



TEA announces initial assessment requirements under HB 5

AUSTIN – Under House Bill 5 (HB 5), passed by the 83rd Texas Legislature and signed by the governor, high school students are now required to pass five State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) end-of-course exams to meet the new graduation requirements.

The five assessments under HB 5 include Algebra I, English I (combined reading/writing), English II (combined reading/writing), biology, and U.S. history. The Texas Education Agency will be advising school districts and charters that students must pass all five of these end-of-course assessments to be eligible to graduate from a Texas public high school.

As a result, students who have taken a required assessment – but have not yet passed – will still need to demonstrate satisfactory performance on that exam to meet the state’s graduation requirements.

Reading and writing are currently assessed separately in English I and English II. However, HB 5 requires reading and writing be combined and given in a single day.

High school students who have to date passed English I or English II reading but not English I or English II writing (or vice versa) will still need to successfully complete the second test to meet graduation requirements. Existing state law does not allow the commissioner to waive a testing requirement.

The English I and English II tests will continue to have separate reading and writing tests for the July 2013 test administration and the December 2013 test administration. English I and English II assessments that combine reading and writing will be available beginning in spring 2014. High school students who have not successfully completed a separate reading or writing assessment by that time will take the new combined English I or English II test.

“Whenever the state revises its graduation plans and assessment requirements, many high school students get caught in that transition,” said Commissioner of Education Michael L. Williams. “The Texas Education Agency is working to make that transition a smooth one for those already in the pipeline, while also balancing fairness to those students who have successfully completed components of the current system.”

Assessments in Algebra II, geometry, English III, chemistry, physics, world geography, and world history have been eliminated from the testing requirements. As a result, the July 2013

STAAR administration will not include assessments for these courses. End-of-course assessments will continue to be offered in Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history.

The Texas Education Agency will be advising school districts and charters that accelerated instruction is required for students who did not perform satisfactorily on end-of-course exams required for graduation under HB 5 (Algebra I, English I (reading/writing), English II (reading/writing), biology, and U.S. history).

Since the end-of-course exams for chemistry, physics, Algebra II, geometry, world history, world geography and English III are no longer required for high school graduation under HB 5, accelerated instruction is not required for those courses.

HB 5 also eliminates the 15 percent grading requirement. Under the rule previously connected to the STAAR end-of-course examinations, a student's score on the STAAR end-of-course exams would have counted 15 percent of the student's final grade in each tested subject area. The STAAR end-of-course cumulative score component has also been eliminated.

###