



# Chapter 1 Historical Overview of Assessment in Texas

## Timeline

### Assessment Provisions in State Law

### Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

## Timeline

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) program was administered to Texas students for the first time in 2011–2012. However, Texas has a long history of student assessment dating back to 1979, when the state instituted its first statewide testing program. Over the years, the assessment program has grown in size, scope, and rigor as a result of periodic changes in legislation and policy. This chapter provides an overview of these changes, starting with a timeline of key events, followed by a summary of recent changes in state law, and concluding with a review of changes in the state curriculum.

### —1979

The Texas assessment program began when the 66<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature enacted a law requiring basic skills competencies in mathematics, reading, and writing for grades 3, 5, and 9.



### —1980

As required by statute, Texas assessed minimum skills in mathematics, reading, and writing with the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) assessments.

### —1986

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) implemented the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) examinations. TEAMS was the first state assessment that students were required to pass to be eligible to receive a high school diploma.



**—1990**

The implementation of another criterion-referenced testing program, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), shifted the focus of assessment from minimum skills to academic skills. The TAAS reading, writing, and mathematics assessments were administered in the fall to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.

**—1993**

The administration of TAAS assessments was shifted to the spring, and the grades and subjects assessed were reconfigured.

TAAS was administered every spring until 2002 to students in grades 3–8 and 10 in mathematics and reading; grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing; and grade 8 in science and social studies. Passing the exit level tests in mathematics, reading, and writing at grade 10 was a requirement for high school graduation.

**—1994**

The State Board of Education (SBOE) approved a plan to develop Spanish-language versions of assessments for grades 3–6.

Algebra I and biology end-of-course (EOC) assessments were administered to students who had completed these courses.

**—1995**

As part of Senate Bill 1, 74th Texas Legislature, the Texas Education Agency was required to develop the English II and U.S. history EOC assessments to be first administered by the 1998–1999 school year. In addition to the Algebra I and biology EOC assessments that were administered beginning in 1994, the EOC assessments could be used to fulfill the assessment graduation requirements instead of TAAS.

**—1996**

The Spanish-language TAAS assessments for grades 3–6 were incorporated into the testing program in 1996 for grades 3 and 4 mathematics and reading and 1997 for grades 5 and 6 mathematics and reading.

**—1998**

Per Senate Bill 1, 74<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 1995, the English II and U.S. history EOC assessments were first administered to students who had completed those courses. The four EOC assessments were

administered as state-mandated assessments and as an option for meeting graduation requirements through 2002.

### —1999

With passage of Senate Bill (SB) 103, the 76th legislature Texas Legislature required the development of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in grades 3-8, 10, and 11 as the assessment graduation exit-level requirement, to replace TAAS. The TAKS assessments were administered beginning in 2003.

SB 103 also required the development of a system to assess the reading proficiency and language acquisition of English language learners (ELLs). The Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) system was first administered in 2000.

### —2000

The RPTE were implemented to evaluate English language acquisition of ELLs in reading in grades 3–12.

### —2001

The State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) was introduced and administered to eligible students receiving special education services in grades 3–8.

### —2002

Due to SB 103, 76th legislature, that replaced TAAS with the TAKS assessments, TAAS was administered for the last time in grades 3–8. Exit level TAAS remained the graduation requirement for students who were in grade 9 or above on January 1, 2001.

### —2003

TAKS replaced TAAS as the primary state assessment program. To satisfy legislative requirements, TAKS was designed to be more comprehensive than its predecessors and to measure more of the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). TAKS also included two additional grades. As required by law, students for whom TAKS was the graduation testing requirement had to pass exit level assessments in four content areas—mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies—to graduate from a Texas public high school. Spanish versions of TAKS were administered in grades 3–6.

