

Texas Assessment Management System questions:

Could specific features within the Texas Assessment Management System be modified to better meet your district's needs? If so, please elaborate. 1) Longer login time. The condition is inactivity and reviewing reports can take some time. Recommendation is 30 minutes. 2) The system needs to link the user to the creator of the user. When an incorrect email address is given, it comes back to the DTC rather than the person that created that user. 3) Need for simpler process to transfer a student from one campus to another. Too many screens to go through. 4) Easier/Faster process to print campus reports. Too much time spent going from list to specific campus to print, then back to list to second campus, etc. 5) Cumbersome system for TAKS-Alt. Had to go through numerous steps to get students in groups for assessment. 6) System is non-intuitive. Help topics not really helpful.

Are there specific features in the Texas Assessment Management System that need more explanation in the User's Guide? If so, please elaborate. 1) Explanations need to be in non-technology terms. 2) System needs tweaking to make it more user friendly rather than updating the User's Guide.

Are there features in the Texas Assessment Management System for which you would like to see more training? If so, please elaborate. 1) Hands-on training on how to set up test sessions, from start to finish would be helpful. 2) Upload of precode files 3) Many felt the training in the fall was insufficient. We needed to be at our computers working as presenters guided us through the various components of the system.

Could the permissions for the existing roles be modified to better meet your district's needs? If so, please elaborate. 1) DTCs need to be able to assign specific privileges to users rather than having roles with set privileges. 2) We need various roles for our technology staff. 3) There is a need for a Director's role, such as Bilingual/ESL for TELPAS.

Please share any practices or procedures you have successfully implemented that involve either the Texas Assessment Management System or the Data Portals. One service center held a DTC Share and Exchange for completing the Participation Counts and TAKs Alt assignments.

Teacher Portal questions:

How is the Teacher Portal being used in your district? At this time, it is not indicated that it is being used.

Could the data presented in the Teacher Portal be modified to be more useful to your district? If so, please elaborate. The problem is with the constant need for updates and that duty falling to DTCs. There needs to be a way for district student information systems to "talk" to the Texas Assessment Management System nightly to keep the system constantly updated. Commercial testing systems, such as Eduphoria Aware, do that very thing.

Student Portal questions:

What level of adoption/usage do you expect of the Student Portal by parents and students in your district? That is going to be very dependent on the demographic makeup of the area. Though information on the portal is being sent home to parents, many do not have internet access at home. We know we will get questions about access codes from parents, but at this time, it's hard to estimate how much use the Student Portal will have from parents and students.

Could the data presented in the Student Portal be modified to be more useful to your district? If so, please elaborate. Again, most feel that it is too early to know an answer to this question. Ask us again next fall.

How does your district currently communicate student scores to parents? Everyone sends home CSRs to parents along with the parent brochures. Some districts arrange for conferences with parents of students that do not meet the standard on the test(s). SSI grades conduct GPC meetings with parents attending.

Has your district communicated the availability of the Student Portal to students and parents? If so, how has it been communicated? This has not been communicated as of yet. We were told that the new parent brochures would include information on the Student Portal.

If students and/or parents in your district have already used the Student Portal, what feedback has the district received on its ease of use and its value in tracking a student's assessment progress toward graduation requirements? At this point in time, we really haven't received any feedback. After this spring's administrations, we feel we will have a better idea of parent and student use.

Data portals—general questions:

Does your district use commercial software that performs similar functions to what the data portals currently do? Yes, various software programs are used including Eduphoria Aware, Skyward, and DMAC.

If so, would the cost of retraining staff to use the data portals be offset by the fact that they are free? No. Districts would keep the commercial software for various reasons including 1) the fact that it would house testing data for a student's entire testing history, not just the 3 previous years; 2) the same software would house local benchmark data for students therefore creating a complete testing history on the student; and, 3) the ease with which these software systems are constantly updated (nightly, automatically).

Does your commercial software offer functionality or benefits that the data portals do not currently provide? If so, please elaborate. Yes, including local testing results, entry/withdrawal records, special program information, contact information, demographic coding, and all other information needed to create data files for precodes. It also updates automatically every night.

Does the Student Portal offer your district any functionality or benefits that your commercial software does not currently provide? If so, please elaborate. Yes. The Student Portal allows for parent access that the commercial software does not. It also has testing information on students that did not test in the district the previous spring (at no cost) whereas that information is only available to districts at a cost.