

Welcome back, Richardson ISD to episode five of the RISD podcast. Dr. Goodson? Yes. Welcome Back. Thank you. Glad to be back. Can you believe this is episode Five? This is episode five, and I've kept you along this whole journey. Can you believe that? I know you haven't booted me outta here yet. This has been fun. This has been a lot of fun. Um, how, you know what? We just got back from spring break. How was your spring break? It was really nice. Good. It was, it was really. How about you? It was wonderful, we actually went on a, our first family cruise ever. Wow. It was, I've never been on a cruise. Oh, was it worth it? You so need to do it. It's amazing. You know, from an eight year old to a 25 year old. All, all four kids all had something that they could do that they found was fun and interesting and engaging. And they all petitioned me to, you know, extend Spring break, just an extra few days. just a friendly little request for the RISD superintendent. Yes. I had to deny it, but, you know, we'll try it again next year. That's right. We did also have a couple of celebrations that happened right before spring break. Yes. I don't know if you remember, but in some of our first podcasts, we had the opportunity to meet some of our outstanding female wrestlers. I Remember an Aquila Moore. Yes. and Fernanda. Uhhuh. Did you know that since then, Fernanda finished first in state, like she won the state champ championship in her weight class. Wow. Can you believe that? Congratulations. That's awesome. And, um, Aquila was a top finisher in her weight class as well. Awesome. So both of them performed incredibly Well. Well done. Then we also had Trey Johnson and Samson Aletan. Yep. I Remember. Remember that? Remember those? Yep. I remember them. You may or may not have read in the headlines that we also have a six A boys basketball state championship in our Wildcats. Somebody told me that happened. Yes, I remember. Yes. Is that Not Amazing? Yes. I feel like there's a pattern here. I think that there's a pattern. I think if you come on our podcast. Yep. Then you're guaranteed to win a state championship. It's Greatness. Greatness. So our guests today should feel very excited. I'm feeling pretty good too. Now when they leave here, they could be bringing home a, a state championship. Well, we are so incredibly proud of, these individuals. You know, Trey Johnson continues to go on and do great things. Mm-hmm. he's on the USA National team. Yep. He is Mr. Texas basketball player of the year. Wow. Like the accolades just keep coming in. And then of course, Samson is, you know, he only has nine more Mondays of his senior year, and then he'll be headed off to Yale. That's right. Yeah. So can you believe the year is coming to a close? Nine more? Nine more Mondays? Like I'm letting that sink in. Nine more Mondays. Nine more Mondays. Well, that's such great news about all of those amazing athletes and the fact that we got to talk to them. We got to talk to them on the podcast, on our podcast. They were some of our initial guests, They were, we started off with greatness. We're gonna continue to train this right now, right? Yes, we are. Because in today's episode, in these last nine weeks of our school year, we have really kind of some intense, learning opportunities and learning experiences for our students and we have a lot going on. A lot. It's our STAAR season as well as our AP season. Mm-hmm. where our students who have been preparing all year, our teachers have been immersing our students in learning experiences. And now it's our opportunity to assess them and see how well we have prepared for the, for these assessments. And so that's coming up. So STAAR 2.0, have you heard about It? I have heard about it. Well, we have really wanted to spend some time today to dig in and help our parents and our community understand STAAR 2.0 what it means, how is this different? Why is this something, why is it even a big deal that we're

talking about it? Like, it's just a test. So why do we even have to have a full episode of our RISD podcast to talk about STAAR 2.0. But I felt like it was really important because especially on the heels of the pandemic, and you and I have talked on this podcast, our teachers have been through a lot. Absolutely. Our families, our students, our community. And this is another change for them. Right. And so we just wanna make sure our parents understand the change can help support not only their students, but also their teachers. Put the STAAR 2.0 in perspective. It is just a test on one day. It is. So let's talk a little bit about that and, and, and what role it plays, and then, just any kind of helpful tips we can get. Does that sound good to you, Dr. That sounds great. I think we've always talked about how important it is to keep our parents as partners, and that this is just another way to keep that going. So I love the fact that we're, we're kind of going in this direction too, with STAAR. I know of all things, this is gonna be a little bit hard for me. I know. I can see it in your eyes. I love to facilitate. You're having a tough time. I'm, this is rad. I love this podcast. Um, but I'm actually gonna step aside in the rest of this episode, and I'm gonna become just one of the panelists. Um, because I, I wanna be able to, you know, kind of offer from the superintendent's seat, what we are doing as a system and what role I've been playing in advocacy at the state level around this assessment in our new accountability system. And I'm gonna let you kind of what I know, don't let me down, Dr. HR, don't let me down. We are gonna allow you to kind of lead and facilitate today's, podcast. So, wow. With that, I'm turning it over to you. Okay. Well, thank you very much Mrs. Branum. This, this is gonna be new for me, but I think we're gonna have a good time. And so yes, I do wanna start out by, having our panel, the rest of our panel introduce themselves. And if you could just tell us who you are and, what your role is in RISD, and maybe even tell us how long you've been in Richardson ISD and so we'll start with you. Okay. My name is Dr. Kristin Leeper, and I'm the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Services. And I have been in Richardson about to finish my ninth year. Wow. Excellent. Yes. Thank you. Happy to be here. Thank you. And I am Gina Ortiz. I am the Executive Director for Curriculum and Instruction, and this is my first year at Richardson ISD. Very excited to be part of the team. First year, first podcast. First podcast, Yes. And, and Dr. Leeper first podcast. Yes, sir. Yes. Okay. All right. How about our next guest? Yes. My name is Jacob Cortez, and I am Executive Director of Accountability and Continuous Improvement. And for me, this is year 20 in RISD. And I was fortunate enough to start even as a student teacher, years ago, and kind of, kind of work through the system and just proud to continue to be on the journey with everybody. That's fantastic. First podcast. First podcast. Wow. Wow. No Pressure. Now I really don't wanna mess up Sampson. Yeah. We want them to come back. Okay. Well, let's just start real quick. I know, uh, Ms. Branum, you kind of started with the, uh, initial conversation about STAAR and really trying to bring in the rest of the community on what it is. And I think this is a good opportunity to, to lead into that. So for those who aren't familiar with the requirements for Texas Public Schools and students relating to testing, let's start with a very general explanation about what STAAR is. You know, how long has it been around, and what is it actually supposed to tell us? So I'll start with you, Mr. Beck, and then we'll go around. I'll provide a little bit of, overall philosophical context. Okay. And then let you know, everyone else around the table kind of provide some of the details. But I think what's important is that I think almost any superintendent and I think any public education system, we wanna be held accountable for student performance. Ultimately, we are here to ensure growth of our students

