# 2025-2026 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®)

## Progress Measure Questions and Answers

Throughout this document, the current year is 2025-2026 and the previous year is 2024-2025.

### Defining the current year STAAR Progress Measure

**1. *What is the STAAR progress measure?***

The STAAR progress measure provides information about the amount of improvement or progress a student has made in a content area. The STAAR progress measure is calculated based on a student's gain score—the scale score difference between the current accountability year and the previous accountability year.

Individual student progress is then categorized as *Limited, Expected,* or *Accelerated* progress.

**2. *How is the current year STAAR progress measure used?***

The current year STAAR progress measure outcomes will be provided in STAAR data files. The current year STAAR progress measure will also be included on STAAR Report Cards and in the Family Portal to help parents gauge their child's academic performance from the previous year to the current year.

**3. *What is an Accountability Year?***

When current and previous years are referenced in the STAAR progress measure, they are accountability years. An accountability year generally refers to the time frame from the previous June to the current May.

For STAAR grades 3–8, the current accountability year includes the spring 2026 grades 3–8 administrations.

For STAAR EOC assessments, the current accountability year includes the June 2025, December 2025, and spring 2026 administrations.

**4. *How are progress measures different from performance levels?***

Performance levels describe and classify students' performance in the current year. The STAAR performance levels are:

- Masters Grade Level
- Meets Grade Level
- Approaches Grade Level
- Did Not Meet Grade Level

In contrast, progress measures provide information about the improvement or progress that students have achieved between the previous year and the current year within the same content area. Individual student progress is compared to progress targets so that progress can be classified as Limited, Expected, or Accelerated.

### 5. *For what grades, content areas, and language is progress measured for the current year STAAR?*

In the current year, progress measures are available for English mathematics and RLA in grades 4–8, Spanish mathematics and RLA in grades 4–5, Algebra I, English I, and English II.

### 6. *How are the STAAR Progress Measure classifications (Limited, Expected, and Accelerated) determined?*

The STAAR progress measure classifications are determined by comparing a student's gain score — the difference between the student's current year scale score and previous year scale score — to a progress target.

The progress measure and progress targets are grounded in the STAAR performance standards. They are also grounded on the goals of having all students achieve at or above *Meets Grade Level* performance and having high-performing students maintain their achievement at *Masters Grade Level* performance.

The *Expected* progress target is defined as the distance between the *Meets Grade Level* performance standards from the previous year grade and the current year grade in the same content area. This definition is based on the goal that students in the *Meets Grade Level* and *Masters Grade Level* performance levels will maintain their respective academic achievement. For example, if a student is currently in the *Meets Grade Level* performance level for STAAR grade 4 English RLA, the expectation is that the student will at least maintain the *Meets Grade Level* performance level for the STAAR grade 5 English RLA. This means that the student who scored at least a 1552 on STAAR grade 4 English RLA (based on the *Meets Grade Level* standard) would need to earn a score of 1592 on the STAAR grade 5 English RLA test (based on the *Meets Grade Level* standard) or higher to maintain the *Meets Grade Level* performance level in grade 5 English RLA.

From grade 4 to grade 5, if the student's score increased by 40 points (1592 – 1552 = 40), then the student would have maintained *Meets Grade Level* performance. Therefore, a student who was in the *Meets Grade Level* performance level in grade 4 English RLA would need to increase his or her score by 40 points or more in grade 5 English RLA to have the *Expected* progress.

Because the *Meets Grade Level* performance standards are not the same across grades, content areas, and language (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Expected* progress target value will differ from grade to grade, across content areas, and language (for RLA).

The same concept applies to students who were in the *Masters Grade Level* performance level in the previous year. For these students, the *Expected* progress target is defined as the distance between the *Masters Grade Level* standards in the previous year grade and the current year grade in the same content area.

Students who were in the *Did Not Meet Grade Level* or *Approaches Grade Level* in the previous year have the same progress targets as students who were in the *Meets Grade Level* performance level.

