At the time of this document, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is still transitioning to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) testing system. With the new assessment program, current testing policies, regulations and procedures are being reevaluated and will be modified as necessary to ensure that they fit the new structure and purpose of the STAAR program. Therefore, as the district receives updated information from the Texas Education Agency throughout the school year, specific details concerning the implementation of the EOC exams will be communicated to staff, students and parents/guardians.

This FAQ was revised and published on December 14, 2012. Items that were revised or added are noted.
STAAR GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Is the STAAR test offered all over Texas or just in NEISD?

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is a statewide assessment system implemented in the 2011-2012 school year to phase out the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for students who enter high school in 2011-2012 and thereafter.

2. Why was STAAR implemented?

This new assessment system is in response to legislative requirements from the 80th and 81st Texas Legislatures.

3. Is STAAR similar to TAKS?

STAAR covers the same curriculum as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and assesses the same grades and subjects for third through eighth grade. However, STAAR will be significantly different from TAKS at the high school level. STAAR includes 15 end-of-course (EOC) assessments, rather than the general subject-area TAKS. According to the Texas Education Agency, the most significant differences between STAAR and TAKS include:

- “The rigor of items has been increased by assessing skills at a greater depth and level of cognitive complexity. In this way the tests will be better able to measure a greater range of student achievement and establish stronger links to postsecondary readiness.”
- “The total number of test items for the STAAR assessments has been increased for most grades, subjects, and courses.”
- “A four-hour time limit has been established for STAAR assessments, as opposed to TAKS, which was untimed.”
- “STAAR assessments in mathematics and reading will be linked from grade to grade as well as to postsecondary-readiness standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments.”
- “STAAR assessments have been designed to focus on ‘readiness’ standards, which are defined as those Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) student expectations that are not only essential for success in the current grade or course but also important for preparedness in the next grade or course. By focusing on the student expectations that are most critical to assess, STAAR will better measure the academic performance of students as they progress from elementary to middle school to high school.”
- “STAAR EOC assessments will differ from the current TAKS high school assessments in that each STAAR EOC assessment will cover only the content from a particular course (e.g., Algebra I will assess only Algebra I content) rather than content from multiple courses (e.g., Algebra I and grade 8 mathematics were assessed on the TAKS grade 9 mathematics tests).”
- “STAAR writing assessments at grades 4 and 7 will be extended to two days.”
- “STAAR EOC assessments for English I, II, and III will be administered over two days, with the writing component on day one and the reading component on day two.”
- “The test designs for STAAR grades 4 and 7 writing and STAAR English I, II, and III will require students to write two essays addressing different purposes for writing rather than one longer personal essay, which TAKS required.”
- “In reading assessments for STAAR, greater emphasis will be given to critical analysis rather than literal understanding. The test designs for English I, II, and III will allow for the reading and writing components to be equated and scaled separately so that reading and writing scores can be reported separately. This means that a student will need to retake only the portion of the STAAR English I, II, or III assessment (reading or writing) that he or she did not pass.”
- “Most STAAR mathematics and science assessments will have an increased number of open-ended (griddable) items to allow students the opportunity to derive an answer independently without being influenced by the answer choices provided with the questions.”
- “STAAR grade 3 assessments will have separate answer documents instead of scorable test booklets.”
4. Do high school students no longer take TAKS?
Some high school students are still under TAKS and others take STAAR depending on when they enter high school. The chart below shows the phase-in process for STAAR beginning with first time 9th graders and below in 2011-2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan for phase-out of TAKS and phase-in of STAAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GR 3–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR 12 &amp; Out-of-School Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. If students have always done great on TAKS, should they be worried about STAAR?
NEISD has always met the challenge of new test mandates by the state. Our staff is dedicated to the success of all of our students. We want students to do the best they can on the STAAR tests, but students should be aware that STAAR is not TAKS. For example, the STAAR test has a four-hour time limit and has college readiness questions. Fortunately, the passing standards for the EOCs will be phased in over time. The passing standards for grades 3-8 are expected in fall 2012.

6. When will students take the STAAR tests during the year?
A complete testing calendar with STAAR make-up sessions and TAKS testing dates is available at http://www.neisd.net/test/General_Info.html.

