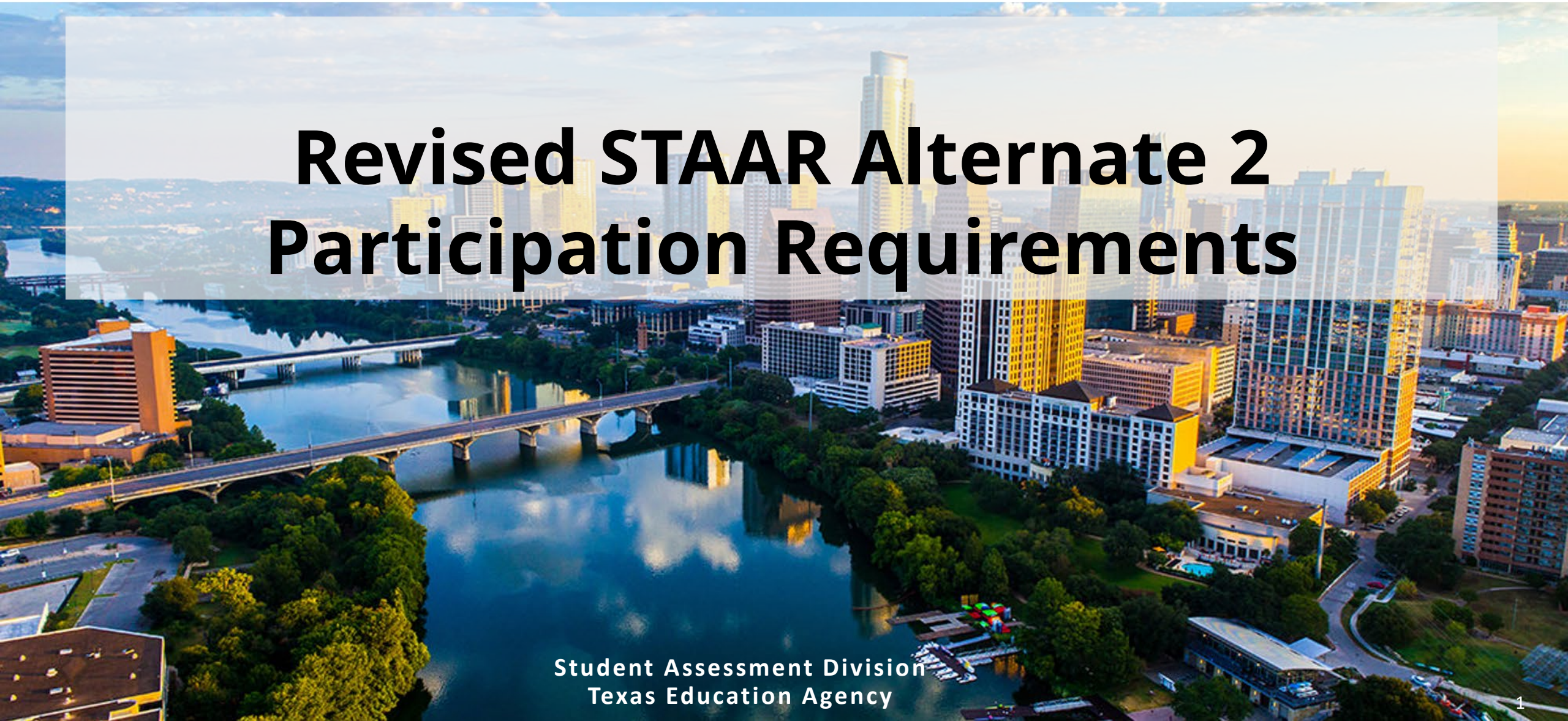
Revised STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements



Student Assessment Division
Texas Education Agency

Webinar Norms

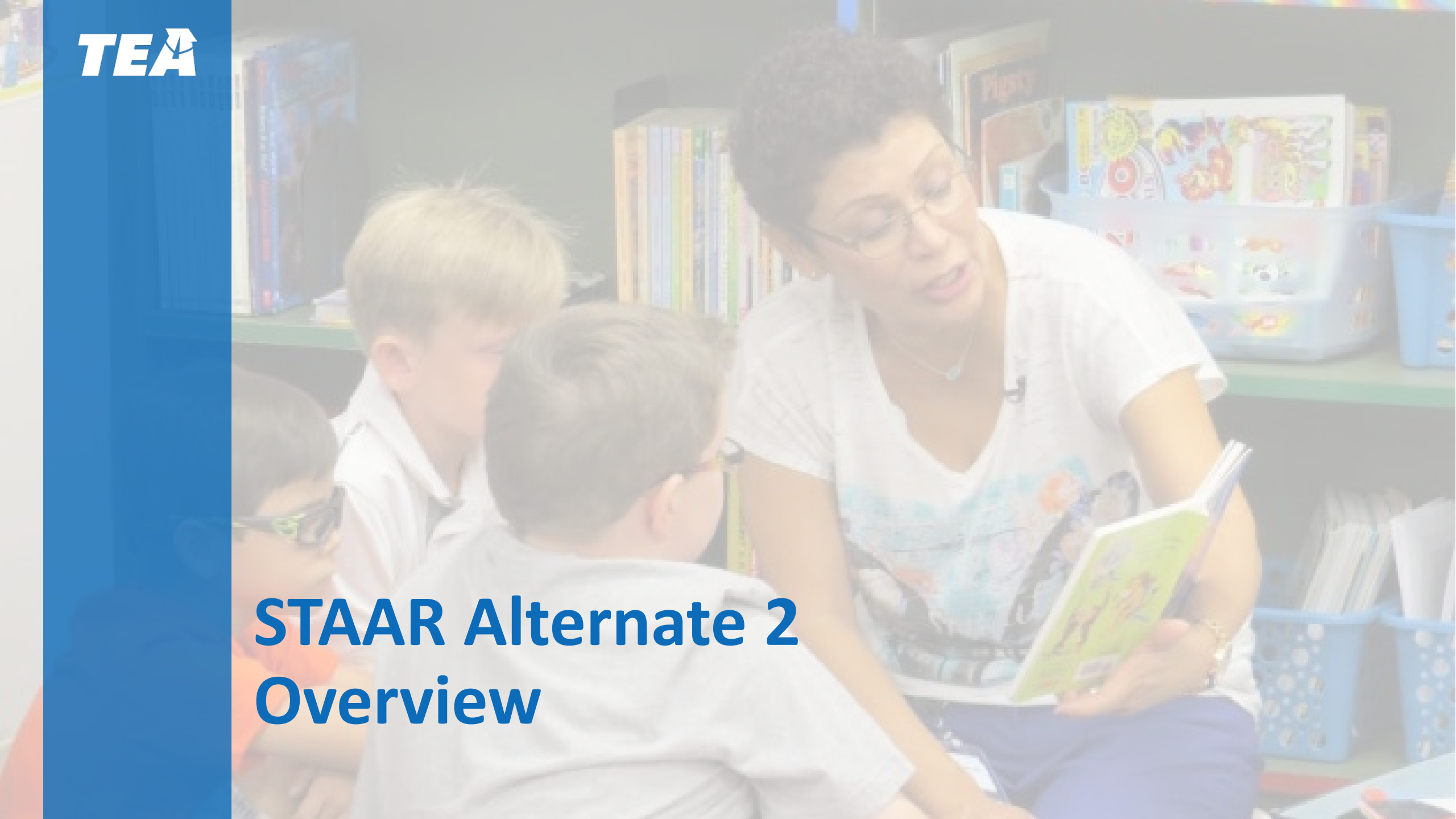
- Please make sure to keep your microphones muted.
- Please send questions through the Q/A function. TEA is producing an FAQ document that will be posted soon.

Agenda

- STAAR Alternate 2 Overview
- USDE Statewide 1% Waiver Denial
- STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requireme
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Additional Resources

Webinar Goals

- Provide an overview of STAAR Alternate 2
- Provide an understanding of the United States Department of Education (USDE) Statewide 1% Waiver Denial
- Provide local education agencies (LEAs) with accurate information and available resources pertaining to the revised STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements



STAAR Alternate 2 Overview

What is STAAR Alternate 2?

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2 is

- an assessment **based on prerequisite skills** of the enrolled grade-level state curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS);
- designed to meet the needs of **students with the most significant cognitive disabilities**; and
- **developed to meet federal requirements** of both the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Who is assessed with STAAR Alternate 2?

- Only students who meet the Texas Education Agency (TEA) definition of a student with the **most** significant cognitive disability may be assessed with STAAR Alternate 2 and who are enrolled in:
  - grades 3–8 or
  - specific high school courses—Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, or U.S. History.
- Students who meet participation requirements are assessed with STAAR Alternate 2 for all grades/subjects and courses.
- The admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee is required to evaluate and make state assessment participation decisions annually.

