



Where We Stand on Assessment and Accountability

As Texas schools continue to recover from COVID-19 learning disruptions and face an unprecedented teacher shortage, our public schools are being asked to do more than ever. Texans deserve a school accountability system that reflects all of the ways our public schools serve our state — not just one test on one day. Texas has long been a national leader in innovative approaches to school accountability. The Texas Legislature can continue to lead the way by reducing the emphasis on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and recognizing the many factors that contribute to a good school and quality education.

Policy Recommendations

- ▶ Remove all high-stakes testing consequences for students
- ▶ Limit STAAR test scores to 50% of any domain or the overall score for districts and schools in the state’s accountability ratings system
- ▶ Expand the scope of Texas’ A-F accountability ratings system to include factors beyond STAAR test scores

Student Assessments Must Be Timely and Inform Instruction

STAAR tests should not be the only tools used for grade advancement or high school graduation. To effectively address individual student 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 other diagnostic tools that can be used locally to meet these needs.

Overemphasis on STAAR undermines the student-centered process at the heart of quality assessment. The most effective assessments are low-stakes, identify strengths and weaknesses, and inform instruction throughout the school year. STAAR, as a single high-stakes test, cannot meet those needs.

Texans Want More from Our Accountability System

Texans trust the public school system, which educates 90% of the students in our state. The current A-F rating system uses STAAR as the only factor in determining a quality school at the elementary and middle school level.¹ Texans also believe our current accountability system is not sufficient to measure all of what Texas schools accomplish. The 2022 Charles Butt Foundation Texas Education Poll found that 56% of Texans are not confident in the STAAR test.² Furthermore, 83% of Texans believe the Texas Education Agency should not base its A-F letter grades for public schools entirely on STAAR test scores. The Legislature should recognize the public’s expectations of educational accountability by expanding how we measure and assess the performance of our schools.

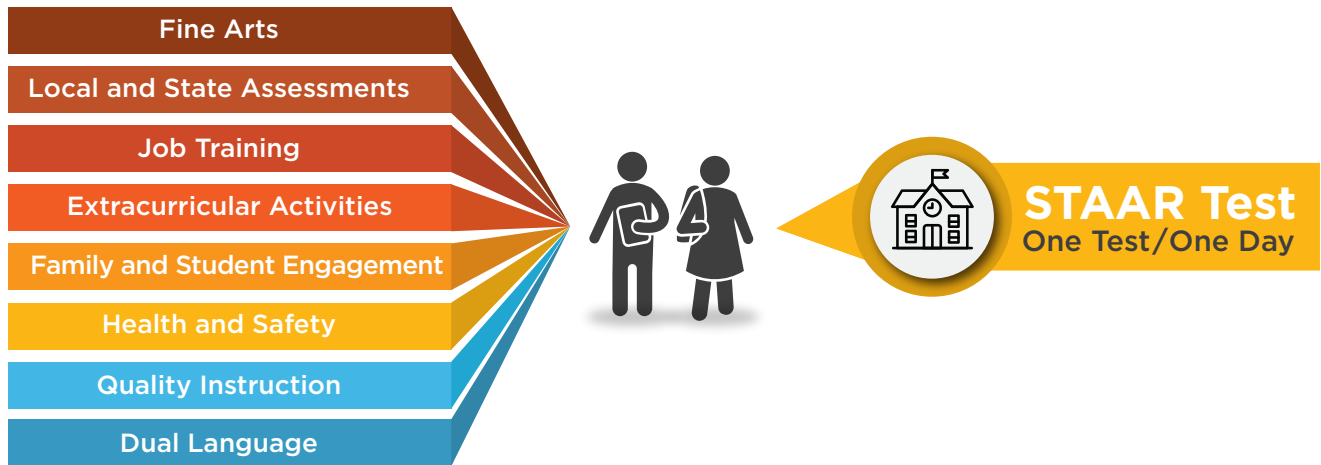
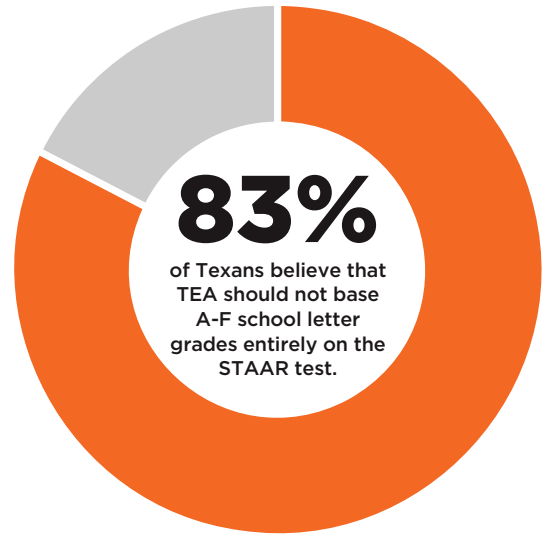
What Gets Measured Now? Student Achievement Domain

Elementary/Middle Schools	Weight
STAAR (Approaches, Meets & Masters Grade Level)	100%
High Schools	
STAAR	40%
College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)	40%
Graduation Rate	20%

Parents, business leaders, and community members are not the only ones who lack trust in our current accountability system. In the Charles Butt Foundation’s 2022 Teacher Poll, 98% of educators indicate a lack of confidence in the A-F single grade rating system.³ Furthermore, 81% of teachers say the pressure placed on students to perform well on standardized tests is a significant barrier to teaching. Texas should place teacher and student experience at the forefront of school accountability.

Texas Schools Are More Than a Test

Public schools in Texas do so much more than prepare students for a single test on a single day. In addition to delivering high-quality core curriculum, public schools offer programming such as fine arts, extracurriculars, and dual languages. Beyond academics, Texas schools do the important work of community and family engagement, addressing health and safety issues, and creating an environment where all children can thrive. Texas' A-F accountability system ignores these indicators of school quality and oversimplifies the important work of school districts and campuses. Texans deserve an accountability system that increases the transparency of school performance for all valuable services that our public schools provide.



What Schools Provide

What the State Measures

Sources

¹ Texas Education Agency (2022). 2022 Academic Accountability System Overview. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2022-accountability-system-overview.pdf>.

² Charles Butt Foundation (2022). Texas Education Poll: Connected Through Our Schools. Retrieved from <https://charlesbuttfoundation.org/2022txedpoll/>.

³ Charles Butt Foundation (2022). The 2022 Texas Teacher Poll: Persistent Problems and a Path Forward. Retrieved from <https://charlesbuttfoundation.org/what-were-learning/2022txteacherpoll/>.

For more information, contact:

Dr. Michelle Smith, Executive Director | ✉ msmith@ryht.org

Bob Popinski, Senior Director of Policy | ✉ bpopinski@ryht.org

Will Holleman, Senior Director of Government Relations | ✉ wholleman@ryht.org

Charles Gaines, Chief of Staff & Legislative Liaison | ✉ cgaines@ryht.org

Max Rombado, Legislative Director | ✉ mrombado@ryht.org