academically, socially, and emotionally, with academics being at the cornerstone of that. And so having, you know, an opportunity to demonstrate that we are growing our students in that way is vitally important. We should be held accountable for that. Our taxpayers do invest a whole lot of those dollars into ensuring a strong public education system here in Richardson ISD. And we want to have the data that we need to demonstrate we are being good stewards of those funds, through student outcomes. And so I'm gonna allow Mr. Cortez to talk a little bit about this particular iteration. I know as a, as a student, I took the state accountability test as a student, as a teacher, I was under two different mm-hmm. I administered two different forms of the state accountability test mm-hmm. And so now we're just on the next iteration. So, Mr. Cortez, maybe you can provide a little bit of historical context of, you know, how long STAAR has been around. Absolutely. STAAR has been around, since 2012, when we first started taking that across all of our grade levels, third grade through high school EOC. And since that time, it has gone through multiple iterations, multiple requirements, throughout time they, they shortened the number of times some tests have been offered. Uh, they've changed some of the topics, the number of questions, that are given. And so this, what we're talking about now for STAAR 2.0 is just one more iteration. But some of the changes here, I think are, not only to help the students, but also to help, our, our teachers and the things that they do, have the test aligned to their instruction. And so here in 2019, with House Bill, 3906, that's really the legislation that led to kind of the redesign, for STAAR. And there are a few things that are really affecting our kids, such as, a 75% cap on the number of multiple choice questions, that are answered, which is typically the way things have been tested, either through multiple choice or essays. And really it's been a move towards online testing. And with that, online testing allows us to ask questions in a number of different ways that we couldn't do on paper and pencil. So we're going to also talk about some of the item types that are being added to the test, that are more technology based. And really the idea for this is to ensure that the students are able to engage with the assessment in the way that they learn in class. So, yeah. So I think there, there are two components of this mm-hmm. The first is ultimately STAAR assessment. And accountability is really an the opportunity for a school system to demonstrate to their community have we provided the, environment and the resources and the support for every student to have that, at least that year's worth of growth. Mm-hmm. You know, every child, every day, every child, every day. I've heard you say it many times. Yeah. So MAP is an opportunity for us to do that throughout the school year and that interim basis. So as a parent, I have an opportunity to see my student growing along the way mm-hmm. And then STAAR is really kind of that final summative opportunity. It kind of is an opportunity to, you know, almost wrap the, you know, year up in a little boat. Like, okay, ultimately right. Where is, is your student performing? And for us, we look at it as another formative of how can we take how your student performed at this end of the year, summative to decide how do we better support them and help grow them the next following year. Got it. It should not be used as a punishment. It should not be used as it, it's because it's one given test on one day. Right? Right. Um, and Dr. Goodson, you have three kids of your own. On any given day, a student can have a bad day, they could have woken up, they could be sick. It is not the complete picture of the child. Yes. It's just one snapshot. Right. It's one snapshot. Okay. And so for us, we get three snapshots of MAP. Okay. Then we have STAAR. So this is four opportunities of data mm-hmm. to help us understand where a child is, what their strengths are,