The *Accelerated* progress target is a designation reserved for those students who have demonstrated significant progress over the course of the year, beyond that of the *Expected* progress range. The *Accelerated* progress target defines the upper limit of the *Expected* range and is determined by calculating the distance between the *Meets Grade Level* standard in the previous year and the *Masters Grade Level* standard in the current year. For example, the *Meets Grade Level* standard for STAAR grade 4 English RLA is 1552 and the *Masters Grade Level* standard for STAAR grade 5 English RLA is 1700. Progress greater than this 148-point increase (1700 – 1552 = 148), which is significantly larger than the 40-point progress targets for *Expected* progress, would be classified as *Accelerated* progress. Because the *Meets Grade Level* and *Masters Grade Level* standards are not the same across grades, content areas, and language (i.e., they do not have the same numerical value), the *Accelerated* progress target value will differ from grade to grade as well as across content areas and language (for RLA).

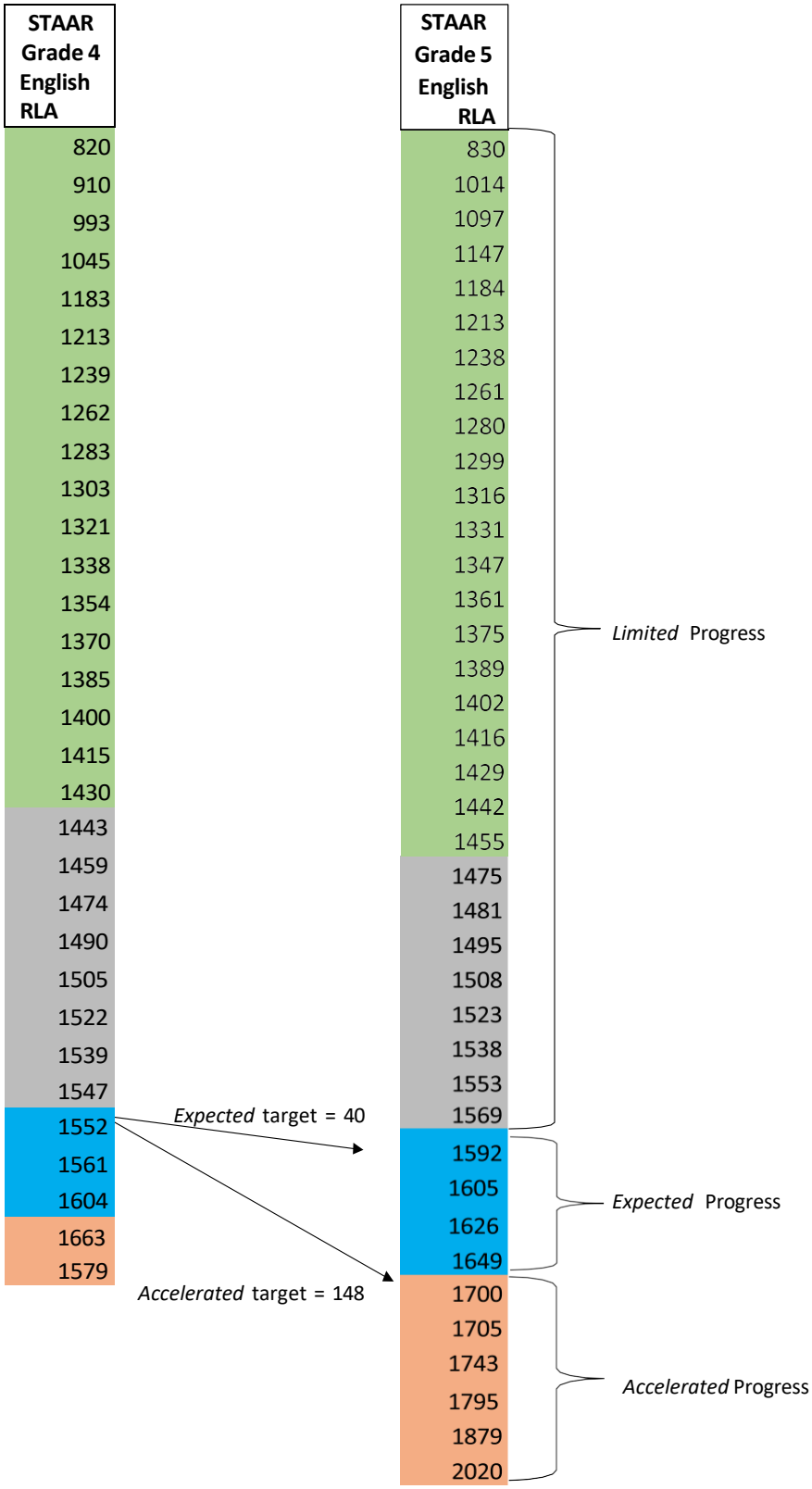
The diagram that follows uses two pseudo conversion tables to illustrate how the *Expected* and *Accelerated* targets are determined. The diagram shows the *Expected* and *Accelerated* targets, represented by the arrows, as well as the progress classifications for a grade 5 English RLA student who had a scale score of 1552 on STAAR grade 4 English RLA.

