



MEASURING STUDENT LEARNING IN 2021: What will be Different in Texas?

Since COVID-19 first led to sudden school closures in 2019, families have stepped up in unprecedented ways to support learning at home as students began learning remotely. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to put plans in place to ensure students are safe, as students across Texas have continued to need to use different learning models this year, from remote to hybrid and in-person, with some transitioning between them. But the unprecedented changes in learning have impacted students in many ways, from their relationships with peers and social emotional growth to academics.

This year, it is more important than ever to measure student learning to understand the impact that COVID-19 and different learning models have had on our students and schools and how to help them recover. This is especially important for families, who need objective information about how well their child learned grade-level skills so they can better support learning at home. To measure learning, students will take STAAR this spring. While STAAR is only one of many ways to measure student learning, families, schools and leaders need the objective and actionable information the state test provides to identify any learning gaps to best support students and fully recover from the pandemic.

How will State Tests be Different in 2021?

Knowing that the pandemic has affected students, teachers and schools, STAAR will be different than it has been in the past. The results will be used for learning purposes only in 2021. As of March 31, the following changes have been made:

- **To reduce stress for teachers and students in an already challenging year, the results from STAAR will not be used to determine A-F grades for schools or districts or for teacher evaluations.**
- **Students in fifth and eighth grade will not need to meet grade level on STAAR to be promoted.**
- **While students will be required to take the test in-person, it will be done with safety precautions that the district puts in place. Students may take the test outside of the classroom, in a gym or cafeteria, or in other buildings, such as a library, church or community centers to allow for more space to socially distance.**
- **Districts have a longer window for students to take the test. This will allow teachers additional time to cover content and for schools to test students in smaller groups with social distancing.**