what are some of the, the skills and the content that they need more support on. And develop an individual plan mm-hmm. to respond to that for the following year. Well, and as a parent, I can imagine, you know, with learning being so complex and with all children being different, I, I don't know if I really want just one snapshot that paints a picture of how my child is learning. I want multiple pieces of information from the teacher, from the campus, from any test data to give me a well-rounded picture, because that helps me know how I can support my child better. Yes. Absolutely. Okay, well thank you for that. So, I guess another question, let me, let me go back to one thing that Mr. Cortez mentioned. Just for the sake of clarification. You, you mentioned EOC. Can you explain what an EOC is? Yes. Just for some of the parents you may not have. Sure. EOC stands for end of course exam. And those are exams that are given at the high school level are actually starting with Algebra One. And they also include other subjects, English One, English Two, US History and Biology. And students have to pass, those assessments as a graduation requirement. And those are, those are items that are tested on STAAR. Okay. Yep. Perfect. Okay. So then let me ask another question. Is STAAR something that every student in Texas is required to take public and private school? You know, is, is that a, is that an expectation for all students in Texas? So, I, I'll go ahead and chime in on this one. Thank you. The only students that are required to take the assessment are public school students. Okay. So students in private schools do not necessarily take the STAAR assessment. Some students that are homeschooled may choose and opt to take the STAAR assessment because parents are wanting to have that assessment on, you know, see how they're doing. Okay. But really, public schools are only the only ones that are expected by the state. We have no option, we have to admit. So when public school districts take STAAR, those scores or those, that data is, is linked to an accountability rating. Correct. So what is that? Like, what, what is, what does that look like right now? I will tell you that that is a very complex process as well. Cause I think it's important to note, you know, Mr. Cortez talked about that we've had iterations of STAAR before mm-hmm. And again, I've, you and I, both, you longer than me, 'cause you're more veteran than me, but have been through a nice way of calling me old, but go ahead. That was a little bit. Thank you. But we've been through many iterations of a state assessment system. Right. One of the things that is different about this implementation is usually the state gives us a time period, almost like a hold harmless, where we have an opportunity to learn the new assessment, learn, you know, making sure that our teachers feel adequately prepared to administer it. That our students have had enough practice where we just have confidence that we're ready for the changes that they're proposing. Mm-hmm. well, this year we're, we're not getting a hold harmless not only in STAAR, but in STAAR 2.0, but also they're making changes to the accountability system. So the test and the accountability system are changing. They are both changing, but there's no grace period. There's no, with this change. No. And so I think in this episode, we're not gonna dive deep into the accountability system because I could probably give you a month's worth of podcasts on just the accountability system mm-hmm. But it's important to note that the tie, you know, the STAAR assessment, I don't know Mr. Cortez, what would you- I would say it, it's a primary driver of 70% of our accountability. It, it is the main driver, for all of our elementaries, and our junior highs, and then the vast majority of our high school. And therefore, as a result, 70 to 80% of a district's rating. And in the end, there are multiple domains that make up, our, our accountability score mm-hmm. But in the end, mm-hmm, how a parent might refer

to the accountability is our grade. So every Elementary, every grade, junior high, high school and district are assigned a letter grade based on this complex formula that the state comes up with to determine how well we are performing as a district. And STAAR 2.0 is, as Mr. Cortez said, kind of the main component of that accountability grade. Okay. Thank you for that. I, I think it's, like you mentioned, it is a very complex system and certainly could be its own podcast, but I think the one thing that I wanna be sure that our community understands is that there's significant changes to the test and the accountability system happening at the same time all at once and on the heel of the pandemic. Exactly. And in the past, we were given a little bit of grace so that the students and the systems were able to adjust. Yes, sir. Because when the standards are changing and the test is changing, that's a huge impact on kids in the classroom. Yes, sir. And teachers who are teaching. Absolutely. Okay. Well, so we know, what STAAR has been over the last decade or so. So now let's talk about what the STAAR redesign is, why it's being done, and what specifically is changing about the test. Sure. I'll, I'll do a high level and then turn it over to the team. I think a high level, I think the, the commissioner and the state's goal was a good goal. Okay. Um, I think it was a, they heard a lot of feedback and received a lot of feedback from teachers and from parents who said, if we're going to take a state assessment, is it possible to have an assessment that more aligns with the way daily instruction looks like in the classroom? We don't ask students every day to answer multiple choice question in their learning. We have them demonstrate their learning in lots of different ways. Mm-hmm. in a course of a day, um, in the course of a class period, in the course of a year. And so could we have more engaging formats, as well as, you know, just more assessment items that match instruction. So I do think that the intent that the state had in this redesign was a, what came from a really good place in terms of the specific changes that I'm gonna turn it over to the team for them to address some of those specifics. Well, I'll speak on it too as, as far as it relates to, curriculum and instruction as well. And some of the specific question types, you know, are quite a bit different. And I know Ms. Ortiz will probably go into the deep, deep specifics of that, but I know one of the ways that we've been addressing it with curriculum too, is there's certain questions that are like drag and drop where kids, I know Mrs. Branum, you've used this example several times and I think about it with my own two boys that are here in Richardson as well. But they have to know the content. And so in curriculum, we are addressing the content and ensuring that they know that content, but then also teaching them how to take the test. And so that's very different. In the past, like you said, it has been on multiple choice mm-hmm, but now they have many questions that are drag and drops. So they might on their iPad or on their computer as we know, everyone will be testing online right now where they have to drag the answer at the appropriate question space. Mm-hmm. And so that can be confusing for kids, right? There's drag and drops, there's interactive question types where they're interacting with what they've read. And then answering those questions below. And there's also ones that we're really focusing on that are different in the past, that are an extended, response and a short response. And so they could write a longer response, which is really like an essay type that kids will have to answer from what they have read, which is different in the past, they've had a prompt that they've had to respond to. So the prompt might say tell a time in your life when you've had a challenge or something that you've learned a great deal about and changed your perspective on thinking. And then you might write an essay on that. Now they're reading a passage that can be a long passage, a shorter passage, and