7. How many questions are on STAAR tests and are they multiple choice?
The Texas Education Agency has released “Blueprints” for each STAAR test, which include the total number of questions on the tests. The blueprint documents are available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/. The STAAR test includes multiple choice items as well as open-ended questions that students will need to answer independently without the influence of answer choices.
8. **How are STAAR tests graded, especially the open-ended questions or writing tests?**

   Multiple-choice items and griddable items are graded by a machine. For the STAAR writing tests, the Texas Education Agency is using a new scoring methodology called “adjacent scoring.” This system is used by most states that have a writing component. A student’s composition will be scored by two different scorers who do not know what the other scorer gave the composition. For example, the first reader scores the composition a 4, and the second reader scores it a 3. Since these two scores are adjacent, TEA will add the two scores together (to get 7) and then multiply the sum by 2 (to get 14 out of a possible 16 points). If the first reader scores the composition a 4, and the second reader score it a 2, then the composition will go to a third reader (since 4 and 2 are non-adjacent scores). The third reader is either the scoring director or an assistant scoring director. Whatever the third reader gives the composition will be reported. Adjacent scoring will also be used for short answer responses on the English I, English II and English III reading tests.

9. **What are the passing standards for STAAR?**

   A student’s performance on the EOC exams will fall under one of three performance categories established by the Texas Education Agency:

   - Level 1: Unsatisfactory Academic Performance
   - Level 2: Satisfactory Academic Performance, and
   - Level 3: Advanced Academic Performance

   The Texas Education Agency plans to establish the STAAR performance standards (raw scores and scale scores) for the categories above for grades 3 through 8 in fall 2012.

   In April 2012, the Texas Education Agency provided the performance standards and the minimum score for each EOC test. TEA is phasing-in the EOC standards over multiple years. The phase-in standard for each content area is determined by the year the student takes the first EOC assessment in that content area. For example, students who take all 9th grade level EOC exams for the first time in 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 will be held to the Phase-in 1 standards for every assessment. Phase 2 Standards begin in 2013-2014 & 2014-2015. And the final performance standards begin in 2015-2016 and thereafter. More information about the EOC standards is available at [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/).

10. **When will parents and students receive the results for STAAR tests taken Spring 2012?**

    **STAAR 3 – 8:** The Texas Education Agency plans to establish the STAAR performance standards for grades 3 through 8 in fall 2012. After performance standards are established for grades 3 through 8, then the standards can be applied to the spring 2012 tests to calculate individual student results. TEA plans to provide official reports to parents and students, called Confidential Student Reports or CSRs, in January of 2013 for 2011-2012 test administrations for grades 3-8.

    **STAAR EOCs:** The performance standards for the EOCs were released by TEA in April 2012. Official reports to parents and students, called Confidential Student Reports or CSRs, were released in June 2012 for students who took STAAR or STAAR Linguistically Accommodated EOCs. The CSRs include test results for each reporting category, scale scores, performance labels and explanations. The CSRs indicate whether a student passes or fails the STAAR tests. For students who took STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate EOCs in 2011-2012, TEA plan to provide the CSRs in January of 2013.
STAAR END-OF-COURSE (EOC) EXAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL COURSES

11. Please explain cumulative scores and how these affect minimum scores, graduation, credits, etc.
   In addition to an individual EOC test score, students will accrue a cumulative score for each content area – math, science, English and social studies. To graduate, a student must achieve a cumulative score target, which is calculated by multiplying the scale score for Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance and the number of tests the student is required to take in each content area. For example: many students who begin taking STAAR math EOC assessments in 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 will have a math cumulative score target of 10500 – which is calculated by multiplying 3500 (the Level II cut score for each math test) by 3 (the number of tests taken).

   For the EOC exams, TEA has also established a minimum score that falls within a reasonable range of Level II. A student must reach or exceed the minimum score for the exam to count in the cumulative score calculation. Although a minimum score on an EOC exam will count in the cumulative score, achieving only the minimum score on all EOC exams will not meet the cumulative score requirement. For example: students who take their first math EOC exam in 2011-2012 or 2012-2013 will have an Algebra I minimum score of 3371, a Geometry minimum score of 3362 and an Algebra II score of 3350. Added together, these minimum scores equal 10083, which is below the cumulative target of 10500. A cumulative score below the requirement does not meet graduation requirements.

