HB 5 UPDATE FOR 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR – Houston ISD

END-OF-COURSE EXAMS

Q: How does HB 5 change the STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) testing requirements for this school year?

A: Starting in school year 2013-2014, high school students are required to pass five STAAR EOC exams to satisfy the new graduation requirements: Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. Students who have taken a required assessment - but have not yet passed it - will still need to demonstrate satisfactory performance on that exam to meet the state's graduation requirements. Accelerated instruction is required for students who did not perform satisfactorily on any of these five required EOC exams. The development and administration of EOC assessments in Geometry, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, and World History has ceased. The administration of the Algebra II and English III assessments have been suspended beginning in July 2013.

Reading and writing are currently assessed separately in the English I and English II EOC tests, and will continue to be assessed separately for one additional EOC administration in December 2013. As of now, current high school students who have not yet passed both the reading and writing portions of an English EOC test will still need to successfully complete each part to meet graduation requirements. However, TEA is proposing to use the minimum – and cumulative – score concepts to determine whether students taking these separate reading and writing assessments have met their English I and English II graduation requirements. If that proposal is formally implemented, schools will receive additional information from HISD Accountability.

Going forward, HB 5 requires reading and writing to be combined and given in a single day, so a revised English EOC assessment that combines reading and writing will be administered beginning in spring 2014. Students who have not successfully completed a separate reading or writing assessment by that time will take the combined English EOC test. TEA has released a chart of the revised blueprints for the redesigned English I and II EOC tests at http://bit.ly/STAAR_ENG1-2. Spring semester HISD curriculum documents for ELA I and II are being rewritten to provide support for the revised writing requirements of the new STAAR blueprints.

In addition, HB 5 eliminates the 15 percent grading requirement. Under the previous rule, a student’s score on a STAAR end-of-course exam would have counted 15 percent of the student’s final grade in each tested subject area. The STAAR end-of-course cumulative score component has also been eliminated.

BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

Q: How does HB 5 impact the various district assessments in HISD, including the fall and spring district-level assessments (DLAs) and the various beginning-of-year (BOY), middle-of-year (MOY), and end-of-year (EOY) assessments?

A: HB 5 limits school districts during a school year to no more than two benchmark assessments to prepare students for a corresponding STAAR or STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) assessment. HB 5 defines a benchmark assessment as “…a district-required assessment instrument designed to prepare students for a corresponding state-administered assessment instrument.” The law does not restrict the administration of college preparation assessments (such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP exams, IB exams, or similar tests), nor does it limit “independent classroom examinations designed or adopted and administered by a classroom teacher.”

HISD has scheduled two rounds of benchmark testing during the 2013-2014 school year for grades and courses assessed by STAAR, one during a fall assessment window and one during one of two spring assessment windows. Information on HISD’s district-level assessment plans are at http://hisdacademics.org/2013/09/09/district-level-assessments-for-2013-2014/. If administered in a school, these district-level assessments would be considered benchmark assessments as defined by HB 5, and no other comprehensive, STAAR-like summative assessments could be administered by the district in that school for the same course or grade during the school year. However, even with the use of DLA’s at their campus, teachers could still administer their own teacher-developed assessments throughout the year as part of their independent efforts to determine student progress and mastery.

The various BOY, MOY, and EOY assessments provided by the district are diagnostic assessments designed to measure readiness for instruction or to monitor progress during instruction. Those assessments are not considered benchmarks under HB 5 because they are not intended to prepare students for STAAR.

ELL EXEMPTIONS

Q: How does HB 5 affect the length of time a student must be enrolled in a U.S. school for purposes of exemption under state assessments?

A: Starting in 2013-2014, English Language Learners (ELLs) must be enrolled for sixty (60) consecutive school days in a school year for that school year to count as one year in the calculation of years in U.S. schools. This may not be calculated retroactively. Therefore, ELL students enrolling in U.S. schools within the last 60 school days of a school year will be considered to be in their first year in U.S. schools for the following school year.
CERTIFICATION EXAM FEE WAIVERS

Q: What does HB 5 change concerning fee subsidies for CTE students who take certification or licensing examinations?

A: HB 5 repeals the provision that required students who successfully complete a CTE program to submit a written application to their school in order to qualify for a subsidy for a certification or licensing examination. It also removes the requirement that certifications must be in high-demand, high-wage, high-skill occupations. In HISD, the CTE Department currently pays for all certification exams for students.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Q: What impact does HB 5 have on options for high school students who take classes at junior colleges?

A: HB 5 maintains service areas for junior colleges but provides greater flexibility for school districts. HB 5 repeals the provision that states that a junior college may enter into an agreement with a high school located outside of its service area only if the service area junior college is unable to provide the requested course to the satisfaction of the school district. HB 5 does state that students may not enroll in more than three courses at a junior college outside of the junior college in their district’s service area. Early college high school students, however, may enroll in a greater number of courses.

School districts still need clarification on whether the three-course limit is per semester or per year, and if summer sessions count toward this limit. HISD does have some flexibility for its students wishing to take more than three courses outside a high school’s service area if the students transfer to an early college high school.

COLLEGE PREP COURSES FOR MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Q: What support does HB 5 require for seniors who need college preparatory coursework in mathematics and English language arts?

A: HB 5 requires each school district to partner with at least one institution of higher education to develop and provide courses in college preparatory mathematics and English language arts. The courses are to be designed for 12th-grade students who do not meet the college-readiness standards on an EOC assessment, or whose coursework, college entrance exam, or TSI assessment score indicates the student is not ready for entry-level college coursework. School districts must send a notice to each student to whom this provision applies. The Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education are tasked with developing and recommending to the State Board of Education the TEKS for these two courses. Currently, dual credit articulations exist in HISD and are regularly communicated to campuses and students. College readiness courses also exist, but are not tied to any one institution of higher education.