they're writing their response to that passage. And the response to that passage could be a long response or a short response. And so we are preparing kids for those different types of responses. Right. As well, which they've never had to do before either. But going back to what you had mentioned as teachers and some parents saying that it mirrors the way it is instructed in the classroom, typically teachers now, obviously, and in the past though, but are still focusing on reading what they're writing on and writing what they're reading on. And so now they are reading that passage and then writing on it and responding to that. And they have to justify their answer. They have to give specific text evidence for their answer. And so those are just different question types than we have seen in the past. So not just answering the question, not just choosing from a multiple choice type question, the students have to explain why. Yeah. And so think about the layers of change order that I heard in there. So the first thing we know with STAAR 2.0 is that everyone across the state is required to move to a technology platform. So I wanna start there 'cause I think it's really important. I know a lot of times our community members will ask questions around why are we investing so much money in technology mm-hmm. And one of the things we know is that we, we predicted, you know, and we knew that the, the house bill when it passed that by the 2022-2023 school year, all districts would have to be online. Our district, our board had had, you know, already committed to providing one-to-one technology. And so we were prepared and we actually jumped on board two years ago because we wanted to get the learning curve out of the way now. But all of our peer districts around us will now be doing it. And so Dr. Byno, to your point, sorry, Dr. Leeper who's, she's now married, so Dr., congratulations, congratulations by the way. Congratulations. Thank you. We're getting used to the name too. We are, I have to get used to it for nine years. I've known you Dr. Byno, but that daily practice of making sure, you know, students have to have mastery of the content and skills, but we also wanna make sure that they're fluent in the technology. Absolutely. Because we don't want the, the, the right challenge of man, you know, manipulating the technology to be a barrier to showing what they learn. Definitely. So that's been a change, just making sure our teachers are giving students practice on that kind of, you know, that fluency of how to use their iPad or their Chromebook mm-hmm. to be able to successfully answer it. So that's one. Yeah. And I'll add to that too real quick. So that the, our audience knows is that before those writing prompts were only given on fourth grade and seventh grade separate writing tests as well as our English One, English Two EOC, where they did an essay, part of the legislation in 2019 called for the embedded writing pieces in all reading, starting in third grade. So the state did away with those writing separate writing tests and instead put these short, answer responses into all of the reading tests starting in third grade, going through English Two. And so now every student third grade through eighth grade is having to do writing in their reading test that they haven't had to do before. So that also means typing skills, Keyboarding and those types of things, It's keyboarding now, Mr. Cortez keyboarding. Yes. keyboarding, Hey, I, when I grew up, it was a typewriter now it's keyboarding keyboard. Well, and I think it's great to see in our classrooms when we go and, and visit our campuses, that the district has student done their due diligence and making sure that students have keyboards with their devices and mouse is even, and mouse, there's track pads and yes, they, that's all to help them and make it easier so that they can be successful when they take that assessment. So you have that. So that's one change that by itself would be huge. But then you have the addition. How many different item types are there now, Mr. Cortez? There

are roughly 20 new item types, that could potentially be given on any particular subject or grade level. And depending on, so depending on how old you are and what you're taking, you could see any array of new wow. New item types. As before we had only three, we had our multiple choice where a student would choose an A, B, C, D, E or in FG HJ type of answer. We had short responses or, or longer response essay type questions. And then we had some, what were called griddables, where we would, where we would bubble in answers, where the student would solve the problem in math and get, you know, come up with an answer of like 3.2. And then on a bubble chart, they would actually bubble in the right place value and bubble a three bubble a decimal, bubble a two to show their knowledge of the answer. Right. So we are moving from that to expanding to, to a bunch of different types. So, Dr. Leeper mentioned like drag drop type questions. We have ones where they're hotspot type questions. So they'll see a picture, they'll see a graph, and they have to, they have to physically touch the right spot or click with their mouse the right spot, to show their answer. We have students that now instead of just bubbling the 3.2 to show their place value, they may actually have to type an equation out using the built-in equation editor, which is new in this type of test. We have others where there are questions that build on each other. So now they're not just necessarily separate questions, but you may be given a question about a topic. And then the next question is tied to what you just answered. Right. So to dig in deeper to show, you know, your, your depth of knowledge on those, on those type topics. Now, one thing that we're excited about in those item types, why, you know, it can feel kind of daunting because it's, it's new. But one of the exciting things is before it was either you got it right or you got it wrong. Correct. And so with a lot of these item types, we have the opportunity to have some partial credit, so like help the audience wrap their minds around like, what is that partial, I'm still trying to get, like, I get one point for this or two points for that. What does that mean? Sure. So, so on those, you, on some of the questions, they will be, not all of the new questions, but some, you could potentially earn two points, for that question or that line of response for questions. So if, to get it completely right, in all parts of the question, you would get two full points. Otherwise, if you got a majority of the pieces correct, then that would be one point. Or if you didn't get anything, that would be zero points. So then the scores are gonna be based not only on did they get the question right, but also, you know, more importantly, are they demonstrating their knowledge of the topic through the question. And for that, some may be more in depth, so the partial credit does help. So again lots of changes, lots of change, lots of changes. But then I also, what I also hear though is it's not be because there are so many different types of questions. Ultimately what we're hearing is that there's an assessment that is geared towards assessing the learning of the students. Yeah. Not assessing how good they are at taking a test. I think back in the day, it could be argued that, okay, you just practiced enough and you knew how to take Toss or TAX Right. Or back in, you know, I mean, I'm going way back. I know. Um, but you can't really do that. Right. With an assessment like this. And I think that the questions that we do have, or maybe concerns. Sure. Might be, again, I, I believe in the, the genuineness right. Of why we made this redesign. I do think we have some baseline concerns around, we're still talking about eight year olds. You know, we're talking about good third graders. That's a good point. Who are taking an assessment. First of all, they're taking an assessment for the first time, the first time. Again, they're, you know, still in the infancy of their learning, their keyboarding skills. You know, again, thinking about technology through the lens

