

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement from TEA Student Assessment Division:**

“Earlier today, districts experienced connectivity issues with the STAAR Online Testing Platform (SOTP). We posted updates to the STAAR Assessment Management System dashboard every 10 minutes to keep districts apprised of the progress in resolving the issue.

“The three STAAR tests affected were Grade 4 writing, Grade 7 writing, and English I. This was the first of five days that students were eligible to take one of these three tests online.

“At 10:17 a.m. CDT today, districts were advised if they were having issues that they should stop online testing for the day while the vendor works to resolve these problems. Online testing will resume tomorrow.

“We are still analyzing data to determine the number of students affected. Students could have experienced four different scenarios with online testing today:

- 1) the student could have successfully submitted the test without disruption;
- 2) the student could have successfully submitted answers but may have noticed unusually slow response times;
- 3) the student could have been prevented from logging in to begin with; or
- 4) the student could have begun to answer questions, but at some point was prevented from continuing, and in this instance, answers were saved every thirty seconds so that these students will be able to pick up where they left off.

“We understand the frustration this has caused students, parents, teachers, and administrators. What happened today is completely unacceptable. ETS, the testing vendor, experienced problems with their database system, which are in the process of being corrected. The 2021 online administration of STAAR will be ETS’s last for the State of Texas. Beginning next school year, Cambium Assessment will be taking over these critical testing functions to ensure that users have a seamless online testing experience moving forward.

“All involved in public education in Texas should expect better than what they have experienced today; we are working to ensure that our students do not experience future testing issues.”

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