

WE STAND FOR THE FUTURE WE STAND FOR ALL



Equity and innovation will create a world-class public school system for all Texans.

Here is Where We Stand on Public School Accountability and Assessment

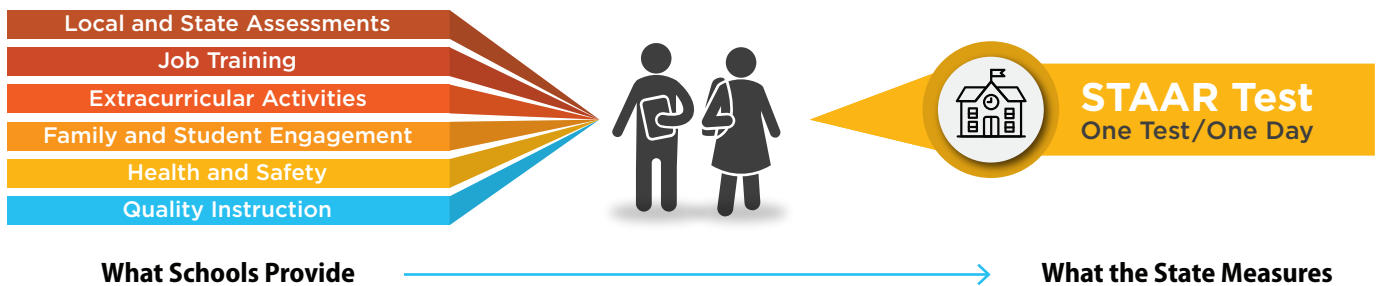
Now is Not the Time for a Punitive Accountability System

As Texas' public education system adjusts to new instructional approaches and deals with technology issues due to COVID-19, state policymakers must take this time to reevaluate whether our accountability system appropriately measures all the factors of an effective education.

Our public schools are being asked to do more than ever, but our A-F rating system is primarily based on one test given on one day. In grades 3-8, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exam is the only measure used in determining district and campus grades. These ratings ignore other essential indicators of a quality education such as extracurricular activities, health and safety issues, and community, family, and student engagement.

Texas School Ratings are Too Focused on STAAR

In Texas, one test on one day is the most significant factor that determines an A-F rating.



Student Assessments Must Be Timely and Inform Instruction

There will be continued academic challenges due to COVID-19 that will last beyond the current school year. To effectively address each student's needs, teachers must use appropriate and timely assessments to better inform instruction, address student learning gaps, and provide appropriate feedback to parents. Schools

already have a number of diagnostic tools that can be used locally to meet these needs. These types of formative assessments should be low-stakes and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in areas that need improvement. Periodic assessments should continue throughout the year to track short and long-term goals.

COVID-19 caused an abrupt transition to remote learning and for some students, a complete loss of

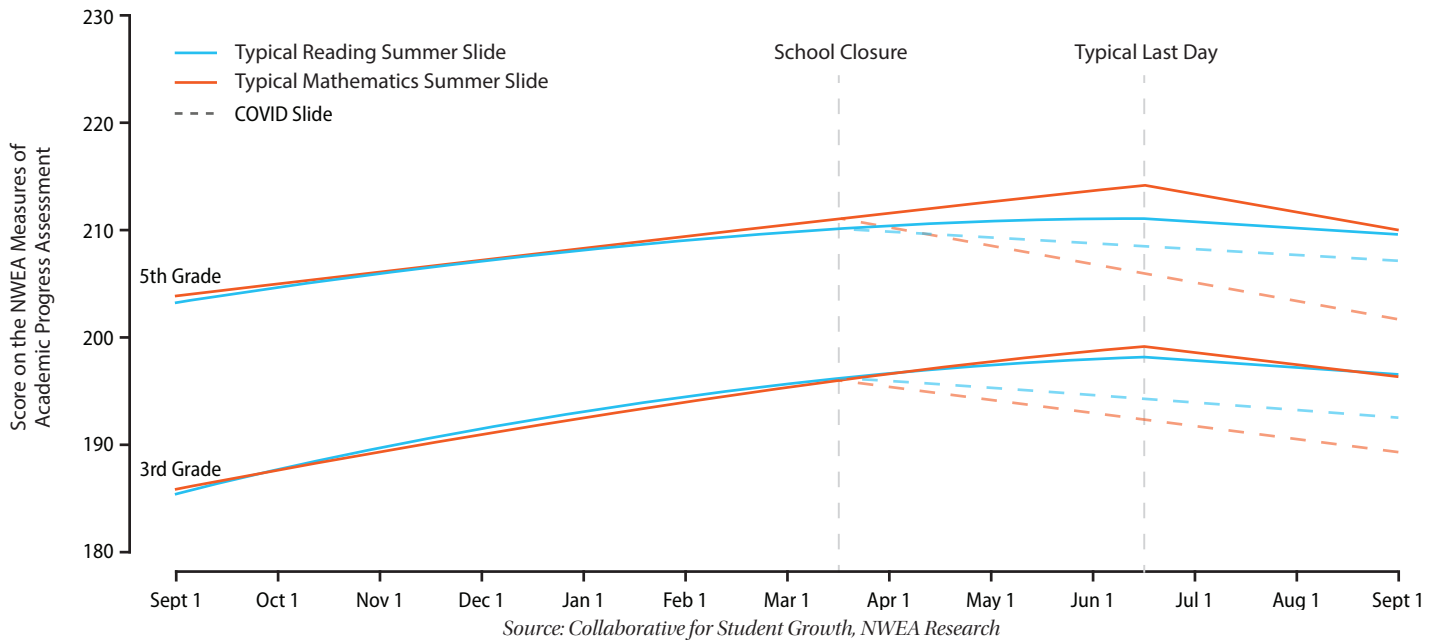
instructional time due to the lack of internet access. As a result, 5.4 million students returned to school in the fall of 2020 with more pronounced academic and social-emotional needs.

As preliminary research shows, significant student learning losses, known as “COVID slide,” can be expected. According to the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), students will “return with roughly 70% of the learning gains in reading relative to a typical

school year. However, in mathematics, students are likely to show much smaller learning gains, returning with less than 50% of the learning gains and in some grades, nearly a full year behind what we would observe in normal conditions.”¹

Now is the moment to have a thoughtful discussion about our state’s assessment system so that our students, parents, and teachers have timely access to relevant information both during COVID and beyond.

Experts Say Students Will Return with Fractional Learning Gains in the Fall of 2020



The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) waived the requirement to administer the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and issue accountability ratings last school year. It is unclear whether a similar waiver will be requested or granted during the 2020-21 school year.

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Suspend the use of the punitive A-F accountability system throughout the current pandemic.
- ▶ Establish a statewide working group to create a new school accountability system that appropriately measures all factors of an effective education.
- ▶ Provide assessments that are timely and inform instruction.

¹ Kuhfeld, Megan and Beth Tarasawa. *The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement*. Collaborative for Student Growth. NWEA Research. April 2020.



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