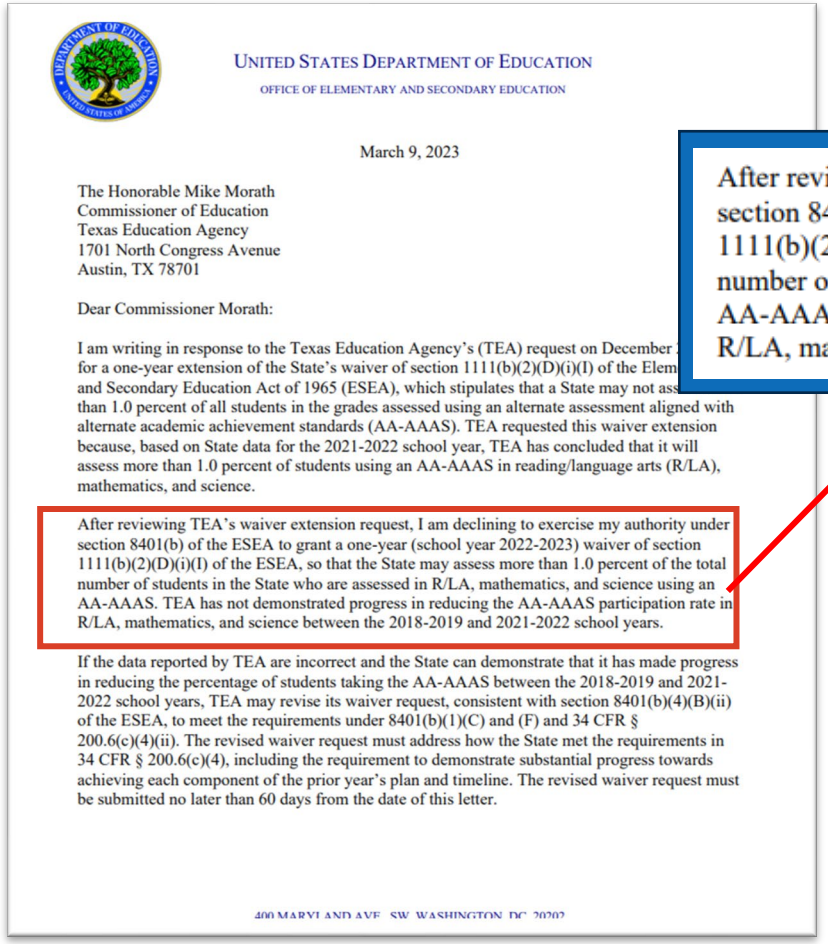
TEA Definition of Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disability

A student with the **most** significant cognitive disability:

- Exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and who indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit his or her ability to apply social and practical skills (e.g., personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money) **across all life domains**.
- Requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and needs substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area.

USDE Statewide 1% Waiver Denial

ESSA Waiver Denial Notification



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Mike Morath
Commissioner of Education
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath:

I am writing in response to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) request on December 1 for a one-year extension of the State's waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the Elem and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), which stipulates that a State may not ass than 1.0 percent of all students in the grades assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). TEA requested this waiver extension because, based on State data for the 2021-2022 school year, TEA has concluded that it will assess more than 1.0 percent of students using an AA-AAAS in reading/language arts (R/LA), mathematics, and science.

After reviewing TEA's waiver extension request, I am declining to exercise my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA to grant a one-year (school year 2022-2023) waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA, so that the State may assess more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in R/LA, mathematics, and science using an AA-AAAS. TEA has not demonstrated progress in reducing the AA-AAAS participation rate in R/LA, mathematics, and science between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years.

If the data reported by TEA are incorrect and the State can demonstrate that it has made progress in reducing the percentage of students taking the AA-AAAS between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years, TEA may revise its waiver request, consistent with section 8401(b)(4)(B)(ii) of the ESEA, to meet the requirements under 8401(b)(1)(C) and (F) and 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)(ii). The revised waiver request must address how the State met the requirements in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4), including the requirement to demonstrate substantial progress towards achieving each component of the prior year's plan and timeline. The revised waiver request must be submitted no later than 60 days from the date of this letter.

400 MARYLAND AVE, SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

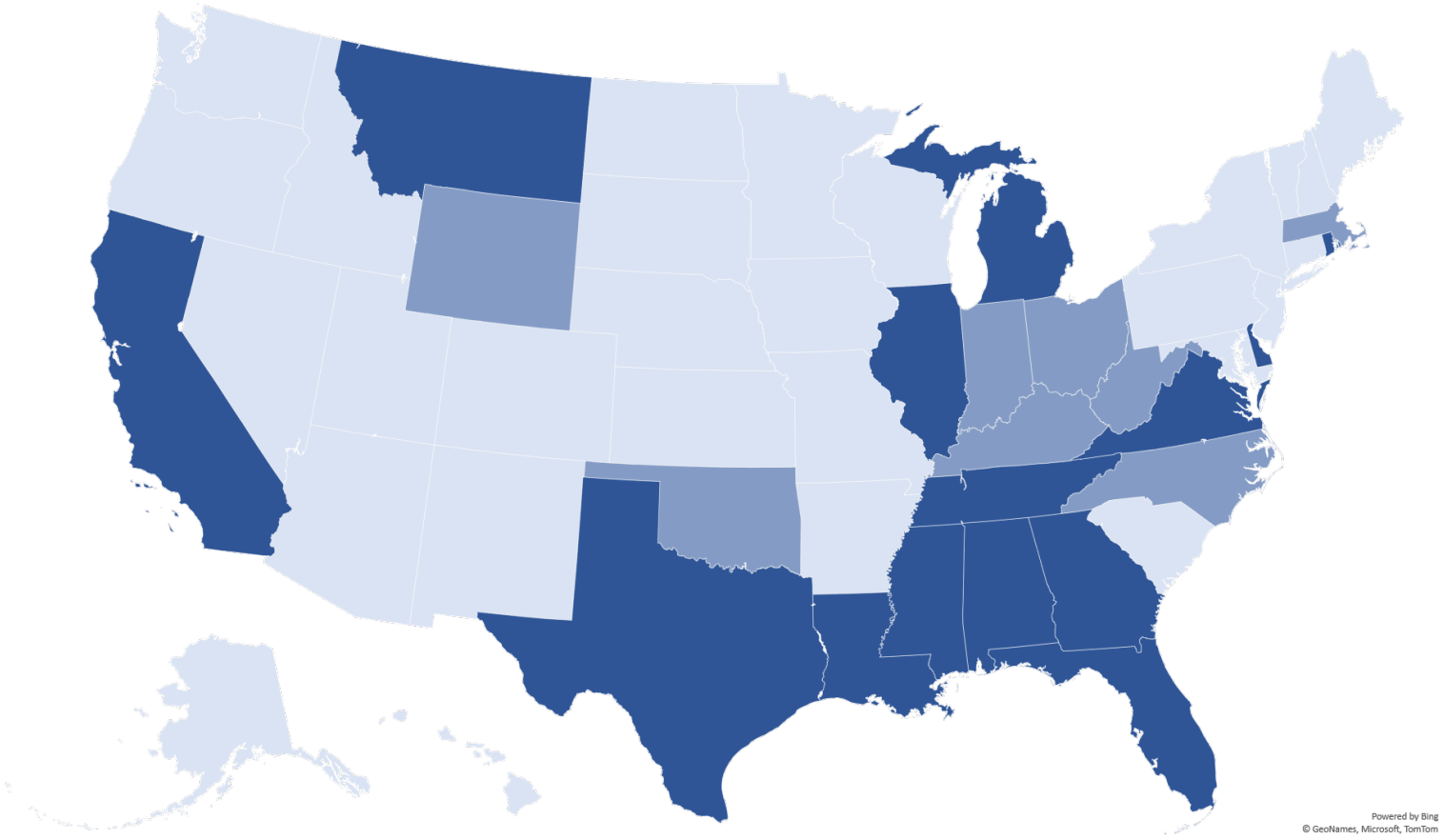
After reviewing TEA's waiver extension request, I am declining to exercise my authority under section 8401(b) of the ESEA to grant a one-year (school year 2022-2023) waiver of section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the ESEA, so that the State may assess more than 1.0 percent of the total number of students in the State who are assessed in R/LA, mathematics, and science using an AA-AAAS. TEA has not demonstrated progress in reducing the AA-AAAS participation rate in R/LA, mathematics, and science between the 2018-2019 and 2021-2022 school years.