Reading  
Proficiency  
Tests in English  
(RPTE)

State-Developed  
Alternative  
Assessment  
(SDAA)





The Student Success Initiative (SSI), enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1999, made satisfactory performance on the grade 3 reading assessment, the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments, and the grade 8 mathematics and reading assessments a promotion requirement for Texas students. The first cohort of students affected by this law was the grade 3 class of 2002–2003. Student performance on the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments was included for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year. Grade 8 promotion requirements became effective in the 2007–2008 school year. The Texas Legislature later amended the SSI to remove the grade 3 promotion requirement.

## —2004

In order to fulfill requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Texas Observation Protocol (TOP) was developed. The TOP assessment program provided training and guidelines for raters so that holistic English language proficiency ratings could be assigned to students based on observations during regular instructional time. These holistic ratings were developed in the language domains of listening, speaking, and writing in grades K–12 and in reading in grades K–2. Together, TOP and the RPTE assessments for grades 3–12 formed the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS).

## —2005

In response to NCLB regulations, TEA first reported assessment results using a linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) administration process in order to include eligible recent immigrant ELLs in the state’s mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 and 10.

In order to align SDAA to the statewide TAKS testing program, TEA made changes to SDAA. The first administration of SDAA II occurred in spring 2005. SDAA II, offered in mathematics, English language arts, reading, and writing, was available to students enrolled in grades 3–10 who received special education services and who were instructed in the state-mandated curriculum, but for whom TAKS was an inappropriate measure of their academic achievement and progress.

Student performance on the grade 5 mathematics and reading assessments was included as an SSI requirement for the first time in the 2004–2005 school year.

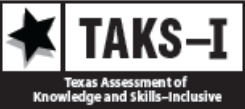
In response to the Governor’s 2004 Algebra Incentive Program, the Algebra I EOC assessment was revised and was administered on a voluntary basis to students who completed Algebra I coursework.



**State-Developed  
Alternative  
Assessment II  
(SDAA II)**

Executive Order RP53 was issued by the Governor in December 2005, which called for increased college readiness programs in Texas schools and authorized the development of a series of EOC assessments in subjects assessed by TAKS in the 11th grade.

As a result of the 2004 Algebra Incentive Program and Executive Order RP53, the state reestablished development of the Algebra I EOC, and began developing EOCs in geometry, biology, chemistry, physics, and U.S. history.



## —2006

TAKS–Inclusive (TAKS–I) was offered for the first time in 2006 for students receiving special education services and for whom TAKS, even with allowable accommodations, was not an appropriate measure of academic progress. TAKS–I met the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) requirements for those subjects and grade levels that were assessed with TAKS but not with SDAA II. TAKS–I was administered in science at grades 5, 8, and 10 and at exit level; in science in Spanish at grade 5; in social studies at grades 8 and 10 and at exit level; and in English language arts and mathematics at exit level.

## —2007

TAKS–I and SDAA II were administered for the final time.

In response to NCLB regulations, linguistically accommodated testing (LAT) administrations of the state’s reading and English language arts assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 3–8 and 10.

In May 2007, the Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill (SB) 1031, expanding the role of the EOC assessment program. The bill phased out the TAKS assessments for grades 10 and 11 and replaced them with the EOC assessments as a component of the new high school graduation requirements, beginning with the incoming freshman class of 2011–2012. The bill required the development of the following six EOC assessments in addition to those required by the 2004 Algebra Incentive Program and the December 2005 Executive Order RP53:

- Algebra II
- English I
- English II
- English III
- world geography

- world history

As a result of SB 1031, the high school, grade-based testing represented by TAKS would be replaced with the course-specific EOC assessments in Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, world geography, world history, U.S. history, biology, chemistry, physics, and English I, II, and III beginning in spring 2012.

## —2008

Student performance on the grade 8 mathematics and reading assessments was an SSI requirement for the first time in the 2007–2008 school year.

EOC assessments in geometry and biology were first administered on a voluntary basis in response to the governor’s 2005 executive order.

To fulfill federal accountability requirements, the TAKS–Alternate (TAKS–Alt) assessment was implemented. TAKS–Alt was an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The TAKS (Accommodated) assessment replaced TAKS–I for students receiving special education services who met the eligibility requirements for specific accommodations. TAKS (Accommodated) was a general assessment based on the same grade-level academic achievement standards as TAKS, but it included format changes (larger font, fewer questions per page) and contained no embedded field-test items.