of a learning tool versus just an entertainment tool that maybe they great point use when they're at home. Great point. Um, how do I use all the functions? Because there are some cool functions that come with taking the test online and maybe we can hit on those later. But ultimately I'm still an eight year old and, and you know, Dr. Leeper mentioned I had my own son take one of the practice tests just 'cause I wanted to watch a student go from the beginning to the end. And it was interesting to watch. Sometimes it was just kind of the endurance for a student when the technology didn't do exactly what, like he knew the answer. Right. Right. But he couldn't get the technology to do what he wanted it to do. And so he finally was like, I don't care. I give up. And he just went to the next item. Start. Okay. So I think there is just some, I think questions, and again, we are all anxious to see it 'cause we've never seen it. Remember we're just learning, like the state started giving us information about this in the spring. We didn't start getting any final really guidance until September, October. We didn't even get the scoring rubrics for the free response essays, and responses until November late October, November. Wow. So we're like, we're learning this almost as it's being developed. And so we're just worried about, you know, an eight year old again, just on, it's a one given day. Right. And the what does it mean for them to take this level of assessment on that one day? We just, it's just a, a concern. So I think that's a really good point to, to really emphasize because in back in the day when there was a little bit more lead time, and it kind of leads into my next question, when we knew enough about the changes that grace period allowed us to not only prepare students, but also prepare teachers for what the instruction needed to look like and train them so that when they delivered that instruction, it provided the students with the learning they needed to, to, perform well on the, on the assessment. So with this, with so many changes happening now, what kinds of things has the district been doing to prepare teachers and students for the redesign test? To the extent that the information has been available for us to make systemic preparations, because we're talking about massive systemic changes with very little runway. Yeah. And information's still coming out and it's still coming out. Even like right before spring break, we were still getting clarifying information. So, so what, what have we done to help prepare? So even, even in the spring of 2022, the district began some sessions to start reviewing some of the details that we received from TEA. So TEA kind of started giving us some breadcrumbs. Mm-hmm. like these are some of the item types we're considering. They're not set in stone, but this is kind of the preliminary. Um, so we knew like multi-select was one of the options, right. Where they could select more than one answer. Drag and drop was one of the ones that had been mentioned early on. But as time went on and as we got closer to August, they gave us another list of, oh wait, we're adding these additional item types. And so just constantly making sure that we're keeping our staff and from teachers to principals, um, instructional coaches, everybody informed on the information that we're getting from TEA and helping to provide some examples mm-hmm. so that they know what it looks like. Right. Um, as much as we're able to, right. Because like as, as was mentioned, TEA hasn't really given us a lot of information. But we've gotten some practice items and so we're kind of pulling from that and making sure that everybody has that information as quickly as we get it. With the, the writing rubrics, that was definitely, you know, just something that we were anxiously waiting for. They kind of kept moving that, that date on when we were gonna receive those details mm-hmm. And so we got it right before that Christmas break and kind of quickly put together some trainings and some resources for teachers so that they could know,



um, exactly how students were going to be graded on that assessment. Wow. Yes. One of the things I would also add too is just ongoing, kinda like Ms. Ortiz was saying is professional development throughout the year, right. As soon as we've kind of heard of a change, heard of something new that week, that next month where whether it's a district-wide day, whether it's a after school, before school, a make and take a, we're constantly making sure that we're in, in front of those teachers supporting them to make sure that they also have the resources that they need to support. Right. The kids too. So just within the instructional resources that are provided to teachers, maybe the bell ringer or the exit ticket or their assessments or quizzes are mirroring what that test is gonna look like, when they take it on the STAAR on the EOC. We also went did our interim assessments this year for the first time, which are different than the simulations that we've taken in the past, which is then the actual platform and mirrors what that test is gonna look like. So like I know my son, Wesley, he's in seventh grade at North, he just took his math interim, last week. And so we were really intentional in ensuring that all of our kids were gonna take those interim assessments to give us that data. One so that we know how to respond to. Right. The assessment so we can, you know, help Wesley and every other 37,000, you know, kids get ready for the test, but also so that he can see and feel and interact with that. Um, test. I know Mr. Cortez always says at bat, we give them lots of at bats and opportunities mm-hmm. to see the test so that the day of the test, you know, it's not something like Mrs. Branum mentioned that it's not content that they know, but they miss the question because of, something that is with the technology that maybe concerns them or frustrates them or, and really, ensuring that they have the supports for that and, and asking them to be patient too. As a kid, I know my 13 year old is not necessarily the most patient kid, They're not known for being that. Yeah. But, but he's gonna, we're trying to get them to, I was in a teacher's classroom the other day and they, when they were scrolling down, the reading part of the, of the interim, it can take you a while to scroll or it can go too fast. And so really just giving them in their mindset before they enter into the test. Mm-hmm. Okay. You're gonna have to be patient with the test. Don't be resistant, be resilient with the test while you're taking it, so that you're not missing a question even though you know the answer. What I think is really important, and what I want our our parents to understand, especially our parents to understand, is that we are not trying to teach to the test. Right. Exactly. We are teaching the curriculum, we are ensuring that we have high quality tier one instruction and for our parents, what does that mean? It's every day, every child. Are we taking the, the, the Texas essential knowledge and skills standard and are we providing a learning experience to ensure our, our students can develop mastery of that specific content or skill. The assessment is just one way for us to know whether or not we're doing that. Right. So the, what you're hearing in terms of professional development and supports, it's really, again, trying to prepare our students for the at bat. Mm-hmm. And, and, and for the game, it is not, we are, we are, we are so focused on the test itself. Correct. It's really, we're focused on good quality instruction Absolutely. And ensuring our students are growing. But, but equipping them to be successful to navigate the test, so that they can demonstrate their learning at high levels. It's about learning, it's about learning and it's about the students being able to show what they've learned through an assessment that has changed significantly. Yes. That's it. Um, yeah, I think that's, that's critical. So I guess a lot of changes, a lot of, lot of prep, a lot of support, a lot of, a lot of at bats. How do we, how do we expect our kids to do on this redesign test? I mean, do we

