

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202-5335

APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE

Application for New Grants Under the Competitive Grants for State Assessment Program

CFDA # 84.368A

PR/Award # S368A200008

Grants.gov Tracking#: GRANT13156113

OMB No. , Expiration Date:

Closing Date: Jun 30, 2020

PR/Award # S368A200008

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This application was generated using the PDF functionality. The PDF functionality automatically numbers the pages in this application. Some pages/sections of this application may contain 2 sets of page numbers, one set created by the applicant and the other set created by e-Application's PDF functionality. Page numbers created by the e-Application PDF functionality will be preceded by the letter e (for example, e1, e2, e3, etc.).

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission: <input type="checkbox"/> Preapplication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Changed/Corrected Application	* 2. Type of Application: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s): <input type="text"/> * Other (Specify): <input type="text"/>
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* 3. Date Received: <input type="text" value="06/30/2020"/>	4. Applicant Identifier: <input type="text"/>
--	--

5a. Federal Entity Identifier: <input type="text"/>	5b. Federal Award Identifier: <input type="text"/>
--	---

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State: <input type="text" value="05/22/2020"/>	7. State Application Identifier: <input type="text"/>
--	---

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: <input type="text" value="Iris Tian"/>	
* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN): <input type="text" value="70070721041"/>	* c. Organizational DUNS: <input type="text" value="1792608560000"/>

d. Address:

* Street1: <input type="text" value="1701 N. Congress Ave."/>
Street2: <input type="text"/>
* City: <input type="text" value="Austin"/>
County/Parish: <input type="text" value="Travis"/>
* State: <input type="text" value="TX: Texas"/>
Province: <input type="text"/>
* Country: <input type="text" value="USA: UNITED STATES"/>
* Zip / Postal Code: <input type="text" value="78701-1494"/>

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name: <input type="text" value="School Programs"/>	Division Name: <input type="text" value="Student Assessment"/>
---	--

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix: <input type="text" value="Miss"/>	* First Name: <input type="text" value="Iris"/>
Middle Name: <input type="text" value="R"/>	
* Last Name: <input type="text" value="Tian"/>	
Suffix: <input type="text"/>	

Title: <input type="text" value="Director of Student Assessment"/>
--

Organizational Affiliation: <input type="text" value="Texas Education Agency"/>

* Telephone Number: <input type="text" value="(734)717-2819"/>	Fax Number: <input type="text"/>
--	----------------------------------

* Email: <input type="text" value="iris.tian@tea.texas.gov"/>

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

Department of Education

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

84.368

CFDA Title:

Competitive Grants for State Assessments (formerly Grants for Enhanced Assessment Instruments)

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

ED-GRANTS-050120-002

* Title:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Competitive Grants for State Assessments Program CFDA Number 84.368A

13. Competition Identification Number:

84-368A2020-1

Title:

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE): Competitive Grants for State Assessments Program CFDA Number 84.368A

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

The Texas Through-Year Assessment Pilot under HB 3906, will explore a modular approach to student assessment providing frequent feedback to educators, students, and parents throughout the year.

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant

* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date:

* b. End Date:

18. Estimated Funding (\$):

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="3,000,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="17,643,442.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="20,643,442.00"/>

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on

b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.

c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

Yes No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

** I AGREE

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix: * First Name:

Middle Name:

* Last Name:

Suffix:

* Title:

* Telephone Number: Fax Number:

* Email:

* Signature of Authorized Representative: * Date Signed:

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008
Expiration Date: 08/31/2020

Name of Institution/Organization

Iris Tian

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel						
2. Fringe Benefits						
3. Travel						
4. Equipment						
5. Supplies						
6. Contractual	465,806.00	2,529,444.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,995,250.00
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	465,806.00	2,529,444.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,995,250.00
10. Indirect Costs*	2,375.00	2,375.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,750.00
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	468,181.00	2,531,819.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000,000.00

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

(1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No

(2) If yes, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: To: (mm/dd/yyyy)

Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify):

The Indirect Cost Rate is %.

(3) If this is your first Federal grant, and you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, are not a State, Local government or Indian Tribe, and are not funded under a training rate program or a restricted rate program, do you want to use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC? Yes No If yes, you must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.414(f).

(4) If you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, do you want to use the temporary rate of 10% of budgeted salaries and wages?

Yes No If yes, you must submit a proposed indirect cost rate agreement within 90 days after the date your grant is awarded, as required by 34 CFR § 75.560.

(5) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? Or, Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is %.

PR/Award # S368A200008

Name of Institution/Organization Iris Tian	Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.	
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**SECTION B - BUDGET SUMMARY
NON-FEDERAL FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel						
2. Fringe Benefits						
3. Travel						
4. Equipment						
5. Supplies						
6. Contractual	0.00	662,879.00	6,537,323.00	10,443,240.00		17,643,442.00
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	0.00	662,879.00	6,537,323.00	10,443,240.00		17,643,442.00
10. Indirect Costs						
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	0.00	662,879.00	6,537,323.00	10,443,240.00		17,643,442.00

SECTION C - BUDGET NARRATIVE (see instructions)

ED 524

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

Complete this form to disclose lobbying activities pursuant to 31 U.S.C.1352

OMB Number: 4040-0013
Expiration Date: 02/28/2022

1. * Type of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. grant <input type="checkbox"/> c. cooperative agreement <input type="checkbox"/> d. loan <input type="checkbox"/> e. loan guarantee <input type="checkbox"/> f. loan insurance	2. * Status of Federal Action: <input type="checkbox"/> a. bid/offer/application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. initial award <input type="checkbox"/> c. post-award	3. * Report Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. initial filing <input type="checkbox"/> b. material change
--	--	--

4. Name and Address of Reporting Entity:

Prime SubAwardee

* Name:

* Street 1: Street 2:

* City: State: Zip:

Congressional District, if known:

5. If Reporting Entity in No.4 is Subawardee, Enter Name and Address of Prime:

6. * Federal Department/Agency: <input type="text" value="U.S. Department of Education"/>	7. * Federal Program Name/Description: <input type="text" value="Competitive Grants for State Assessments (formerly Grants for Enhanced Assessment Instruments)"/> CFDA Number, if applicable: <input type="text" value="84.368"/>
---	---

8. Federal Action Number, if known: <input type="text"/>	9. Award Amount, if known: \$ <input type="text"/>
--	--

10. a. Name and Address of Lobbying Registrant:

Prefix * First Name Middle Name

* Last Name Suffix

* Street 1 Street 2

* City State Zip

b. Individual Performing Services (including address if different from No. 10a)

Prefix * First Name Middle Name

* Last Name Suffix

* Street 1 Street 2

* City State Zip

11. Information requested through this form is authorized by title 31 U.S.C. section 1352. This disclosure of lobbying activities is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed by the tier above when the transaction was made or entered into. This disclosure is required pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1352. This information will be reported to the Congress semi-annually and will be available for public inspection. Any person who fails to file the required disclosure shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* Signature:

* Name: Prefix * First Name Middle Name
* Last Name Suffix

Title: Telephone No.: Date:

Federal Use Only: Authorized for Local Reproduction
Standard Form - LLL (Rev. 7-97)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

OMB Number: 1894-0005
Expiration Date: 04/30/2020

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may

be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

- (1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.
- (2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.
- (3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.
- (4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Public Law 103-382). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDOcketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0005.

Optional - You may attach 1 file to this page.

	Add Attachment	Delete Attachment	View Attachment
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CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

* APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	
Iris Tian	
* PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
Prefix: Mr.	* First Name: Cory Middle Name:
* Last Name: Green	Suffix:
* Title: Associate Commissioner	
* SIGNATURE: Cory Green	* DATE: 06/30/2020

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION
FOR THE SF-424**

1. Project Director:

Prefix: Miss	First Name: Iris	Middle Name:	Last Name: Tian	Suffix:
-----------------	---------------------	--------------	--------------------	---------

Address:

Street1:	1701 N. Congress Ave.
Street2:	
City:	AUSTIN
County:	TX
State:	TX: Texas
Zip Code:	78701-1494
Country:	USA: UNITED STATES

Phone Number (give area code) (734)717-2819	Fax Number (give area code)
--	-----------------------------

Email Address:
iris.tian@tea.texas.gov

2. Novice Applicant:

Are you a novice applicant as defined in the regulations in 34 CFR 75.225 (and included in the definitions page in the attached instructions)?

Yes No Not applicable to this program

3. Human Subjects Research:

a. Are any research activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed Project Period?

Yes No

b. Are ALL the research activities proposed designated to be exempt from the regulations?

Yes Provide Exemption(s) #: 1 2 3 4 5 6

No Provide Assurance #, if available:

c. If applicable, please attach your "Exempt Research" or "Nonexempt Research" narrative to this form as indicated in the definitions page in the attached instructions.

	Add Attachment	Delete Attachment	View Attachment
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Abstract

The abstract narrative must not exceed one page and should use language that will be understood by a range of audiences. For all projects, include the project title (if applicable), goals, expected outcomes and contributions for research, policy, practice, etc. Include population to be served, as appropriate. For research applications, also include the following:

- Theoretical and conceptual background of the study (i.e., prior research that this investigation builds upon and that provides a compelling rationale for this study)
- Research issues, hypotheses and questions being addressed
- Study design including a brief description of the sample including sample size, methods, principals dependent, independent, and control variables, and the approach to data analysis.

[Note: For a non-electronic submission, include the name and address of your organization and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person for this project.]

You may now Close the Form

You have attached 1 file to this page, no more files may be added. To add a different file, you must first delete the existing file.

* Attachment:

Texas Through-Year Assessment Pilot: Texas Plan for the Competitive Grants for State Assessments (CGSA) Program - Abstract

Texas currently educates a diverse 5.4 million students annually, with around 3.5 million students taking the summative STAAR exam. Over the last decade, the state has added approximately 770,000 students, with roughly 80% of those new students classified as low income and nearly 40% considered as English learners. These students, as well as all Texas students, deserve assessments that provide timely and meaningful information on their mastery of academic standards to drive instructional decision-making.

Current summative assessment models nation-wide provide student assessment data once at the end of the school year. The Texas assessment program currently provides students, parents, and educators with reliable and valid assessments to measure progress and growth. Although this data is useful for making end-of-year instructional decisions and providing information to educators and parents on student learning and progress, the data does not currently inform instructional decision-making throughout the year. In 2019, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3906 calling for the development and pilot of an integrative formative assessment to potentially replace the current summative assessment. This would more quickly address instructional gaps by providing detailed and timely data throughout the school year and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency, while allowing for more rapid measurement of learning loss due to instructional disruptions such as COVID-19.

Under Absolute Priority 3(b), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will create a Through-Year Assessment Pilot consisting of modular assessments that provide timely feedback to educators and parents while creating a valid, reliable, and fair summative assessment of individual students. The design of the pilot will align with elements that are most important to

stakeholders, such as: equity for different student groups, minimally disruptive testing schedules, and immediate and useful educator data that can be used to inform instruction. The pilot will be online, allowing for a more accurate diagnosis of student mastery of content and standards with personal needs preferences (PNPs), and will need to meet the same high standards for quality, fairness, validity and reliability as the current STAAR. The pilot will also be designed to ensure equity across underrepresented student groups, such as transient students and English learners.

This project is part of a comprehensive effort to support student learning, including assessment initiatives such as exploring new item types and enabling teachers to write and review items for inclusion in the Texas assessment program. TEA is creating asynchronous trainings on topics of assessment literacy and creating high-quality assessments and assessment items. In addition, other TEA initiatives such as Texas Instructional Leadership and the Effective School Framework focus on supporting and growing data-driven instructional practices.

The objective and desired outcome of this project is to pilot a through-year assessment model that 1) equitably measures student learning (meeting the same strict requirements for quality and fairness as the STAAR currently does), 2) supports ongoing academic mastery, and 3) can feasibly replace the current end-of-year Texas summative assessment, STAAR. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will be developed, deployed, and evaluated across multiple years. Continuous improvement will occur over the lifetime of the pilot with TEA revisiting and adjusting models year after year based on stakeholder feedback and metrics gathered. Given successful metrics and positive feedback, the pilot can scale statewide in four years, seeking to impact all 3.5 million students taking the STAAR across almost 9000 campuses. The \$3 million grant fund requested by the TEA will help fund item development to create a pilot across multiple grade levels and content areas.

Project Narrative File(s)

* **Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename:**

[Add Mandatory Project Narrative File](#)

[Delete Mandatory Project Narrative File](#)

[View Mandatory Project Narrative File](#)

To add more Project Narrative File attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

[Add Optional Project Narrative File](#)

[Delete Optional Project Narrative File](#)

[View Optional Project Narrative File](#)

Texas Through-Year Assessment Pilot: Texas Plan for the Competitive Grants for State Assessments (CGSA) Program

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Absolute Priority 3: Developing Innovative Assessment Item Types and Design Approaches

Texas educates 5.4 million students annually, around 10% of all students in the country, all of whom deserve an excellent and equitable education that prepares them for future success. **The Texas assessment program exists to provide data and information to educators, students, and parents to support this goal and aims to ensure transparency, fairness, and rigor in district and campus academic performance.**

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR[®]) program was administered to students for the first time in 2011–2012. However, Texas has a long history of student assessment dating back to 1979, when its first statewide testing program was implemented. Ultimately, with STAAR, a modified version was introduced to support students with accommodations, leading to STAAR online. In addition, STAAR Alternate was adopted and later refined as STAAR Alternate 2, which assesses students with severe cognitive disabilities. In 2004, the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) was created to fulfill the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. TELPAS assesses the English language proficiency of English learners and is still used today with the Listening, Speaking, and Reading sections administered entirely online. In addition, TELPAS Alternate was created to support English learners with severe cognitive disabilities.

