>• May be reinforced in the current grade or course and emphasized in a previous year</li> <li>• Play a role in preparing students for the next grade or course, but not a central role</li> <li>• Address more narrowly defined ideas</li> </ul>

review the content of each STAAR EOC assessment before test construction is completed. This review is referred to as content validation and is included as a QC

## MANUALS

The Coordinator Resources and test administrator manuals, including the *TELPAS Rater Manual*, provide guidelines on how to train testing personnel, administer tests, create secure testing environments, and properly store test materials. They also instruct testing personnel on how to report to TEA any confirmed or alleged testing irregularities that might have occurred in a classroom, on a campus, or within a school district. Finally, the manuals provide training and guidelines relative to test security oaths that all personnel with access to secure test materials are required to sign. The manuals give specific details about the possible penalties for violating test procedures. In addition, [TAC §101.3031](#) includes specific language detailing the requirements of school districts and charter schools to maintain security and confidentiality of assessment instruments, including a

Products and procedures to assist in test administration have been developed to promote test security and include the following:

- an internal database that allows TEA to track reported testing irregularities and security violations

- a system to review and respond to each reported testing irregularity

- a resolution process that tracks missing secure test materials after each administration and provides suggested best practices that districts can implement for proper handling and return of secure materials

## Item Response

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STAAR Alternate 2

transformations of the data. These calculations are always completed and verified by multiple psychometricians or testing experts at CAI and Pearson. These calculations are then additionally verified and accepted by TEA.

While each year's calculations are verified, they are also compared to historical values to further validate the reasonableness of the results. For example, pass rates from this year were compared to those from previous years. These year-to-year comparisons of the technical procedures and assessment results help to verify the quality of the assessments and to inform TEA of the impact of the program on student achievement.

For more information about the standard technical processes of the Texas Assessment Program, see









## WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS

The training materials are selected to clearly differentiate student performance at the different rubric score points and to help scorers learn the difference between score points. The training materials also contain responses determined to be borderline between two adjacent score points to help scorers refine their understanding of differences between adjacent score points. Supervisors are available during rater training to assist and answer questions. Once scorers complete the training sets, they are administered qualification sets of student compositions as with the training sets, the student compositions in the qualification sets have already been scored by Pearson and TEA staff. All the scorers must accurately assign scores to student responses in the qualification sets. Scorers are given two opportunities to qualify, with a different set of responses in each set. Any scorer who is unable to meet the standards established by Pearson and TEA is dismissed from scoring.

## ONGOING TRAINING