know anything about how scores are gonna be impacted in general when the test has changed in the past? Like is what, what what all historically speak and then I'll, you know, I, I'll let the team provide any additional commentary. You know, I've never been through, just in my personal experience, never been through a significant change in the assessment system where we've not had a temporary dip that next year that we call it, often call it the implementation dip. Mm-hmm. Again, these are all new assessment items, you know, the way that we're having our kids, you know, again, keyboard and type their free response essays that they've never had before in every grade level in, in multiple subjects. So we do anticipate that, that there will be a dip. Okay. In, in the scores. What TEA has told us is that, and I think this is important, they, the, the level of rigor or the, is this test harder? They would say, no, the test is not harder. And I don't necessarily disagree until I see it. Of course we can only, which which we haven't done. Yes. I don't necessarily think it's going to be harder, but I do think because of there are so many changes and it's going to look so different. I I think it will take us all time to understand are the, what strategies are the best strategies to prepare our students for their at bat. Mr. Cortez, I dunno if you'd add anything else. No, you made, you made, the great point that TEA's perspective is the level of difficulty is not gonna be any different because of the way that they make up the test. What we are anticipating though is just simply through the new item types and just, the ability for students to demonstrate their knowledge in those new item types. It's gonna be very interesting for my department whenever we're able to get the data, in August when final data is released for this test, that we start doing analysis, to see, yes, Dr. Goodson, you heard that right? I'm sorry, I mouthed the words, but it doesn't do any good if I'm not speaking on the microphone. But you said, you said I'm, I'm, I'm learning that you don't, we don't get the data until August of next School year. I feel like you should share a little bit about the zone of uncertainty because I feel like that's something that parents may see when they get some information on the Portal. Well, just because historically speaking, you, you typically would get a snapshot of whatever at the end of the school year, school year and you know what your ratings are and yay. We're it got mailed home in your report part. Absolutely. That's right. So, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to because I, I looked at Mrs. Branum and mouthed the word August, August, August. Well, we hope maybe August. Yes. So at this point, uh, for TEA's release schedule, we are going to get some, some early intervention data, quote unquote, that is going to give us a likelihood that the student is going to pass. The reason for the delay in the scores and everything is simply because with the, with the new test and the new item types, TEA also has to figure out what the changes are in the data. So they need more time, so they need more time to make that happen. Mm-hmm. because the current, this test is not gonna be comparable necessarily to the test it was before. And that's important to know because they're, they're looking at this as an apples and oranges test. So they have have to figure out, like what it means to pass the test mm-hmm. What it means to master the content again. And so for that, they're gonna give us some likelihood, type of data where we will be able to say to a student, that, okay, well given what you're, your, the number of points you earned on the test, you're likely to have passed this, but we're not sure certain yet, or you're likely to have not passed the test, but we're unsure or there's this, zone of uncertainty. The, this thing called the zone of uncertainty between the likelihood of passing and not passing were the stage. It's A real thing. Dr. Goodson, it really is zone at first, I was thinking y'all just making this up, but no, this is a no, it's on TEA. This is an official TEA reference. We definitely have's

uncertainty. We will definitely have charts to share, uh, that will show the words from TEA's perspective, zone of uncertainty, where really they're saying, if your score is within this range, at this point, we don't know if that's gonna be passing or not passing. So they're even unsure. So we'll get that information in in June, later in, in June, July, we will get a preliminary result. So once they've kind of determined, you know, maybe passing and not, then they're gonna share with us, with districts, again, more data about, preliminary. Like, okay, this is what we think now and that's our chance. Like we have every year to review the data and then, and then report back if we think any of the scores are off or if we want to have TEA look at something in relation to our district. And then finally in August, that is when the final data that's gonna drive our accountability ratings and everything will be delivered. We hope we can, we hope I'm getting there. So, uh, so in August is when TEA is scheduled to give us that final data. I can't help but be skeptical, sorry, Dr. Hr. And, and that is the data that they're gonna make available to families, in the state portal. You know, the official scores, they may release some preliminary data, but definitely, it will just be that preliminary. It, it will not be, the final, you know, how did my student actually do until, until that final data. And so from there, we're hoping that we have that data in August, soon enough in August that then we can use the information to drive instructional decisions for the next year, not only for students, but for curriculum. However, we have heard from, from a few people within, within TEA and, and that are attached to the STAAR development and whatnot, that it's possible the data may be delayed as late as September. So it, it's possible those, those dates may be pushed back just depending on how the analysis goes to kind of reset what it means to pass the test. So clearly with the changes there's gonna need, they're gonna need more time to, to process the data. Not getting solid data back until September makes it a challenge for really any school district to start the school year and ensure that the curriculum has been adjusted to stay as rigorous as it needs to be. Yep. Sir. And aligned with an assessment that has so much writing on it from the standpoint of student. Right. And really even being able to do like the rich professional learning community Correct. Data analysis, data reflection that our teachers would normally wanna do with that information that that would typically be done in the summer. Right. In July and August and that back to school professional development time. Absolutely. And so, okay. Yes. Traditionally we get our data end of May. Right. First week of June gives us plenty of time to really dig in mm-hmm. and kind of make those changes to get ready for the new school year because it's, it's not just an indication of student growth, it's, it is another piece of the puzzle that indicates to our district, how did we do with aligning our curriculum to what is taught and tested. Right. You know, for example, you know, we've made adjustments, really making sure that we have more non-fiction right. Material that our, our teachers are reading and that they're bringing in what a lot more science and social studies content. You know, there was a time when, not any times recently, but there was a time when we taught, you know, social studies like twice a week for 30 minutes. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Because really the, the, the weight and the pressure was on teaching math and reading. Right. But we recognize that, especially with STAAR 2.0, that a lot of the passages in the, he, the open res, uh, responses that they're gonna be giving is going to be on science and social studies topics. So providing more non-fiction resources in the classroom has been a vital important part of that. And so there are times when we need to, you know, adjust our materials, the supports, the, you know, the order of, even the, the order in which we teach something may have to be