As STAAR has progressed, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has worked to involve educators in the development of assessment items. An item development process is crucial to any assessment program, and the item development process for STAAR is robust and involves: (1) creation of items with review by content and assessment experts, (2) a review by an educator committee for each subject and grade level, (3) consistent review of alignment to the TEKS, (4) review for biases and fairness, and (5) field-testing. With help from Texas educators, the Texas assessment program remains committed to not only providing quality assessments but

continuing to innovate and develop programs to address student needs.

The TEA has continued to refine and increase the assessment support that is available to districts and campuses. In 2017, the TEA launched a benchmarking tool, STAAR Interim Assessments, that predicts student performance on STAAR and helps drive instructional intervention. STAAR Interim Assessments were established as a pilot in 2017-2018, opened state-wide the following year, and continued with the 86th Texas Legislative session within House Bill (HB) 3906.

The Texas assessment program provides students, parents, and educators with fair and viable assessments to measure progress and growth. The STAAR is aligned to the TEKS and serves to measure academic progress as a summative assessment. The STAAR standard-setting process considers not only the assessed curriculum and content, but also policy considerations and postsecondary readiness. **The STAAR is a reliable and valid assessment that meets rigorous psychometric standards. Texas educators and content experts are part of the process to ensure reliability and validity.** Performance standards are required to have empirical evidence and have been externally validated by research studies.

As a valid and reliable test, STAAR serves to measure academic progress as a summative assessment and focuses on continuous improvement. At times, the TEA chooses to pilot assessment programs. The purpose of pilot testing is to gather information about test-item prototypes and administration logistics for a new assessment and to refine item-development guidelines as needed. Pilot testing can be conducted to accomplish varying objectives. If the purpose is to pilot items of differing types and ranges of difficulty, piloting might occur before the extensive item-development process (see figure 6). If the purpose is to pilot test administration logistics, the pilot might occur after major item development but before field testing.

Most recently, **House Bill 3906 was one of several bills addressing public education that was passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019** and signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott. The bill addresses several components related to assessments and administration that expands input from educators, provides more flexibility at the campus level for test administration, and more. The key component of the bill relevant to this grant application is the integrated formative assessment pilot. **HB 3906 requires the TEA to develop an integrated formative assessment pilot that informs instruction during the year and can potentially replace the single summative assessment, STAAR.** The pilot program must meet the same rigorous reliability and validity standards as the STAAR in order to be considered as a replacement for STAAR.

Just as the TEA involves educators in the development of the STAAR, the TEA will also involve educators in the design of the pilot program. Any participation by districts in this pilot will be optional and does not eliminate a district's obligation to administer the STAAR test. The integrated formative pilot seeks to potentially replace the current summative with an assessment model that is more formative in nature and can better inform teaching decisions and improve instructional supports. As the TEA engaged stakeholders, there was widespread agreement that formative and summative assessments serve different purposes. Formative assessments usually occur immediately after instruction, require more depth to identify gaps in student understanding (which usually means multiple questions per standard), and are meant to improve instruction during the learning process. Summative assessments are usually administered after completion of a specified portion of instructional material, such as a unit or a year, and requires more breadth to fully assess the curriculum in order to provide evidence of learning. Because of the difficulty of designing an assessment to serve multiple purposes, the TEA will launch two initiatives: (1) **The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will pilot a multi-**

part assessment that occurs throughout the year and aims to generate a cumulative score similar to STAAR. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot, consisting of modular unit-based summative assessments, will seek to provide more frequent feedback to educators and parents while maintaining the same rigorous validity and reliability standards that the STAAR meets. This will be a multi-year pilot that will involve several research studies and cycles of stakeholder feedback before being considered as a possible replacement for the STAAR. (2) The Formative Assessment Tool is an optional and free supplement to support existing district resources and formative assessment practices, unrelated to accountability. This tool is aims to provide better formative assessment support to districts and campuses in Texas in a low stakes environment and will supplement the efforts of the Through- Year Assessment Pilot.

This grant application seeks support for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot under Absolute Priority 3 (b).

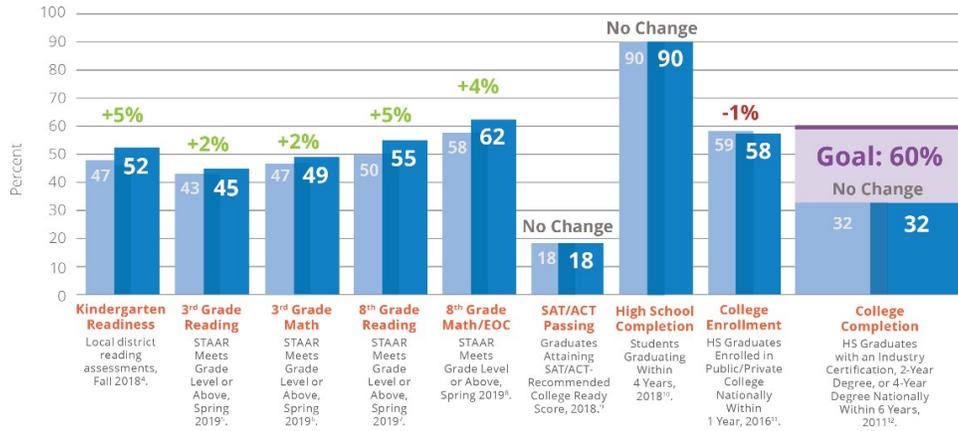
Need for project

Out of the 5.4 million students Texas educates annually – over 10% of students in the United States – around **3.5 million students take STAAR each year. Over the last decade the state has added approximately 770,000 students, with roughly eight in ten of those students classified as low income and nearly four in ten of those new students considered as English learners (ELs).** As a result, Texas currently ranks second in the nation in the percent of EL students (19.5%) and ninth in the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (60.6%) respectively. The percentage of students served in special education programs increased from 9.2 percent in 2017-18 to 9.8 percent in 2018-19. Furthermore, **Texas represents an extremely diverse population: 52.6% Hispanic or Latino, 27.4% White, 12.6% Black or African**

American, 4.5% Asian, 2.4% two or more races, 0.4% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Pacific Islander. Students with dyslexia account for 3.6% of the student population. **All of these students, particularly underserved student groups, deserve assessments that provide accurate and meaningful information on their mastery of academic standards in order to drive instructional decision-making.**

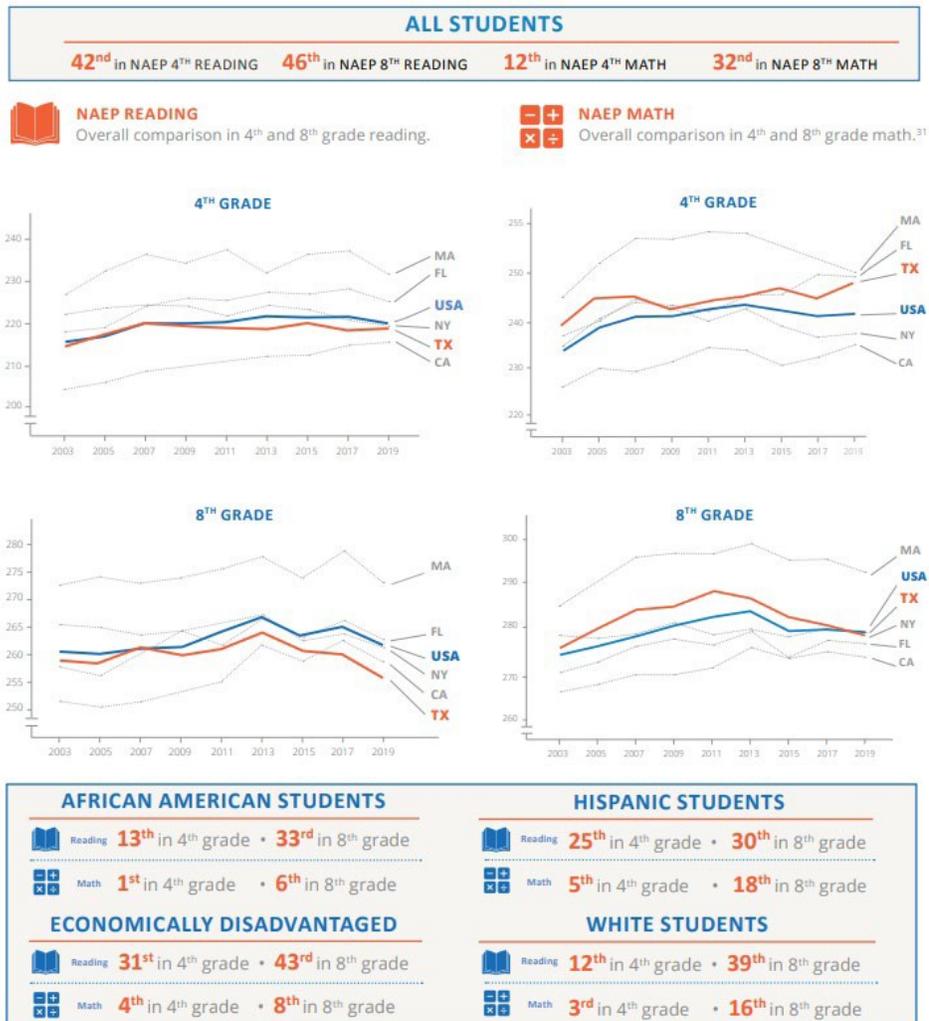
All educators, students, parents and other stakeholders need data on skills relevant to academic mastery. A coherent and well-used assessment system can identify gaps as well as enrich and motivate student learning; however, in order to leverage assessment data to improve outcomes, data and information must not only be timely, but also, recipients must know what to do with it. **Currently, the Texas summative assessment only provides data at the end of a year or course.** STAAR balances the desire to evaluate students as late in the year as possible in order to provide more time for teaching and learning and the need to get data back in time for interventions before the year ends. Assessments that are administered in the second half of May do not provide data until June, when some students have already gone home for the summer. **The Through-Year Assessment Pilot attempts to address this specific gap in services, infrastructure, and opportunity by providing more frequent and timely feedback throughout the year instead of at the end of the year, so that educators and other stakeholders have the meaningful data they need to make instructional adjustments.**

Figure 1: Year-over-year student outcomes from TEA 2019 Annual Report



Although Texas has made strides in student achievement, this is still not where Texas wants to be (see figure 1). In the 2019 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Texas performed above the national average in mathematics and underperformed in reading. This underperformance in reading, in comparison to the nation, has persisted since 2003 (see figure 2 for nature and magnitude of gaps). Proficiency rates on STAAR for low-income and EL students across all grades and subjects now only equal 36% and 24%, respectively – achievement that is roughly just one-third to one-half of their non-low-income non-EL peers. For special education students, across all grade levels and subjects, the proficiency rate is 24%. **Despite their best efforts, even the highest performing districts in the state for low-income student achievement reflect at most a 50% proficiency level – demonstrating the need for better support.**

Figure 2: NAEP 2019 – How Texas stacks up to other states



Along with high-quality instructional materials and training and support, educators also need frequent, readily available, and meaningful data in order to address learning gaps and promote interventions. In 2019, research published in the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education summarizes two consistent research findings, across a wide range of learning contexts, concerning the benefits associated with (a) testing and (b) multiple spaced opportunities to retrieve content previously learned: “While tests in a variety of formats result in improved performance relative to restudy, having multiple tests spaced over time has consistently been shown to have an advantage over a single test. A single retrieval opportunity is better than

none, but **multiple retrievals, especially in a variety of contexts, produces great long-term retention.**” Additionally, a 2019 whitepaper, *It’s Time to Rethink State Assessment*, published by NWEA adds that “[...] **while summative tests allow states to measure academic growth as a year-over-year change in summative proficiency scores, they don’t reveal how much learning occurred from fall to spring.** This within-year growth information is critical to understanding how well schools are serving students. When considered alongside proficiency data, it reveals which schools need the most support and which schools are beating the odds, so promising practices can be shared.”

House Bill 2804, passed in the 84th Texas Legislature and signed by Governor Greg Abbott on June 19, 2015, established the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability. The purpose of the commission is to develop and make recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public-school accountability. They agreed on the following purposes and roles of assessment:

Purposes

- Inform instruction by providing timely feedback to educators
- Inform parents and students with data on individual student outcomes
- Measure student growth
- Provide a tool for district and school administrators and the community to allocate school funding as effectively as possible
- Determine whether students will be college- and/or career-ready upon graduation

Roles

- Inform and drive instruction in a formative approach, which will allow for more timely student-level instructional interventions
- Provide comparisons to help identify student performance gaps and student populations

with instructional needs in order to more effectively target the allocation of educational resources

- Provide necessary data in order to determine whether desired educational outcomes are being achieved
- Allow for student-, school-, district-, and state-level comparisons of educational outcomes
- Allow for collaboration among educators so that they can share best practices
- Assist universities and colleges of education better prepare teachers to succeed

All current **summative assessment models nation-wide only provide student assessment data once** at the end of the school year. **Although this data is useful for making end-of-year instructional decisions, providing information to educators and parents on student learning and progress, and evaluating instructional methodologies and materials, the data doesn't currently inform instructional interventions, resource allocation, or decision-making throughout the year.** Through public testimony and research, the commission determined **that consistent feedback — to parents, students, and teachers — improves student achievement** and assists students in ongoing content mastery.