   TEA has also set higher performance requirements for Algebra II and English III to indicate college and career readiness. Students graduating under the Recommended High School Program must meet at least Satisfactory Academic Performance at Level II on the Algebra II and English III EOCs. Students graduating under the Distinguished Achievement Program must meet Advanced Academic Performance standard at Level III on the Algebra II and English III EOCs.

   The cumulative score is not related to course credits. Credit is awarded when the grade is 70 or above.

12. Do this year's 8th-graders have to take the STAAR End-of-Course test?
   Students who are taking Algebra I or Geometry in middle school must take the high school level STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) exam.

13. Do high school seniors take a STAAR EOC test?
   According to the Texas Education Agency, “Students enrolled in grade 10 or above in the 2011–2012 school year or who are repeating grade 9 in the 2011–2012 school year will graduate under TAKS requirements and do not have the option of taking STAAR assessments. These students will only take STAAR EOC assessments if their campus has been assigned to participate in the mandatory testing activities.”

14. If a student took Algebra I during the 2010-2011 school year, does he have to take the Algebra I EOC exam?
   According to the Texas Education Agency, “A student who has STAAR as his or her graduation requirement and who has completed a high school course prior to spring 2012 is not required to take that specific STAAR EOC assessment to fulfill his or her graduation requirement. As a result, the student's cumulative score will be based on fewer assessments. However, the student could choose to take the assessment beginning in spring 2012 and has the option of using the score in his or her cumulative score.”

15. If a student transfers in after the first semester, does he/she still have to take the End-of-Course tests?
   Students first enrolled in grade 9 or below in the 2011-2012 school year will be required to take the STAAR EOC tests for courses in which they are currently enrolled. Students who receive high school credits for EOC courses while out of the state, country or in private school will not be required to take those EOC tests if the district accepts the course credits.

16. Is the STAAR EOC test the same for regular, GT, Honors, Pre-AP, AP and dual credit classes?
   Yes.

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17. Based on a student’s class scores for each semester, can an EOC exam be exempted?
No. First time 9th-grade students in 2011-2012 and below are required to take the EOC exams for courses in which they are enrolled.

18. Will the EOC exams replace final exams?
No. The district will continue its policy for semester and final exams. If and when the 15 percent requirement resumes, NEISD will monitor EOC performance and high school practice to determine if a change is needed in future years.

19. Will the district revise its policy on final exams being worth up to 20 percent of the class grade now that EOCs represent 15 percent?
The district’s policy states that final exams can be worth up to 20 percent, and there are no plans to change it. If and when the 15 percent requirement resumes, NEISD will monitor EOC performance and high school practice to determine if a change is needed in future years.

20. Who decided on the 15 percent requirement for the STAAR EOC tests and why?
House Bill 3 from the 81st Texas Legislature (Regular Session 2009) was signed into law and “requires a student’s performance on an end-of-course assessment instrument for a course ... in which the student is enrolled to account for 15 percent of the student’s final grade for the course.” School districts were given the ability to defer the 15 percent grading requirement for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school year.

21. Will STAAR increase the high school dropout rate?
Since STAAR is in its early stages of implementation, there is insufficient data to predict its impact on dropout rates or completion rates. STAAR represents up to 15 hurdles to graduation versus the four hurdles of the TAKS exit-level test; therefore, secondary schools and districts must have strong systems in place to support and advise students.

22. Why are the English III and Algebra II tests given more importance?
House Bill 3 from the 81st Texas Legislature (Regular Session 2009) required the establishment of college- and career-readiness performance standards for English III and Algebra II assessments. HB 3 further defines college readiness as: “the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program.”
GRADERS AND STAAR EOC 15 PERCENT REQUIREMENT

23. Will the 15 percent EOC requirement count this year?
   State law requires that 15 percent of the student’s EOC exam score count toward his/her final grade for the course. However, the Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced that he will defer implementation of the 15 percent grading requirement for the 2012-2013 school year. As a result, NEISD will postpone the 15 percent requirement. EOC exam performance will not influence the Final Course Grade or credit. The state also allowed districts to postpone the requirement in 2011-2012. If and when the 15 percent requirement resumes, NEISD will implement it.

