

# Empowerment Through Data: **Texas'** Assessments Enable Student Support & Success

Quality assessments provide stakeholders in the education system – students, parents, educators, and policymakers – with critical information about students' educational progress and mastery of knowledge and skills. Different types of assessments<sup>1</sup> each play a role in understanding and supporting student learning:

## Formative Assessments

which can be informal, help teachers to check for understanding and tailor lesson plans as needed to support student learning.

## Interim Assessments

administered throughout the school year, monitor progress and, if needed, inform instructional practices to help students get back on track.

## Summative Assessments

test against mastery of state standards, providing comparable insights into progress for both individual students and groups of students.

Accurate and comparable **summative assessments in core subjects specifically play a necessary part in enabling decision makers to evaluate policies and practices and stay informed.** Incredibly valuable in the insights they generate, typically annual statewide assessments take up just 2% of instructional time for the year.<sup>2</sup>

## Texas' Annual Summative Test (STAAR) Provides Unique And Powerful Data



Allows us to gauge the **effectiveness** of our schools in relation to **Texas educational standards**



Offers the ability to **learn from schools** exceeding expectations and experiencing remarkable growth and **scale best practices**



Enables us to **monitor achievement gaps** and identify where more support is needed



Does not negatively impact school funding or student opportunities: low performance results **provide clarity for targeted supports**



**Parents value the information these tests provide**

**69%**

of parents support continued state testing to assess student learning compared to previous years.<sup>3</sup>

**75%**

of Texas voters support annual reading and math tests to provide parents and policymakers with an apples-to-apples comparison of our schools.<sup>5</sup>

**Nearly 90% of parents think their kids are performing at grade level while only 47% of Texas students are actually meeting expectations.**<sup>4</sup> State assessments provide an essential and objective measure of student performance, enabling parents and policymakers to make data-driven decisions to improve outcomes.

1: Data Quality Campaign, The Guide to Assessments

2: Education Reform Now, Advocates' Guide to Assessments

3: National Parents Union, Poll May 2023

4: Learning Heroes & Gallup, B-Flation; Commit STAAR data dashboard

5: Commit Statewide Poll, Nov. 2024

# Proven Innovations Can Enhance Texas' Testing Experience And Improve Outcomes

## A redesigned STAAR more closely mirrors instructional best practices

Annual statewide testing has undergone multiple changes in response to parent and educator feedback. HB 3906 (86R, also known as the "STAAR redesign") enacted the following changes to ensure the STAAR test is based on best practices, encourages strong classroom strategies, and provides quicker data to inform instruction:



Capped percentage of multiple-choice questions



Moved to fully online by 2022-23 school year



Eliminated writing-only tests in 4th & 7th grades



Created optional interim assessments

## Texas is leading the nation with an innovative through-year assessment pilot (TTAP) to provide more real-time feedback to teachers and families to support student learning

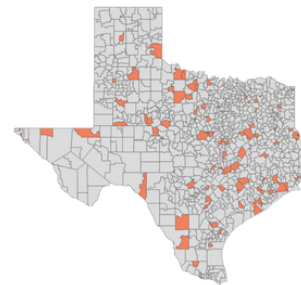
This school year, Texas is entering its 3rd year of the TTAP, which is exploring replacing the single end-of-year summative test with shorter, adaptive interim tests administered throughout the school year to produce a summative score. Almost 100 school systems are participating in the pilot. Initial pilot findings underscore the value of multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding, highlight the importance of ensuring assessment data is meaningfully utilized by parents and teachers to better support students, and provide insights into evolutions in the testing experience to apply more broadly.



Current end-of-year STAAR



Potential future of 3 shorter assessments throughout the year



TTAP Year 3 participating school systems

## Policy Takeaway

**Assessments provide key information to support student learning that would otherwise be hidden.** To deliver the best education to all students, Texas must prioritize summative annual assessments in core subjects and continue exploring innovative assessment design to improve instruction and ultimately student performance.



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