TABLE 1. SPRING 2022 PARTICIPATION IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT BY SUBJECT

DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
STAAR ALTERNATE 2 TESTS, ALL STUDENTS MATHEMATICS	43,270	1.5%
STAAR TESTS, ALL STUDENTS MATHEMATICS	2,856,986	
STAAR ALTERNATE 2 TESTS, ALL STUDENTS RLA	48,795	1.4%
STAAR TESTS, ALL STUDENTS RLA	3,537,439	
STAAR ALTERNATE 2 TESTS, ALL STUDENTS SCIENCE	17,842	1.3%
STAAR TESTS, ALL STUDENTS SCIENCE	1,337,884	

(2023 Texas One Percent Waiver Denial Letter)

USDE Denial by State



In March of 2023, USDE denied the 1% waiver for 14 states (indicated in darker blue) for not making significant progress toward meeting the 1% state limit and/or not testing at least 95% of eligible students.

Eight states saw their waiver approved for making 'significant progress' towards reaching the 1% state limit.

Frequently Asked Question

Does the 1% cap apply to individual districts or campuses?

No. The 1% cap on students participating in the alternate assessment applies to the state. LEAs who are over 1% student participation are required to complete a justification and assurances form to indicate LEA specific information as to why more than 1% of students were assessed using the alternate assessment.

Revised STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements

WHEN AND WHO

In August 2023, STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements were revised using recommendations and feedback that included the following stakeholders across the state:

- Special education educators and administrators
- ESC administrators and specialists
- Special education advocates
- TEA Special Populations personnel

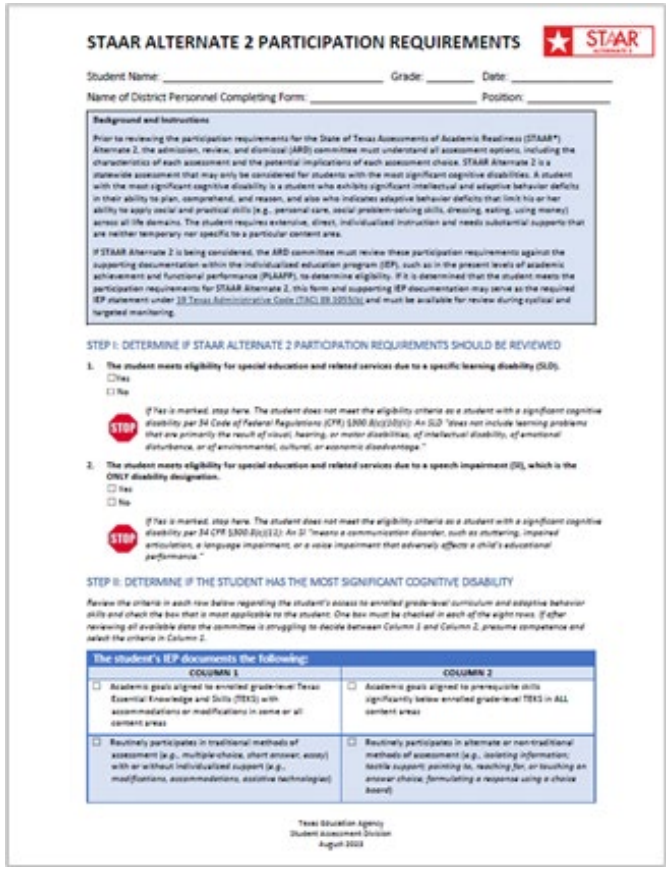
WHY

The purpose of revising the participation requirements was to

- clarify the scope of students that are assessed with STAAR Alternate 2 and
- satisfy ESSA requirements.

STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements

STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements (continued)



STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Name of District Personnel Completing Form: _____ Position: _____

Background and Instructions

Prior to reviewing the participation requirements for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice. STAAR Alternate 2 is a statewide assessment that may only be considered for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student who exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and also who indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit his or her ability to apply social and practical skills (e.g., personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money) across all life domains. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and needs substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area.

If STAAR Alternate 2 is being considered, the ARD committee must review these participation requirements against the supporting documentation within the individualized education program (IEP), such as in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), to determine eligibility. If it is determined that the student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, this form and supporting IEP documentation may serve as the required IEP statement under 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §89.1055(b) and must be available for review during cyclical and targeted monitoring.

STEP I: DETERMINE IF STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE REVIEWED

1. **The student meets eligibility for special education and related services due to a specific learning disability (SLD).**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

   STOP *If Yes is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the eligibility criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability per 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.8(c)(10)(i): An SLD "does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage."*

2. **The student meets eligibility for special education and related services due to a speech impairment (SI), which is the ONLY disability designation.**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

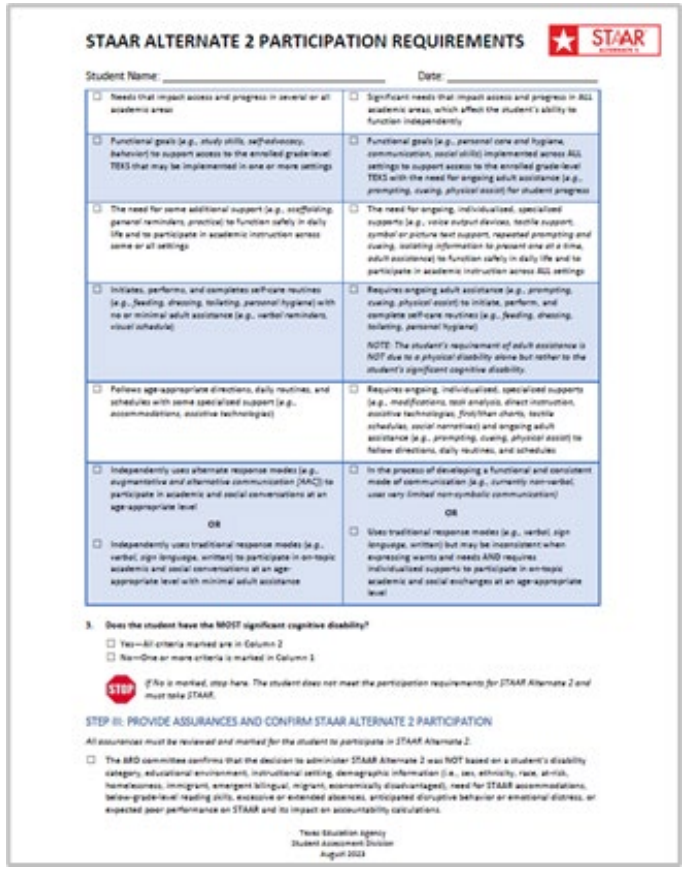
   STOP *If Yes is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the eligibility criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability per 34 CFR §300.8(c)(11): An SI "means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance."*

STEP II: DETERMINE IF THE STUDENT HAS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY

Review the criteria in each row below regarding the student's access to enrolled grade-level curriculum and adaptive behavior skills and check the box that is most applicable to the student. One box must be checked in each of the eight rows. If after reviewing all available data the committee is struggling to decide between Column 1 and Column 2, presume competence and select the criteria in Column 2.

The student's IEP documents the following:	
COLUMN 1	**COLUMN 2**
☐ Academic goals aligned to enrolled grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with accommodations or modifications in some or all content areas	☐ Academic goals aligned to prerequisite skills significantly below enrolled grade-level TEKS in ALL content areas
☐ Routinely participates in traditional methods of assessment (e.g., multiple-choice, short answer, essay) with or without individualized support (e.g., modifications, accommodations, assistive technologies)	☐ Routinely participates in alternate or non-traditional methods of assessment (e.g., isolating information; tactile support; pointing to, reaching for, or touching an answer choice; formulating a response using a choice board)