The TAKS–Modified (TAKS–M) assessment was administered for the first time for grades and subjects required for federal accountability. TAKS–M was an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards designed for students receiving special education services who met participation requirements.

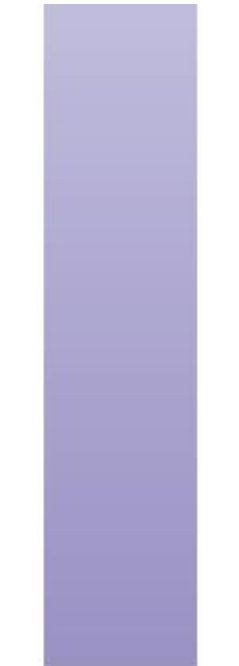
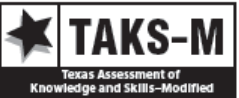
In response to NCLB regulations, LAT administrations of the state’s science assessments were first implemented for eligible recent immigrant ELLs in grades 5, 8, and 10.

Revised TELPAS reading assessments were first administered for grades 2–12 to more fully address NCLB goals for assessing English language proficiency. TELPAS was designed to be administered as an online testing program.

## —2009

The TAKS–M assessment was administered for all grades and subjects.

Exit level TAAS was administered for the final time.





A vertical scale was implemented for TAKS mathematics and reading assessments in grades 3–8, as required by the Texas Legislature.

With passage of House Bill 3, the 81st Texas Legislature placed emphasis on postsecondary readiness by requiring that the mathematics and reading assessments in grades 3–8 be linked from grade to grade to the college readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments. The required vertical linking along with the phase-out of TAKS at the exit-level necessitated the design of a new series of assessments to ultimately indicate college-readiness.

HB 3 also removed the SSI requirement for students in grade 3 to pass the TAKS reading assessment to be promoted to the grade 4.

EOC assessments in chemistry and U.S. history were first administered.

## —2010

EOC assessments in physics and world geography were first administered.

## —2011

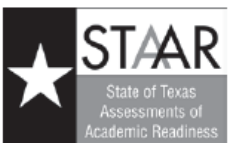
New State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) 3–8 field-test items were embedded in most TAKS operational test forms, with the exception of grades 4 and 7 writing, which were field-tested using stand-alone field tests.

EOC assessments in English I and Algebra II were administered for the first time. In addition, the other EOC assessments—Algebra I, geometry, biology, chemistry, physics, world geography, and U.S. history—were administered as operational assessments.

## —2012

In spring 2012, the STAAR program replaced TAKS. At grades 3–8, STAAR assessments were administered for the same subjects and grades that were assessed with TAKS. At high school, grade-specific assessments were replaced with 15 STAAR EOC assessments: Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, English I reading, English I writing, English II reading, English II writing, English III reading, English III writing, biology, chemistry, physics, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

Depending on their graduation program, students were required under House Bill (HB) 3 to meet the passing standard, Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance (or at least achieve a predetermined minimum score), on 11 to 15 STAAR EOC assessments. In order to graduate, a





student needed to achieve a cumulative score requirement in each content area.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate replaced TAKS–M and TAKS–Alt at grades 3–8 and high school. At grades 3–8, STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate assessed the same subjects and grades as STAAR. At high school, STAAR Modified included nine EOC assessments for administration in 2012–2013: Algebra I, geometry, English I reading, English I writing, English II reading, English II writing, biology, world geography, and world history. STAAR Modified English III reading, English III writing, and U.S. history were scheduled to be administered for the first time in 2013–2014. STAAR Alternate included nine EOC assessments at high school: Algebra I, geometry, English I, English II, English III, biology, world geography, world history, and U.S. history.

