

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION
Adult Education and Literacy Letter

ID/No:	AEL 07-18
Date:	October 9, 2018
Keyword:	AEL
Effective:	Immediately

To: Adult Education and Literacy Grant Recipients
Adult Education and Literacy Special Project Grantees
Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Courtney Arbour, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Suitable Tests for Use in AEL**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this AEL Letter is to notify Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) grantees¹ that the tests used to determine AEL eligibility are being revised and that the AEL Assessment Guide (Assessment Guide) is being revised accordingly. This letter may be revised as publishers develop new tests that are subsequently approved under the National Reporting System (NRS) for AEL grantees to use for determining participant eligibility and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) performance.

RESCISSIONS:

None

BACKGROUND:

Section 116 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess how effectively the six core WIOA programs prepare program participants to succeed in educational programs and the workforce.

WIOA and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §805.4 require that AEL grantees have a comprehensive performance accountability system.

The US Department of Education (ED) *NRS Technical Assistance (TA) Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (NRS Guidelines) provides guidance on AEL performance accountability, including guidance on the tests allowed for measuring the educational functioning levels (EFLs) of participants, in accordance with WIOA §462.13. The NRS Guidelines standardize the

¹ For the purposes of this AEL Letter, AEL grantees are entities that receive AEL funds through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

process of determining participant placement, progress toward outcomes, and collection and reporting of data. TWC uses the NRS Guidelines and related federal and state guidance to update the Assessment Guide, which authorizes tests approved for use in Texas. The Assessment Guide must be approved by ED each year.

In January 2015, ED announced draft modifications to the learning objectives associated with the EFL descriptors published in the NRS Guidelines. The announcement was made in *Federal Register* notice 80 FR 1630, ED-2015-ICCD-0004-0001. The final versions of the revised descriptors were published in the 2016 NRS Guidelines but will not be implemented until publishers develop tests that align with the revised descriptors and the tests are suitable for publication in the NRS Guidelines.

In September 2018, ED announced updates to tests, test forms, and delivery formats for use in AEL through *Federal Register* notice 83 FR 47910. Updates include the following:

- Tests that are revoked and will not be renewed for use after June 30, 2019
- Current tests approved for use through February 2, 2021
- The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE®) 11&12 approved for use through September 7, 2023

PROCEDURES:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that AEL entities must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this AEL Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that AEL entities have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this AEL Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”

Revoked Tests That Are Discontinued for Use after June 30, 2019

NLF: AEL grantees must not use the following tests after June 30, 2019. ED originally announced in December 2016, in *Federal Register* notice 81 FR 89920, that these tests are revoked in the NRS Guidelines and have a sunset period for use through February 2019. The sunset period has since been extended to June 30, 2019:

- The TABE® 9&10
- The General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN®) Test of English Skills and Test of Math Skills

Current Tests Approved for Use through February 2, 2021

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that *Federal Register* notice 83 FR 47910 announced the approval of the following tests through February 2, 2021:

- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy (forms B, C, and D)
- BEST Plus 2.0 (forms D, E, and F)
- TABE Complete Language Assessment System—English (TABE CLAS-E) (forms A and B)

Although approved, these tests are not aligned to the revised EFL descriptors for English as a Second Language (ESL).

TABE 11&12 Approved for Use as of July 1, 2018, through September 7, 2023

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that ED announced in the September 2017 *Federal Register* notice 82 FR 42339 that TABE 11&12 was approved in the NRS Guidelines as an Adult Basic Education (ABE) test for use on paper and through a computer-based delivery format. TABE 11&12 became available to grantees for pretesting and posttesting on July 1, 2018.

AEL grantees must be aware that as of July 2, 2018, the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), which is the AEL statewide management information system, is able to accept TABE 11&12 for performance purposes.

AEL grantees must be aware that TABE 11&12 is substantially different from TABE 9&10. Changes include new administrative requirements, revised answer forms, increased rigor, and revised suggested testing times. Therefore, TWC advises that all providers planning to adopt TABE 11&12—including providers planning to administer the paper version—begin preparations to ensure that staff administrators of the test are prepared to administer TABE 11&12.

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that administration of the paper version requires appropriate supplies, such as sufficient scientific calculators of the same model type and a scanner that meets certain technical specifications, for providers that plan to scan score sheets.

Transition from TABE 9&10 to TABE 11&12

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that when using TABE 9&10 as a pretest for obtaining the EFL measure Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a) in Program Year 2018–2019 (PY’18–’19), the provider must also administer the TABE 9&10 posttest before June 30, 2019.

NLF: AEL grantees must not use TABE 9&10 as an AEL pretest after December 31, 2018; they must use TABE 11&12, or another approved test, for pretesting. When using TABE 11&12 as a pretest for obtaining the EFL measure Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a), the provider must also administer the TABE 11&12 posttest.

Other Information on CASAS Tests

LF: Because TWC plans to approve the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) series in PY’19–’20, AEL grantees may begin researching whether to use the CASAS Reading GOALS Series as an ABE test and the CASAS Life and Work Listening Assessments and CASAS Reading Assessments as ESL tests in their programs.

NLF: AEL grantees must be aware that ED announced in the February 2018 *Federal Register* notice 83 FR 5087 that it had approved forms 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, and 908 of the CASAS Reading GOALS Series for use on paper and through a computer-based delivery format and had approved them for inclusion in the NRS Guidelines as ABE tests through February 2025.

NFL: AEL grantees must be aware that ED announced in the September 2018 *Federal Register* notice 83 FR 47910 that it had extended approval to include the CASAS tests in the NRS Guidelines as ESL tests through February 2021. The following tests were originally approved through February 2019:

- CASAS Life and Work Listening Assessments—forms 981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L, and 986L—are approved for use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format.
- CASAS Reading Assessments (Life and Work, Life Skills, Reading for Citizenship, and Reading for Language Arts—Secondary Level)—forms 27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188, 310, 311, 513, 514, 951, 952, 951X, and 952X—are approved for use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format.

INQUIRIES:

Send inquiries regarding this AEL Letter to aelpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

REFERENCES:

NRS Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, §116, Performance Accountability System

Texas Administrative Code §805.4

Texas Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Guide