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division
August 2023



STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Needs that impact access and progress in several or all academic areas	☐ Significant needs that impact access and progress in ALL academic areas, which affect the student's ability to function independently
☐ Functional goals (e.g., study skills, self-advocacy, behavior) to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS that may be implemented in one or more settings	☐ Functional goals (e.g., personal care and hygiene, communication, social skills) implemented across ALL settings to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS with the need for ongoing adult assistance (e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist) for student progress
☐ The need for some additional support (e.g., scaffolding, personal reminders, proximity) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across some or all settings	☐ The need for ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (e.g., voice output devices, tactile support, symbol or picture text support, repeated prompting and cueing, isolating information to present one at a time, adult assistance) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across ALL settings
☐ Initiates, performs, and completes self-care routines (e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene) with no or minimal adult assistance (e.g., verbal reminders, visual schedule)	☐ Requires ongoing adult assistance (e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist) to initiate, perform, and complete self-care routines (e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene) *NOTE: The student's requirement of adult assistance is NOT due to a physical disability alone but rather to the student's significant cognitive disability.*
☐ Follows age-appropriate directions, daily routines, and schedules with some specialized support (e.g., accommodations, assistive technologies)	☐ Requires ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (e.g., modifications, task analysis, direct instruction, assistive technologies, first/then charts, tactile schedules, social narratives) and ongoing adult assistance (e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist) to follow directions, daily routines, and schedules
☐ Independently uses alternate response modes (e.g., augmentative and alternative communication [AAC]) to participate in academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level OR ☐ Independently uses traditional response modes (e.g., verbal, sign language, written) to participate in on-topic academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level with minimal adult assistance	☐ In the process of developing a functional and consistent mode of communication (e.g., currently non-verbal, uses very limited non-symbolic communication) OR ☐ Uses traditional response modes (e.g., verbal, sign language, written) but may be inconsistent when expressing wants and needs AND requires individualized supports to participate in on-topic academic and social exchanges at an age-appropriate level

3. **Does the student have the MOST significant cognitive disability?**
   ☐ Yes—All criteria marked are in Column 2
   ☐ No—One or more criteria is marked in Column 1

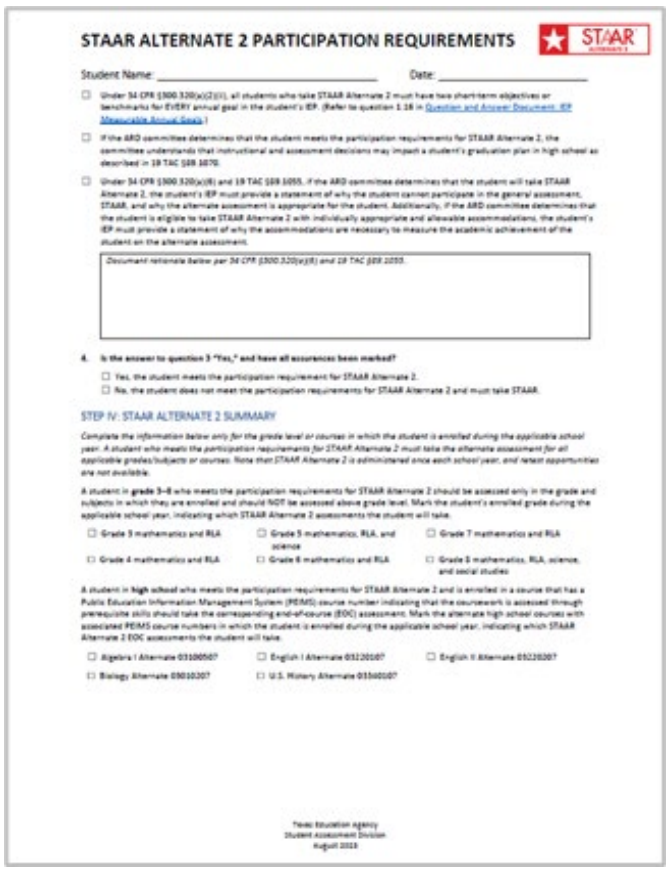
   STOP *If No is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and must take STAAR.*

STEP III: PROVIDE ASSURANCES AND CONFIRM STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION

All assurances must be reviewed and marked for the student to participate in STAAR Alternate 2.

☐ The ARD committee confirms that the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 was NOT based on a student's disability category, educational environment, instructional setting, demographic information (i.e., sex, ethnicity, race, at-risk, homelessness, immigrant, emergent bilingual, migrant, economically disadvantaged), need for STAAR accommodations, below-grade-level reading skills, excessive or extended absences, anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional distress, or expected poor performance on STAAR and its impact on accountability calculations.

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division
August 2023



STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

☐ Under 34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(i), all students who take STAAR Alternate 2 must have two short-term objectives or benchmarks for EVERY annual goal in the student's IEP. (Refer to question 1.16 in Question and Answer Document: IEP Measurable Annual Goals.)

☐ If the ARD committee determines that the student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, the committee understands that instructional and assessment decisions may impact a student's graduation plan in high school as described in 19 TAC §89.1070.

☐ Under 34 CFR §300.320(a)(6) and 19 TAC §89.1055, if the ARD committee determines that the student will take STAAR Alternate 2, the student's IEP must provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment, STAAR, and why the alternate assessment is appropriate for the student. Additionally, if the ARD committee determines that the student is eligible to take STAAR Alternate 2 with individually appropriate and allowable accommodations, the student's IEP must provide a statement of why the accommodations are necessary to measure the academic achievement of the student on the alternate assessment.

Document rationale below per 34 CFR §300.320(a)(6) and 19 TAC §89.1055.

4. **Is the answer to question 3 "Yes," and have all assurances been marked?**
   ☐ Yes, the student meets the participation requirement for STAAR Alternate 2.
   ☐ No, the student does not meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and must take STAAR.

STEP IV: STAAR ALTERNATE 2 SUMMARY

Complete the information below only for the grade level or courses in which the student is enrolled during the applicable school year. A student who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 must take the alternate assessment for all applicable grades/subjects or courses. Note that STAAR Alternate 2 is administered once each school year, and retest opportunities are not available.

A student in **grade 3–8** who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 should be assessed only in the grade and subjects in which they are enrolled and should NOT be assessed above grade level. Mark the student's enrolled grade during the applicable school year, indicating which STAAR Alternate 2 assessments the student will take.

☐ Grade 3 mathematics and RLA
☐ Grade 3 mathematics, RLA, and science
☐ Grade 7 mathematics and RLA
☐ Grade 4 mathematics and RLA
☐ Grade 6 mathematics and RLA
☐ Grade 8 mathematics, RLA, science, and social studies

A student in **high school** who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and is enrolled in a course that has a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) course number indicating that the coursework is assessed through prerequisite skills should take the corresponding end-of-course (EOC) assessment. Mark the alternate high school courses with associated PEIMS course numbers in which the student is enrolled during the applicable school year, indicating which STAAR Alternate 2 EOC assessments the student will take.

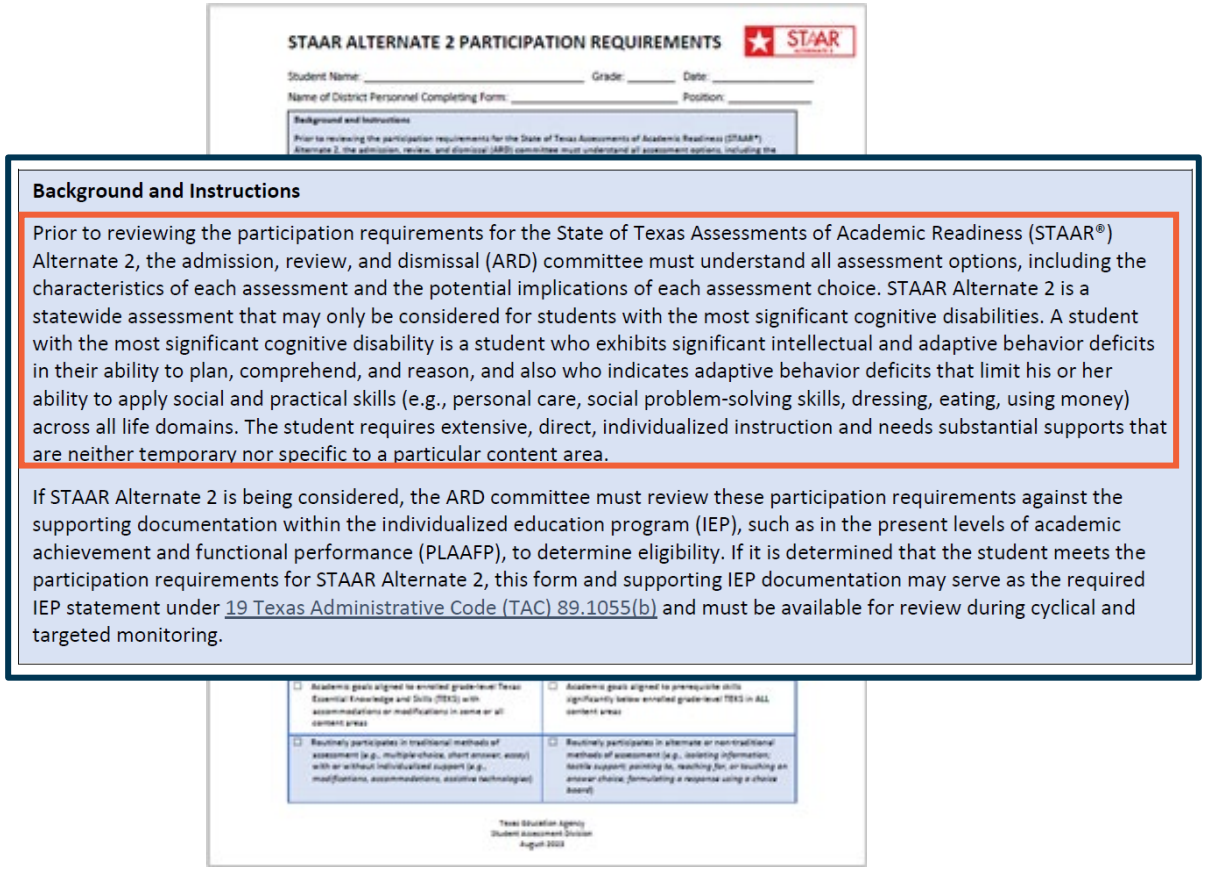
☐ Algebra I Alternate 03100507
☐ English I Alternate 03120107
☐ English II Alternate 03220207
☐ Biology Alternate 03010207
☐ U.S. History Alternate 03360107

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division
August 2023

Background and Instructions

- The ARD committee must review state assessment decisions annually.