adjusted. Mm-hmm. Right. But we're not gonna have that data really in advance enough to make really significant changes prior to us launching 2023-2024. Well, Yes. So like, that's sinking for. Yeah. Well, okay. Let me, let me ask you this then. So separate from the redesign test and the anticipated adjustment period where scores may temporarily dip, like you referenced, is, is the state also changing how the scores are used to determine school and district ratings? For this first year, no. They will be using the ratings that we get in September, October or August, I'm sorry, that will continue to drive the scores. But as far as the accountability changes are concerned, because of the change. Mm-hmm. they're not adjusting the, the weights or or how those scores are applied in the accountability system. Now, next year, the 2024, I'm sorry, uh, 2023-2024 school year, they are going to come back. And now that we've had a year of data, potentially update the accountability system with some new targets that we have to hit to earn certain points. But It's important to note that there are changes to the account. There's significant changes to the accountability system. So that's where this is very complex because right. There are, for example, in domain one where we just look up around student achievement and how do kids do on STAAR 2.0 or not. Okay. Those scores are not substantially changing. But if you go, for example, to college career military readiness domain four, Okay. There's a significant change to that domain of our accountability system. So not only are we having a change in the test. Mm-hmm. But then there are aspects of accountability that they are changing that are hitting us and hitting the system all at once. That would impact the district rating, That would impact the District rating, school district rating. And I also wanna add that they're also changing the way that they're measuring growth. Yes, that's correct. So the past few years, parents have been able to see my student showed limited growth. They showed exceptional growth. Right. You know, what level of growth did they have on the assessment? The way they're measuring that is completely being revamped. So that is completely new for this new accountability system as well as our closing the performance gap. That's gonna be looked at in a very different way. Hmm. What about the impact on individual students and passage requirements in certain grades or to graduate? I, I know that, that, that looked a certain way back in the day with student success initiative and other test situations in specific grade levels. Are those being adjusted or will there be a grace period for students in relation to that? So at this point, no. There aren't really any changes. You're gonna say from last year. I'm just gonna say for now we don't know if they'll change. Okay. We we're also in the legislative year, so there could be some changes that are introduced from that. Student success initiative, the way we had it a few years ago where fifth graders were retesting right. In the summer, that hasn't been in place, um, the last couple of years, and that will not be in place. Okay. We did have some other tutoring aspects that we had to add. And we don't know what that'll look like until after the legislative session and is done, because there's a couple of bills on the floor that are looking at what those requirements were could change things. And starting the last legislative session, they did remove the student success initiative where a student, in certain grade levels, if they didn't pass the test, they wouldn't be able to progress to the next grade. Mm-hmm. So they did do away with that. They're not bringing that back, thankfully, because that does limit how students grow, and it really does impact their educational career. But the tutoring aspect is something we're, we're waiting to see how that legislative change, from last session house bill 45 45, which requires students who didn't pass the test to receive a certain number of hours of dedicated tutoring in that subject. Okay. We're

