State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
Transition to New Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Mathematics
Student Success Initiative (SSI) Retest Opportunities

Region One Area Superintendents’ Petition for
Consideration of Test Date Administration:
Grade 5 and 8 STAAR Mathematics Assessments

TEA New Math TEKS Transition Guidance:

Commissioner of Education Michael Williams provided Superintendents with guidance for the STAAR Transition to New TEKS for Mathematics Assessment Decisions for the 2014-2015 academic year. Texas Education Agency correspondence indicated that revised TEKS for kinder through grade 8 mathematics will be implemented in classrooms and in the grades 3-8 assessment program during the 2014-2015 school year. Teachers across the state are required to teach the revised TEKS and respective state assessments will be aligned to the new mathematics TEKS required to be taught. According to Commissioner Williams, Student Success Initiative (SSI) retest opportunities for STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics will not be offered in May and June 2015.

With the transition to the new mathematics curriculum this year, the Texas Education Agency considered the timing of the STAAR grades 5 and 8 mathematics assessments (part of the Student Success Initiative) since only one assessment per grade will be administered in the 2014–2015 school year. Although there has been some interest in moving these assessments later in the school year, the decision was made to maintain the traditional schedule.

Implications for Assessment:

In the past, TEA has indicated that the Texas Assessment Program has integrated changes to the TEKS in the state assessments using an “overlap year” approach for the first year of TEKS implementation. TEA has further indicated that this “overlap year” approach worked well when the changes were minimal (e.g., during the prior rounds of mathematics refinement in 2005 and 2009) or when the assessment program has been in transition (e.g., TAKS to STAAR, as occurred during the 2009 science TEKS revisions and the 2010 social studies revisions.)

An example provided by TEA for the 2015-2016 assessment cycle indicates that the overlap in the algebra content between the current and the revised TEKS is fairly extensive. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the shift in the STAAR Algebra I and II assessments to incorporate the revised Algebra TEKS has been determined to be minimal. Therefore, an “overlap plan” for assessing Algebra I and Algebra II in 2015-2016 is feasible and these tests will only assess the content that overlaps between the current and the revised TEKS in the first year the revised TEKS are required to be taught.
Regarding 2014-2015 Grades 5 and 8 STAAR Mathematics Assessments, TEA correspondence indicates that there are substantial challenges associated with implementation of the revised mathematics TEKS in the STAAR grades 3-8 assessments. Specifically, there is not sufficient overlap between the current and the revised TEKS at these grade levels to make the overlap approach feasible. Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff are currently working on a plan for assessing grades 3-8 mathematics in spring 2015. This plan will involve a special operational administration that incorporates the revised mathematics TEKS as indicated in the recently posted STAAR assessed curriculum documents and blueprints. Thus, the “overlap plan” that will be applied for the 2015-2016 Algebra I and Algebra II assessments will not be applied for the 2014-2015 grades 3 through 8 mathematics assessments due to not sufficient overlap between current and revised TEKS for these grade levels.

Implications for Instruction:

As indicated earlier, STAAR Transition to New TEKS for Mathematics 2014-2015 expectations is for revised TEKS Kinder through 8 to be implemented in classrooms and the 3-8 assessment program. Teachers across the state are required to teach the revised TEKS and respective state assessments will transition and be aligned to the new Mathematics TEKS required to be taught.

Using grade 5 Mathematics as an example, percentage of prior year assessed TEKS and percentage of non-previously TEKS are indicated as follows:

**Grade 5 Mathematics Assessed TEKS for 2014-2015**

- Previously assessed TEKS:
  - 10 Prior year assessed TEKS - 28%
- Non-previously assessed TEKS:
  - 8 Enhanced TEKS – 22%
  - 8 New TEKS – 22%
  - 3 Previously 6th Grade TEKS – 8%
  - 7 Previously 7th Grade TEKS – 20%

As evident with this Grade 5 Mathematics example, findings indicate that only 28% of the 2014-2015 Assessed TEKS overlap with prior year Assessed TEKS. Key findings for Grade 5 Mathematics also indicate students to be assessed on 72% non-previously assessed TEKS including Enhanced, New, and from Upper Grade Levels. There are significant challenges beyond students being held accountable for substantial new learning. Of primary consideration is that non-previously assessed TEKS not only constitutes new learning for students, but critically constitutes new learning for teachers. School systems must provide educators with instructional resources aligned to non-previously assessed TEKS, revise instructional timelines, provide professional development on effective instructional approaches to non-previously assessed TEKS, and extend instructional time to ensure mastery of non-previously assessed TEKS.
Recommendations to TEA:

In prior transition years, a phase-in period would provide school districts with time to adjust instruction, provide new professional development, increase teacher effectiveness, and close knowledge gaps. For the 2014-2015 academic year, we understand that Texas is not transitioning to a new accountability system; however, the high percentage of non-previously assessed TEKS for Grades 5 and 8 Mathematics constitutes a major transition in assessment expectations for Texas school systems, educators, and students. Region One area Superintendents are recommending for the Texas Education Agency to move the early spring 2015 March Mathematics Grade 5 and 8 SSI assessment dates to coincide with the late spring non-SSI assessment dates. Primary rationale is to allow for educators to have much needed instructional time in order to provide students with adequate opportunity to learn the high percentage of non-previously assessed Mathematics TEKS.