- The ARD committee must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment option and the potential implications of each assessment option.



STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Name of District Personnel Completing Form: _____ Position: _____

Background and Instructions

Prior to reviewing the participation requirements for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2, the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice. STAAR Alternate 2 is a statewide assessment that may only be considered for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. A student with the most significant cognitive disability is a student who exhibits significant intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits in their ability to plan, comprehend, and reason, and also who indicates adaptive behavior deficits that limit his or her ability to apply social and practical skills (e.g., personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money) across all life domains. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and needs substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area.

If STAAR Alternate 2 is being considered, the ARD committee must review these participation requirements against the supporting documentation within the individualized education program (IEP), such as in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), to determine eligibility. If it is determined that the student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, this form and supporting IEP documentation may serve as the required IEP statement under 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 89.1055(b) and must be available for review during cyclical and targeted monitoring.

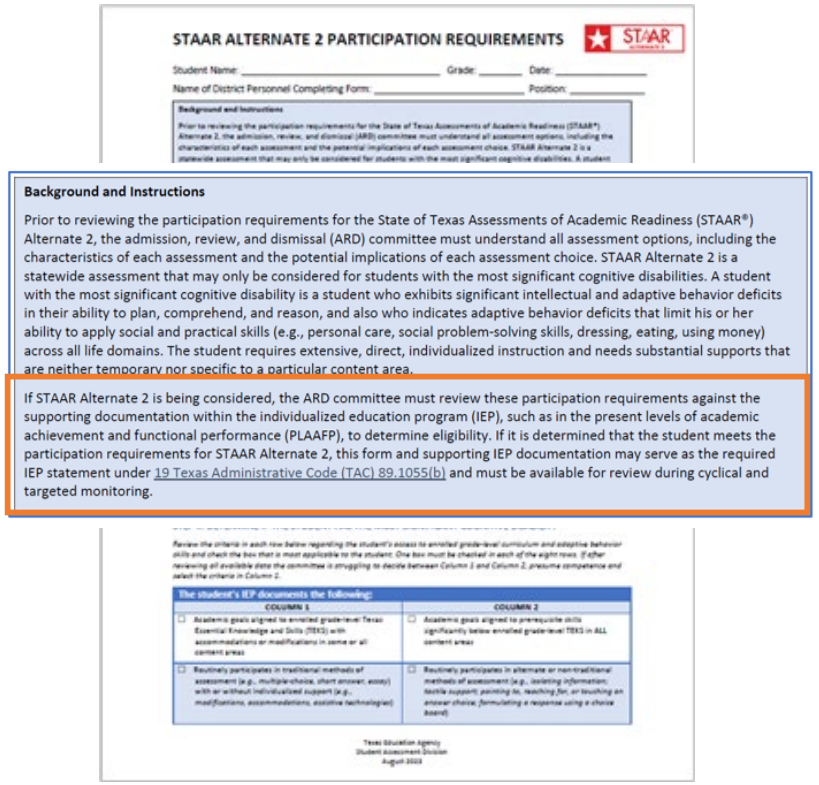
Background and Instructions (continued)

- **What data does the ARD committee need to consider to determine a student's eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2?**

  To determine a student's eligibility, the ARD committee must review the participation requirements against the supporting documentation within the student's individualized education program (IEP), such as the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).

- **Is there other data or documentation that an ARD committee may consider?**

  Yes. Documentation is not limited to the student's full individual evaluation (FIE) or PLAAFP. The ARD committee may also consider other sources of evidence such as parent and teacher observations and data, the student's goals and objectives, and progress monitoring data. For additional sources of evidence that may be used, refer to the Companion Document.


STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Name of District Personnel Completing Form: _____ Position: _____

Background and Instructions

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If STAAR Alternate 2 is being considered, the ARD committee must review these participation requirements against the supporting documentation within the individualized education program (IEP), such as in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), to determine eligibility. If it is determined that the student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, this form and supporting IEP documentation may serve as the required IEP statement under 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 89.1055(b) and must be available for review during cyclical and targeted monitoring.

The student's IEP documents the following:

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
☐ Academic goals aligned to enrolled grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with accommodations or modifications in some or all content areas	☐ Academic goals aligned to prerequisite skills significantly below enrolled grade-level TEKS in ALL content areas
☐ Routinely participates in traditional methods of assessment (e.g., multiple-choice, short answer, essay) with or without individualized support (e.g., modifications, accommodations, assistive technologies)	☐ Routinely participates in alternate or non-traditional methods of assessment (e.g., isolating information; tactile support; pointing to, reaching for, or touching an answer choice; formulating a response using a choice board)

Step I: Determining Eligibility

Step I includes two statements to determine if the ARD committee should proceed to Step II.

1. **The student meets eligibility for special education and related services due to a specific learning disability (SLD).**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

If Yes is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the eligibility criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability per 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.8(c)(10)(ii): An SLD "does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage."

2. **The student meets eligibility for special education and related services due to a speech impairment (SI), which is the ONLY disability designation.**
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

If Yes is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the eligibility criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability per 34 CFR §300.8(c)(11): An SI "means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance."

Step II: Determining Eligibility

The information selected means that it is documented in the student's IEP.

The ARD committee must review the criteria in each row in this section regarding the student's access to enrolled grade-level curriculum and adaptive behavior skills and check the box that is most applicable to the student.

The student's IEP documents the following:	
COLUMN 1	**COLUMN 2**
☐ Academic goals aligned to enrolled grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with accommodations or modifications in some or all content areas	☐ Academic goals aligned to prerequisite skills significantly below enrolled grade-level TEKS in ALL content areas
☐ Routinely participates in traditional methods of assessment (*e.g., multiple-choice, short answer, essay*) with or without individualized support (*e.g., modifications, accommodations, assistive technologies*)	☐ Routinely participates in alternate or non-traditional methods of assessment (*e.g., isolating information; tactile support; pointing to, reaching for, or touching an answer choice; formulating a response using a choice board*)
☐ Needs that impact access and progress in several or all academic areas	☐ Significant needs that impact access and progress in ALL academic areas, which affect the student's ability to function independently
☐ Functional goals (*e.g., study skills, self-advocacy, behavior*) to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS that may be implemented in one or more settings	☐ Functional goals (*e.g., personal care and hygiene, communication, social skills*) implemented across ALL settings to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS with the need for ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) for student progress
☐ The need for some additional support (*e.g., scaffolding, general reminders, practice*) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across some or all settings	☐ The need for ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (*e.g., voice output devices, tactile support, symbol or picture text support, repeated prompting and cueing, isolating information to present one at a time, adult assistance*) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across ALL settings
☐ Initiates, performs, and completes self-care routines (*e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene*) with no or minimal adult assistance (*e.g., verbal reminders, visual schedule*)	☐ Requires ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) to initiate, perform, and complete self-care routines (*e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene*) *NOTE: The student's requirement of adult assistance is NOT due to a physical disability alone but rather to the student's significant cognitive disability.*
☐ Follows age-appropriate directions, daily routines, and schedules with some specialized support (*e.g., accommodations, assistive technologies*)	☐ Requires ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (*e.g., modifications, task analysis, direct instruction, assistive technologies, first/then charts, tactile schedules, social narratives*) and ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) to follow directions, daily routines, and schedules
☐ Independently uses alternate response modes (*e.g., augmentative and alternative communication [AAC]*) to participate in academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level **OR** ☐ Independently uses traditional response modes (*e.g., verbal, sign language, written*) to participate in on-topic academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level with minimal adult assistance	☐ In the process of developing a functional and consistent mode of communication (*e.g., currently non-verbal, uses very limited non-symbolic communication*) **OR** ☐ Uses traditional response modes (*e.g., verbal, sign language, written*) but may be inconsistent when expressing wants and needs AND requires individualized supports to participate in on-topic academic and social exchanges at an age-appropriate level

One box must be checked in each of the eight rows.

