



TEXANS ADVOCATING FOR MEANINGFUL STUDENT ASSESSMENT

TAMSA Recommendations for 85th Legislative Session

TAMSA advocates for meaningful assessments that will provide timely and relevant information to teachers, parents, and students. We do not need to shut down schools for weeks of testing, narrow the curriculum to teach to the test, or give millions to private companies to accomplish this; TAMSA urges you to take the following actions.

Replace STAAR with meaningful student assessments that provide timely and useful feedback with no high stakes.

- In grades 3-8, use assessments that provide diagnostic feedback in a timely manner to gauge how children are learning. National tests, such as Stanford, ITBS, ACT Aspire, are cost-effective and proven, age-appropriate and meet federal requirements.
- In high school, in lieu of STAAR EOCs, administer nationally recognized assessments, such as SAT or ACT, including one science test. Such proven tests are actually used by colleges and can show aptitudes for career choices.
- Attaching high stakes to standardized tests by requiring a certain score for grade promotion and graduation leads to teaching to the test and other corruption of classroom learning. Texas should not attach high stakes to standardized tests.

Limit standardized tests to no more than required by federal law.

Texas has continued to prioritize testing over learning and to spend limited resources on more state standardized tests (STAAR tests) than we need to comply with federal law. In grades 3-8, federal law requires that every child be tested every year in reading and math, and twice in science. Texas exceeds that with 2 additional writing tests and 1 additional social studies test. In high school, students are required to be tested once in reading, math, and science. Texas imposes additional standardized tests in History and English, and two incorporated writing tests. These additional STAAR tests should be eliminated. Time and resources should be reallocated to actual learning. Varied and in-class assessments more accurately capture student achievements.

Retain the Graduation Committee option allowed under Senate Bill 149.

If high stakes are not removed from standardized tests, it is imperative to offer an option for students to have an alternative path to graduation that is available to them currently under SB 149.

If Texas continues to require state-designed standardized tests:

- Require TEA to comply with HB 743 that limits test length and readability to be age appropriate.
- Redesign math assessments to evaluate computation skills rather than gauge linguistic ability.
- Test readiness standards only.
- Eliminate field test questions on high stakes exams.