24. How will NEISD calculate the 15 percent EOC requirement?
   If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, NEISD will apply 85 percent to the year average and 15 percent to the EOC score that is converted to a numeric grade of 0 to 100 to calculate the Final Course Grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Algebra</th>
<th>Semester One grade</th>
<th>Semester Two grade</th>
<th>Year Average</th>
<th>EOC converted grade</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.15=10.2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

Note: Grades are rounded up or down from one decimal place

25. Since the English End-of-Course exam will be split into a reading component and a writing component, will the student’s grade in the course also be split?
   Students will receive one English grade for semester one, another for semester two and a year average. If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, the English Final Course Grade will be a combination of the year average at 85 percent and the EOC score at 15 percent. The district will apply 7.5 percent to the EOC reading component and 7.5 percent to the writing component, which will be added with 85 percent of the year average to calculate the student’s Final Course Grade. For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English I</th>
<th>Semester One grade</th>
<th>Semester Two grade</th>
<th>Year Average</th>
<th>EOC converted grade</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Reading EOC:</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68 x 0.075=5.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.1+5.6=72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing EOC:</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75 x 0.075=5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Grades are rounded up or down from one decimal place

26. Will End-of-Course test scores be standard across Texas?
   The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has provided two cut scores that identify Satisfactory Academic Performance (Level II) and Advanced Academic Performance (Level III). A student’s EOC exam score will be provided as a raw score (number of questions answered correctly) and scale score, which the district will convert to a numeric grade of 0-100. As stated by the state’s Student Assessment Division, “TEA is not planning to provide a method by which scale scores can be converted into grading systems because of wide variations in grading policy from district to district.” Therefore, EOC scores that have been converted will not be standard across Texas.
27. Why is the state leaving it up to districts to convert End-of-Course test scores and determine the policy for the 15 percent requirement?
The state has indicated to districts that it has no statutory authority to dictate grading policies. A San Antonio-Express News article included the following explanation from a Texas Education Agency spokesperson as to why the agency cannot dictate how districts handle grades: “The last time we issued a mere letter about a grading policy, we got sued. Districts have set their own grading policies for decades, so this continues that practice.”


28. What percentage of districts has established their EOC conversion charts and EOC grading policies?
That information hasn’t been made available; however, districts are sharing their models with each other. NEISD initially collected about 10 models and presented its information at a regional level during the 2011-2012 school year.

29. How does North East ISD’s grading policy for the 15 percent requirement compare to other districts?
NEISD developed its method to implement the 15 percent requirement (if and when it resumes) after studying plans from other districts across the state. In turn, NEISD has shared its methodology with other districts in Bexar County and across the state. The district believes that its method is a reflection of what is best for students within the requirements of the law.

State law requires that 15 percent of the student’s EOC exam score count toward his/her final grade for the course. However, the Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams announced that he will defer implementation of the 15 percent grading requirement for the 2012-2013 school year. As a result, NEISD will postpone the 15 percent requirement. EOC exam performance will not influence the Final Course Grade or credit. The state also allowed districts to postpone the requirement in 2011-2012. If and when the 15 percent requirement resumes, NEISD will implement it.

30. How can the semester one or two grade be adjusted?
If a student has a failing semester grade, credit recovery may be an option to increase that grade to a 70. If your student has failed or is in danger of failing a course, the best action to take is to talk with your high school counselor.

31. Will the student’s final report card show the teacher’s grade at 85 percent or at 100 percent?
With the postponement of the 15 percent requirement, the district is planning to provide middle school and high school students with one report card after June 1, 2012 calculated entirely with the grades awarded by their teachers. Additionally, the district will return to its practice of awarding credits by semester.

32. Will Final Course Grades be reported on the transcripts that colleges and universities receive?
NEISD’s transcripts, also known as the Academic Achievement Record (AAR), will include Final Course Grades and all EOC exam scores. The district will follow the standards established by TEA for the content of the transcripts.

