

# MY TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL

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STANDARDIZED TESTING  
IS CRITICAL NOT ONLY  
FOR TRACKING STUDENT  
PROGRESS BUT FOR  
DETERMINING SCHOOL  
AND DISTRICT RATINGS.



## STUDENT TESTING AND ADVANCEMENT

### What is STAAR?

STAAR stands for State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness. The test is developed by staff at the Texas Education Agency along with experts in test development and Texas educators. The STAAR exams are a series of tests taken by every Texas public school student.

Your child will begin taking the exams in third grade and, after that, he or she will take some form of the exams each year. In the earlier grades, the tests focus on reading, writing, and mathematics. Starting in fifth grade, students take tests on writing, science, and social studies, as well.

In high school, students take end-of-course STAAR exams in five high school subjects: Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, and U.S. History. Students must pass the five tests to graduate, but students' performance on the end-of-course exams will not be used to determine class rank. Some districts may opt to administer two additional end-of-course tests: Algebra II and English III.

### STAAR exams

Everyone feels a lot of pressure during exam time. Test results can reflect on a teacher's success and can substantially affect a school's or district's reputation through the Texas accountability rating system as well as the federal accountability system established in the No Child Left Behind Act. Both accountability systems spell out performance expectations for schools and districts, as well as consequences for performance that is below standard. In the most extreme cases of persistent low performance, a district or school may be required to close and reopen with a new name and new staff.

The importance of the STAAR tests for students in grades 3 through 8 rests in the emphasis on rigorous standards for learning in mathematics, science, social studies, and reading/language arts.

### 15 Percent Rule

You may have heard about the "15 Percent Rule" for high school students: that the end-of-course exam grades counted for 15 percent of a student's final grade. The 2013 Texas Legislature removed that requirement.