



District Assessments - FAQs

2023 - 2024

Content areas: English/Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

What is the origin of DAs?

DAs are the product of the Katy ISD Assessment Council work that began in August 2012. The Assessment Council met quarterly and was comprised of campus and district leadership. The Council's purpose was to create a balanced assessment system district-wide. One component of a balanced assessment system includes periodic, short assessments that are TEKS-aligned and are administered district-wide.

What is the purpose of DAs?

DAs are common assessments designed to gather evidence of student learning. These assessments should be used to help identify students' strengths and weaknesses as well as indicate any curriculum, instructional, or programmatic implications.

What role do DAs play in an assessment system?

DAs are not intended to be the sole assessment instrument Katy ISD teachers use to measure student learning. Rather DAs are meant to supplement a balanced campus-based assessment program. An assessment system should include both formal and informal evaluation methods.

What is tested?

DAs assess the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that have been taught in the time periods preceding their administration dates within the scope and sequence of the Katy ISD unit plans for their respective subjects. Students will be given Reading, Math, and Science assessments through TEA's STAAR Interim Assessments. Secondary students will also use TEA STAAR Interim Assessments only for Reading and Math. These assessments assess the curriculum and will measure current progress so that teachers can monitor growth and create plans for students to reach their maximum potential.

Are DAs part of a balanced assessment system?

DAs are not intended to be the sole assessment instruments that Katy ISD teachers use to measure student learning. Rather, DAs are meant to supplement balanced campus-based assessment programs. A Balanced Assessment system should include both formal and informal evaluation methods.

What is the format of DAs?

DAs must be formatted to be administered district wide within the testing windows so that scoring and data analysis can be completed in a timely fashion. DAs include multiple choice, technology enhanced items (TEI's), griddable numerical response items, short answer, and written prompts as appropriate.

DAs are intended to be administered within the regular class period of a school day. They are

not lengthy assessments and do not require special bell schedules or campus-wide testing arrangements. TEA STAAR Interim Assessments are untimed, and the blueprint of the test has been adjusted from previous years. At this time the recommendation for timing is approximately 90 minutes, however this may be adjusted once we complete our first round of testing.

DAs are available in Spanish versions for grades 2-5. Designated supports for individual students should be used as documented (ARD, RTI, 504, LPAC)

What data analysis is done for DAs?

Katy ISD recommends that DA data analysis protocols be utilized by campuses and teacher teams, with special considerations to incorporating the process with their own campus-based assessment practices. Campus principals should understand and model the effective use of common assessments including the need to use them to drive instruction.

What is the DA test security expectations?

DA test booklets and answer documents should be stored where students do not have access. They do not need to be stored in locked closets like STAAR assessments, but they should not be accessible for students to view prior to the administration.

DA test booklets shall not be sent home. Parents can view a DA at the campus upon request made to the classroom teacher.

TEA STAAR Interim Assessments are created by TEA and will not be released for parent viewing.

DA test booklets should be stored at the campus until the end of the year.

At the end of the year, DA test booklets should be recycled, and answer documents should be shredded since they contain student information.

Teachers administering DA online should not start the test until the testing window begins. This will ensure that students will not see the test before the appropriate times.

How will DAs be used for grades?

Elementary:

- Literacy Module Assessments in Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth grades will be taken as a major grade.
- Math Checkpoints are data points used for timely instructional guidance and adjustments. Math Checkpoints are administered to all students and data is collected in Aware. Math Checkpoints are administered with STAAR accommodations only. Additional modifications or accommodations are not allowable. The recommendation is that Math Checkpoints are used as a minor grade. For students with an IEP requiring a modified curriculum, the non-modified Math Checkpoints are used to collect data in the general education curriculum and a grade may not be taken. In lieu of testing a student two times, use another assignment that was modified to record the grade. Grades will NOT be taken on any other types of DAs. DA data should be used as a tool for goal setting and instructional adjustments.

Secondary: DAs administered through TEA STAAR Interim Assessments will NOT be taken as a grade. DA data should be used as a tool for goal setting and instructional adjustments. For all other DAs, grades will be taken and will count in the “minor” category. See "Special Populations" regarding grading DAs for students who receive Special Education services and supports.

How many DAs will students take in a year?

The quantity of DAs vary by content and grade. Core content courses taught in 2nd through 11th grade will administer a DA twice a school year in core content courses. For example, a 3rd grader could take up to six DAs throughout the entire school year, secondary students could take up to 12, depending on core content courses.

Who receives the results from DAs and what is done with that information?

Teachers, principals, and curriculum coordinators should utilize the results to inform curriculum and instruction. Teachers may share results with students in a variety of ways, such as discussing the intent of questions, reviewing common mistakes, or completing reflection sheets. Parents may review DAs with their child’s teacher by request.

Is there a District passing standard for DAs? How can a teacher assign a grade? (Secondary only)

The district uses the performance passing levels of Approaches, Meets and Masters from the 2022 TEA Raw Score Conversion chart for all STAAR tested grade levels and contents. For Non-STAAR related grades and contents Approaches is 50%, Meets is 70% and Masters is 90%. Secondary teachers are able to use flexible grading scales for DAs as a minor grade. Students who receive Special Education services may take the DAs with allowable designated supports (allowable on state testing), but will **NOT** receive a grade.

Are the DLAs used to prepare students for the STAAR?

No. However, DAs assess the curriculum, which is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The STAAR also assesses the TEKS. Students who perform well on the DAs are typically successful on the STAAR.

Are the Interim Assessments used to prepare students for the STAAR?

No, TEA STAAR Interim Assessments are given in the same platform as STAAR and exposes students to STAAR type questions, however, isn't a preparatory assessment. Through these assessments students have the opportunity to practice in the same system with the same tools as they will see on their STAAR Assessment.

Do other districts administer DAs?

After surveying multiple districts across the state, we found that district developed, curriculum-based assessments, are very common. In fact, all districts surveyed conduct some form of local assessments. These assessments vary in number and length (with Katy ISD's being less frequent than most). Grading practices also vary from among districts and most write their own assessments which are developed by knowledgeable campus and district staff and may include some purchased item banks.

How are DAs/Interim Assessments reviewed and updated?

DLAs at both Elementary and Secondary levels are reviewed internally by the Curriculum and Instruction Department as well as by campus Instructional Coaches. TEA STAAR Interim Assessments are updated each year from the Texas Education Agency.

Are the DAs considered high-stakes testing?

No, the DAs are not considered high-stakes testing. High-stakes tests refer to those exams in which students are required to pass in order to advance to the next grade level or to graduate. DLAs are not utilized to determine grade-level advancement or graduation. DLAs are diagnostic tools utilized to measure a student's understanding of the curriculum.

How should DAs be administered?

DA's will be administered via the mode assigned for each assessment. The calendars and mode of administration for Elementary, Junior High and High school is posted on the DA district webpage.