33. What will be reported on the transcript if a student takes a Pre-AP course in the first semester and a regular course in the second semester?
The transcript, also known as the Academic Achievement Record (AAR), will list the courses on two separate lines with a code to distinguish the Pre-AP course. For example: a Pre-AP World Geography course taken during the first semester would be listed on the transcript as “W GEO : QH” along with a legend explaining that Q=PRE AP and H=HONORS COURSE. The regular World Geography course taken during the second semester would be listed on a separate line as “W GEO” without any extra identifying codes.
CLASS RANK

34. Does this new testing system effect how GPAs are calculated?

If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, NEISD plans to incorporate it into class rank and Weighted Grade Average (WGA) beginning with 9th-grade students entering high school in 2014-2015 and beyond.

Note: NEISD transitioned from Grade Point Average (GPA) to Weighted Grade Average (WGA) in 2011-2012.

35. How does the 15 percent requirement impact class rank?

If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, NEISD plans to phase-in a new class rank policy that includes the 15 percent EOC requirement beginning with 9th-grade students entering high school in 2014-2015. The new rank policy will include the Final Course Grade calculated with 85 percent of the Year Average and 15 percent of the EOC. Students entering high school from 2007 to 2013 will remain under the current class rank policy for all four years of high school.

Current rank policy for students entering high school from 2007-2013: Rank points are based on semester grades. For example: a current 9th-grade student in Algebra I earns a 70 in Semester One and a 76 in Semester Two. His/Her rank points will be calculated based on the teacher’s grades so 70 + 76 = 146 Rank Points. The EOC score or Final Course Grade are not used in the calculation.

Recommended rank policy for students entering high school in 2014-2015 and beyond (if and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes): Rank points will be influenced by the EOC score. Rank points will be determined by doubling the Final Course Grade. For example: A student in Algebra I earns a 70 in Semester One and 76 in Semester Two for a Year Average of 73. He earns a 68 on the EOC. Applying 85 percent to the Year Average and 15 percent to the EOC results in a Final Course Grade of a 72. The student’s rank points will be 72 x 2 = 144. The weight points, or rank factor, will be applied to 85 percent of the Year Average and then added with the EOC and doubled. For example: A student in English III Advanced Placement earns a 90 in Semester One and a 94 in Semester Two for a Year Average of 92. Applying 85 percent to the Year Average results in 78.2 points, which is then multiplied by the rank factor of 1.29. The student earns a 90 on the EOC. Fifteen percent of the EOC grade results in 13.5 points. The student’s rank points will be calculated: (78.2 x 1.29) + 13.5 = 114.4; 114.4 x 2 = 228.8 rank points.

36. Will the STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate tests be weighted differently in class rank?

EOC exam scores – whether a regular, modified or alternate exam – will not receive any weight points for class rank. If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, NEISD plans to phase-in a new class rank policy beginning with 9th-grade students entering high school in 2014-2015. The weight points, or rank factor, will be applied to 85 percent of the Year Average and then added with the EOC and doubled. (Refer to question 33 for further explanation about class rank.)
COURSE CREDITS UNDER STAAR

37. If a student leaves school before the end of the year, is credit earned?

With the Commissioner of Education’s postponement of the 15 percent requirement in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the district will continue its practice of awarding course credits by semester. Credit is awarded when the grade is 70 or above. If a student leaves before the end of the year and has not earned a semester two grade, then the credit cannot be awarded. The student’s transcript will show any semester credits and grades earned, which the new district can evaluate based on its credit requirements.

38. If student does not pass a semester but passes the EOC exam, will he/she need to retake the course or will he/she get credit for it?

Credit for EOC courses is awarded when the grade is 70 or above at the end of the year. With the Commissioner of Education’s postponement of the 15 percent requirement in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, final course grades will be calculated entirely from the grades awarded by teachers. If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, an EOC exam score will count for 15 percent of the student’s Final Course Grade with the remaining 85 percent awarded by the teacher. Under this requirement, it is possible for a student to fail one semester (grade below a 70) and still earn credit for the course. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester One grade</th>
<th>Semester Two grade</th>
<th>Year Average</th>
<th>EOC converted grade</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(70+67)/2 x 0.85=58.2 76 x 0.15=11.4 58.2 + 11.4=69.6

In the scenario above, the student has earned course credit and does not need to retake the semester or the course.

