

April 8, 2015

STAAR grades 3–8 math assessments to be excluded from 2015 state accountability system

AUSTIN – Commissioner of Education Michael Williams announced today that results of 2015 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) in mathematics for grades 3–8 will be excluded from the 2015 state accountability system.

Commissioner Williams reached his decision following numerous discussions with math teachers, parents and superintendents across the state regarding new curriculum standards in mathematics for grades K–8. New rigorous math standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2012 with implementation now taking place this current school year.

"The teachers I have spoken with have confidence that Texas students will, in time, adjust to the more rigorous math standards, but for accountability purposes asked for a transition year," said Commissioner Williams. "Based on what I hear from those working in the classroom, I agree and will not count grades 3–8 math assessment results in 2015 accountability ratings for schools, charters and districts."

Although the grades 3–8 math assessment results will not be part of the 2015 state accountability system, campus-level results will still be reported to school districts and charters. The results, based on actual student performance standards, will be provided to school districts, charters and parents in early September.

Last year, Commissioner Williams announced that the Student Success Initiative (SSI) requirement that students in grades 5 and 8 must pass the STAAR mathematics assessment in order to move on to the next grade level would be suspended for this school year. Suspension of the 5th and 8th grade mathematics requirement applies only for the 2014-2015 school year. State law requiring students in grades 5 and 8 to pass the STAAR reading exam in order to proceed to the next grade level is still in effect. The STAAR mathematics assessments in grades 5 and 8 will only be administered one time this school year.

Along with the grades 3–8 math assessments, results from STAAR Accommodated (STAAR A) and STAAR Alternate 2 (a redesign of the original STAAR Alternate) will also be excluded from the 2015 state accountability system. The U.S. Department of Education no longer allows Texas to use modified assessments (such as the STAAR Modified), which had been used for students receiving special education services that met certain participation criteria. Those students were administered the STAAR Accommodated this year. In addition, House Bill 5, passed by the Texas Legislature in 2013, required the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to redevelop the STAAR Alternative (STAAR Alt) test which is designed for the state's most cognitively disabled students. That test was administered for the first time this school year. While results from the

STAAR Accommodated and STAAR Alternate 2 will be excluded from the state accountability system, results will be reported to school districts, charters and parents.

In 2013 and 2014, districts and charters had to meet all four indexes to receive a *Met Standard* or *Met Alternative Standard* rating. The four indexes are Student Achievement (Index 1), Student Progress (Index 2), Closing Performance Gaps (Index 3), and Postsecondary Readiness (Index 4). For 2015 accountability, due to the changes in the state assessment program this school year, a campus or district must meet the target on either Index 1 or Index 2 plus meet the target on Index 3 and Index 4. School administrators should note that for 2015, the performance standard in Index 1 is increased from 55 percent to 60 percent.

An overview of the substantial differences in state accountability between 2014 and 2015 is available on the TEA website at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/materials.html>.

The 2015 state accountability system will be fully explained in the *2015 Accountability Manual*, which is scheduled for release in May. TEA will release 2015 state accountability ratings for districts, charters and campuses in August.