One of the commission's recommendations is such, "[To] implement an individualized, integrated system of Texas designed state assessments using computerized-adaptive testing and instruction aligned with the state's curriculum framework. To provide useful, real-time feedback to educators, parents, and students, the commission recommends implementing a computer-adaptive assessment system of multiple integrated assessments that are administered throughout the school year to inform individual student learning and growth." In order to address the recommendations from this group as well as other stakeholder input, the Texas Legislature passed HB 3906 in 2019. Along with other assessment-related initiatives, the bill calls for the development and piloting of an integrated formative assessment system to potentially replace the

current summative model.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot addresses these gaps by providing:

- 1. More detailed data throughout the school year**
- 2. Quicker results for more timely instructional interventions**
- 3. Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency throughout the school year**
- 4. A potential through-year growth measure**

Now more than ever, as a result of COVID-19, flexible approaches and innovations in assessment are needed. A recent article published by *The New York Times* explains, “New research suggests that by September, most students will have fallen behind where they would have been if they had stayed in classrooms, with some losing the equivalent of a full school year’s worth of academic gains. Racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps will most likely widen because of disparities in access to computers, home internet connections and direct instruction from teachers” (Goldstein). And the widening of these learning gaps is far from over. According to a working paper from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), a nonprofit organization, and scholars at Brown University and the University of Virginia, the average student could begin the next school year having lost as much as a third of their expected progress from the previous school year in reading and half of their expected progress in math (Kuhfeld). A recent paper titled *Contextualizing COVID-19 “Learning Loss” and “Learning Recovery”* by the Center for Assessment further expounds upon this “learning loss” from COVID-19 stating, “One of the consequences of the spring 2020 disruption was a collapse in our ability to formally assess students on the few critical outcomes measured on tests designed to assess student achievement with respect to state standards comprehensively.” The paper explains that NWEA’s projections of one third

learning lost for reading and half of learning lost for math may be over projections, but that the solution to uncovering any learning gaps, COVID-19 related or not, is “high-quality classroom assessment systems with an emphasis on powerful formative assessment practices.” When all of the impacts are considered - according to an analysis conducted in June 2020 from McKinsey and Company - the average student could fall seven months behind academically, while minority students could experience even greater losses – equivalent to 10 and nine months respectively for black and Hispanic students. These staggering statistics and the collective cause for concern from assessment experts sits heavily with Texas because of our student population: 60.6% economically disadvantaged, 52.6% Hispanic, and 12.6% black.

Despite a “break” from statewide accountability requirements, there is a pressing need to track student progress. John King, president and CEO of The Education Trust and a former U.S. Education Department secretary advises educators that it is important for schools to identify how much learning loss has occurred and make the necessary adjustments in the coming school year. With these widening gaps a reality, educators need a way to not only measure the extent of those learning gaps but also be provided with timelier and more meaningful student data. **The Through-Year Assessment pilot provides critical additional data needed to measure student performance on standards and can address learning loss, e.g., in emergencies such as COVID-19, sooner rather than later, which is particularly essential for our students in underserved populations.**

Currently, districts have different avenues of access to interim and formative assessment tools. Some Local Education Agencies (LEAs) purchase outside benchmarks while others create their own. External vendors that provide interim assessments can be costly and products may be aligned to the TEKS at varying levels. According to NWEA’s 2015 Product and Services pricing

guide, MAP Growth assessments cost \$13.50 per student with an additional fee of \$2.50 per student for a MAP science assessment. A \$1,500 minimum licensing fee is required in addition to any training or workshop fees, which can cost an LEA upwards of \$7,000. The TEA created the STAAR Interim Assessments as a free, optional tool for districts. STAAR Interim Assessments measure the full scope of standards to monitor student progress and predict STAAR performance. About 50% of LEAs participated in the state provided STAAR Interim Assessments in 2019-2020. Between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, an increase of 18% of districts surveyed indicated that they have opted out of purchasing an outside interim assessment resource or locally created resources to adopt the available state provided assessment resource. Although STAAR Interim Assessments have received positive feedback and high usage among districts in Texas, one of the most common pieces of feedback that is received is a desire for more in-depth data, such as standard-level information. Because STAAR Interim Assessments cover the breadth of grade-level standards, there can be as few as one question per standard, which does not allow for detailed standard-level information. The full scope nature of the STAAR Interim Assessments allows for an accurate prediction of STAAR performance without losing the flexibility of a district's unique scope and sequence, and the Through-Year Assessment Pilot fills this gap by providing more detailed standard-level information and greater opportunity for students to demonstrate proficiency and measure growth throughout the year. This allows for more targeted and timely instructional adjustments. Moreover, it addresses the need for assessment data that can save district resources and ensure that all districts and all students have access to high quality assessments and assessment data throughout the year. This will provide educators with accurate data of where their kids are for intervention and instructional purposes.

The TEA has partnered with stakeholders throughout the design process and will continue to work closely with them to finalize the design specifics of Year 1 of the Through-

Year Assessment Pilot. If the pilot achieves metrics and milestones and receives positive feedback from the field, we assume that the **quickest that we can scale statewide would be four years (see table 1)**. At full scale, a through-year model assessment will require nearly five times the number of assessment items compared to the current STAAR summative test due to the increased number of forms, as well as ongoing item releases (see table 2). The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will likely start with linear or multi-stage assessments with the potential to become fully computer adaptive over time. **Assuming ongoing linear or multi-stage assessments and four years to scale, the total cost over four years will be around \$21 million (see table 3).**

Table 1: Illustrative scaling plan by subject

# Test Titles	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
Language Arts	0	2	6	11
Math	2	4	5	7
Science	0	1	2	3
Social Studies	1	1	2	2

Assumptions

- The TEA will need to develop 375 assessment items per subject and grade level during the first year of the pilot and 675 per subject and grade level in every year after.
- If through-year assessments remain linear, assessment items can be released to the public each year, requiring an ongoing item development in the same numbers.
- If through-year assessments become fully computer adaptive, the TEA can release a sample of items each year, requiring a smaller amount of item development once fully scaled.

Table 2: Estimated item development needs – STAAR vs. Through-Year Assessment Pilot (ramp-up to full scale in FY 2024)

# of Items Required	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Current Summative (STAAR)	3,335	3,335	3,190	2,900	12,760
Language Arts	1,380	1,380	1,320	1,200	5,280
Math	1,150	1,150	1,100	1,000	4,400
Science	460	460	440	400	1,760
SS	345	345	330	300	1,320
Through-year Pilot	1,125	5,400	10,125	15,525	32,175
Language Arts	-	1,350	4,050	7,425	12,825
Math	750	2,700	3,375	4,725	11,550
Science	-	675	1,350	2,025	4,050
Social Studies	375	675	1,350	1,350	3,750

Table 3: Cost projections comparison – STAAR vs Through-Year Assessment Pilot (ramp up to full scale in FY 2024)

\$ Required for Item Dev.	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Current Summative (STAAR)	\$ 2,299,945	\$ 2,299,945	\$ 2,185,870	\$ 1,931,320	\$ 8,717,079
Language Arts	1,304,100	1,304,100	1,234,800	1,096,200	4,939,200
Math	594,750	594,750	573,300	504,000	2,266,800
Science	216,741	216,741	206,241	185,241	824,964
SS	184,354	184,354	171,529	145,879	686,115
Through-year Pilot	\$ 465,806	\$ 3,192,323	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,638,692
Language Arts	-	1,233,225	3,643,589	6,633,312	11,510,126
Math	330,750	1,338,525	1,665,830	2,303,420	5,638,525
Science	-	301,928	596,196	874,801	1,772,924
Social Studies	135,056	318,645	631,708	631,708	1,717,117

These estimated costs take into account the difference in item development costs by content area and the move to increasing numbers of non-multiple-choice item types that will be required in future developments, which is due to a 75% multiple-choice question cap enacted as a result of HB 3906. The projections fold in the 75% multiple-choice cap into the through-year model starting in Year 2.

The TEA is also in the process of piloting new item development processes, including one that enables teachers to write and review items for inclusion in Texas assessment programs, including the Through-Year Assessment Pilot. This would diversify the source of assessment items, while serving to further increase already existing teacher

involvement in assessment development and assessment literacy training. A large part of this is developing a set of asynchronous assessment training modules that builds in complexity and detail to increase educator knowledge and familiarity in constructing high-quality assessment items. These trainings might grow into a statewide certification or micro-credential program that qualifies teachers to lead additional trainings or are granted more extensive item development assignments. These teacher-created items will need to go through the same review process and field-testing in order to meet the current psychometric requirements for summative assessment items.

The \$3 million grant fund requested by the TEA will go entirely towards the item development process in order to create a pilot within multiple grade levels and multiple content areas to demonstrate proof of concept that the through-year model has the potential to replace the current summative and, if metrics are met and stakeholder feedback is positive, potentially scale statewide within four years.

Significance

Currently Texas assessment results are used to evaluate the performance of a student group over time. Average scale scores and the percentage of students meeting performance standards are analyzed by grade and content area across administrations. These yield insight into **whether student performance is improving across years.** Assessment results are also used to **compare the performance of different demographic or program groups.** STAAR scores are analyzed within the same content area of any single administration to determine factors such as: which demographic or program group had the highest average scale score, which group had the lowest percentage meeting the Approaches Grade Level performance standard, which group had the highest percentage achieving the Meets Grade Level performance standard, etc. Other scores are used to help **evaluate the**

academic performances of demographic or program groups in core academic areas. For example, reporting category data help districts and campuses **identify areas of potential academic weakness for a group of students**. The same methodology is applied to an entire district or campus. Test results for groups of students are used when **evaluating instruction or programs** that require average-score or year-to-year comparisons. Because the tests are designed to measure content areas within the required state curriculum, the consideration of test results by content area and by reporting category is helpful when evaluating curriculum and instructional programs.

The Though-Year Assessment Pilot will be offered online, which improves the ability to serve specific student groups (ELs and students with disabilities) by more accurately diagnosing student mastery of content and standards with personal needs preferences (PNPs). This will **build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services to address the needs of these students**. The current online Accessibility Features (available to ALL students) include:

- Zoom tool
- Different color settings
- Guideline tool
- Highlighting tool
- Pencil tool
- Sticky Notes

The current online PNPs (for students who meet eligibility) include:

- Basic Calculator
- Text to Speech
- ASL Videos
- Refreshable Braille

- Content and Language supports (this includes pop-ups, rollovers, writing checklists, Punnett squares for science, and pre reads)
- Spelling Assistance
- Speech to Text (coming in 2021)

Because the Through-Year Assessment Pilot will be online, it will allow for greater and more equitable student access to Content and Language Supports, PNPs, and more individualized testing, e.g., computer adaptive testing.

According to the 2011 publication *Picking Up the Pieces: Aggregating Results from Through-Course Assessments*, the “...**advantage offered by through-course assessments is that they can provide more timely data, allowing diagnostic information to be used before students move on to the next grade or class.** Testing right after instruction in particular topics or skills could help to identify deficits that need remediation prior to transitioning to more advanced topics or skills.” In other words, more frequent, detailed data allows campuses, districts, and teachers to identify areas of academic weakness and evaluate curriculum and instructional programs on a more frequent basis. **This frequency and immediacy of data is especially important for building local capacity to better serve underserved student groups.**

A through-year assessment model builds local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of Texas students by **providing more frequent, timely, meaningful, and high-quality data on student performance.** It enables teachers to **tailor instruction, reteach, create student groups, spiral in material, and create student-level instructional interventions.** Administrators will be able to design **class-wide, grade-wide, and school-wide interventions.** Parents can know where their kids are academically on a more frequent basis. Together, administrators and educators can **make decisions on instructional**

methodologies and materials and compare student groups to identify performance gaps across populations. This will allow school leaders and instructors to **more effectively allocate time, resources, and funding.** Administrators and educators can **measure student gaps from disruptions such as COVID-19 and ensure gaps are being closed, measure student growth, and collaborate and share best practices.** There are potential learnings from this model to help us explore how to assess student learning when we need to assess them, even if they are learning remotely.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot can also **expand the capacity of Education Service Centers (ESCs) to support LEAs,** building local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of Texas students. Twenty Regional Education Service Centers serve Texas schools and provide services to school districts throughout the state. The centers are service organizations, non-regulatory arms of the TEA, and participation by schools in services of the centers is voluntary. Texas Education Service Centers assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system, enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner. **Providing these ESC's more frequent and consistent data will help these vital resources tailor their services and connect LEAs in their region for best practice sharing and professional learning communities.**

With COVID-19 disruption, there will be gaps especially for underserved student populations. With Texas' large economically disadvantaged (60.6%), Black (12.6%), and Hispanic (52.6%) populations, it is more important than ever that we identify and measure gaps that persist from COVID-19 and use that information to design instructional interventions for populations that have been impacted the most. It is impossible to provide services that address the needs of target populations without knowing what those needs are. **With a through-year assessment model, educators and administrators can better understand those needs on a**

more frequent basis and be better prepared should these disruptions happen on a large scale again.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot builds local capacity to support Texas students by providing:

- web-based testing that allows for different item types that can: cover depth and breadth of standards, align with classroom practices, and support faster reporting;
- multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery throughout the year and the ability to re-test on standards;
- more frequent, detailed, and timely data; and
- a potential growth measurement throughout the school year.

