

STAAR FAQ

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness — more commonly referred to as STAAR — are required assessments given every year to students in Texas public schools.

ARE HISD STUDENTS REQUIRED TO TAKE THE STATE TEST?

Yes. Every student receiving instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) shall take the appropriate criterion-referenced assessments – in this case, the STAAR, as required by the TEC § 39.023.

IS PASSING STAAR A REQUIREMENT FOR PROMOTION TO THE NEXT GRADE?

In order for students to move to the next grade level, they must show that they have met HISD's promotion standards. These standards generally include course or subject grades, state tests where applicable, and attendance. However, because of changes to the state's testing calendar and the subsequent delay in receiving test results, promotion standards have been modified for grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 for the 2015-16 school year only to exclude passing scores on STAAR tests. The HISD Board of Education made this decision at the December 15, 2015, board meeting. Read more about promotion standards [here](#).

IS PASSING STAAR STILL A PROMOTION STANDARD IN GRADES 5 AND 8?

Yes, passing scores on STAAR are still a promotion standard for students in grades 5 and 8. The Texas Legislature created the Student Success Initiative (SSI) to ensure that students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. Under SSI, students in fifth and eighth grade must pass the STAAR in mathematics and reading as a state promotion requirement.

IF MY STUDENT FAILS A STAAR TEST OR DOESN'T TAKE A STAAR TEST, WILL HE OR SHE STILL BE PROMOTED TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL? WILL SUMMER SCHOOL BE REQUIRED?

Passing STAAR is one of the state promotion requirements for students in grades 5 and 8. Students in grades 5 and 8 who do not take or pass the STAAR will not automatically meet promotion requirements. When a student doesn't meet all district and state promotion requirements, he/she is referred to a school-based Grade Placement Committee prior to the start of summer school for a formal review of grades, attendance records, and other assessments. The Grade Placement Committee is made up of a student's parents or guardian, teacher of record, and principal or principal's designee.

After the review, the Grade Placement Committee makes a determination: move forward with promotion or require the student to receive additional instruction during summer school. Students who need additional instruction are re-evaluated by the committee at the end of the summer, and a final promotion/retention determination is made and must be unanimous.

CAN A PARENT/GUARDIAN OPT A STUDENT OUT OF STAAR?

Standardized testing is required in Texas public schools by the STAAR program set out in the Texas Education Code, chapters 39 and 19, and the Texas Administrative Code, chapter 101. State law makes it clear that students may not "opt out" of standardized or any other tests. Texas Education Code section 26.010 states: Exemption from Instruction (a) A parent is entitled to remove the parent's child temporarily from a class or other school activity that conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs if the parent presents or delivers to the teacher of the parent's child a written statement authorizing the removal of the child from the class or other school activity. A parent is not entitled to remove the parent's child from a class or other school activity to avoid a test or to prevent the child from taking a subject for an entire semester. (b) This section does not exempt a child from satisfying grade level or graduation requirements in a manner acceptable to the school district and the agency.

According to HISD Board of Education policy, a parent or guardian who wishes to opt his or her child out of the state-mandated assessments can complete the “[State Assessments Opt-Out Form](#).” This form is not required and is not considered to be an authorization for a test exemption request. It merely lists the implications of not testing that parents/guardians should be aware of. Instead of the form, parents/guardians may submit a written request to the school principal.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY STUDENT ON TESTING DAYS IF WE OPT OUT?

If a student is present during the state test administration and chooses not to test, a blank answer document – coded with an “S” for Scored – is submitted for scoring as required by the state. The student will receive a raw score of zero and the lowest possible scale score for the grade/subject. If a student is absent during the entire state test administration, they are coded with an “A” for absent. Such designation does not impact the school or the district regarding performance calculations but will impact participation rates on the test. This applies to any make-up days or retest days. See the STAAR testing schedule [here](#).

WHAT CAN THE SCHOOLS OFFER TO STUDENTS WHO ATTEND SCHOOL BUT DO NOT PARTICIPATE DURING STAAR ADMINISTRATION DAYS?

Schools may assign homework, projects, etc., and will provide a safe, educational setting for these students to study independently. There will be no negative consequences or disciplinary action on the part of teachers or school administrators, such as detention or removal of recess, for students who do not participate in STAAR.

IF MY STUDENT DOESN'T TAKE THE STAAR, WILL IT AFFECT MY SCHOOL OR THE DISTRICT?

If the student opts out, there is no direct impact on state accountability ratings, although there could be an indirect impact in that teachers and schools won't get credit for students who potentially could have done well on the test. Additionally, teachers, schools, and parents/guardians won't have an accurate measure of how well students met state standards.

In schools where a high number of students are not participating in STAAR, the test participation rate may impact the federal accountability rating. Additionally, any campus or district-level student performance or academic growth analyses would not include information for these students. These analyses are used to make decisions about the effectiveness of campus and district instructional programs and efforts at the campus, district, and state levels.