If the student has a gain score less than the *Expected* progress target of 40, the student is classified as having *Limited* progress.

If the student has a gain score greater than or equal to the *Expected* progress target of 40, and less than or equal to the *Accelerated* progress target of 148, the student is classified as having *Expected* progress.

If the student has a gain score greater than the *Accelerated* progress target of 148, the student is classified as having *Accelerated* progress.

For more details regarding the progress classifications, including the progress targets for all grades, content areas, and language, see Calculating the 2025–2026 STAAR Progress Measure.




**NOTE**: The conversion tables used here are for illustration purposes and do not correspond to the actual ones used to report students' scores.

### 7. *Are there any exceptions to the Expected and Accelerated definitions described above?*

Yes, there are some places on the STAAR scale, specifically at the extreme high and low ends of the scale, where the application of the *Limited, Expected,* and *Accelerated* definitions would not be appropriate. At the extreme ends of the scale, unlike the rest of the scale, answering one more question correctly results in large differences in scale scores. For this reason, several places on the scale have been identified as exceptions to the *Limited, Expected,* and *Accelerated* definitions.

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Accelerated* progress.
- Students who maintained *Masters Grade Level* performance from the previous year to the current year will be classified as having *Expected* or *Accelerated* progress based on their gain scores. (The *Limited* classification will not be applied to these students.)
- Students scoring at or below chance in the current year will be classified as having *Limited* progress.

Chance represents the score that could be reasonably obtained solely by guessing. For all assessments, chance is defined as one fourth, or 25 percent, of the points possible on dichotomous items.

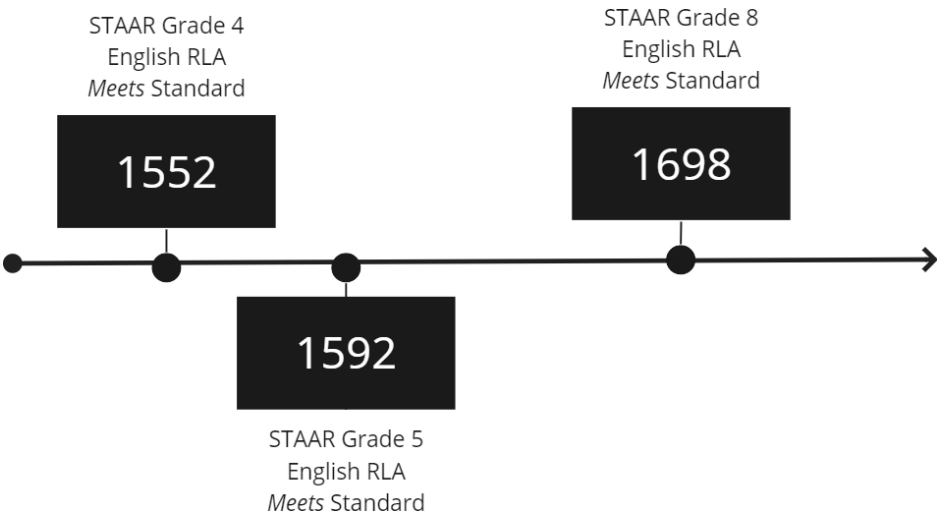
All students, including those that meet the exceptions defined above, must meet several criteria in order to receive a progress measure. See question 16 for these criteria.

### 8. *Why are some of the progress targets zero?*

It is possible to have zero value for the *Expected* progress target with assessments reported on horizontal scales. For grades 3–8 RLA and mathematics, scores are reported on a vertical scale. This means that one continuous scale is used to report scores for all tests within the same content area for grades 3–8. The lower end of this scale includes the scores for the lower-grade tests (grades 3 and 4), while the higher end of the scale includes the scores for the higher-grade tests (grades 7 and 8). As an example, the *Meets Grade Level* standard for STAAR grade 4 English RLA is 1552, and the *Meets Grade Level* standard for STAAR grade 5 English RLA is 1592. Because of the vertical scale, the higher value in grade 5 reflects increased learning and performance expectations as compared to grade 4. The *Meets Grade Level* standard for STAAR grade 8 RLA is larger still, 1698, again reflecting increased learning and performance expectations within the same vertical scale.