Stakeholder engagement to ensure significance

In order to create a model that builds local capacity to provide, improve, and expand services that addresses the needs of the target population (Texas students), **the TEA engaged stakeholders throughout the design of the model.** Typically, the TEA engages with a variety of stakeholder groups, including but not limited to: the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA), the Texas Statewide Network of Assessment Professionals (TSNAP), and content area associations, such as: the Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors of Texas (CREST), the Texas Association of Supervisors of Mathematics (TASM), and the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (TCTLA). The TEA works closely with each of the Education Service Centers (ESCs) across Texas to share information and trainings and collect input. The TEA also **assembles its own advisory committees** including the Educator Advisory Committee (EAC) comprised of educators across Texas, a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Council, and the Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), which is comprised of assessment experts from across the nation. Both

the EAC and TTAC are convened directly by the TEA's Assessment and Curriculum divisions. **In the case of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot, there were two phases of stakeholder engagement.** The first phase of feedback included a broader group of leaders within the field of education and assessment psychometrics. The Student Assessment Division sent out a state-wide HB3906 survey that gauged interest and opinions around specific initiatives of the bill, inclusive of the Integrated Formative Pilot. The division also conducted independent research on various states (particularly IADA pilot states) to better understand the types of through-year models that are either in development or in pilot phase. From there, the TEA presented these types of models to various stakeholder groups and gauged interest in the following elements: overall assessment design, who makes local decisions, scoring and reporting, and test frequency and timing. These stakeholder groups include the Educator Advisory Committee, the Chief Academic Officer Council, ESC and district level math specialists (TASM), and teachers. A subcommittee of ~7 individuals that focuses on the Through-Year Assessment Pilot was formed out of the Educator Advisory Committee, which has been convened several times in 2020 for continued feedback prior to taking ideas to larger external groups. The Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a group of 9 experts on educational assessments, advises the commissioner and the TEA regarding the development of valid and reliable assessment instruments and serve as advisors for other TEA needs. TTAC was engaged to discuss the possibility of creating a summative score out of through-year assessments, and ways to ensure continued assessment validity.

The second phase occurred after the creation of more detailed prototypes that align with the features and elements that were important to stakeholders, such as: equity for different student groups, least disruptive testing schedules, and immediate and useful educator data that can be used to inform instruction. All designs will consist of three to four tests

throughout the year, but still require refinement in terms of the calculation method for cumulative score, specific data reporting needs, and the potential to transition to a fully computer-adaptive model over time. The TEA is partnering with Teach Plus, the Texas Parent Teacher Association and others to bring these prototype designs to Texas teachers, parents, and students for further feedback and review. The TEA plans to finalize a pilot design in time for the ramp-up in item development in Fall 2020.

In addition, the TEA partners with other organizations and institutions to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of state academic assessments. The 84th Texas Legislature (2015) established the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability, which developed and made recommendations for new systems of student assessment and public-school accountability to address the following:

1. The purpose of a state accountability system and the role of student assessment in that system
2. Opportunities to assess students that provide actionable information for a parent or person standing in parental relation to a student, an educator, and the public; support learning activities; recognize application of skills and knowledge; measure student educational growth toward mastery; and value critical thinking
3. Alignment of state performance standards with college and career readiness requirements in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
4. Policy changes necessary to enable a student to progress through subject matter and grade levels on demonstration of mastery
5. Policy changes necessary to establish a student assessment and public-school accountability system that meets state goals, is community based, promotes parent and community involvement, and reflects the unique needs of each community

The TEA has also partnered with Texas A&M University Education Research Center (TAMU ERC), which studies major issues in education and conducts program evaluation, STEM education, and educator preparation. The TEA and TAMU ERC are conducting a feasibility study that will include a set of recommendations regarding the online transition as well as estimated costs for achieving full online readiness within the pre-determined timeline. HB 3906 requires the TEA to investigate and develop a transition plan to administer all STAAR tests electronically by 2022–2023. A fully electronic administration will level the playing field for students who need accommodations, expedite test results, reduce costs, and promote future innovations in assessments. A transition plan, due to the Legislature by December 2020, is subject to legislative approval prior to implementation.

Quality of project design

To date, the TEA has engaged with teachers, district curriculum and assessment leaders, and superintendents through surveys, focus groups, and discussions (see Stakeholder section). These groups have shown excitement about potential benefits associated with a through-year assessment model, while also acknowledging the technical challenges and trade-offs involved in designing the pilot model. For the Through-Year Assessment Pilot to potentially replace the current STAAR summative, the assessment system must calculate a cumulative score that meets the current rigorous validity and reliability requirements that the STAAR meets. The TEA has spoken with psychometric experts and conducted research on other states that are piloting innovative summative assessments, particularly those approved under the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority, or IADA (e.g. Georgia, North Carolina). Our research to-date has shown that conclusions on the validity and feasibility of through-year assessment models are still developing and there remains a lack of consensus among psychometric experts as to how to produce a representative summative score from through-year

testing; however, there may be potential design elements that increase the likelihood of validity (e.g., an additional mini summative at the end of the year to test long-term retention). The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will collect more data and research to test the validity of the through-year model.

After meeting with various stakeholder groups, including an Educator Advisory Committee (EAC) and classroom educators, the input assisted in prioritizing design elements of the pilot. Educators, as well as the Educator Advisory Committee, agree that one large benefit of a through-year model is the potential to provide **stronger growth measures** that can potentially inform instructional choices during the school year. In addition, the pilot will only be made **available online** due to the transition to online testing required by HB 3906. The TEA will also explore the **possibility of using computer adaptive testing to individualize the assessment** and recognize multi-grade growth in students even if they are above or below grade level. Furthermore, the TEA has heard from stakeholder discussions that another large benefit of a through-year model is the **potential for more frequent data and feedback**. With a through-year assessment system, the TEA can provide data throughout the year instead of at the end of the year, and has the potential to provide more detailed, standard-level information unlike the current STAAR Interim Assessments and the STAAR, so that educators can adjust their instruction and re-teach as necessary. As the TEA continues conducting focus groups with Texas educators, the agency will continue to **identify what specific data tools and representations are most instructionally useful** in the classroom. The TEA will also continue to engage other stakeholder groups to ensure through-year assessment results can be useful at the campus and district level. Finally, to measure the impact of re-teaching and interventions, the TEA will explore the potential for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot to **include opportunities for re-testing standards**.

Prior to stakeholder engagement, three categories of through-year assessment designs

were in consideration: a Competency Based Model, a Curriculum Based Model, and an Audit Based Model.

- **Competency Based Model:** Modular assessments organized by standard that can be combined in different ways and given throughout the year. A range of flexibility is determined at the district, campus, or educator level. Similar in design to the Georgia NAAVY, students are tested on specific standards selected by the educator whenever the educator deems students are ready to be assessed.
- **Curriculum Based:** Assessments administered during specific windows throughout the year that are tied to a more structured scope (e.g., specific texts for R/LA) or sequence (e.g., which standards are taught at what point in the year). A similar pilot was the Louisiana LEAP Humanities program, in which the pilot measured what students have learned via passages from books that students have read, rather than passages that they have not read as part of the curriculum.
- **Audit Based:** Locally developed, state audited performance tasks that align with state standards, likely requiring extensive teacher training and support from the state and district. A similar pilot is New Hampshire's PACE assessment system, which includes a combination of locally developed and administered performance tasks and common tasks that are shared among all participating schools.

With the three key designs in mind, the TEA worked with multiple stakeholder groups to narrow the designs even further through clear consideration of the key elements and trade-offs – as some elements may be mutually exclusive. Stakeholder groups included the EAC (along with a subcommittee designated for through-year pilot discussions), the Chief Academic Officer Council, Teach Plus, ESC math specialists, and the Texas Association of Supervisors of Mathematics (TASM). Some recurring themes that stakeholders valued are listed below (although some may be opposing or even mutually exclusive):

1. **Student growth measure:** A clear metric for measuring growth to demonstrate instructional impact and better meet the needs of students on both ends of the learning spectrum
2. **Opportunity for re-testing:** Students have more than one opportunity to test on a standard or module
3. **Only testing for standards that have been taught:** LEAs make decisions about module order and assessment frequency at the campus level to align with local scope and sequence.
4. **Equity for subpopulations, especially transient students:** The design to work to improve accessibility and accommodations support as well as consider opportunity to test.
5. **Consistency across district:** LEAs want to know that their counterparts are being evaluated in a similar way.
6. **Detailed data and feedback:** Results obtained as quickly as possible after assessment, the more detailed the better (by item, standard).
7. **Limited impact on teaching and learning:** Limit assessment frequency that reduces disruption to instruction and campuses.

Additionally, the variable features considered for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot are:

- full scope testing or mix and match;
- 2-3 assessments per year or 4-6 assessments per year;
- individualized or comparability; and
- weighted average vs. priors, i.e., adding together all assessments using a weighted average vs. a final test form determined from performance on previous assessments.

The TEA created more detailed prototypes that align with the features and elements that were important to stakeholders, such as: equity for different student groups, least

disruptive testing schedules, and immediate and useful educator data that can be used to inform instruction. All designs will consist of three to four tests throughout the year, but still require refinement in terms of the calculation method for cumulative score, specific data reporting needs, and the potential to transition to a fully computer-adaptive model over time.

There are some guiding questions as the TEA continues to refine:

1. What is the best way to generate a summative score – through some sort of weighted average of scores throughout the year, or priors that determine the final test?

Diving deeper into multiple tests contributing to a cumulative score, North Carolina’s technical advisory committee had the following feedback for their NCPAT through-year pilot: “It was apparent there are several significant interpretative and practical issues with this design. Most notable are what summative interpretative claims should be made about students. For example, should the claim be about average student performance in a fashion similar to the way in which course grades or grade point averages are defined? Should the claim be about a student’s best performance, similar to the way in which a student’s best work is selected for a portfolio? Or should the claim be about a composite that weights each assessment according to some value judgment, similar to the way different kinds of work contribute more or less to a student’s course grade? ... Following this feedback, North Carolina revised its design and will no longer attempt to combine scores from all three assessments into a single summative score. The revised plan is to use information from NCPAT 1 and NCPAT 2 to classify students into performance groups and route each group to the NCPAT 3 cluster sets that will maximize their measurement precision.” With that said, while the pilot initially attempted to pull the modular linear assessments into a cumulative score, there was not enough evidence to point towards the best method of aggregation.

2. What type and level of data would educators, parents and students find most

useful, and most actionable?

The TEA is working with the EAC, teachers, parents, and students to determine if this could be at an item-level, standard-level, or reporting category-level and the significance of a growth score throughout the year.

3. What are the implications of the current remote learning situation on these new assessment models?

The TEA is still working with the rest of the nation to understand the extent of learning loss on students and how to accommodate assessment to remote, in-school, and hybrid learning environments.

Goals and outcomes

The TEA has worked to develop a Theory of Action that describes the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by this project (see figure 3).

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot seeks a cumulative score that is comparable to the current state assessment, STAAR can be used for the same purposes

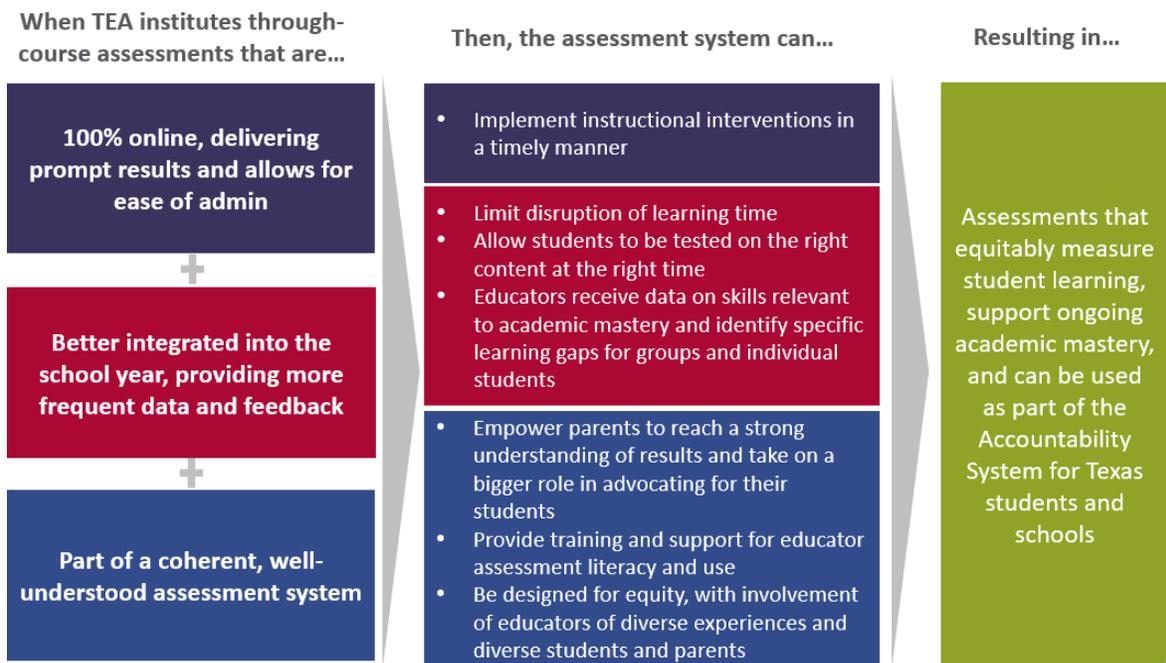


Figure 3: Theory of Action

These goals, objectives, and outcomes will be clearly measurable and are specified below:

1. Equitably measure student learning (meeting the same strict requirements for quality, reliability, validity, and fairness as the STAAR currently does)

- a. Long-term: Pilot participants achieve cumulative scores that are comparable with the STAAR across reported student groups
- b. Short-term: Pilot participants are a representative sample of districts along several variables (e.g., size, geographic location, rural/urban) and serve a demographically representative sample of Texas students

2. Support ongoing academic mastery

- a. Long-term: Pilot participants see a statistically significant difference of student outcomes (measured through STAAR summative performance) compared to non-participants based on a matched study. Pilot participants see an increase in data-driven instructional practices and utilize assessment data to inform instructional adjustments and interventions, based on qualitative case studies and performance alongside existing rubrics for data-driven instructional practices.
- b. Short-term: Through regular surveys, pilot participants demonstrate agreement with statements such as the following:
 - i. Student: “This model allows me to better show what I have learned.”
“This model allows me to perform better than the current STAAR.”
 - ii. Educator: “This model allows students to better show what they have learned.” “This model provides me with useful data to inform instructional decision-making”. “This model improves student outcomes through more frequent and detailed data and information.”
 - iii. Parent: “This model helps me better understand my child’s progress

throughout the year.” “This model helps me be more engaged in my child’s education.”

