



House Bill 3 (HB 3) SAT, ACT, and TSIA Reimbursement Frequently Asked Questions

We've shared some of our most frequently asked questions to help you out!
The HB 3 SAT, ACT, and TSIA Reimbursement FAQs will be modified periodically to ensure a consistently accurate document.

Can't find the answer you're looking for? Please contact Advanced Academics at advancedacademics@tea.texas.gov for additional questions.

In which category does your question exist? Sections are *bookmarked* for a category question index. You may select the category section title in the chart below for a bookmarked set of Q & As or select a specific question for a quick response.

(A) Policy Overview & Definitions	(D) Calendar Constraints	(G) National Administrations and TSIA Exceptions
(B) SAT, ACT, TSIA Definitions and Cost	(E) Reimbursement Process & Reporting	(H) Title I and Non-Traditional ISDs
(C) Student and District Requirements	(F) School Finance	(I) Student Absences

(A) Policy Overview and Definitions
A.1) What is the HB 3 reimbursement?
A.2) What is an "college preparation assessment" for reimbursement?
A.3) Who is getting reimbursed?
A.4) For which eligible students is the district getting reimbursed?
A.5) How does this legislation and policy affect accountability?

(B) SAT, ACT, TSIA Definitions and Cost
B.1) What is the SAT, ACT, and TSIA?
B.2) When are the SAT and ACT administrations?
B.3) Why isn't the essay portion or writing test included in the reimbursement?
B.4) Why is the TSIA included in the reimbursement?
B.5) What are the costs of the assessments?

B.6) Will the discount automatically occur on the College Board or ACT online registrations when a student is registered independently?

B.7) Can a fee waiver be used for school day administrations?

(C) Student and District Requirements

C.1) What is the requirement for students?

C.2) Does a student have to meet the college readiness benchmarks for districts to receive reimbursement?

C.3) What is the requirement for districts to comply with this law?

C.4) Can districts restrict reimbursement for only school day administrations?

(D) Calendar Constraints

D.1) What is considered "spring" of junior year?

D.2) If a student is behind or ahead on their credits and will be a second semester junior in the fall, will TEA consider this to be "spring"?

D.3) What is considered the "school year"?

D.4) When can a student take the assessment at state cost?

D.5) If eligible students have previously taken the SAT or ACT, are they still eligible to take an assessment at state cost?

(E) Reimbursement Process and Reporting

E.1) When will districts be reimbursed?

E.2) Is the reimbursement retroactive or can it only be used on students taking the exam during the school year it was given?

E.3) What is the reimbursement process?

E.4) Does the district pay the student or the vendor?

E.5) Can districts charge students for the assessments before the exam is taken & reimburse students later?

(F) School Finance

F.1) How was the advanced funding calculated?

F.2) Will the \$35 school day administration be automatically applied to Texas schools?

F.3) Is the funding that districts received in September 2019 for SAT/ACT/TSIA on an annual basis? Meaning, should districts expect to receive another set of front-loaded funds with the same guidelines in September of 2020?

F.4) Can the original expense of the assessments be used to meet the 55% College, Career, and Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus (CCMR OB) spending requirement?

F.5) Can the CCMR OB pay for additional college readiness assessments?

F.6) Where does a district code the college preparation assessment reimbursement?

F.7) Is there a minimum or maximum amount that TEA will reimburse?

F.8) What is the settle-up process?

F.9) How will TEA determine a district's final reimbursement amount?

(G) National Administrations and TSIA Exceptions

G.1) Can the district be reimbursed if they pay for a student to take an assessment on a National testing date?

G.2) If the district pays for a student to take a National administration, can they tell the student they can't take the school day administration (or make the student pay for it) and vice versa?

G.3) How can the district request reimbursement for National administration fees or TSIA fees?

(H) Title I & Non-Traditional ISDs

H.1) Do Title I schools still receive the discounted rate of \$8?

H.2) Can private schools receive reimbursement?

H.3) Can charter schools receive reimbursement?

H.4) Can homeschooled students still receive reimbursement?

(I) Student Absences

I.1) What if a student misses a school day administration?

I.2) What if a student misses a national administration?

I.3) What is the absentee/unused test policy?

[Return to Top](#)

Section A: Policy Overview and Definitions

A.1) What is the HB 3 reimbursement?

A school district is entitled to reimbursement for the fees paid by the district for a college preparation assessment administration under Texas Education Code (TEC) §[39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#) and §48.155.

A.2) What is a "college preparation assessment" that is eligible for reimbursement?

"College preparation assessments" include the ACT, SAT, or the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) for the 2019-2020 school year. ([TEC §39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#)). The reimbursement covers the basic SAT and/or ACT test, or the reading and math sections of the TSIA. Other additional costs or fees such as the writing test, subject areas tests, essay portion, or late fees are not eligible for reimbursement. Diagnostic tests and retests are also not eligible for reimbursement.