waiting to see how that gets updated. There is a component there too, where we have to meet with families that didn't, for students that didn't pass the test. And being that we're gonna get that information so late, we are still figuring out, and I'm starting to talk with districts surrounding us about what are we going to do about that legislative requirement that's there still in statute or is that something that will update through this legislative session? Because obviously if we don't get the data until right before school starts, it's hard to have meetings about student deficits. Good point. With families, right. Before going into the next grade. What I have to say that I appreciate not only as a colleague of yours, all of you, but also as a current Richardson ISD parent is, you've, you've highlighted the reality of what's going on right now. It's, it's about being transparent and sharing with our community, here's what we're working with, here's what our students are going to experience. And while there are a lot of additional challenges, we're up to the challenge. Mm-hmm. we are still going to make it a priority to connect with our teachers, to prepare them to continue delivering that quality tier one instruction like you discussed. And then any interventions that need to be in place to support our students so that when we get to the end of the year, regardless of the assessment, we are not changing our focus, which is every child every day. Yes. One at a minimum of one year's growth, that learning is still the priority, but we have to also be upfront about the challenges that these changes are going to present. Yes. But I appreciate the fact that we are sharing with our community today. We are up to the challenge. Our teachers are phenomenal. And, and this is a commitment on everybody's part. And I I love it. You just said that, and I think it's really important. And, and I hope that our parents hear this because it breaks my heart when I get an email from a parent that expresses the stress and the anxiety that a student may feel about walking into that classroom and taking this test. Right. And that high stakes nature of it. Now again, I, I want our community to hear, I, I love what you just said, like, we take this seriously. Mm-hmm. It is, it is one data point that we can use to help demonstrate are we growing our students every, you know, every child, every day. We take it seriously. We want our students to take it seriously because they, they've worked hard all year to be able to show what they learn and, and how they have grown. At the same time, we want that to be a healthy experience. Absolutely. I, I, you know, we've, I think we've, we've worked really hard, and I hope our teachers feel that, you know, this is not a, this is not a, a high anxiety, high pressure, you know, experience. This is, we're we're going to do what we can to prepare, we're gonna do our best on that given day, and then we're gonna use those results for continuous improvement. That's, that's what this is about. And I don't want our students getting sick over it. I know every year I have a lot of questions from parents about opting out of the assessment and there's not an opt out. We are, we are expected to test every student, and if a student doesn't come on that day, they are scored as not meeting standard. Like they, that, that, that is a score that reflects both on the student performance as well as it focuses on the district accountability. Okay. And for end of course, exams, if they don't take that assess it is a graduation requirement to successfully Wow. Pass that end. Of course. So there, you know, again, it's an important assessment. We're gonna do all we can to equip our students to have confidence, right. That they can do it, but it is not anything that should, or we would want for our students to affect them emotionally or mentally on, you know, on that test day. That's a great point. Mm-hmm. That's a great point. So I guess I would, just kind of open up to the group. What else should parents, taxpayers know about the STAAR redesign and changes to the state rating system? What else do

you wanna be sure that they know? One thing I wanna mention real quick here, and then maybe, the team can give some resources to parents just again, to continue to learn more. I know in my recent Keeping Tabs, we provided some deep information around how parents can go learn more, but I do wanna highlight that one of the things that I've shared a lot of my concern. Mm-hmm. Or challenges of the test. But one of the things I do appreciate about the new redesign, is in the past, students who have qualified for accommodations, whether through a 504 plan or maybe they have an individualized education plan through special education, there were often some accommodations and some tools that only they would have access to, but really are good tools for everyone. Whether it's a highlighting tool or, you know, that, that kind of thing. A dictionary, that kind of thing. And so, in this new, format, a, you know, kids have access to a lot of these tools that are gonna help them navigate that technology platform. Mm-hmm. Students will be able to, if they have certain accommodations that are appropriate for their learning, those will be applied. But there are general tools as well. In some cases, now they will also be able to use scratch paper. Yes. Pencil and paper, while they're next to their device that's still allowable. So it's just the test that's 100% online. So if they're, you know, used to working something out, you know, they'll, you know, next to what they're doing, they'll still be able to do that. But it does allow for, you know, you to change the size of the, of the font. Hmm. It does allow you to highlight certain things. The system allows you, the students to take notes, to flag questions that maybe they want to come back to, in the system. You know, so there's, there's a number of things there that can change the colors on the page. It does provide a number of things that we just couldn't do. Sure. With paper. Oh, real quick, yes. Before you close it up, cause you were, you were about to do a phenomenal job of closing us up, even though I like to be the closer, but I was not gonna close it. I was gonna take it right back to you. But it, as a parent, again, I I hope that we've provided some kind of insight into the assessment, but Mr. Cortez, how as a parent can I go to, to learn more about the assessment and maybe even take it myself so I can understand what these new assessment items look like? Absolutely. Are you smarter than a fifth grader I was able to do that with, with our school board. So you can go and find not only a, a copy of the, Keeping Tabs about the redesign, but also directed to resources available on TEA's website. So if you go to [risd.org/staar](http://risd.org/staar), and that's spelled STAAR, that website will give you, the resources that we have from TEA currently up to, up to this time. And that includes, an FAQ, from TEA, it, it includes the, the whole redesign website, a link to that. And then also there's, links on there for how to help your child prepare for STAAR as well as family resources. And through those links, you're able to, then you can go on your own in your web browser from the redesign sources that are available and the testing resources to actually take the practice test. You don't have to be, you know, tied to a school district. You can take it on your laptop, on your home computer, on your, iPad, uh, you know, I would recommend those, I don't know how well it would work on your phone, but to get the experience that the students have, you need, you need something that is browser-based, in a format large enough, to interact with it. And you'll see all the options that are available there. So once again, that website, [risd.org/staar](http://risd.org/staar). Thank you. Are you blown away by these individuals Who. I really am. Like I'm, I'm so impressed with the level of knowledge and expertise regarding something that is truly, truly complex. It is. Yes. And again, I, it, it makes me, me feel really encouraged as a parent of two current RISD students, that we have people who are supporting and leading the departments, who are supporting and leading the teachers to

really make a difference with this. Thank you all so much for being on today's episode. Thank you for leading our district. Thank you for loving our kids and loving our staff. I am blown away by all of you, Dr. Hr, you get to come back for another podcast. You did a phenomenal job. Thank you. Thank you very much. You were awesome. This is a tough one, but I, I really appreciate it. You guys are great. And with that, we are gonna close out this edition of the RISD podcast. And do not forget, I am always, always here to serve and support you.