3. Can feasibly replace the current end-of-year Texas summative

- a. Meet the rigorous validity standards of the STAAR

The following describes validity evidence to be collected during the development and deployment of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot including comparability of the scores to the current summative assessment.

Validity evidence can be organized into five categories: (1) test content, (2) response processes, (3) internal structure, (4) relations to other variables, (5) and consequences of testing (AERA/APA/NCME, 2014; Schafer, Wang, & Wang, 2009). Validity evidence based on test content supports the assumption that the content of the test adequately reflects the intended construct. This validity evidence comes from the established test development process. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will need evidence to support the test development and the timing by which content standards are assessed. If needed, teacher survey data on scope and sequence within the content area and expert review of the test designs will provide evidence during the pilot. The relationship of student performance on the items with respect to the summative assessment will support the validity of the blueprint and test design.

Response processes refer to the cognitive behaviors required to respond to a test item. The through-year assessments will consist of: multiple-choice items, griddable-response items, non-multiple choice machine scored items, and constructed response items. The pilot will collect evidence showing the manner in which students are required to respond to test items supports an accurate measurement of the construct of interest. During initial development and deployment of the assessment, surveys and potentially cognitive labs will provide insight into the usefulness of the item types to assess student learning and reflect instruction. Next, test items will be piloted

with a larger sample of students to gather information about performance on new item types and formats. After new item types and formats are determined to be appropriate, evidence is gathered about student responses through field testing, including statistical information such as item difficulty, point-biserial correlations, and differential item functioning. The evidence is then submitted to content expert review.

The process used to score items can provide validity evidence related to response processes. For assessments with constructed-response items, such as written compositions, rubrics are used by human readers to score student responses. For non-multiple-choice items, response and score frequencies are evaluated for all possible correct or partially correct responses.

When a test is designed to measure a single construct, the internal components of the test should exhibit a high level of homogeneity that can be quantified in terms of the internal consistency reliability coefficients. Internal consistency estimates should be evaluated for reported student groups, including all students as well as female, male, African American, Hispanic, and white students. Estimates are made for the full assessment as well as for each reporting category within a content area.

Another source of validity evidence is the relationship between test performance and performance on another measure, sometimes called criterion-related validity. The relationship can be concurrent, predictive, convergent, or discriminant. Concurrent indicates the performance on two measures taken at the same time are correlated. Predictive indicates the current performance on one measure predicts performance on a future measure. Convergent meaning performance on two measures that are meant to assess the same or similar construct should be strongly correlated. Discriminant indicates the performance on two measures that are meant to assess distinct constructs should have a weak correlation or no correlation. The comparability of the through-year assessment can be evaluated through predictive measures both within the

assessment (e.g. the multiple administrations) and with the current STAAR summative assessment.

Consequential validity refers to the idea that the validity of an assessment program should account for both intended and unintended consequences resulting from inferences based on test scores. Consequential validity studies use surveys to collect input from various assessment program stakeholders to measure the intended and unintended consequences of the assessments. Surveys will capture teacher input on the uses and inferences made during the pilot especially impact to student learning and teacher expectations for instruction.

Gathering validity evidence and documenting the reliability of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot will include cognitive labs, survey data, item response data, and correlational and predictive analyses. Data will be gathered throughout the process. Samples of teachers and students should reflect the diversity of Texas. Cognitive labs are inherently small in nature and it is recommended to have approximately 10-20 participants. For survey data, the recommendation increases depending on the purpose of the survey results in development or deployment of the pilot. It is recommended to have 50-200 responses for general survey results. Statistical analyses for item performance and predictive analyses to the summative assessments establish a stronger relationship between the through-year pilot and the current STAAR summative assessment. Therefore, the recommended sample sizes are 100-500 depending on the intended inferences being made.

Validity is an ongoing process throughout the development and administration of the assessment program. Each year during the Through-Year Assessment Pilot, validity evidence will be collected to provide feedback and refinement to the pilot program.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will be developed, deployed, and evaluated across multiple years. Select grades and content areas will be piloted at several schools throughout Texas in the first few years before scaling. **Continuous improvement will occur**

over the lifetime of the pilot and the TEA will revisit and adjust models year after year based on stakeholder feedback and metrics.

Linkages

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population, Texas students, in many ways. Throughout the project, the TEA will continue to **partner with its regularly engaged stakeholder groups**. The TEA's Student Assessment division regularly engages with the Texas Statewide Network of Assessment Professionals (TSNAP), accessibility working groups, an accommodations task force, and the 20 Texas Education Service Centers to gather feedback and improve assessments. In past agency pilots, due to the size and expanse of Texas schools, the TEA strategically worked with the 20 Education Service Centers as points of contact. In 2017- 2018, the TEA developed a communication strategy during the Texas Writing Pilot Program that heavily utilized the service centers through three focused areas of communication: Clarity of Role, Capacity to Provide Support, and Coherence of Responsibility. The TEA will continue to refine strategy and operational support utilizing its existing service centers as well as other various stakeholder groups to ensure equity of program services.

For assessment development, external stakeholders are engaged as external reviewers and as a regular part of the item development process. As previously stated, the TEA has and will continue to work with the Technical Advisory Committee, the Educator Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders to refine the design of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot (see Stakeholder section for more detail).

The proposed project involves a potential for **new trainings and a new item development processes involving educators**. Due to the need for an increased number of items and a desire to engage teachers more in the process, the TEA is piloting a new process for Texas

educators to write and review items to be included in Texas assessment programs, including the Through- Year Assessment Pilot. The TEA is considering leveraging the U.S. Department of Education’s trainings to adapt training modules and create an assessment micro-credential for teachers to earn as a regular part of professional development.

Additionally, this project will **partner with another TEA initiative, Texas Instructional Leadership (TIL), and use its focus on data-driven instruction to ensure alignment between trainings.** TIL is a program that provides training and support to campus and district leaders in order to build the capacity of educators that they manage. It consists of a suite of trainings that fosters continuous improvement by helping campus and district administrators grow concrete instructional leadership skills in the areas of observation and feedback, student culture, and data driven instruction. The goal is to help districts and campuses increase student achievement overall and close learning gaps between student sub-groups. Data-Driven Instruction (DDI) is a highly effective, research-based training that guides educators and administrators to spend less time teaching their students what they already know and more time on what their students need. It also answers the questions, “How do I know if my students are learning? And if they aren’t, what do I do?”. Based on the protocol developed by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and described in his books, *Driven by Data 2.0* and *Leverage Leadership 2.0*, TIL DDI advocates for a deeper analysis of student work. First, teachers develop content knowledge by unpacking standards and analyzing aligned assessment items. Then, they look at actual student responses, not just percent mastery, to identify the gap between what students show and what they need to know. Finally, they create and practice a targeted reteach plan focused solely on their students’ gaps. Campuses that have engaged in this training have seen significant increases in student mastery. During the 2018-2019 school year, 60 campuses participated in the program. Coming into the training year, 13 campuses had a campus rating for accountability of an A or a B. Coming out of the training program, the

number of participating campuses that received an A or a B rating doubled. Conversely, coming into the training year, 27 campuses had a rating of a D or an F. Upon the close of the program, the number of participating campuses that received a D or an F was reduced to 14. TEA will leverage TIL trainings and learnings to create the assessment-specific trainings and micro-credential to scale this impact. **In addition, all inter-agency and outer-agency partners, such as Education Service Centers and LEAs will receive more frequent data in a comprehensive effort to support students academically.**

Lastly, the Through-Year Assessment Pilot efforts of administering the pilot tests online will promote another statewide initiative; HB 3906 requires the TEA to investigate and develop a **transition plan to administer all STAAR tests electronically** by 2022–2023. As a result, the TEA has partnered with Texas A&M University Education Research Center (TAMU ERC) to conduct a feasibility study in 2020, which will include a set of recommendations regarding the online transition as well as estimated costs for achieving full online readiness within the pre-determined timeline. HB 3906 requires the TEA to investigate and develop a transition plan to administer all STAAR tests electronically by 2022–2023. A fully electronic administration will level the playing field for students who need accommodations, expedite test results, reduce costs, and promote future innovations in assessments. A transition plan, due to the Legislature by December 2020, is subject to legislative approval prior to its implementation. The fully online nature of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot can contribute to learnings and support this transition online.

[Part of a comprehensive effort](#)

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support academic standards for students. The Texas assessment

program currently provides students, parents, and educators with reliable and valid assessments to measure progress and growth and is focused on continuous improvement. HB 3906, passed in 2019 in the 86th Texas Legislature, includes a variety of initiatives, including **an integrated formative pilot, a 75% multiple-choice cap that enables exploration of new item types, and a feasibility study which the TEA is currently conducting with Texas A&M to move to 100% electronic assessments by 2022-2023. Texas Reading Language Arts assessments are undergoing a redesign to eliminate standalone writing tests and align reading passages with standards in other content areas.** These initiatives not only allow for partnership with the Through-Year Assessment Pilot but pave the way for continued assessment innovation. **While STAAR is a proven valid and reliable form of assessment, TEA is committed to continuous improvement, and continues to explore opportunities for innovation and research to support the agency’s mission.**

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot is part of a **comprehensive effort to support a balanced assessment system.** The TEA will continue to provide the **STAAR Interim Assessment, an optional benchmarking and predictive tool** that supports currently half of the LEAs in the state. Furthermore, the TEA is working on a **new Formative Assessment Tool**, an educator- centered classroom tool that allows educators to choose from or create online formative assessments to gain immediate feedback and data, set to launch in the 2020-2021 school year. In response to COVID-19 and the cancellation of STAAR in 2019-2020, the TEA is also providing **optional end-of-year assessments and optional beginning-of-year assessments** for districts and parents to measure student learning during the disruption.

This pilot is also part of an **agency-wide comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support academic standards for students.** Within the TEA Strategic Plan, the Through-Year Assessment Pilot and other assessment-related initiatives fall under Enabler 1, “Increase transparency, fairness, and rigor in district and campus academic and

financial performance” (see figure 4).

Figure 4: TEA Strategic Plan



There are also connections with other TEA initiatives that emphasize data-driven instruction. One such example is the Texas Instructional Leadership (TIL), a program that provides training and support to campus and district leaders in order to build the capacity of educators they manage. TIL is a program that provides training and support to campus and district leaders in order to build the capacity of educators that they manage. It consists of a suite of trainings that fosters continuous improvement by helping campus and district administrators grow concrete instructional leadership skills in the areas of observation and feedback, student culture, and data driven instruction. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will partner with TIL to ensure consistent messaging and support around data-driven instruction. Another TEA initiative is the **Effective Schools Framework (ESF)**, a state resource for campuses and districts that consists of a set of district commitments and, for

schools, essential actions. District commitments describe what local education agencies do to ensure that schools are set up for success. The essential actions describe what the most effective schools do and how they use assessment data to support powerful teaching and learning. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will provide more frequent assessment data, which will support the essential actions within the ESF. Another TEA instructional initiative is **Lesson Study**, a framework for collaborative, instructional research and lesson design that can be implemented by any campus and is proven to be effective in positively impacting teacher effectiveness and student outcomes (Gersten, Taylor, Keys, Rolfhus, & Newman, 2014). This teacher-driven process has also been shown to increase teacher self-efficacy and professional growth, including reported gains in the ability to craft good questions, use a variety of assessment strategies, provide alternate examples to alleviate student confusion, and implement alternative instructional strategies (Young, 2018). The Through-Year Assessment Pilot can provide additional data and opportunities for reflection for those participating in Lesson Study and serves as part of a comprehensive effort to increase data-driven instruction.

