



District Learning Assessments- FAQs

2021 - 2022

Students in Katy ISD will be administered several standards-based District Learning Assessments (DLAs) in the content areas of English/Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

What is the origin of DLAs?

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

What is the purpose of DLAs?

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

What is tested?

DLAs assess student expectations from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that have been taught in the time periods preceding their administration dates within the scope and sequence of the Katy ISD unit plans for their respective subjects. New for the 21-22 school year Elementary grades 3, 4, and 5 Reading assessments will be given through TEA's STAAR Interim Assessments. This assessment will test the complete assessed curriculum and will measure current progress so that teachers can monitor growth and create plans for students to reach their maximum potential.

Are DLAs part of a balanced assessment system?

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

What is the format of DLAs?

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

DLAs are intended to be administered within the regular class period of a school day. They are not lengthy assessments and do not require special bell schedules or campus-wide testing arrangements.

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

What data analysis is done for DLAs?

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

What is the DLA test security expectations?

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

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

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

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

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

How will DLAs be used for grades?

Elementary: Grades will **NOT** be taken on DLAs. DLA data should be used as a tool for goal setting and instructional adjustments.

Secondary: Grades will be taken and will count in the “minor” category. DLA data should be used as a tool for goal setting and instructional adjustments. Students who receive Special Education services will take the DLAs with allowable designated supports (allowable on state testing) but will **NOT** receive a grade.

How many DLAs will students take in a year?

Core content courses taught in 2nd through 11th grade will administer a DLA twice a school year per core content courses. For example, a 3rd grader could take up to six DLAs throughout the entire school year, secondary students could take up to 12, depending on core content courses.

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

Teachers, principals, and curriculum coordinators should utilize the results to inform curriculum and instruction. Teachers should share results with students in a variety of ways, such as discussing the intent of questions, reviewing common mistakes, or completing reflection sheets. Parents have access through the Home Access Center to view all grades (secondary) that are recorded by a teacher. Parents may review DLAs with their child’s teacher.

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

The district uses the performance passing levels of Approaches, Meets and Masters from the 2021 TEA Raw Score Conversion chart for all STAAR tested grade levels and contents. For Non-STAAR related grades and contents Meets is 70% and Masters is 90%. Secondary teachers are able to use flexible grading scales for DLAs as a minor grade. Students who receive Special Education services will take the DLAs with allowable designated supports (allowable on state testing), but will **NOT** receive a grade.

Is the DLA used to prepare students for the STAAR?

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

Do other districts administer DLAs?

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

How are DLAs reviewed and updated?

DLAs at both Elementary and Secondary levels are reviewed internally by the Curriculum and Instruction Department as well as by campus Instructional Coaches.

Are the DLAs considered high-stakes testing?

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

How should DLAs be administered?

DLA's will be administered via the mode assigned for each assessment. Please see the links for the DLA Calendars and their modes. [21-22 Elementary Campus Calendar](#) and [21-22 Secondary DLA Campus Calendar](#)