A.3) Who is getting reimbursed?

The district is the entity that receives reimbursement from TEA for paying for eligible students to take an eligible assessment (TEC §48.155).

A.4) Who are the eligible students for which the district will be reimbursed?

Beginning September 1, 2019, districts will get reimbursed for students who take a college preparation assessment in either the spring of their junior year or during the senior year. No summer assessments are eligible for reimbursement (June 1 – August 30).

A.5) How does this legislation impact accountability?

The college preparation examination reimbursement is a separate process from accountability. A–F accountability measures the percentage of students who are College, Career, or Military Ready (CCMR) through [multiple indicators](#). Through this program, more students will take the assessment(s) and have the opportunity to meet the TSI criteria necessary for CCMR credit. This is an opportunity for districts to continuously improve their strategies to ensure that every child is CCMR and has the opportunity to pursue postsecondary options.

[Return to Top](#)

Section B: SAT, ACT, TSIA Definitions and Cost

B.1) What are the SAT, ACT, & TSIA?

SAT: The SAT is an assessment administered by the College Board and is used by colleges and universities nationwide for admissions and scholarship opportunities. It tests on three subjects, scoring from 400-1600 and totaling 3 hours. It also contains an optional 50-minute essay.

ACT: The ACT is an assessment administered by ACT, Inc. and is used by colleges and universities nationwide for admissions and scholarship opportunities. It tests on four subjects, scoring from 1-36 and totaling 2 hours and 55 minutes. It also contains an optional 40-minute essay.

TSIA: The Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) is an assessment administered by the College Board on the ACCUPLACER platform and is used to determine the student's readiness to enroll in freshman-level academic coursework by institutions of higher education ([TEC §51.334](#)).

B.2) When are the SAT/ACT administrations?

School day: please visit the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) webpages for more information.

National administration: Please visit the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) webpages for more information.

B.3) Why isn't the essay portion or writing test included in the reimbursement?

Texas public institutions of higher education do not require the essay or writing test for admission. Therefore, the agency will not reimburse the cost of the essay or writing test.

B.4) Why is the TSIA included in the reimbursement?

The TSIA is specifically referenced in [TEC §39.0261\(a\)\(3\)](#) as an eligible assessment for reimbursement.

B.5) What are the costs of the assessments?

TEA has negotiated a rate with both College Board and ACT, Inc. for school day administrations to cost \$35 per student. This rate replaces any prior negotiated rates and will be the cost for every school day assessment administered moving forward. This rate is also restricted to the basic assessment and does not include the essay portion. The national administration fees will remain the same at \$49.50 for the

SAT (no essay) and \$52.00 for the ACT (no essay). The TSIA costs are dependent on the institution that administers the assessment. Please note that only the reading and math portions will be reimbursed for each assessment (not writing or essay).

B.6) Will any discount automatically occur on the College Board or ACT online registrations when a student is registered independently?

No, the national administration price will remain the same to users unless they use a fee waiver. Information about fee waivers can be found [here](#) for SAT and [here](#) for ACT.

B.7) Can a fee waiver be used for school day administrations?

No, fee waivers are for national administrations only. Eligible students who participate in a school day administration can still use two fee waivers on national administrations. Information about fee waivers can be found on the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) websites.

[Return to Top](#)

Section C: Student and District Requirements

C.1) What are the requirements for eligible students?

There are no requirements of students other than to be eligible for reimbursement. To be eligible, students must be in the spring of their junior year or during their senior year when they take the assessment, be present for the exam, and take it in its entirety. Outside of these boundaries, students are welcome to take the assessments on their own time and pay for it themselves or use a fee waiver. ([TEC §39.0261\(c\)](#))

C.2) Does a student have to meet the college readiness benchmarks for districts to receive reimbursement?

No, the student does not have to meet college readiness benchmarks for the district to receive reimbursement. The reimbursement is given for an eligible student to take the exam one time in the spring of the junior year or during the senior year.

C.3) What is the requirement for districts to comply with this law?

Students may take one eligible assessment of their choosing at state cost (see question [A.2](#) for details on eligible assessments). Districts may implement this by either offering a school day administration or paying for national exams. Districts may not limit the student's choice of test. To assist with the financial burden, TEA frontloaded funds to each district in their September or October payment.

C.4) Can districts restrict students to only taking the exam only on the school day administration?

No, a district can't restrict which exams a student may take. Students may choose which exam they want to take at state cost. Each district will need to follow local policy to determine how to determine student choice and pay for administrations outside of the school day. Please note that if a district pays for a national administration, they must request reimbursement from TEA. See question [G.3](#) for more information.

