



## SPRING ASSESSMENT UPDATES

March 30, 2021

Dear Orenda Public Charter School Staff and Families,

Happy Spring! It is assessment time. We encourage all students to participate in upcoming assessments. These assessments provide valuable data on academic performance that parents, teachers, and schools can use to help students grow. Included in this letter is information about the upcoming assessments so you can make the best decision for your child.

### **STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, and TELPAS**

Texas public school, including charter schools, are required by law to offer STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, and TELPAS. State law also requires that students take the assessments (Texas Education Code (TEC), Sections 39.023 and 39.027). Although state assessments will not be used to assign state or federal accountability ratings for the 2020–2021 school year, they will provide critical information about student learning.

### **On-Campus Testing Only**

Per TEA requirements, STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, and TELPAS Online Assessments must be given on-campus in a monitored testing session by a trained test administrator. Most test administrations have extended testing windows to allow for flexibility in scheduling. Due to this flexibility, each Orenda campuses may have different testing and will be communicating those testing dates directly with families.

### **EOC Required for Graduation**

STAAR EOC for Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and US History are still required for graduation. TEA does not have the authority to waive graduation requirements. Even though there are multiple opportunities during high school to take the STAAR EOC, we encourage students to take the EOC at the first opportunity after completing the course for the highest chance of success.

### **Promotion and Retention Based on STAAR**

Under the Student Success Initiative, students in grades 5 and 8 must pass the reading and math STAAR to be promoted to grade 6 and 9, respectively. This requirement has been **waived** for the 2020-21 school year. Students do not need to pass the reading and math STAAR to be promoted. Local promotion and retention requirements, as described in the Parent-Student Handbook for each campus, will be used as the basis for all K-12 decisions.



### **Students Who Don't Test**

We encourage all students to take the state assessments. This information provides both students and parents information on your child's academic progress towards meeting grade-level standards. This information helps teachers and our school plan instruction and learning programs to best meet the needs of your child.

If your child does not test, they will not be penalized in any way. Schools are required to submit an answer document with the score code "other" for remote students who do not test and "absent" for in-person students who miss the assessment.

### **SAT and ACT for Accelerated Testers**

Starting this year, students who took a STAAR EOC test in middle school (typically Algebra I) are required take the SAT or ACT prior to graduation to meet federal accountability requirements. TEA has submitted a request to the US Department of Education, but it hasn't been approved. We are encouraging all student to take one of these college preparatory assessments. As a reminder, all students are eligible for reimbursement for one test, SAT or ACT, taken during the spring of their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year or during 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Fitnessgram**

State law requires school districts, including charter schools, to annually assess all students in grades 3-12 who are enrolled in a physical education courses. This requirement applies to students who are receiving instruction remotely, in person, and through approved off-campus PE. There is nothing in the law that requires students to be assessed on-campus. Your child's PE will be in communication regarding the Fitnessgram assessment.

### **CPR Instruction for 2021 Graduates**

CPR instruction, which includes both online instruction and a hands-on component, is still required for graduation this year. All 2021 graduates need to complete this requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carla Silber'.

Carla Silber  
Superintendent/COO  
Orenda Public Charter School District