DISCLOSURE OF STATE AND DISTRICT ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Q: What does HB 5 say about teacher access to student assessment results?

A: HB 5 requires school districts to disclose a student’s assessment results to the student’s teacher for that subject. HISD teachers have access to the assessment results of currently assigned students via the HISD Analytics for Education (A4E) Teacher Dashboard. Access to previous-year student results will be available in October 2013.

EVALUATING COMMUNITY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Q: How are school districts to evaluate and report community and student engagement in the district and at schools according to HB 5?

A: HB 5 requires districts to evaluate and assign a rating of exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and unacceptable for district and campus performance in community and student engagement. HISD currently captures community and student engagement feedback via the annual Your Voice survey. TEA still needs to develop an online data collection system that will allow districts to upload their locally-determined performance ratings in nine possible categories for each campus in the district.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Q: On what additional indicators does HB 5 require districts and campuses to be evaluated?

A: HB 5 requires additional indicators to be used to rate student achievement at the district and campus level. These indicators will be included in the Distinction Designations in the State Accountability System. The three required indicators include: (1) the percentage of students who graduate with the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation high school program; and (2) the percentage of students who successfully complete the curriculum requirements for an endorsement under the foundation high school program. In addition, the third indicator consists of at least three additional indicators of student achievement which evaluate district/campus performance. These indicators include the percentage of students who satisfy the TSI college readiness benchmarks or the number of students who earn: (i) at least 12 hours of postsecondary credit required for the foundation high school program or to earn an endorsement; (ii) at least 30 hours of postsecondary credit required for the foundation high school program or earn an endorsement, (iii) an associate’s degree; or (iv) an industry certification.
MINIMUM ATTENDANCE FOR CLASS CREDIT

Q: May class credit be awarded if certain attendance requirements are not met?
A: Minimum attendance for class credit, or a final grade, may not be awarded unless certain attendance requirements are met. These requirements are published in the current HISD School Guidelines and reflect practices already in place in HISD.

EOC EXAMS AND CLASS RANK

Q: May a student’s performance on an EOC be used in determining class rank?
A: A student’s performance on an EOC may not be used in any way or for any purpose in determining the student's class ranking.

TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Q: How do current federal accountability testing requirements and HB 5 impact middle and high school state testing requirements?
A: Current federal accountability requirements specify that students have a mathematics score every year in grades 3–8 as well as a mathematics score in high school. States that offer only one mathematics assessment at the high school level – which can also be taken by middle school students – must ensure that there is a mathematics result that can be attributed to a high school. In Texas, that now means middle school students who take Algebra I will need to take two assessments. HISD is making minor adjustments to the Math 7 Pre-AP curriculum to allow those students to take their grade-level mathematics STAAR in each year of middle school.

With HB 5’s elimination of STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) assessments for Geometry and Algebra II, Algebra I remains as the only assessment to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in mathematics for high school students. The U.S. Department of Education has determined that middle school students who take Algebra I must take two assessments: the Algebra I STAAR EOC (which will count for high school accountability when the student is in high school) and the grade-level middle school mathematics STAAR (which will count for middle school accountability in the current year).

Current state law also mandates that students be assessed by STAAR over the curriculum for the course they have been taught during the year. Until now, the HISD Math 7 Pre-AP curriculum addressed all the Math 8 standards, because Math 8 is a prerequisite for Algebra I, the course most of these students take in grade 8. However, because Math 7 Pre-AP students in previous years had addressed all the standards for Math 8 during the school year, they were required to take the Grade 8 Mathematics STAAR.

Therefore, to allow HISD middle school students to test on grade level in mathematics every year and to ensure that Math 7 Pre-AP students are not required to take the Grade 8 Mathematics STAAR two years in a row, the HISD Curriculum Department has adjusted the Math 7 Pre-AP curriculum by removing from the course three Math 8 standards that are also addressed in Algebra I. The end result is that middle school students will now take their grade-level STAAR mathematics test each year. During the year they take Algebra I, they will also take the Algebra I STAAR EOC.

The following table indicates the appropriate STAAR assessment(s) for each middle school mathematics course. Additional details are in a memo posted at: http://hisdacademics.org/2013/09/23/changes-to-the-math-7-pre-ap-curriculum-and-staar/

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Math Course(s) Taken</th>
<th>STAAR Assessment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Math 6</td>
<td>Grade 6 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Math 6 Pre-AP</td>
<td>Grade 6 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Math 7</td>
<td>Grade 7 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Math 7 Pre-AP</td>
<td>Grade 7 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Any Algebra I course for high school credit</td>
<td>Grade 7 Math and Algebra I EOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Math 8</td>
<td>Grade 8 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Math 8 Pre-AP</td>
<td>Grade 8 Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Any Algebra I course for high school credit</td>
<td>Grade 8 Math and Algebra I EOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Any Geometry or Algebra II course for high school credit</td>
<td>Grade 8 Math</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Because all HISD high school students take both English I and English II EOC exams in high school, no accountability issues of “double testing” are raised by Pre-AP ELA courses in middle school. All HISD middle school students should be taking on-grade-level STAAR tests for Reading and Writing.

TUTORING AND TEST PREPARATION

Q: What limitations does HB 5 place on remedial tutoring and/or test prep activities during class time?
A: HB 5 states that a district’s board of trustees must adopt and strictly enforce a policy limiting the removal of students from class for remedial tutoring or test preparation. A district may not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation if, as a result of the removal, the student would miss more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student’s parent or another person standing in parental relation to the student provides to the district written consent for removal from class for that purpose. The HISD Board of Education is in the process of addressing this mandate.