This pilot **also aligns with the TEA’s response to COVID-19 work**. The TEA created an instructional continuity framework for districts and educators to guide them through the transition for at-home instruction and has created a Texas Home Learning initiative to provide districts and educators with instructional planning and materials to support classroom instruction. **The Through-Year Assessment Pilot can directly link to some of these resources to provide educators with more actionable next steps.**

Rationale

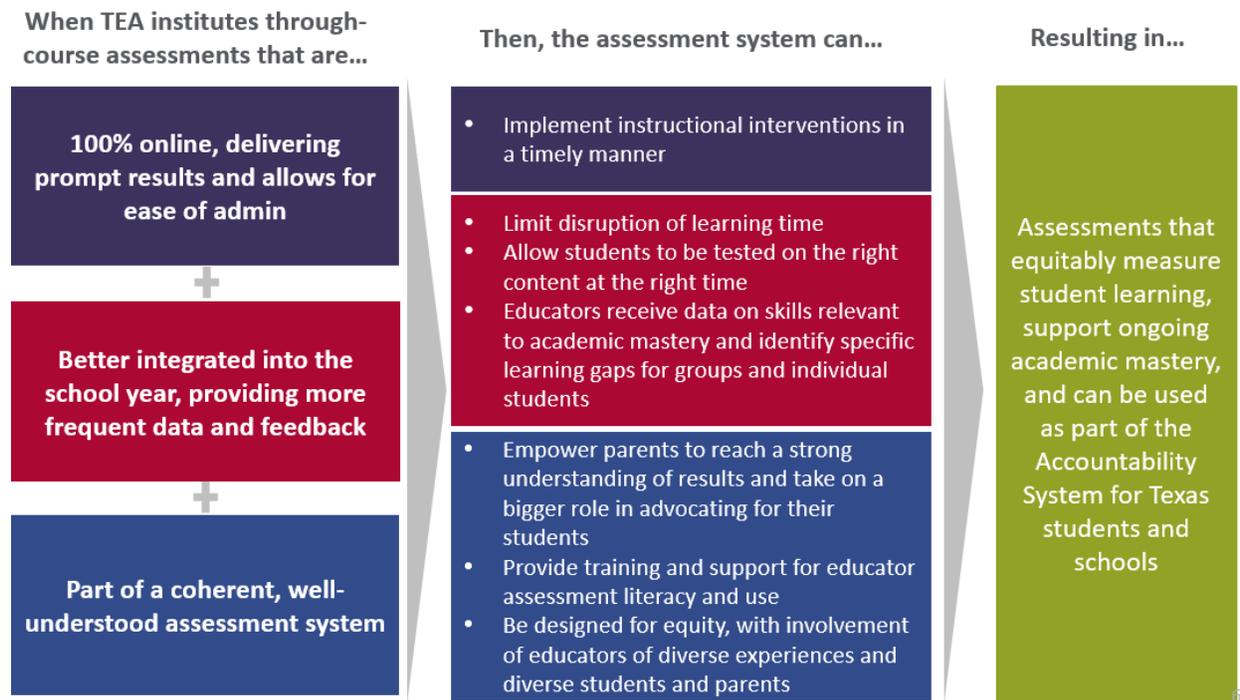
As noted throughout this section, the Through-Year Assessment Pilot’s linkages to inner and outer agency initiatives and supports, as well as the comprehensive effort to support student outcomes, are encapsulated at a high level by the Theory of Action. The TEA is aiming for a

through-year assessment model that supports the following research -

- **Multiple tests spaced over the course of a school year have potential advantages versus one testing event, as multiple retrievals produce greater long-term learning retention** (Persky 2020).
- **Through-course assessments give way to more timely data, resulting data being used in a diagnostic fashion and it helping teachers identify gaps in learning to inform students’ readiness to move forward with content** (Wise 2011).
- **Proficiency data needs to be considered alongside within-year growth data to allow for schools to be held accountable for student learning as well as best practice sharing** (Javurek 2019).

Figure 5: Theory of Action

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot seeks a cumulative score that is comparable to the current state assessment, STAAR can be used for the same purposes



This further points to the needs of an integrated assessment system that connects student learning and data throughout the year to their end-of-year determination of learning.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot has strategies to ensure equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. The TEA’s current assessment development process has **built-in checks to ensure equity of services** including **qualitative checks in the form of item review by educators** as well as **quantitative checks in the form of field-testing and differential analysis** (see figure 6).

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will follow the current TEA assessment development process to ensure equity and that students can see themselves reflected in the item development. In addition, an online administration will not only allow the through-year assessment pilot to maintain the TEA’s current accessibility features and PNPs within an online test, but also for **greater and more equitable access to those content and language supports.** The online administration also allows a transition to computer-adaptive testing over time, which results in a **more individualized test** for all students.

Key findings from *Education Inequalities at the School Starting Gate: Gaps, Trends, and Strategies to Address Them*, a study combining statistical analyses of performance gaps and qualitative analyses of school districts that are piloting promising strategies for closing these achievement gaps details **how frequent information and transparency is needed to close learning** gaps, especially for students who are from low-income areas and students of minority ethnicities. The study claims that these learning gaps happen even before students begin kindergarten and proposes, “Comprehensive, community-level education strategies that begin addressing children’s needs before kindergarten show promise in narrowing these gaps. Such

strategies should be further explored and adapted in more districts, and proven interventions should be widely scaled up,” and that “[these] comprehensive interventions are starting to narrow early achievement gaps and boost test scores, increase measures of student well-being, and lead to higher rates of advanced course placement and high school graduation among low-income and minority students.” The current state assessment, STAAR, **shines light on achievement gaps between groups**, but does not currently assist in **quickly** closing those gaps. An Austin ISD school in 2017 shared with *The Austin Monitor*, “Overall, there were significant gaps in both STAAR reading and math scores based on student race, economic status, and whether or not they were in special education courses,” (Caterine.) The school further shared that they were able to narrow those gaps over time, but never at a granular level, meaning between campuses. The school officials explained that how strategies are implemented is key. For schools like this, **the Through-Year Assessment Pilot will work to provide frequent and timely feedback, something that is vital to underserved student groups and in turn to schools such as this, allow for more timely interventions as well as allocation of resources.**

The TEA discussed with stakeholders the potential impact to specific student populations within the through-year project. A large focus was making sure that the model did not negatively impact **highly transient students** who moved between different campuses or districts or **English Learners, whose English proficiency increases throughout the year.** Both groups of students need to be able to demonstrate mastery of standards both throughout and at the end of the year.

We learned one potential solution to addressing this through North Carolina’s assessment pilot. According to North Carolina’s technical advisory committee in reviewing its NCPAT pilot, “...this design did not account for student growth throughout the year and a consistent procedure to handle missing data and transient students. Following these feedbacks, North Carolina has revised its design and will no longer attempt to combine scores from all three

assessments into a single summative score. The revised plan is to use information from NCPAT

Figure 6: Item Development Process
Figure 2.1. Test-Development Process

- 1** Committees of Texas educators review the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), or the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) to develop appropriate assessment categories for a specific grade/subject or course that is assessed. For each grade/subject or course, educators provide advice on an assessment model or structure that aligns with best practices in classroom instruction.
- 2** Educator committees work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) both to prepare draft test reporting categories and to determine how these categories would best be assessed. These preliminary recommendations are reviewed by K–12 teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialists, and assessment specialists.
- 3** A draft of the reporting categories and TEKS student expectations or ELPS to be assessed is refined based on input from Texas educators. TEA begins to gather statewide opportunity-to-learn information.
- 4** Prototype test questions are written to measure each reporting category and, when necessary, are piloted by Texas students from volunteer classrooms.
- 5** Educator committees assist in developing guidelines for assessing each reporting category. These guidelines outline the eligible test content and test-question formats and include sample items.
- 6** With educator input, a preliminary test blueprint is developed that sets the length of the test and the number of test items measuring each reporting category.
- *7** Professional item writers, many of whom are former or current Texas educators, develop test items based on the reporting categories, the TEKS student expectations or ELPS, and the item guidelines.
- *8** TEA content specialists from the curriculum and assessment divisions review and revise the proposed test items.
- *9** Item-review committees composed of Texas educators review the revised test items to judge the appropriateness of item content and difficulty and to eliminate potential bias.
- *10** Test questions are revised again based on input from Texas educator committee meetings and are field-tested with large representative samples of Texas students.
- *11** Technical processes are used to analyze field-test data for reliability, validity, and possible bias.
- *12** Data reviews are held to determine whether items are appropriate for inclusion in the bank of items from which test forms are built.
- 13** A final blueprint for each test that establishes the length of the test and the number of test items measuring each reporting category is developed.
- *14** All accepted field-test items and data are entered into a computerized item bank. Tests are built from the item bank so that the tests are equivalent in difficulty from one administration to the next.
- *15** Content validation panels composed of university-level experts in each content area review the end-of-course assessments or high-school level tests for accuracy because of the advanced level of content being assessed.
- *16** Tests are administered to Texas students.
- *17** Stringent quality control measures are applied to all stages of printing, scanning, scoring, and reporting for both paper and online assessments. Results of the test are reported at the student, campus, district, regional, and state levels.
- 18** In accordance with state law, the Texas assessment program releases tests to the public.
- 19** In accordance with state law, the Commissioner of Education uses impact data, study results, and statewide opportunity-to-learn information, along with recommendations from standard-setting panels, to set a passing standard for state assessments.
- 20** A technical digest is developed and published annually to provide verified technical information about tests.

*These steps are repeated annually to ensure that tests of the highest quality are developed.

1 and NCPAT 2 to classify students into performance groups and route each group to the NCPAT 3 cluster sets that will maximize their measurement precision.” (North Carolina’s Innovative Assessment 17). In initial linear or multi-stage versions of the pilot, we will replicate North Carolina’s learnings to ensure access and treatment for transient students. The ability of North Carolina’s final “cluster sets” to give students unrestricted opportunity to demonstrate proficiency also ensures that English Learners that have improved their English proficiency over time are able to demonstrate their highest level of mastery during that last assessment. The Through-year Assessment Pilot also has the potential to become fully computer-adaptive over time. With a fully computer-adaptive assessment, if student is absent during the first few testing opportunities and does not make up those tests, the adaptive engine will assess the student on the full blueprint before the final test event is finished. In this case, the last test event may be slightly longer and slightly less adaptive if necessary to provide blueprint coverage. In other words, a summative score can still be generated through the final test only. Both designs fit well with students in specific circumstances. Transient students, who may have learned content in a different order in their previous district would not be set back for not succeeding in the earlier testing opportunities. On top of that, the computer-adaptive design would allow teachers to better understand the transient student’s learning thus far as well as their gaps. The computer-adaptive nature would allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery. Stakeholders have agreed that this flexibility is key to ensuring equal access and treatment for students from underrepresented groups.

Ultimately, pilot participation will need to be **representative of Texas’ population**, including representation from traditionally underrepresented groups. This pilot has the potential

to scale statewide and learnings can be applied to other assessments such as TELPAS, STAAR Alt 2, and TELPAS Alt.

Appropriateness of services to participant needs

The following groups are the intended beneficiaries of the project's services:

- **5.4 million students in Texas:** 52.6% Hispanic, 27.4% White, 12.6% Black or African American, 4.5% Asian, 2.4% two or more races, 0.4% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Pacific Islander
 - 3.6% Dyslexic students, 19.5% English Learners, 9.8% Special Education students, 60.6% economically disadvantaged students
- **20 Regional Education Service Centers**
- **~1200 Texas schools districts containing nearly 9,000 campuses total**
- **~370,000 classroom teachers**

The services to be provided by the Through-Year Assessment Pilot are appropriate to the needs of these intended recipients and beneficiaries. The pilot items are **aligned to the Texas curriculum standards, TEKS, and will offer accommodations and PNPs for students testing online**. The items will undergo the agency's item development process to **ensure grade-level appropriateness, no biases, and alignment to the TEKS** (see figure 7).

Items will continue to undergo field-testing. To ensure that each item is examined for potential ethnic bias, the sample selection is designed so that the proportions of African American and Hispanic students in the samples are representative of their respective total student populations in Texas. Data obtained from the field test include:

- the number of students by ethnicity and gender in each sample;
- the percentage of students choosing each response;

- the percentage of students, by gender and by ethnicity, choosing each response;
- point-biserial correlations to determine the relationship between a correct response on a particular test item and the score obtained on the total content-area test;
- Rasch statistical indices to determine the relative difficulty of each test item; and
- Mantel-Haenszel statistics for dichotomous items and standardized mean difference (SMD) for Constructed Response (CR) items to identify greater-than-expected differences in group performance on any single item by gender and ethnicity.

Figure 7: Item Review Guidelines

Item-Review Guidelines	
Reporting Category/Student Expectation Item Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the item measure what it is supposed to assess? • Does the item pose a clearly defined problem or task?
Appropriateness (Interest Level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the item or passage well written and clear? • Is the point of view relevant to students taking the test? • Is the subject matter of fairly wide interest to students at the grade being tested? • Is artwork clear, correct, and appropriate?
Appropriateness (Format)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the format appropriate for the intended grade? • Is the format sufficiently simple and interesting for the student? • Is the item formatted so it is not unnecessarily difficult?
Appropriateness (Answer Choices)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the answer choices reasonably parallel in structure? • Are the answer choices worded clearly and concisely? • Do any of the choices eliminate each other? • Is there only one correct answer?
Appropriateness (Difficulty of Distractors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the distractor plausible? • Is there a rationale for each distractor? • Is each distractor relevant to the knowledge and understanding being measured? • Is each distractor at a difficulty level appropriate for both the objective and the intended grade?
Opportunity to Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the item a good measure of the curriculum? • Is the item suitable for the grade or course?
Freedom from Bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the item or passage assume racial, class, or gender values or suggest such stereotypes? • Does the item provide an advantage or disadvantage to any group of students because of their personal characteristics, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status or religion? • Might the item or passage offend any population? • Are minority interests well-represented in the subject matter and artwork?

After field testing, TEA curriculum and assessment specialists provide feedback to ETS and Pearson on each test item and its associated data regarding reporting category/student

expectation match; appropriateness; level of difficulty; and potential gender, ethnic, or other bias; and then recommend acceptance or rejection of each field-test item. Items that pass all stages of development—item review, field testing, and data review—are placed in the item bank and become eligible for use on future test forms. Rejected items are marked as such and eliminated from consideration for use on any summative assessment. For the Through-Year Assessment Pilot, the TEA will also continue to partner with institutes of higher learning to review resources and provide assessment expertise.