If after reviewing all available data the committee is struggling to decide between Column 1 and Column 2, presume competence and select the criteria in Column 1.

Step II: Row 1

The student's IEP documents the following:	
COLUMN 1	**COLUMN 2**
☐ Academic goals aligned to enrolled grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) with accommodations or modifications in some or all content areas	☐ Academic goals aligned to prerequisite skills significantly below enrolled grade-level TEKS in ALL content areas

The ARD committee should ask the question:

Does the student access ALL enrolled grade-level TEKS through prerequisite skills, including math, reading language arts, science, social studies, and any other TEKS based course?

Step II: Row 2

☐ Routinely participates in traditional methods of assessment (*e.g., multiple-choice, short answer, essay*) with or without individualized support (*e.g., modifications, accommodations, assistive technologies*)	☐ Routinely participates in alternate or non-traditional methods of assessment (*e.g., isolating information; tactile support; pointing to, reaching for, or touching an answer choice; formulating a response using a choice board*)

The ARD committee should ask the question:

Does the student routinely require alternate or non-traditional methods of assessment?

Step II: Row 3

☐ Needs that impact access and progress in several or all academic areas	☐ Significant needs that impact access and progress in ALL academic areas, which affect the student's ability to function independently

The ARD committee should ask the question:

How significant are the student's needs in relation to how they impact access and progress in all academic areas, which affect the student's level of independence?

Step II: Row 4

☐ Functional goals (*e.g., study skills, self-advocacy, behavior*) to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS that may be implemented in one or more settings	☐ Functional goals (*e.g., personal care and hygiene, communication, social skills*) implemented across ALL settings to support access to the enrolled grade-level TEKS with the need for ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) for student progress

The ARD committee should remember:

Any student with an IEP can have functional goals identified. The functional goals listed in Column 2 are needs so pervasive that without ongoing adult assistance the student is unable to function independently.

Step II: Row 5

☐ The need for some additional support (*e.g., scaffolding, general reminders, practice*) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across some or all settings	☐ The need for ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (*e.g., voice output devices, tactile support, symbol or picture text support, repeated prompting and cueing, isolating information to present one at a time, adult assistance*) to function safely in daily life and to participate in academic instruction across ALL settings

The ARD committee should ask the question:

How extensive is the support required for the student to function safely in daily life and participate in academic instruction across ALL settings?

Step II: Row 6

☐ Initiates, performs, and completes self-care routines (*e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene*) with no or minimal adult assistance (*e.g., verbal reminders, visual schedule*)	☐ Requires ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) to initiate, perform, and complete self-care routines (*e.g., feeding, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene*) *NOTE: The student's requirement of adult assistance is NOT due to a physical disability alone but rather to the student's significant cognitive disability.*

The ARD committee should remember:

Other self-care routines may include, but are not limited to, tasks such as: brushing teeth, bathing, selecting appropriate clothing for the weather, washing hands, determining an appropriate meal, transitioning safely in the hallway or between classes, etc.

The ARD committee should ask the question:

How extensive and frequent is the adult support required for the student to initiate, perform, and complete self-care routines?

Frequently Asked Question

My student can_____ independently, can they still participate in STAAR Alternate 2?

It is important to look at what independence looks like for the student. What level of support is the adult providing so the student can initiate, perform, and complete the self-care routine?

Are there supports, such as:

- Visual, verbal, physical prompts
- Cueing
- Visual schedules
- Timers
- Adult transition support
- Adult physical support
- Task analysis

If a student requires any of these example supports on an ongoing basis, then the student is not independently initiating, performing, or completing self-care routines.

Step II: Row 7

☐ Follows age-appropriate directions, daily routines, and schedules with some specialized support (*e.g., accommodations, assistive technologies*)	☐ Requires ongoing, individualized, specialized supports (*e.g., modifications, task analysis, direct instruction, assistive technologies, first/then charts, tactile schedules, social narratives*) and ongoing adult assistance (*e.g., prompting, cueing, physical assist*) to follow directions, daily routines, and schedules

The ARD committee should ask the question:

How extensive and frequent is the adult support required for the student to follow directions, daily routines, and schedules?

Step II: Row 8

☐ Independently uses alternate response modes (*e.g., augmentative and alternative communication [AAC]*) to participate in academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level **OR** ☐ Independently uses traditional response modes (*e.g., verbal, sign language, written*) to participate in on-topic academic and social conversations at an age-appropriate level with minimal adult assistance	☐ In the process of developing a functional and consistent mode of communication *(e.g., currently non-verbal, uses very limited non-symbolic communication)* **OR** ☐ Uses traditional response modes (*e.g., verbal, sign language, written*) but may be inconsistent when expressing wants and needs AND requires individualized supports to participate in on-topic academic and social exchanges at an age-appropriate level

The ARD committee should ask the question:

How extensive and frequent are the individualized supports required for the student to participate in on-topic and age-appropriate academic and social exchanges?

Step II: Review Criteria

3. Does the student have the MOST significant cognitive disability?

☐ Yes—All criteria marked are in Column 2
☐ No—One or more criteria is marked in Column 1

If No is marked, stop here. The student does not meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and must take STAAR.

- The ARD committee will need to determine if the student has the **most** significant cognitive disability after reviewing all the criteria, completing each row, and selecting the appropriate response.
- Based on the response to Question 3, the ARD committee will either move on to the next step or stop on Step II.

*Remember that a student with the **most** significant cognitive disability requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction, as well as a need for substantial supports that are neither temporary nor specific to a particular content area.*

Step III: Provide Assurances and Confirm

STEP III: PROVIDE ASSURANCES AND CONFIRM STAAR ALTERNATE 2 PARTICIPATION

All assurances must be reviewed and marked for the student to participate in STAAR Alternate 2.

☐ The ARD committee confirms that the decision to administer STAAR Alternate 2 was NOT based on a student's disability category, educational environment, instructional setting, demographic information (i.e., sex, ethnicity, race, at-risk, homelessness, immigrant, emergent bilingual, migrant, economically disadvantaged), need for STAAR accommodations, below-grade-level reading skills, excessive or extended absences, anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional distress, or expected poor performance on STAAR and its impact on accountability calculations.

All assurances must be reviewed and marked for the student to participate in STAAR Alternate 2.

The ARD committee will also need to respond to Question 4 to either confirm or not confirm the student's eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2.

☐ Under 34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(ii), all students who take STAAR Alternate 2 must have two short-term objectives or benchmarks for EVERY annual goal in the student's IEP. (Refer to question 1.16 in Question and Answer Document: IEP Measurable Annual Goals.)

☐ If the ARD committee determines that the student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2, the committee understands that instructional and assessment decisions may impact a student's graduation plan in high school as described in 19 TAC §89.1070.

☐ Under 34 CFR §300.320(a)(6) and 19 TAC §89.1055, if the ARD committee determines that the student will take STAAR Alternate 2, the student's IEP must provide a statement of why the student cannot participate in the general assessment, STAAR, and why the alternate assessment is appropriate for the student. Additionally, if the ARD committee determines that the student is eligible to take STAAR Alternate 2 with individually appropriate and allowable accommodations, the student's IEP must provide a statement of why the accommodations are necessary to measure the academic achievement of the student on the alternate assessment.

Document rationale below per 34 CFR §300.320(a)(6) and 19 TAC §89.1055.

4. Is the answer to question 3 "Yes," and have all assurances been marked?

☐ Yes, the student meets the participation requirement for STAAR Alternate 2.
☐ No, the student does not meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and must take STAAR.