[Return to Top](#)

Section D: Calendar Constraints

D.1) What is considered “spring” of junior year?

TEA defines “spring” as January 1 – May 31.

D.2) If a student is behind or ahead on their credits and will be a second semester junior in the fall, will TEA consider this to be “spring”?

No, spring is defined as January 1 – May 31. Districts may only be reimbursed for juniors who take the test during this time frame.

D.3) What is considered a “school year”?

TEA defines a “school year” as September 1 – August 31. However, summer assessments are not eligible for reimbursement (assessments taken between June 1– August 31).

D.4) When can a student take the assessment at state cost?

Please see the below table for example reimbursement eligibility scenarios. The scenarios follow student 1 (Johnny) in gray throughout his junior and senior year, and student 2 (Sally) in white throughout her senior year.

School Year	Example Scenario	District Reimbursement
2019-2020	The district paid for Johnny, a junior , to take an eligible assessment in the fall.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Johnny to take an assessment in the spring.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Johnny to take an assessment in the summer.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; summer is not an eligible time frame within legislation to receive reimbursement.
2020-2021	The district also paid for Johnny to take an assessment fall (now a senior).	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; the state can only pay for ONE eligible student for ONE student-chosen exam.
2020-2021	The district did NOT pay for Johnny to take an assessment spring 2019 (junior year) but DID pay for Johnny to take an assessment in the fall 2020 (senior year).	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district paid for Sally, a senior , to take an assessment in the fall.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.
2019-2020	The district also paid for Sally to take an assessment in the spring.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; the state can only pay for ONE eligible student for ONE student-chosen exam.
2019-2020	The district did NOT pay for Sally to take an assessment in the fall 2019 but DID pay for Sally to take an assessment in the spring 2020.	The district is eligible for reimbursement.

2019-2020	The district paid for Sally (now GRADUATED) to take an assessment in the summer.	The district is not eligible for reimbursement; that student is no longer within the Texas public school system.
-----------	--	--

D.5) If eligible students have previously taken the SAT or ACT, are they still eligible to take an assessment at state cost?

It depends on when the student took the assessment. Districts will not be reimbursed for exams taken prior to September 1, 2019, since that is when the legislation went into effect. Therefore, any student who took an assessment prior to September 1, 2019 (and has not yet taken another assessment at state cost), is currently eligible to take an assessment at state cost. Remember, the student is only eligible for one assessment at state cost, one time.

[Return to Top](#)

Section E: Reimbursement Timeline

E.1) When will districts be reimbursed?

TEA advanced funds to districts in September 2019. Districts will reconcile eligible expenditures during the settle-up process in April 2021.

E.2) Is the reimbursement retroactive, or can it only be used on students taking the exam during the school year it was given?

Frontloaded funds must be applied to students in the same school year and cannot be carried over into the next school year. Districts will receive funding annually. The funds may not be used to pay for assessments before September 1, 2019 or during the summer (June 1-August 31).

E.3) What is the reimbursement process?

TEA will collect vendor data from SAT and ACT to determine which students took an exam and the date(s) of administration. Through that process, TEA will verify eligible students that participated in school day administrations and allocate accordingly. No additional action is needed by districts that administered school day testing of the ACT and/or SAT. ***If a district wishes to be reimbursed for a National administration or the TSIA in lieu of school day administration, a request must be submitted to TEA for reimbursement.*** Please see question [G.3](#) for more information.

E.4) Does the district pay the student or the vendor?

If the district is paying for a school day administration, they pay the vendor. It is local policy how the district chooses to pay for national administrations or the TSIA.

E.5) Can districts charge students for the assessments before the exam is taken & reimburse students later?

The intent of the legislation was to remove all barriers (including financial) to allow students in the spring of their junior year or during their senior year to take a college preparation exam so they may have increased access to postsecondary options. Districts may need to create local policy on how to provide a free assessment to students.

[Return to Top](#)

Section F: School Finance

F.1) How was the advanced funding calculated?

TEA calculated the advanced funding by funding 100% of expected juniors and 50% of expected seniors at \$35 per student. This is not a budget, but rather an estimate of expected expenditures. Any amount unexpended will be returned and any eligible amount overspent will be reconciled in April 2021 during settle-up.

F.2) Will the \$35 school day administration price be automatically applied for Texas schools?

Districts will receive a custom invoice from vendors reflecting the \$35 price for eligible students.

F.3) Is the September 2019 SAT/ACT/TSIA funding that districts received going to be distributed annually? Meaning, should districts expect to receive another set of front-loaded funds with the same guidelines in September 2020?

Yes, districts will receive advance funding in the fall of each school year with reconciliation happening in the spring of the next school year. The funding amount will vary as it is based on projected enrollment for the upcoming school year.