39. What will determine whether a student simply retakes an EOC exam or needs to engage in credit recovery?

A student who fails an EOC exam will automatically be scheduled to retake it. Credit is awarded when the grade is 70 or above. With the Commissioner of Education’s postponement of the 15 percent requirement in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, final course grades will be calculated entirely from the grades awarded by teachers. If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, the Semester One grade, Semester Two grade and EOC grade will influence whether a student passes a course. Credit recovery is one option for students who fail, but there are several other options depending on the individual student’s situation. If your student has failed or is in danger of failing a course, the best action to take is to talk with your high school counselor.

40. What is credit recovery and how do I take advantage of it?

Course and credit recovery are types of interventions that occur after the course in middle school or after the end of a semester for high school. These programs are designed to allow students to gain a maximum grade of 70 for the course in middle school or for the semester in high school. For high school courses, credit recovery could occur during the school year or during the early summer program offered at every high school.

41. Do the weight points for Pre-AP and AP courses impact students earning credit?

The weight points, or rank factor, assigned to courses are strictly used in the district’s ranking policy to recognize differences in levels of difficulty between Advanced Placement, Pre-Advanced Placement, Regular, and Content Modified coursework. The rank factors are not used to determine if credit is awarded.
STAAR ACCOMMODATIONS

42. What accommodations will be available for students with dyslexia or 504 plan?

According to the Texas Education Agency, two of the three bundled accommodations will be available for students with dyslexia and other reading disabilities on the STAAR reading assessments in grades 3 through high school—(1) the oral reading of item stems/answer options only and (2) extended testing time if needed. These accommodations will not be offered as a bundle; the needs of the student should be considered when determining which accommodations to use. A proper-nouns list like the one used in the TAKS assessments will no longer be provided. Students who are identified with dyslexia by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee or Section 504 placement committee or who are identified as Dyslexic and getting services but not Special Ed or 504 may meet the eligibility criteria for the extra time accommodation. This accommodation provides students extra time to complete the test until the end of the regular school day.

43. If a student with a disability does not pass the regular STAAR test, will he/she then be given a modified or alternate version of the test?

Only students served by special education who qualify under eligibility criteria set by the Texas Education Agency can be given a modified or alternate assessment. Eligibility is not determined by performance on a regular STAAR exam. Students served by 504 must take the regular STAAR test; however, there are some accommodations for which they may qualify to use. Placing students on a STAAR Modified exam indicates that the student is also receiving extensive modifications and accommodations within the classroom and is not expected to achieve grade-level proficiency during the school year.

CLASS WORK AND STAAR

44. Is the material on the STAAR exam the same material as the student learns in class?

Like the TAKS system, STAAR is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) – the state’s standards for what students should know and be able to do by grade level and subject. The TEKS provide a road map for class instruction. The majority of the STAAR test (60-65 percent) concentrates on the TEKS identified as readiness standards, but STAAR also assesses other TEKS for the current grade/course – known as supporting standards. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) provides more information about the assessed curriculum for each STAAR test at [www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/).

45. How are Algebra I and Algebra I Pre-Advanced Placement classes different if all teachers are expected to teach the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and prepare students for the same Algebra I EOC?

All teaching is intended to enable students to develop mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), but Pre-AP and AP classes offer an enrichment of the regular curriculum. Pre-AP courses prepare students for AP courses. AP courses follow a college curriculum approved by the College Board, and students can take AP tests to gain college credit.

46. If a teacher has to teach everything in time for the End-of-Course tests in spring, then what is taught after the EOC exams are given?

Throughout the school year, classroom instruction is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TEKS from elementary to high school are vertically aligned, meaning that many TEKS standards are not only essential for success in the current grade or course, but also important for preparedness in the next grade or course. After the STAAR exams are given, students are still expected to develop mastery on the TEKS and take a final exam given by the teacher at the end of the year.
STAAR PREPARATION

47. How are you preparing students for the increased rigor of STAAR?
   Teachers are increasing the level of rigor in their questioning—both in class and on tests. The district has
   provided staff with instructional guides and professional development to help them with lesson plan creation
   and implementation under the more rigorous STAAR system. Campus administrators look for levels of
   instruction and rigor when conducting “walkthrough” observations.