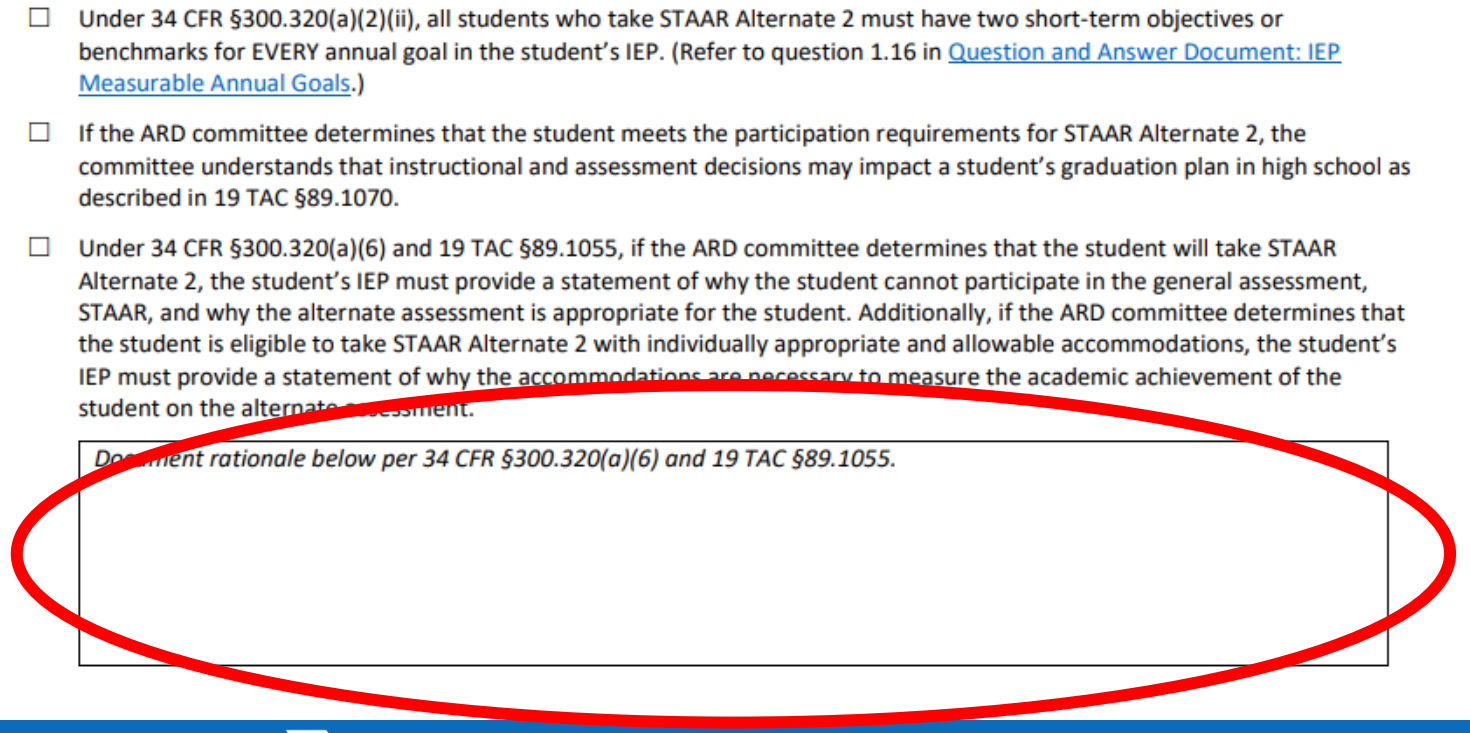
Frequently Asked Questions

What needs to be included in the rationale box? How specific do I need to be?

The rationale needs to include:

- A statement about why the student cannot participate in STAAR and why the alternate assessment is appropriate and
- A statement of necessary allowable accommodations.

Each row in the participation requirements does not need to be individually addressed in the rationale box because they will have already been discussed and completed in Steps I and II.



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Document rationale below per 34 CFR §300.320(a)(6) and 19 TAC §89.1055.

Step IV: STAAR Alternate 2 Summary

STEP IV: STAAR ALTERNATE 2 SUMMARY

Complete the information below only for the grade level or courses in which the student is enrolled during the applicable school year. A student who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 must take the alternate assessment for all applicable grades/subjects or courses. Note that STAAR Alternate 2 is administered once each school year, and retest opportunities are not available.

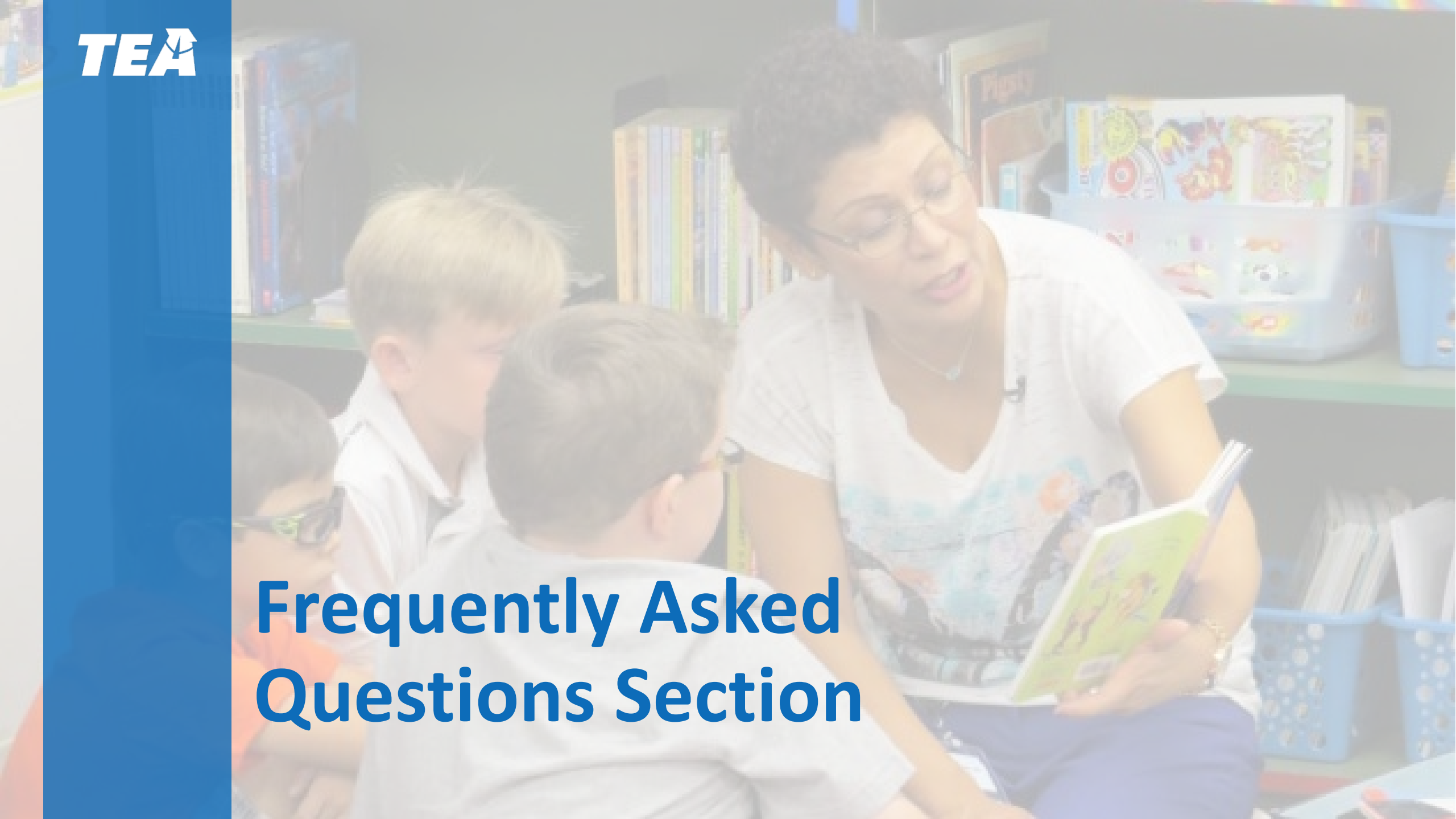
A student in **grade 3–8** who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 should be assessed only in the grade and subjects in which they are enrolled and should NOT be assessed above grade level. Mark the student's enrolled grade during the applicable school year, indicating which STAAR Alternate 2 assessments the student will take.

- ☐ Grade 3 mathematics and RLA
- ☐ Grade 4 mathematics and RLA
- ☐ Grade 5 mathematics, RLA, and science
- ☐ Grade 6 mathematics and RLA
- ☐ Grade 7 mathematics and RLA
- ☐ Grade 8 mathematics, RLA, science, and social studies

A student in **high school** who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 and is enrolled in a course that has a Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) course number indicating that the coursework is accessed through prerequisite skills should take the corresponding end-of-course (EOC) assessment. Mark the alternate high school courses with associated PEIMS course numbers in which the student is enrolled during the applicable school year, indicating which STAAR Alternate 2 EOC assessments the student will take.