Continued stakeholder engagement to ensure the pilot model is appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients and beneficiaries will be a cyclical process to help the TEA in project design, needs, and evaluation. In order to make sure we create a model that builds local capacity and addresses the needs of the target population (Texas students), **the TEA engaged stakeholders throughout the design of the model.**

As mentioned in the Significance section, the TEA regularly engages with a variety of stakeholder groups, such as the state’s professional association for superintendents (TASA), district testing coordinator professional association (TSNAP) , and specific content area associations. The TEA also works closely with each of the Education Service Centers (ESCs) across Texas to share information and trainings and collect input. The TEA Assessment and Curriculum divisions also assembles its own advisory committees of different focus areas – educator input and leadership (EAC) and psychometric/assessment expertise (TTAC). These groups not only receive updates throughout the project but also are offered opportunities to get involved and provide feedback on the work to ensure that services are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries.

In the case of the through-year pilot, there were **two phases of stakeholder engagement performed**. First phase of feedback included a broader group of leaders within the field of education and assessment psychometrics. The Student Assessment Division sent out a state-wide HB3906 survey that gauged interest and opinions around specific initiatives of the bill, inclusive of the Integrated Formative Pilot. The division also conducted independent research on various states (particularly IADA pilot states) to better understand the types of through-year summative replacement models that are either in development or pilot phase. From there, the TEA presented these types of models to various stakeholder groups and gauged interest in the following elements, such as overall assessment design, who makes local decisions, scoring and reporting, and test frequency and timing. These stakeholder groups include the Educator Advisory Committee, the Chief Academic Officer Council, ESC and district level math specialists (TASM) and Teach Plus teachers. The Texas Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), a group of 9 experts on educational assessments, advise the commissioner and the TEA regarding the development of valid and reliable assessment instruments and serve as advisors for other TEA needs. TTAC was also engaged to discuss the possibility of creating a summative score out of through-year assessments, and ways to mitigate risks to test validity.

The second phase occurred after the creation of more detailed prototypes that align with the features and elements that were important to stakeholders, such as: equity for different student groups, least disruptive testing schedules, and immediate and useful educator data that can be used to inform instruction. All designs will consist of three to four tests throughout the year, but still require refinement in terms of the calculation method for cumulative score, specific data reporting needs, and the potential transition to a fully computer-adaptive model over time. The TEA is partnering with Teach Plus, the Texas Parent Teacher Association and others to bring these prototype designs to Texas teachers, parents, and students

for further feedback and review. The TEA plans to finalize a pilot design in time for the ramp-up in item development in Fall 2020.

Transient students, who may have learned content in a different order in their previous district, and English Learners, whose English proficiency increases throughout the year, would not be set back for not succeeding in the earlier testing opportunities. Transitioning over time to a fully computer-adaptive design would allow teachers to better understand the transient student's learning thus far as well as their gaps. **The final pilot design will ensure that flexibility is given to students of various circumstances in order to generate a summative score that is reflective of their learning.**

Quality, intensity, and duration of training or professional development

The TEA currently provides **existing student assessment trainings for Regional Education Service Centers, district testing coordinators, and a subset of ~200 educators at annual educator summer institutes.** The TEA will continue to leverage these well-established avenues to provide training and services to educators in Texas for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot in order to ensure that educators can utilize the assessment information and data in order to adjust and improve instructional practices.

In addition, the TEA is working on developing **additional trainings and channels to increase assessment literacy across the state and improve practices on using assessment data to inform instruction.** The TEA is currently creating a set of **asynchronous trainings in increasing depth and complexity on topics of assessment literacy and creating high-quality assessments and assessment items.** While the asynchronous nature will provide flexibility during COVID-19, the goal is to promote assessment literacy and provide specific training opportunities on writing quality assessment items to larger numbers of educators. In developing and implementing these trainings, we will collaborate with many other TEA initiatives that are

focused on data-driven instruction, such as Texas Instructional Leadership, the Effective Schools Framework, and Lesson Study, which provide complementary and aligned professional development opportunities. We will also collaborate with the TEA Office of Educator Support to give educators the potential to earn micro-credentials through these assessment trainings and professional development opportunities, perhaps leading to opportunities to facilitate assessment- related trainings or play a more extensive role in developing assessment items for the state.

The increase in frequency in assessment data from the Through-Year Assessment Pilot will create additional opportunities for LEAs and ESCs to work with educators to refine data- driven instruction practices. A well-defined data tool and dashboard will be an integral part of this project and will connect to appropriate next steps for educators and parents after test administrations. In collaboration with other TEA initiatives, including Texas Home Learning, educators and parents can utilize this pilot’s assessment data to determine appropriate next steps to meet students where they are in their learning process.

Adequacy of resources

This grant will assist in funding the demands of assessment items for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot. The TEA has conducted an item development need analysis that anticipates much higher item development needs compared to the current summative.

Assumptions:

- The TEA will need to develop 375 assessment items per subject and grade level during the first year of the pilot and 675 per subject and grade level in every year after.

- If through-year assessments remain linear, assessment items can be released to the public each year, requiring ongoing item development in the same numbers.
- If through-year assessments become fully computer adaptive, the TEA can release a sample of items each year, requiring smaller amount of item development once fully scaled.

In order to align with the 75% multiple-choice cap that becomes operational, non-multiple-choice items will be part of this item development started in Year 2 (see table 2). **If it is determined that this model maintains the same level of validity and better supports instruction, it has the potential to scale statewide in as little as four years. Item development costs over the course of these four years will be around \$21M, of which we are seeking \$3M from this grant application (see table 5).**

Table 4: Estimated item development needs for MC items and non-MC items

# Items Required (Through-Year)	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Multiple Choice Items	1,125	4,050	7,594	11,644	24,413
Language Arts	-	1,013	3,038	5,569	9,619
Math	750	2,025	2,531	3,544	8,850
Science	-	506	1,013	1,519	3,038
Social Studies	375	506	1,013	1,013	2,906
Non-Multiple Choice Items	-	1,350	2,531	3,881	7,763
Language Arts	-	338	1,013	1,856	3,206
Math	-	675	844	1,181	2,700
Science	-	169	338	506	1,013
Social Studies	-	169	338	338	844

Table 5: Cost projections for item development (ramp-up to full scale by FY 2024)

\$ Required for Item Dev.	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Through-year Pilot	\$ 465,806	\$ 3,192,323	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,638,692
Language Arts	-	1,233,225	3,643,589	6,633,312	11,510,126
Math	330,750	1,338,525	1,665,830	2,303,420	5,638,525
Science	-	301,928	596,196	874,801	1,772,924
Social Studies	135,056	318,645	631,708	631,708	1,717,117

These costs are reasonable due to the large-scale impact and the anticipated results and benefits. Anticipated results and benefits from the Through-Year Assessment Pilot include:

- Inform instruction and drive intervention by providing more frequent and timely feedback to educators
- Provide more frequent information to parents on how their children are performing academically
- Measure student growth throughout the year vs. year to year.
- Provide more information to drive ESC, district and school decision-making in allocating funding and resources – particularly based on comparisons to identify student performance gaps and student populations with instructional needs.
- Encourage increased collaboration among educators based on more frequent information
- Facilitate multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery

This pilot will determine the potential of the through-year assessment model to replace the summative. If it is determined that this model maintains the same level of validity and better supports instruction, it could potentially **scale to the entire state, which has 5.4 million students and over 3.5 million taking STAAR every year.** This assessment pilot has the potential to impact:

- **The entire diverse student population in Texas:** 52.6% Hispanic, 27.4% White, 12.6% Black or African American, 4.5% Asian, 2.4% two or more races, 0.4% American Indian

and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Pacific Islander, 3.6% Dyslexic students, 19.5% EL students, 9.8% Special Education students, 60.6% economically disadvantaged students.

- **20 Regional Education Service Centers** in providing better services and support to their districts and campuses
- **~1200 Texas schools districts** containing nearly **9,000 campuses total**, and **~370,000 classroom teachers**

Research proves that educators are one of the most important roles to student success.

School Psychology Quarterly studied the effects that educators have on student outcomes and a student's well-being. While undoubtedly the studies proved over and over the positive affect educators have on their students and student academic success, this study also concluded that, "Teacher quality has a vital influence on student success or failure. Thus, further research regarding teacher effectiveness, teacher evaluation, teacher well-being, and teacher contributions is essential to inform school [officials] who collaborate with teachers to facilitate student success" (*Understanding the importance of teachers facilitating student success: Contemporary science, practice, and policy*, 30(4), 488-493). **The ~370,000 educators in Texas are integral to student success and outcomes, and to assist in the efficacy of those educators' practices and methods, it is necessary to provide support to help them obtain meaningful information on where their students are.**

According to NWEA's 2015 Product and Services pricing guide, MAP Growth assessments cost \$13.50 per student with an additional fee of \$2.50 per student for a MAP science assessment. \$13.50 for each of the 3.5 million students who take STAAR is \$47.25 million a year, which is almost five times the cost of the most expensive year of item development for the Through-Year Assessment pilot. There is a clear need for more frequent

student progress data through a 50% state adoption rate of STAAR Interim Assessments and a public outcry for a more connected and cohesive assessment system through the HB 3906 integrated formative assessment pilot statute. The Through-Year Assessment Pilot can allow schools to allocate funding using the valuable data received throughout the course of the school year. **The Through-Year Assessment Pilot builds the capacity of 1200 districts, 9000 campuses and 370,000 Texas teachers to support the individualized needs of 5.4 million students in Texas.**

Quality of management plan

Management Plan

The TEA developed a detailed project plan for this project that includes timeline, milestone, and responsibilities. Below is a high-level version of this management plan that includes a timeline and milestones (see figure 8). While there will be multiple years of piloting in order to get the data needed for comparability, only Pilot Year 2 is shown to demonstrate the cyclical nature of the work. Pilot Year 1 has a slightly different timeline due its transitional phase. **Per House Bill 3906 requirements, a report is due to the legislature to recap work completed, decisions made, and lessons learned. This report will be available to the public and will serve as the primary documentation of best practices that can be shared as models and resources with other States.**

Figure 8: Major Tasks Milestones (Q1 is September 1, milestones marked with x)

Activities	FY 20-21				FY 21-22				FY 22-23				FY 23-24			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Pilot Year 1 (Transition)																
Item Development		x														
Field Testing				x												
Training and Recruiting					x											
Operational Pilot																
Stakeholder Feedback & Analysis								x								
Design Improvements									x							
Legislative Report										x						
Pilot Year 2 (Cyclical)																
Item Development						x										
Field Testing								x								
Training and Recruiting									x							
Operational Pilot																
Stakeholder Feedback & Analysis												x				
Design Improvements													x			
Report														x		

Point people for portions of the project have been assigned as follows:

Stakeholder Focus Groups	Research and Development	Design and Refinement	Training and Communications	Project Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamie Kwan, Senior Strategy and Operations Associate, Assessment • Spencer Barr, Senior Policy Analyst, Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamie Kwan, Senior Strategy and Operations Associate, Assessment • Spencer Barr, Senior Policy Analyst, Assessment • Iris Tian, Division Director, Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamie Kwan, Senior Strategy and Operations Associate, Assessment • Kristina McCeig, STAAR Interim Assessments and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Assessment • Mubeen Khumawala, Director of Strategy & Operations, Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Doris, Social Studies Director, Curriculum • Jo Ann Bilderback, Director of Mathematics, Curriculum • Shelly Ramos, Division Director, Curriculum • Vincent Salas, Communications Manager, Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyson Kane, Association Commissioner, Strategy & Analytics • Iris Tian, Division Director, Assessment • Victoria Botello, Performance Manager, Strategic Initiatives

Project team and key project personnel commitments

Because of the importance of this project, there are multiple staff members both within and outside the Student Assessment division working on the Through-Year Assessment Pilot.

Below is a list of the key staff:

- **Tyson Kane, Associate Commissioner of Strategy and Analytics:** Tyson oversees three divisions at the TEA: Assessment, Strategy, and Analytics. Prior to the TEA, he has served as an area Superintendent, a principal, and a teacher. He also has prior experience in management consulting and private equity.
- **Iris Tian, Division Director of Student Assessment:** Iris oversees the TEA Student Assessment Division. Iris has spent her career in education: as a Texas teacher, instructional coach, and a consultant specializing in education and social impact.
- **Mubeen Khumawala, Director of Strategy and Operations:** Mubeen oversees strategy, finance, and operations for the Assessment division, including long-term strategy for assessments in Texas as well as strategic initiatives. He is a former Texas teacher and most recently worked as a management consultant specializing on large-scale transformation projects.
- **Jamie Kwan, Senior Strategy and Operations Associate:** Jamie specializes in data analytics and project management for the team and owns multiple initiatives, including the transition to online testing and the integrated formative assessment pilot. Jamie previously served in both district-level roles and teaching capacities.
- **Julie Cole, Director of Policy & Publications:** Julie has worked in the Texas Assessment Program since 2002 and oversees test security, policy and rule-making, and publications. She is a previous Texas educator.