48. Will teachers and students be spending some time to review the past year’s lessons immediately before the
    STAAR administrations?
   Teachers will likely use class time to review the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) prior to the STAAR
   test as they did under the TAKS system. Some schools will also hold school-wide review events and/or parent
   academic nights to help prepare students for STAAR.

49. Will practice STAAR tests be available?
   The Texas Education Agency has released STAAR test questions by grade level and subject and plans to release
   the spring test forms of STAAR in summer 2014. The released test questions are available at
   http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/.

50. Have students been taking a STAAR benchmark?
   To help students prepare for the STAAR exam, the district created its own benchmark exams based on
   information provided by the Texas Education Agency and with input from its teachers. Benchmarks are
   administered in the fall and spring semesters.

51. What study materials will be provided to students for the STAAR tests?
   NEISD has collected study resources for STAAR on its website at www.neisd.net/staar/resources.html. However,
   class instruction and assignments are the first resources for success on STAAR.
SUMMER SCHOOL AND EOC RETAKES

52. If my child is not doing well (60-70) in math, can he still attempt summer school if he/she passes EOC?

If your student has failed or is in danger of failing a course, the best action to take is to talk with your high school counselor about the available options. Credit is awarded when the grade is 70 or above. With the Commissioner of Education’s postponement of the 15 percent requirement in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, EOC performance will not influence the final course grade or credit.

If and when the 15 percent EOC requirement resumes, an EOC exam score will count for 15 percent of the student’s Final Course Grade with the remaining 85 percent awarded by the teacher. Under this requirement, it is possible for a student to fail one semester and still earn credit for the course. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester One grade</th>
<th>Semester Two grade</th>
<th>Year Average</th>
<th>EOC converted grade</th>
<th>Final Course Grade</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(70+67)/2 x 0.85 = 58.2

76 x 0.15 = 11.4

58.2 + 11.4 = 69.6

In the scenario above, the student has earned course credit and does not need to retake the semester or the course.

53. Please provide more information relating to EOC exam retakes.

Students can retake an EOC exam for any reason. Some students will retake an EOC until they pass the assessment and/or the course. Some students will retake an EOC to improve their cumulative score. NEISD students who do not reach Level II: Satisfactory Academic Performance will automatically be enrolled for the next EOC retake. North East ISD has developed a chart for each EOC exam, which provides guidance on whether a retake is required based on a student’s test performance and graduation plan. The district’s recommendations are available at the STAAR website under the high school section and [http://www.neisd.net/staar/docs/NEISDRetakeOptionsforInternetwithinstructions.pdf](http://www.neisd.net/staar/docs/NEISDRetakeOptionsforInternetwithinstructions.pdf).

The cumulative score will be calculated using the highest scale score on each EOC assessment within a content area.

54. What if a student retakes an EOC exam and receives a lower score?

If the student is retaking the test to receive a passing score, he/she will need to retake the test until that is achieved. The cumulative score will be calculated using the highest scale score on each EOC assessment within a content area.

55. Please explain the test remediation options.

Students who are unsuccessful on an EOC exam or TAKS test will be offered remediation. Remediation can come in several forms. The district’s summer program provides optional EOC exam and TAKS exit-level preparation courses to support students for the summer retake opportunity. Additionally, all campuses provide remediation opportunities during the school year.
56. **Do you recommend all students enroll in an EOC Prep course with an 80 or below semester average?**
   No. Each individual student will be advised if an EOC Prep course is recommended based on his/her course grade, EOC performance and graduation plan.

57. **Will there be an extra cost for an EOC Prep class?**
   There will not be a cost for EOC prep classes.

58. **Is the price for summer school going to go down?**
   At the time of this revised and published document, there will not be a fee for the campus-based summer program that includes EOC Prep, TAKS Success, Credit Recovery, and Grade Recovery. There will be tuition for the traditional Summer School 2013, which will be $150 for one semester and $300 for two semesters.

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Editor’s Note: The “State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Questions and Answers” document provided by the Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency was used to answer some of these questions. [http://www.txetests.com/FAQS/index.asp](http://www.txetests.com/FAQS/index.asp)