A phase-in period was implemented for the STAAR performance standards in order to provide school districts with sufficient time to adjust instruction, provide new professional development, increase teacher effectiveness, and close knowledge gaps. The commissioner of education determines the appropriate timeline for phasing in the performance standards. Initially, a two-step phase-in for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance was set in place for all STAAR 3–8 and EOC assessments. Phase-in 1 performance standards for Level II were planned to be effective during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years.

## —2013

In spring 2013, TAKS exit level was administered as a primary assessment for the final time to grade 11 students. Exit level TAKS retests continue to be administered for students who are eligible and who have TAKS as their graduation requirement. TAKS–M was also administered for the last time in spring 2013.

The STAAR progress measure, which provides information about students' academic improvement or growth, was reported for the first time.

In June 2013, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature enacted HB 5, which reduced the number of STAAR EOC assessments from 15 to 5 tests: Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history. Consequently, spring 2013 was the final administration of STAAR world geography, world history, chemistry, physics, and geometry. STAAR Algebra II and English III will be administered again in 2015–2016 as optional assessments. The legislation also mandated the creation of combined reading and writing assessments for English I and English II and required the redesign of the STAAR Alternate program by 2014–2015.



After reviewing changes in STAAR performance between spring 2012 and 2013, the commissioner of education decided to extend phase-in 1 through the 2013–2014 school year.

## —2014

The redesigned STAAR English I and English II assessments were administered for the first time in spring 2014.

The STAAR On-Track Measure, which provides information about whether a student is on track to be at or above the Level II passing standard in a future target year, was reported for the first time. The ELL progress measure was also reported for the first time to provide a gauge of annual improvement on STAAR for ELLs.

In response to new federal accountability requirements, STAAR Modified was administered for the final time in spring 2014. A new, accommodated version of the STAAR assessment, STAAR A, was developed using the same performance standards as STAAR.

STAAR Alternate was administered for the final time in spring 2014. As required by HB 5, STAAR Alternate 2 was developed as an assessment that would not require teachers to prepare tasks or materials.

After reviewing changes in STAAR performance between spring 2012 and 2014, the commissioner of education decided to implement a new three-step phase-in plan, wherein phase-in 1 would be extended through the 2014–2015 school year, phase-in 2 would be implemented in 2015–2016 through 2017–2018, phase-in 3 would be implemented in 2018–2019 through 2020–2021, and the final recommended performance standards would be implemented in 2021–2022 and beyond.


## —2015

The SBOE adopted revised mathematics TEKS in April 2012, which were first implemented in classrooms during the 2014–2015 school year. STAAR 3–8 mathematics assessments aligned to revised TEKS were administered for the first time in spring 2015.

The online assessment STAAR A was administered for the first time in spring 2015. This assessment provides embedded accommodations designed to help students who meet eligibility requirements access the content being assessed. STAAR A has the same performance standards as STAAR.

STAAR Alternate 2 was administered for the first time in spring 2015. Although the assessment has standardized administration materials,





test administrators may apply appropriate accommodations to test items in order to provide access to students.



**—2016**

To meet the legislative requirements of House Bill 743, the length of each STAAR grades 3–8 assessment was reduced by five to eight questions by removing all embedded field-test items. STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing tests were also redesigned so they can be completed in one four-hour administration.

In 2015, the STAAR reading grades 3-5, English and Spanish, were linked with the Lexile Framework and El Sistema Lexile, respectively. These are tools that can help teachers, parents, and students locate challenging materials. Lexile measures typically range from 200L to 1600L; Spanish Lexile measures typically range from 200L to 1400L.

## Assessment Provisions in State Law

### Texas Education Code

State law pertaining to the statewide student assessment program is found in the [TEC Chapter 39, Subchapter B](#). Assessment provisions relating to grade promotion requirements are located in [TEC §28.021](#) and [TEC §28.0211](#). Additional provisions relating to the intensive instruction districts must provide to students who do not perform satisfactorily on a state assessment are located in [TEC §28.0213](#). This section highlights legislation pertaining to the transition from TAKS to STAAR.