- **José Ríos, Director of Test Administration and Test Development:** Jose has been with the agency for 12 years and manages test development and administration for all Texas assessment programs. He was a bilingual teacher for 6 years in Texas before joining the TEA and is the main point of contact for district testing coordinators and the Texas Statewide Network of Assessment Professionals (TSNAP).
- **Rachel Griffin, STAAR Manager:** Rachel directly liaises with the field, conducting trainings and presentations to guide districts as they make assessment policy decisions. She has been with the agency for 7 years and previously worked on the reading language arts curriculum team, where she developed assessment items and led the Texas Writing Pilot.
- **Shelly Ramos, Senior Director of Curriculum, Standards, and Student Support:** Shelly oversees implementation of the state curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the TEA content specialist teams. Shelly has been at the TEA since 2009. Prior, she served as a classroom social studies teacher for eleven years and worked for six years in educational publishing.
- **Jo Ann Bilderback, Director of Mathematics:** Jo Ann oversees the mathematics team and the content work including resources to help teachers implement the state curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Jo Ann has been at the TEA for eight years. Prior she taught middle school math and science and a campus and district instructional specialist for 17 years. She also worked with the Infinity Project, a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program at Southern Methodist University.

- **Zhen Li, Psychometrician:** Zhen has been with the TEA for 2 years, and is involved in standard setting, field testing, pilot testing, scaling, calibration, test development and equating of student performance data for all Texas assessment programs. Zhen has a doctorate degree from the University of British Columbia in the field of Measurement, Evaluation, and Research Methodology.

This group has committed to 8 hours a month currently to define project needs and specifications. Other relevant staff, stakeholders, and vendors who have contributed and will continue to contribute to work on this project include:

- **Educator Advisory Committee (EAC):** HB 3906 requires the TEA to establish a new assessment educator advisory committee. This educator advisory committee advises the commissioner and the agency on the development of academically appropriate state assessment instruments. The committee is comprised of experts in curriculum and instruction, higher education, school leadership, and individuals with experience supporting special populations. The committee provides advice on the design and implementation of changes contemplated for the state’s assessment program, including the Through-Year Assessment Pilot. Nominations were submitted in August 2019, and the Educator Advisory Committee met for the first time in Austin on January 23, 2020 and are required to meet twice annually. The following is a list of the appointed EAC members:

Melody Young Sherman, TX	Linda Macias Houston, TX	Jeremy Wagner* Lubbock, TX	Deana Lopez Weatherford, TX
Karina Vergara Weslaco, TX	Carolina Lopez Weslaco, TX	Cindy Tierney Lufkin, TX	Yuridiana Lewis, Grand Prairie, TX
Ferleshare Starks Houston, TX	Jonathan Lee San Antonio, TX	Janie Shielack* College Station, TX	Adalberto Garcia El Paso, TX

Cassandra Scott* Wylie, TX	Kerry Gain New Braunfels, TX	Cynthia Sanchez El Paso, TX	Charles Dupre Sugar Land, TX
Ami Rubi Houston, TX	Lindsay Cooper* Georgetown, TX	Raymar Ramirez* Humble, TX	Kevin Brown* Austin, TX
Sue Melton-Malone Robinson, TX	Kristin Brown* Lyford, TX	Rebekah McCallay Corsicana, TX	Stephanie Ashworth Robstown, TX

* Part of the subcommittee dedicated to the Integrated Formative Pilot (inclusive of the Through-Year Assessment Pilot); this group has met several times since Fall 2019

- **Texas Technical Advisory Committee:** The TTAC meets twice annually to provide psychometric guidance and is available for consultation between meetings. The TTAC is comprised of assessment experts from across the nation and is convened by the TEA.
- **Current assessment vendors:** The TEA’s existing assessment vendors provide psychometric research and consultation and advise within the current vendor contract.

Quality of project evaluation

In order to evaluate this project, the TEA will measure the following goals, outcomes, and objectives:

1. Equitably measure student learning (meeting the same strict requirements for quality, reliability, validity, and fairness as the STAAR currently does)

- a. Long-term: Pilot participants achieve cumulative scores that are comparable with the current summative (STAAR) across reported student groups
- b. Short-term: Pilot participants are a representative sample of districts along several variables (size, geographic location, rural/urban) and a demographically representative sample of Texas students

2. Support ongoing academic mastery

- a. Long-term: Pilot participants see a statistically significant difference of student outcomes (measured through STAAR summative performance) compared to non-participants based on a matched study. Pilot participants see an increase in data-driven instructional practices and utilize assessment data to inform instructional adjustments and interventions, based on qualitative case studies and performance alongside existing rubrics for data-driven instructional practices.
- b. Short-term: Through regular surveys, pilot participants demonstrate agreement with statements such as the following:
 - i. Student: “This model allows me to better show what I have learned.”
“This model allows me to perform better than the current STAAR.”
 - ii. Educator: “This model allows students to better show what they have learned.” “This model provides me with useful data to inform instructional decision-making”. “This model improves student outcomes through more frequent and detailed data and information.”
 - iii. Parent: “This model helps me better understand my child’s progress throughout the year.” “This model helps me be more engaged in my child’s education.”

3. Can feasibly replace the current end-of-year Texas summative

- a. Meet the rigorous validity standards of the STAAR

The feasibility to replace the current Texas summative, STAAR will require ongoing psychometric studies over multiple years. Documenting the validity and reliability of the assessments is critical to supporting the intended uses and score interpretation. Five categories of validity evidences will to be collected during the development and deployment of

the pilot, including comparability of the scores to the summative assessment.

Content validity evidence supports the assumption that the content of the test adequately reflects the intended construct. The evidence will be collected through the established test development process, from teacher survey data on scope and sequence within each content area, expert review on test design, and student performance on items. Response processes refer to the cognitive behaviors required to respond to a test item. Surveys, cognitive labs, and pilot-testing will be used to collect information on the appropriateness and usefulness of variety of item types for measuring the construct of interest. The items will be evaluated in terms of difficulty, discrimination power, and fairness by experts. Internal structure evidence will be collected through multivariate statistical analysis to identify underlying construct(s) that explain score variability. The internal consistency estimates should be evaluated for the overall population and sub-groups of students at the overall test level and reporting category level. Criterion-related validity should be examined through concurrent, predictive, convergent, or discriminant validity. Consequential validity studies use surveys to collect input from various assessment program stakeholders to measure the intended and unintended consequences of the assessments. (see Goals and Outcomes section for more details)

Psychometric evaluation will be conducted by the TEA’s current testing vendors with support from TEA psychometricians. Additionally, student and educator surveys will be provided to determine qualitative feedback and inform decisions about program improvements. While educator surveys will be sent directly from the TEA, students will have the ability to complete a feedback survey online at the close of the last through-year assessment.

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will be developed, deployed, and evaluated across multiple years. The TEA is committed to providing continuous improvement to its

initiatives and will utilize psychometric outcomes, continued stakeholder input from groups such as the Educator Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, educator, parent, and student focus groups and others to adjust and inform the pilot design year after year.

This grant will support Texas to pursue a tremendous opportunity to further innovate student assessment, which impacts 3.5 million students taking the STAAR across almost 9,000 campuses. Texas is experiencing rapid population growth, as evident in national data. Public school enrollment in Texas alone increased by 18.8 percent between 2004 and 2014, more than six times the increase experienced in the United States (3.1%) over the same time period. Additionally, Texas has continued to outpace the nation in the growth of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Investing in innovative assessment programs in Texas will help ensure that students in underserved groups, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities – all of which have been significantly affected by learning loss due to COVID-19 – benefit from evidence-based practices, equitable assessment, and interventions. As evidenced through past commitments to assessment innovation such as the STAAR Interim Assessments and current initiatives within the TEA such as Texas Home Learning, Texas Instructional Leadership and the Effective Schools Framework, Texas stands firmly dedicated to supporting its students, especially in response to crisis, and will to continue do so with the Through-Year Assessment Pilot. Texas aims to lead the way in assessment and seeks to provide additional support and resources to educators, LEAs, and families. Texas is a great fit for this grant; existing state work and legislation establishes the infrastructure to build a quality design to pilot a through-year model that provides more frequent and timely data and information to support instructional decision-making and resource allocation throughout the year, ultimately

providing Texas and the nation with more research on the potential of replacing a single summative assessment with multiple assessments throughout the year. This project will leverage state and federal resources to increase efficiency and coherence in Texas' assessment systems, ultimately improving student outcomes, providing increased value to students, educators, and parents, and paving the way for national innovation to student assessment.

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Budget Narrative File(s)

* **Mandatory Budget Narrative Filename:**

To add more Budget Narrative attachments, please use the attachment buttons below.

Texas Education Agency

Budget Narrative

Total Costs (Lines 9-11)

Innovative Assessment Federal Grant (Priority 3) – Fiscal Years 2020-2024

Budget Category	Project Year 1 (20-21)	Project Year 2 (21-22)	Project Year 3 (22-23)	Project Year 4 (23-24)	TOTAL
6. Contractual	\$ 465,806	\$ 2,529,444	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,995,250
9. Total Direct Costs (Lines 1-8)	\$ 465,806	\$ 2,529,444	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,995,250
10. Indirect Costs	\$ 2,375	\$ 2,375	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,750
12. Total Costs (Lines 9-11)	\$ 468,181	\$ 2,531,819	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000,000

Contractual (Line 6)

Line 6 reflects the primary make-up of the costs, which is invested in item development led by an external vendor. Because the pilot design requires a high number of items, and therefore a large budget, the requested \$3 million will be spent down by Year 2.

Overall, the item development process consists of item creation, item review, item field testing, and data review, prior to being placed in an item bank for future test forms. The contractor holds expertise in designing, creating, and operationalizing programs within the State of Texas assessment system. A previously established contractor will be used for Year 1 but the contractor for the following three years is still undergoing the request for proposal (RFP) process. All procurements will be developed, evaluated, negotiated, and awarded by a certified state agency purchaser following the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts’ Statewide Procurement Division procedures for state agency procurement. The procedures for procurement have been followed, as stated in 2 CFR 200.317-200.326.

The proposed number of items required is outlined below (ramp up to full scale by FY 2024).

# of Items Required	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Through-year Pilot	1,125	5,400	10,125	15,525	32,175
Language Arts	-	1,350	4,050	7,425	12,825
Math	750	2,700	3,375	4,725	11,550
Science	-	675	1,350	2,025	4,050
Social Studies	375	675	1,350	1,350	3,750

The Through-Year Assessment Pilot will require 375 items per test title in Year One’s transition model, and 675 items per total in Year Two and beyond. In the full version (post-transition), items in each test are released to the public after each testing window, which then requires previously created items to be replenished. The tentative ramp-up on test titles by subject is indicated.

Linear Modules	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
Language Arts	0	2	6	11
Math	2	4	5	7
Science	0	1	2	3
Social Studies	1	1	2	2

As laid out below, the costs ramp up differently for each subject, given the different ramp-up schedules per subject as well as variable costs per item. Additionally, more expensive item types, such as performance-based tasks and technology enhanced items, will be required in future developments. The introduction to different item types is due to the 75% Multiple-Choice Cap initiative, which is a legislative mandate that caps multiple choice questions to 75% of the entire state assessment. The projections fold in the 75% Multiple-Choice Cap initiative into the through-year model starting in Year 2.

\$ Required for Item Dev.	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	TOTAL
Through-year Pilot	\$ 465,806	\$ 3,192,323	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,638,692
Language Arts	-	1,233,225	3,643,589	6,633,312	11,510,126
Math	330,750	1,338,525	1,665,830	2,303,420	5,638,525
Science	-	301,928	596,196	874,801	1,772,924
Social Studies	135,056	318,645	631,708	631,708	1,717,117

Total Direct Costs (Line 9)

Aside from Contractual costs, there are no other funds requested by the TEA in any of the following categories –

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Construction
- Other
- Training Stipends

Indirect Costs (Line 10)

TEA has an approved indirect cost rate of 9.5% per agreement number 2020-012 executed on April 27, 2020, as signed by Carla Steffen, Associate Commissioner for Finance/CFO for TEA, and Andre Hylton, Director of the Indirect Cost Division for the U.S. Department of Education. Indirect in this case is calculated at 9.5% of the federal share of up to \$25,000 of each contract,

each year. This comes to an indirect cost total of \$4,750 for all years of the grant. See Other Attachments for TEA’s Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

Commitment of Non-Federal Resources

As outlined above, the \$3 million requested in the grant will be used to support the ~\$21 million Through-Year Assessment Pilot. Excluding the requested federal grant funds, Texas commits to allocate \$17,643,442 of state resources to support the activities required by the project. The primary source comes from state funding made available through Texas House Bill (HB) 3906, and passed during the 86th Legislative session of Texas. These funds go towards a multitude of initiatives, including Integrated Formative Pilot (the umbrella category of this project), 75% Multiple-Choice Cap, and Reading Language Arts Redesign.

The following table outlines the non-grant funds that will be used for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot.

Budget Category	Project Year 1 (20-21)	Project Year 2 (21-22)	Project Year 3 (22-23)	Project Year 4 (23-24)	TOTAL
6. Contractual	\$ -	\$ 662,879	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 17,643,442
9. Total Direct Costs (Lines 1-8)	\$ -	\$ 662,879	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 17,643,442
10. Indirect Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
12. Total Costs (Lines 9-11)	\$ -	\$ 662,879	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 17,643,442

For reference, the following table outlines the total funds that will be used for the Through-Year Assessment Pilot, including the requested \$3 million.

Budget Category	Project Year 1 (20-21)	Project Year 2 (21-22)	Project Year 3 (22-23)	Project Year 4 (23-24)	TOTAL
6. Contractual	\$ 465,806	\$ 3,192,323	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,638,692
9. Total Direct Costs (Lines 1-8)	\$ 465,806	\$ 3,192,323	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,638,692
10. Indirect Costs	\$ 2,375	\$ 2,375	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,750
12. Total Costs (Lines 9-11)	\$ 468,181	\$ 3,194,698	\$ 6,537,323	\$ 10,443,240	\$ 20,643,442