F.4) Can the original expense of the assessments be used to meet the 55% College, Career, or Military Readiness Outcomes Bonus (CCMR OB) spending requirement?

No. Districts have been frontloaded funding to pay for a college preparation assessment for each eligible student and should use those funds for that purpose. However, districts may elect to pay for additional college preparation/readiness assessments using the CCMR OB funds.

F.5) Can the CCMR OB pay for additional college preparation/readiness assessments?

Yes, college preparation/readiness assessment administrations qualify under an approved use of the minimum 55% CCMR OB spending requirement since it supports the district in earning the bonus. Districts can pay for additional assessments such as PSAT, PSAT 8/9, ACT Aspire, TSIA, etc.

F.6) Where is the advanced funding and how do we code expenses?

The funding can be found in the Foundation School Program general allotment in September 2019. Your district must track the expenses as there is no separate code or line item for tracking.

F.7) Is there a minimum or maximum amount that TEA will reimburse?

There is no minimum or maximum amount. The \$35 school day administration is the automatic rate that TEA will reimburse for students who tested during school day administration. If a district pays for a national administration or TSIA and would like reimbursement for this instead, they will have to request reimbursement from TEA. Please note that the highest cost exam will be reimbursed. See question [G.3](#) for more information.

F.8) What is the settle-up process?

The settle-up process is a well-known process in school finance during which the district reconciles funds with TEA. TEA plans to get SAT/ACT data from the vendors to determine final funding. If districts would like to receive reimbursement for a national testing date or TSIA, they will have to request that funding separately. Please see Question [G.3](#) in order to receive information on that process.

F.9) How will TEA determine a district's final reimbursement amount?

Every summer, TEA will collect vendor data from the prior school year to determine students who took an assessment and when that assessment was taken. TEA will automatically consider school day administration for reimbursement. The district must submit formal requests for reimbursement IF:

- The district wishes to be reimbursed for a national administration
- The district wishes to be reimbursed for TSIA administration

Please see question [G.3](#) for more information on this process.

[Return to Top](#)

Section G: National Administrations and TSIA

G.1) Can the district be reimbursed if they pay for a student to take an assessment on a national testing date?

Yes. During the 2019-2020 school year (September 1, 2019-August 31, 2020), a district may be reimbursed if they pay for a student to take the ACT or SAT on one of the national testing dates. However, TEA will not automatically calculate reimbursements to districts if they pay for national administrations. Districts will need to submit a request to TEA that they wish to receive reimbursement for this. Please see question [G.3](#) for more information on this process.

G.2) If the district pays for a student to take a national administration, can they tell the student they can't take the school day administration (or make the student pay for it) and vice versa?

Yes. Students can choose which assessment they would like to take at state cost. If the student has already taken one exam at state cost, they are not eligible to take another assessment at state cost. The students can still use a fee waiver for national administrations if they are eligible, pay for the assessment themselves, or the district may choose to pay. It is a local decision how the district determines student choice. (([TEC §39.0261\(e\)](#))).

G.3) How can the district request reimbursement for national administration fees or TSIA fees?

Districts must submit a request to TEA in the late spring 2020 that they wish to be reimbursed for paying for the national administration or TSIA administration of a student. TEA will release a To the Administrator Addressed letter with more information in early spring 2020. At a minimum, districts should be prepared to provide the student's name, unique ID, date of birth, cost, date of administration, and proof of payment. Please note that the highest cost exam will be reimbursed.

[Return to Top](#)

Section H: Title I and Non-Traditional ISDs

H.1) Do Title I schools still receive the discounted rate of \$8?

No. TEA has established a state-negotiated rate of \$35 per exam administered for school day testing across both vendors (SAT & ACT). However, districts participating in school day administrations can still opt to receive benefits for income-eligible students when placing the order.

H.2) Can private schools receive reimbursement?

No, private schools are not eligible for reimbursement.

H.3) Can charter schools receive reimbursement?

Yes, public, open-enrollment charter schools are eligible for reimbursement.

H.4) Can homeschooled students receive reimbursement?

No, homeschooled students are considered private school students in the state of Texas; therefore, they are not eligible for reimbursement.

[Return to Top](#)

Section I: Student Absences**I.1) What if a student misses a school day administration?**

Sometimes, students are not able to attend a school day administration. In these rare cases, students should still be provided every opportunity to take the administration such as a retest day or during one of the national administration dates.

I.2) What if a student misses a national administration?

The student must take the assessment in its entirety for the district to receive reimbursement.

I.3) What is the absentee/unused test policy?

TEA has established a formal agreement with ACT and SAT that will prevent the vendors from charging districts for absent students or unused tests. However, districts and campuses should be conscious of the number of exams they are ordering so not to return an abundance of unused exams. Districts may want to institute a preregistration process to ensure an accurate count of tests to order.