In May 2007, the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [Senate Bill \(SB\) 1031](#), requiring changes to the assessment program, including the implementation of an EOC assessment program, changes to the administration window for the assessments, limitations on the frequency of stand-alone field testing, provisions for accelerated instruction based on assessment results, and a revised release schedule for test questions and answer keys for most Texas assessments.

Changes resulting from [HB 3](#) that took effect during the 2008–2009 school year included eliminating the requirement that assessments administered for the purpose of retesting were subject to mandatory release; specifying that TEA was no longer required to develop assessment study guides; eliminating exit level testing under the TAAS program; and requiring the commissioner of education, rather than the SBOE, to determine performance levels for assessments.

In June 2009, the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [HB 3](#), which made further changes to the assessment program. These included requiring TEA to develop assessments in a manner that allows for the measurement of performance across grades culminating in postsecondary readiness performance standards in Algebra II and English III. These performance standards are part of the STAAR program, which encompasses the EOC assessments mandated by [SB 1031](#) and the new grades 3–8 assessments mandated by [HB 3](#), and were set by the commissioner of education. STAAR testing began with the 2011–2012 school year.

In 2011, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature passed [HB 2135](#), which stated that students were not required to take the grade-level assessment if they were taking an above-grade-level assessment in a course for which they were enrolled. The bill also addressed the use of STAAR EOC performance results of students below grade 9 who take a STAAR EOC assessment, including how those results must be included in accountability performance indicators. [HB 2135](#) also amended the SSI



so that a student was not required to take the corresponding SSI assessment in grades 5 and 8 if the student was enrolled in either

- a course in the subject for which the student received high school academic credit and was administered a STAAR EOC assessment, or
- a course in the subject intended for students above the student's enrolled grade and was administered the corresponding assessment instrument.

HB 2135 also prohibited a student subject to SSI grade promotion requirements from being denied promotion on the basis of performance on an assessment if the student was taking an above-grade-level assessment instead of the grade-level assessment.

In June 2013, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [HB 5](#), which reduced the number of STAAR EOC assessments required for graduation from 15 to 5 assessments: Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history. The administration of Algebra II and English III was delayed until 2015–2016, and the assessments will be optional based on the decision of each district. In addition, the separate reading and writing assessments for English I and II were required to be combined into a single assessment for each course with a single reported score. HB 5 removed the requirement for a cumulative score, a minimum score, and inclusion of the STAAR EOC assessment results as 15 percent of a course grade. In addition, HB 5 required a conversion table for STAAR EOC scale scores to a 100-point scale. HB 5 required the release of certain STAAR assessments after the 2012–2013, 2013–2014, 2014–2015, and 2015–2016 administrations.

HB 5 also impacted the STAAR Alternate assessments. The legislation stated that, beginning in 2014–2015, teachers may not be required to prepare tasks or materials for alternate assessments. In order to meet this requirement, the STAAR Alternate assessments were redesigned. STAAR Alternate 2 was administered for the first time in spring 2015.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature enacted [SB 906](#), which also impacted the STAAR Alternate assessments. SB 906 states that the adopted performance standard may not “[indicate] that a student’s performance on the alternate assessment does not meet the standards if the lowest level of the assessment accurately represents the student’s developmental level.” To meet this requirement, TEA maintained the STAAR Alternate adjusted performance standard in 2013–2014 rather than applying the final recommended standard.

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed [SB 149](#), which added TEC 28.0258 to revise the assessment graduation requirements for students



enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade for the 2014-2015, 2015-2016, or 2016-2017 school years. A student who has failed the EOC assessment graduation requirements for no more than two courses may receive a Texas high school diploma if the student qualified to graduate by means of an individual graduation committee (IGC). The assessment provisions of SB 149 were effective beginning with the 2014-2015 school year and expire September 1, 2017.

House Bill 743, passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in 2015, requires that the STAAR assessments be designed so that 85 percent of students taking an assessment in grades 3-5 can complete a test in two hours and 85 percent of students taking a test in grades 6-8 can complete an assessment in three hours.