- ☐ Algebra I Alternate 03100507
- ☐ Biology Alternate 03010207
- ☐ English I Alternate 03220107
- ☐ U.S. History Alternate 03340107
- ☐ English II Alternate 03220207

- *The ARD committee needs to complete the information only for the grade level or courses in which the student is enrolled during the applicable school year.*
- *A student who meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 must take the alternate assessments for all applicable grades/subjects or courses.*
- *STAAR Alternate 2 is administered once each school year, and retest opportunities are not available.*



Frequently Asked Questions Section

Frequently Asked Question

My student no longer meets eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2, will his or her special education programming need to change?

- If a student is not eligible to take the alternate assessment, the ARD committee is responsible for educating the student in the least restrictive environment while still addressing the student's needs and critical skills (goals and short-term objectives).
- A student may have a significant cognitive disability but does not meet the criteria as having the most significant cognitive disability. The ARD committee will determine the programming that is most appropriate to ensure access to and progress in the general curriculum. **For some students this may mean their programming does not change, but that is an ARD committee decision and TEA cannot provide guidance on the frequency, duration, or location of individual students' special education supports and services.**
- Staffing considerations for individual students are an ARD committee decision.

Frequently Asked Question

My student no longer meets eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2, can he or she still receive instruction at the prerequisite or modified level?

- Yes. The student's ARD committee will continue to determine how the student will receive instruction. It is possible that a student will take STAAR while accessing the enrolled grade-level TEKS through modifications and/or prerequisite skills.
- Only students who meet the participation requirements and will take STAAR Alternate 2 EOC assessments can be associated with the alternate course codes in PEIMS for Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

Frequently Asked Questions

My student has always taken STAAR Alternate 2 but no longer meets the participation requirements. What happens if my student takes STAAR and does not pass? Is he or she required to receive accelerated instruction?

- Texas law requires all students who do not achieve *Approaches Grade Level* or higher on STAAR to be provided accelerated instruction. These requirements were recently updated with the passage of House Bill 1416, 88th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2023.
- A parent may elect to modify or remove a requirement for the accelerated instruction by submitting a written request to the administrator at the campus in which the student is enrolled. To request the change, the student must have been administered and failed to perform satisfactorily on STAAR or administered a beginning-of-year assessment aligned with the TEKS for that grade/subject or course. An LEA may select a beginning-of-year assessment designed to show grade level proficiency on the TEKS. A student who does not have a failed STAAR assessment must be administered a beginning-of-year assessment for the parent to be able change the requirements.
- Additionally, an ARD committee may be convened if the committee feels that the student's IEP needs to be modified based on the accelerated instruction requirements.

Frequently Asked Question

Does the ARD committee have to meet again if the committee had already reviewed and determined participation for the 2023–2024 school year using the previous STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements?

- It depends. The ARD committee must review and determine student participation in STAAR or STAAR Alternate 2 for each school year. If the ARD committee has already reviewed and determined participation for the 2023–2024 school year using the previous STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements, district personnel must review all eligible students to determine if any STAAR Alternate 2 decisions need to be re-evaluated based on the revised participation requirements.
- For those students whose participation needs to be re-evaluated based on the updated participation requirements, **assessment participation decisions may be made through an ARD amendment in accordance with 34 CFR §300.324(a)(i) or a full ARD meeting**.
- For any future assessment participation decisions, the ARD committee should use the updated STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements.

Frequently Asked Question

My student meets the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 in some areas but not all; is he or she still required to take STAAR?

- Yes. Remember that the definition of a student with the **most** significant cognitive disability requires extensive supports in all areas not just in particular subject areas.

- Students must meet the participation requirements in ALL subject areas to be eligible to take STAAR Alternate 2.

Frequently Asked Question

I have only ever given STAAR Alternate 2 but now have a student who needs to take STAAR; do I need to be trained in administering both assessments?

- Yes. If you will be administering both types of assessments, you will need to be trained in test security and administration procedures specific to each assessment program. All district personnel who participate in state-mandated testing or handle secure test materials and content are required to be trained at least once in test security and administration procedures for the applicable assessment.

- If the student is also eligible for assessment accommodations, the test administrators must understand the proper implementation of the accommodations.

Frequently Asked Question

My student is eligible for special education services based on only a speech impairment (SI) but meets all other requirements in Step II; can he or she take STAAR Alternate 2?

- No. Remember that STAAR Alternate 2 is authorized under federal law for students with the **most** significant cognitive disabilities. A student who is identified with only a speech impairment would not meet eligibility requirements as a student with a cognitive disability.
- This is why the STAAR Alternate 2 participation requirements indicate that if a student is identified with only SI, then the student is not eligible to participate in STAAR Alternate 2.
- If an LEA believes that a student still meets all criteria in Step II under Column 2, then the ARD committee may need to address whether additional student evaluations may be

Additional Resources

STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements Resources

Resource	Purpose	Audience
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements	Used by the ARD committee to determine if a student meets the eligibility requirements to participate in STAAR Alternate 2. The form is available in English and Spanish.	Administrators, Coordinators, Teachers, Parents
STAAR Alternate 2 Companion Document	Used in conjunction with STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements. Sources of evidence for a student's eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2 are on page 2 of this document. The document is available in English and Spanish.	Administrators, Coordinators, Teachers, Parents
STAAR Alternate 2 Participation Requirements FAQs	Will include frequently asked questions and answers related to the updated STAAR Alternate 2 Participation. **(Coming soon on the STAAR Alternate 2 Resources webpage.)**	Administrators, Coordinators, Teachers
STAAR Alternate 2 Overview and Eligibility Training	Assists the ARD committee in better understanding the unique features of STAAR Alternate 2, and thereby, in determining the most appropriate assessment for each student. (**Coming soon in the Learning Management System.)**	Administrators, Coordinators, Teachers
STAAR Alternate 2: Before, During, and After the Assessment Course	Is designed for new test administrators to be helpful in understanding the testing process and may also serve as a refresher to experienced test administrators. **(Coming soon on the TEA Learn webpage.)**	Administrators, Coordinators, Teachers

Texas Assessment Educator Committees

Classroom teachers, instructional coaches, campus and district content specialists, and campus administrators can serve in a variety of ways:

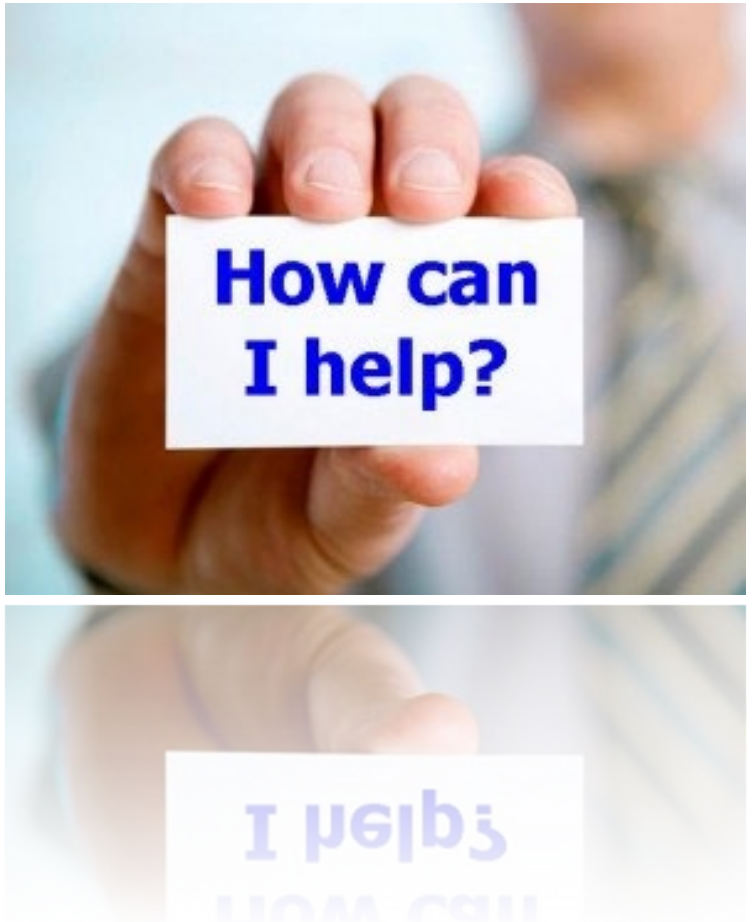
- **Educator item review**—each potential question for a state test is reviewed and approved by a committee of Texas educators
- **Subject-area advisory groups**—groups of educators are convened to provide feedback on subject-area-specific topics

https://www.texasassessment.gov/educator-committees.html

TEA Contact Information

For inquiries related to development, administration, scoring, and reporting of state assessments please contact:

Student Assessment Help Desk
(512) 463-9536
https://tea.Texas.gov/student.assessment/



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Thank you!