

# The Student Success Initiative

## State Law Requirements

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the Texas Legislature to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in mathematics and reading.

Under the SSI grade advancement requirements, students are required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) grade 5 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to sixth grade. Additionally, students are required to pass the STAAR grade 8 mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to ninth grade.

In addition to the SSI grade advancement requirements, state law mandates that high school students must not only meet all their course requirements but also pass the STAAR end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history to receive a diploma from a Texas public high school.\*

## What Happens at Grades 5 and 8?

Students in grades 5 and 8 have three opportunities to pass the STAAR mathematics test and three opportunities to pass the STAAR reading test. If a student does not pass one or both tests, the school must give the student additional instruction after each testing opportunity, and the student must participate in that instruction. Parents will be notified if their child does not pass a STAAR test that is required for promotion.

If a student has not passed after the second

testing opportunity, a grade placement committee (GPC) is formed. The GPC, which consists of the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian, will create an instructional plan based on the individual needs of the student.

## Parents' Role in the Process

If a student does not pass the STAAR mathematics or reading test after the third testing opportunity, the student will be automatically retained. However, the student's parents may appeal the decision to have their child repeat the grade by submitting a request to the GPC within five working days of receiving the retention notice. The GPC may decide to promote a student to the next grade, but only if everyone on the committee agrees that the student is likely to succeed in the next grade. Even if the GPC decides to promote the student, the student must participate in the required additional instruction in order to be promoted.

Parents may request a waiver of the third testing opportunity if they do not want their child to appeal the retention, but the parents may still appeal the retention. A student must participate in all additional instruction required by the GPC, even if the third testing opportunity is waived.

For information about how the Student Success Initiative applies to students receiving special education services, check with the special education contact on your campus.

\*The graduation requirements have changed for students enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade for the 2014–2015, 2015–2016, or 2016–2017 school years. A student who has not passed two or fewer end-of-course assessments may receive a Texas high school diploma if the student has qualified to graduate by means of an individual graduation committee (IGC) determination.

## PARENT TIPS to Prepare for Success

### General

- Early in the school year, review your child's academic progress with his or her teachers to determine if extra help is needed in mathematics or reading.
- Reinforce what your child is learning in school by asking questions about classroom and homework assignments.
- Attend the school's open house and parent-teacher conferences. Ask about activities you can do at home to improve your child's skills.
- Keep in contact with your child's teachers throughout the year. If your child seems to be struggling, ask about tutoring programs or other forms of available assistance.

### Mathematics

- Encourage your child to talk about the steps used when solving a mathematics problem.
- Ask your child questions about what is represented in the tables and graphs found in different sections of magazines and newspapers, such as the weather page.
- Find ways to incorporate mathematics skills into everyday situations like comparing prices when shopping, budgeting money, calculating the amount of tax and tip, measuring ingredients for cooking, doing home repairs, and estimating time and distance when traveling.

### Reading

- Establish a daily reading time, when family members can enjoy their favorite book or magazine without the distraction of television. This will help your child realize that you value and enjoy reading.
- Encourage your child to read a variety of materials, including stories, poems, plays, books, and newspaper and magazine articles. Look for opportunities to discuss what your child is reading, and find out what your child learned from the text. Suggest that your child make notes about unfamiliar words and concepts. Interacting with your child about what he or she is reading can improve your child's ability to read "between the lines" and to make connections between reading and personal experience.
- Help your child learn to use the reading resources available at home or at the library. Doing this will put your child on the road to becoming a better, more independent reader.

# STATE PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS



## STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students must pass the STAAR mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to the sixth grade.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students must pass the STAAR mathematics and reading tests to be promoted to the ninth grade.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students must pass the STAAR end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, English I, English II, biology, and U.S. history in order to graduate.\*

For information on course requirements for graduation, please go to TEA's website at <http://tea.texas.gov/graduation.aspx>.

## STAAR Testing at Grades 5 and 8

Students have three opportunities to pass the STAAR mathematics test and three opportunities to pass the STAAR reading test—two during the spring and one during the summer. The exact test dates are available at <http://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/calendars>.



If you have questions about the state requirements for SSI, please contact your school's principal or go to TEA's website at <http://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/ssi>.



**Texas Education Agency**  
Student Assessment Division  
Curriculum Division

# Prepare for Success



A PARENT GUIDE  
TO THE

*Student Success Initiative*

AT GRADES 5 AND 8



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