

Lindale Independent School District

Federal Programs and Assessment

1. Can students “opt-out” of STAAR tests in Texas public schools?

Texas does not have opt-out provisions for assessments required under Texas Education Code 39.023(a). This subchapter calls for “all students” to be assessed in math (grades 3-8), reading (grades 3-8), social studies (grade 8), science (grades 5 and 8), and any other subject and grade required by federal law.

2. How do parental rights outlined in Texas Education Code Chapter 26.010 apply to state testing?

Texas Education Code Chapter 26 addresses parental rights and responsibilities and states that a parent is “not entitled to remove the parent’s child from a class or other school activity to avoid a test or to prevent the child from taking a subject for an entire semester.” This section goes on to explain that it “does not exempt a child from satisfying grade level or graduation requirements in a manner acceptable to the school district and the agency.”

3. Can I opt my child out of testing by keeping him/her at home?

STAAR exams are scheduled during a testing window. While a student may be absent on a given testing day, a student will only be coded as absent for the state assessment if he/she is out for the entire testing window. Testing windows are generally two weeks long. If a student slated to take one or more STAAR exams attends school during the window, the student will be required to sit for the exam(s). If the student refuses to take the exam, the test will still be submitted for scoring.

4. Are there consequences for LISD if my student does not take the STAAR?

STAAR is used to determine students’ progress within the curriculum as well as campus and district accountability ratings. When students do not participate in state assessments but attend school during the testing window, their tests are still scored, resulting in a failure for each applicable assessment. When students are absent for the entire testing window, this impacts the district’s participation rate. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), participation percentages below 95 percent face potential consequences from the state.

5. Are there consequences for my student if he/she doesn’t take STAAR?

Grade advancement: While a passing score on STAAR is no longer required for a student to advance to the next grade level, scores on state assessments must be considered as a factor in promotion (see Texas Education Code 28.021(c)).

Accelerated instruction: Students who do not participate in STAAR (due to refusal or absences) miss the opportunity to perform satisfactorily on the applicable exams. Failure to achieve satisfactory performance results in 30 hours of required intervention in each of the aligned subject areas (see Texas Education Code 28.0211(a-1)). Interventions can be offered in the summer (see Texas Education Code 28.0211(a-4) and/or may require the student to attend school before or after regular school hours (see Texas Education Code 28.0211(a-2)).

High school graduation: To earn a high school diploma, students must earn satisfactory performance on five end-of-course (EOC) exams (see Texas Education Code 39.025). Students may be eligible to meet graduation requirements using substitute assessments; however, **a qualifying score on the substitute**

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assessment must be earned while the student is enrolled in the corresponding high school course in conjunction with other criteria (see Texas Administrative Code 101.4002). Additionally, students are only eligible for the substitute assessment pathway after unsuccessful participation in the STAAR EOC.

6. **What options do parents have when it comes to STAAR?**

Parent options are:

- Support your child's participation in state testing.
- Withhold your child from school during the testing window. With this option, please be aware of compulsory attendance rules (see Texas Education Code 25.093 and Texas Family Code 65.003).
- Send your child to school during the testing window, acknowledging that the appropriate STAAR exam will be administered to your student. If your child refuses to take the test, the test will be submitted for scoring.