Because scores on a vertical scale increase across grades, progress target values are positive. For example, the *Expected* progress target for STAAR grade 5 English RLA for students who achieved *Meets Grade Level* performance on STAAR grade 4 English RLA is 40 (1592 – 1552 = 40).

Figure 1




In contrast, the EOC assessments are reported on horizontal scales. For the tests that use horizontal scales, the progress targets may be zero. For example, the *Meets Grade Level* standard for both English I and English II occurs at 4000. The *Expected* progress target for English II for students who achieved *Meets Grade Level* performance on English I is 0 (4000 – 4000 = 0).

While it may seem odd to have progress targets that are zero, these values are an expected result of a horizontal scale. Despite the small values of some progress targets, they still represent increased performance from course to course because of the increased difficulty in content reflected on the assessments.

### 9. *Can a high-achieving student still demonstrate progress?*

Yes, students who consistently earn high scores, even those in *Masters Grade Level* performance level, have the opportunity to earn the *Expected* or *Accelerated* progress classifications. Exceptions to the *Expected* and *Accelerated* definitions have been developed specifically for high-performing students. These exceptions are as follows:

- All students scoring at the three highest raw scores in the current year will be classified as having *Accelerated* progress.
- Students who maintained *Masters Grade Level* performance level from the previous year to the current year will be classified as either having *Expected* or *Accelerated* progress based on their gain scores (the *Limited* progress classification will not be applied to these students).

### 10. *Can a student have increased performance levels but not have Expected progress?*

Yes, a student can move to a higher performance level without having *Expected* progress. Typically, this occurs when a student earns the highest score in a performance level in previous year and then earns the lowest score in the next performance level in the current year.

In these cases, while the student crosses the threshold and achieves the higher performance level, the gain score (the difference between the current year score and the previous year score) is not greater than or equal to the *Expected* progress target.

### 11. *Does the STAAR progress measure change a student's passing status on STAAR?*

No, passing status, which is determined by performance level, is independent from the progress measure.

## Applying the current year STAAR Progress Measure

### 12. *Is progress measured the same way for all students in Texas?*

Progress is measured differently for different assessments. Progress for students who take STAAR or STAAR Spanish is measured in the same way for all students, including English learners (ELs). Progress for students who take STAAR Alternate 2 is measured differently by the STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure.

### 13. *How is progress measured for students who take STAAR Alternate 2?*

Because of the unique characteristics of STAAR Alternate 2 and the students who take it, a different progress measure is developed specifically for this population. For more information about the STAAR Alternate 2 progress measure, see STAAR Alternate 2 Progress Measure.

### 14. *How is progress measured for ELs?*

Beginning in 2018, progress for students who take STAAR or STAAR Spanish is measured in the same way for all students, including ELs. Prior to 2018, qualifying ELs who tested in English received the ELL progress measure rather than the STAAR progress measure.

### 15. *How can I calculate my student's STAAR progress measure?*

In order to calculate a student's progress measure, the following information is needed:

- Test information from the current year, including
  - grade level
  - content area
  - test language (English or Spanish)
  - scale score
  - raw score
  - performance level
- Test information from the previous year, including
  - grade level
  - content area

- test language (English or Spanish)
- scale score
- performance level

- Gain score = current year scale score – previous scale score

For step-by-step instructions for calculating STAAR progress using this information, see Calculating the 2025-2026 STAAR Progress Measure.

### *16. Why do some students not receive a progress measure?*

Students will not receive a STAAR progress measure if they do not meet ALL of the following criteria within the same content area (mathematics, RLA):

- The student has taken a STAAR assessment in the previous year and a STAAR assessment in the current year.
- The student has valid scores for the previous year and the current year.
- The student has tested in lower-grade or course levels in the previous year than in the current year. Students who took the same grade-level or EOC assessment in the previous year and the current year will not receive a progress measure. Students who take STAAR assessments and have skipped grade levels between the previous year and the current year will receive a progress measure.
- For STAAR RLA assessments, the student has taken tests in the same language in the previous year and the current year (i.e., English or Spanish).
- For STAAR English I in the previous year and STAAR Algebra I, English I, and English II in the current year, the student took the test for the first time (did not take a retest).

