



October 16, 2015

**TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:**

**SUBJECT: Reduction of Number of Questions, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Grades 3–8 Assessments**

This letter is to inform school districts that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will reduce the length of the STAAR assessments in grades 3–8 for the 2016 spring administrations.

House Bill (HB) 743 requires that STAAR assessments be designed so that 85% of students can complete the grades 3–5 assessments in two hours and 85% of students can complete the grades 6–8 assessments in three hours. To meet this legislative requirement to reduce the length of each assessment while maintaining valid and reliable assessments, the TEA will take the following actions in the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 school years. For 2016 only, TEA will remove all currently-embedded field-test questions for STAAR grades 3–8, which will reduce the length of each assessment by five to eight questions. TEA has also redesigned the 2016 STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests so they will be completed in one four-hour administration.

TEA will also collect detailed data during the spring 2016 test administration on the time it takes students to complete the assessments. These data will then be used to determine how to adjust the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments for spring 2017 testing to more precisely meet the testing time requirements of HB 743.

Sincerely,

Michael Williams  
Commissioner of Education