In response to HB 743, for the spring 2016 administration the TEA reduced the overall length of every STAAR assessment in grades 3-8 by five to eight questions. Additionally, the TEA redesigned the grades 4 and 7 writing tests into single-day tests that can be completed in one four-hour administration. These were previously two-day assessments. TEA also collected time-to-administer data during the spring 2016 administration to determine which grades 3-8 assessments were in compliance with the timing requirements of HB 743 after being shortened by five to eight questions.

Using the time-to-administer data from the STAAR grades 3-8 spring 2016 administration, the TEA redesigned those grades 3-8 assessments that did not meet HB 743's timing requirements. Fully-compliant assessments will be administered beginning in spring 2017.

In 2015, the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed House Bill 2349, which requires a school district or charter school to report to the agency whether a student assessed with a STAAR end-of-course assessment transferred into the school or district from out of a Texas public school district during the current school year. House Bill 2349 also revised the state's assessment requirements for students to be eligible to receive a Texas diploma. Effective with the 2015–2016 school year, a student who previously earned high school credit for a course for which there is an EOC assessment prior to enrolling in a Texas public school, and a Texas public school district accepted the credit, is not required to take that EOC to receive a Texas diploma. Prior to HB 2349, a student on the foundation program was required to take and pass all five EOC assessments in order to receive a Texas diploma regardless of course enrollment.



## Curriculum Guidelines for Assessment

The TEKS were adopted by the SBOE in July 1997 and were implemented as the statewide curriculum for Texas in the 1998–1999 school year. The TEKS replaced the Essential Elements, which were implemented in 1984. The TEKS were developed to be more specific and focused than the Essential Elements, with emphasis placed on the knowledge and skills students were expected to learn rather than on the delivery standards expected of teachers.

The TEKS are reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the SBOE. As revisions are made to the TEKS, changes are subsequently made to the assessment program to maintain a strong, direct, and effective link between the TEKS curriculum and the statewide assessments.

The STAAR reporting categories and the corresponding TEKS student expectations that are eligible for testing are available on the [STAAR Resources](#) webpage on TEA’s Student Assessment Division website.

### TEKS Revisions

Following the schedule for TEKS review, the SBOE most recently revised the TEKS as follows.

- In 2008, the SBOE adopted new TEKS for English language arts/reading (ELA/R) and Spanish language arts (SLA); alignment with the new TEKS was reflected in the 2010 and 2011 TAKS reading, writing, and ELA assessments.
- In 2009, the SBOE adopted revised science TEKS; alignment with those TEKS was reflected in the 2011 TAKS science assessments.
- In 2010, the SBOE adopted revised social studies TEKS; alignment with those TEKS was reflected in the 2012 STAAR social studies assessments.
- In 2012, the SBOE adopted new mathematics TEKS; alignment with the new TEKS was reflected in the 2015 grades 3–8 mathematics assessments and will be reflected in the 2016 STAAR Algebra I and II assessments.

Additionally, in 2008 TEA and the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#) (THECB) established vertical teams to develop College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), as required by HB 1. Specifically, TEA and the THECB undertook a process of vertical alignment to link the CCRS to the TEKS in ELA/R, mathematics, science, and social studies. As part of the TEKS review process, the SBOE incorporated the CCRS into the TEKS, making Texas the first state in the country to

adopt a curriculum aligned to college and career readiness. Additional information about this topic can be found in the [Texas College and Career Readiness Standards](#) report available on [THECB's website](#).

## English Language Proficiency Standards

The state's standards for addressing the English language proficiency needs of ELLs were revised in 2006–2007 to explicitly require all teachers to address English language proficiency standards in the instruction of ELLs. The SBOE adoption of new grades K–12 [Texas English Language Proficiency Standards \(ELPS\)](#) for ELLs was effective in December 2007. The 2008 revised TELPAS reading assessments were aligned to these standards.

In August 2013, a review of the TELPAS reading performance standards was conducted to evaluate the alignment of the performance standards between the TELPAS and STAAR assessments. The new TELPAS performance standards were implemented in the 2013–2014 school year.