If a student does not meet any one of these criteria, the student will not receive a progress measure. Some students may meet the criteria and receive a progress measure for one content area but not another.

### *17. Do students receive a progress measure for retests?*

For EOC assessments, progress measures are reported only for the Algebra I, English I, and English II first time test takers in current year. For English II, only the English I test that a student first took in previous year is used in the progress measure calculation. That is, progress would be calculated from the first time the student takes English I to the first time the student takes English II; retest results are not used to compute progress measures for English II. A student who takes both English I (e.g., December 2025) and English II (e.g., April 2026) for the first time in the same accountability year won't receive a progress measure.

For Algebra I and English I, the mathematics or RLA test in grades 3–8 that a student took in the previous year is used in the progress measure calculation. If a student took more than one mathematics or RLA test in different grades (e.g., grades 7 and 8 mathematics tests) in the previous accountability year, only the highest-grade mathematics test (e.g., grade 8 mathematics test) is used in the progress measure calculation.

### 18. *Why does it appear as if more progress is required from grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I or grade 8 RLA to English I?*

The number of scale-score points needed to have *Expected* progress is defined in the same way for all grades and content areas and references the number of scale-score points needed to move from the *Meets Grade Level* standard at one grade to the *Meets Grade Level* standard at the next grade (or in some cases *Masters Grade Level* to *Masters Grade Level*). This is true as we look at STAAR grade 8 mathematics to Algebra I and STAAR grade 8 RLA to English I.

The difference between the *Meets Grade Level* standards for grade 8 mathematics and Algebra I is 2141 scale score points and the difference between the *Meets Grade Level* standards for grade 8 RLA and English I is 2302 scale-score points. While for grades 3–8, the biggest difference between the *Meets Grade Level* standards for the adjacent grades is around 110. The change from a vertical scale at grade 8 to a horizontal scale at Algebra I and English I is largely responsible for these differences.

## Interpreting the STAAR Progress Measure

### 19. *How is the STAAR progress measure useful to parents, teachers, and administrators?*

Scale scores and performance levels convey information about how a student performed in the current year. Progress measures provide additional information by communicating how much the student has improved from the previous year to the current year. When used together, this information provides a more complete picture of the student's achievement.

For example, while a student may have achieved the *Approaches Grade Level* standard and passed the test, the student may not have met the *Expected* progress target. This information could help parents, teachers, and administrators identify students for early interventions to prevent them from falling behind in the future.

In contrast, a student may not have achieved the *Approaches Grade Level* standard, but the progress measure may indicate that the student made significant gains from the previous year to the current year. The progress measure allows parents, teachers, and administrators to recognize such gains.

### 20. *If state, district, or campus pass rates haven't changed from the previous year to the current year, does that mean that students did not make progress?*

Not necessarily, STAAR performance levels and progress measures provide different information about student performance. Pass rates indicate the percent of students who achieved *Approaches Grade Level performance or above on a test in a particular accountability year. In comparison, progress measures indicate the amount of improvement or progress that students have made between the previous year and the current year. Students may make progress but remain in the same performance level. In this case, pass rates may not change even though students have made progress.*

## Development of the STAAR Progress Measure

### *21. Why did Texas develop and implement a measure of student progress?*

Progress measures are legislatively mandated for the STAAR program (Texas Education Code §39.023, §39.034, and §39.053). To meet these requirements, Texas developed the STAAR progress measure. In doing so, the goal was to provide additional information about student performance that is easy to understand and helpful to students, parents, and teachers.

### *22. What process was used to develop the STAAR Progress Measure?*

The development of the STAAR progress measure began before the first STAAR tests were administered. A thorough research of progress measures was done to review the various approaches that could be used to measure student progress. As part of the development of the STAAR progress measure, many factors were considered, including the following:

- Different models for measuring student progress to determine the model best suited for STAAR
- Content relationships among STAAR tests to determine where progress measures are appropriate
- Federal and state requirements that determine how progress measures can be used for accountability
- Reporting options that allow information about progress to be communicated most effectively

Throughout the development of the STAAR progress measure, advice was sought from a number of advisory groups, including the Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a group of national psychometric experts. In addition, progress measures were discussed with the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), which are groups made up of educators from various Texas campuses and districts as well as parents, higher education representatives, and legislative representatives.

From this research and advice, the STAAR progress measure was developed and refined. The goal of providing additional information about student performance that was both meaningful and easy to understand was at the forefront of all development activities.