

Minneapolis Adult Education Consortium  
**Assessment Policy**

**Document 2.C**

**Effective Date:** Policy Revised 5/1/2015

**Policy Purpose and Rationale** – The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) – Adult Basic Education (ABE) office requires that:

- ABE programs use National Reporting System (NRS) approved adult appropriate standardized assessments (*CASAS* or *TABE*) to:
  - Pre-test and assign students in an NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL) within the first 12 hours of instruction
  - Administer subsequent *CASAS/TABE* tests to measure NRS level completion/gain after 40 hours of instruction in each modality tested
- Assessments are administered in a standardized and consistent way by all programs statewide according to the test publisher guidelines
- Program staff administering assessments be trained in the test administration and scoring

**Required MDE and Local Benchmarks for ABE Consortia**

- NRS level completion/gain – meet or exceed state NRS target percentages for Minnesota ABE
- Test students every 40 to 60 hours (testing schedule can be based on local program intensity and average hours of instruction)
- Maintain a 60% or greater post-testing rate for all participants within the program year

**Minneapolis AE Consortium Benchmarks**

- Consortium members are expected to meet or exceed the negotiated annual MDE NRS Educational Functioning Level target percentages
- Learners will be tested with NRS approved assessments every 40 to 60 hours. Individual programs may develop individual testing schedules based on their program intensity and average hours of instruction. This plan must be submitted to the fiscal agent for approval.
- Programs are expected to achieve a 60% or greater post-testing rate for all participants within the NRS program year.

**Minneapolis AE Consortium Plan to Implement Assessment Policy**

It is important that ABE staff articulate to enrollees that our reason for testing is to evaluate the skills they currently possess. We then use this information to determine what additional instruction will be needed to assist them in reaching their goals quickly and to assist us in assigning them to the appropriate class. Programmatically, we view testing as a way to provide learners with feedback regarding their skill level in a specific content area and demonstrate their progress in the ABE program.

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- **Initial Assessment/Pre-testing**

TABE 9&10 Series/CASAS Life and Work pre-testing must occur for all learners when they first enter our program (prior to classroom placement and before 12 hours of attendance) with few exceptions:

- ELL learners who do not have the skills to be tested may be exempted from testing at the time of registration. The student should be placed in a level 0 or Pre-lit class, their MABE record should indicate they were assigned CASAS – *Life Skills-Reading 27* with a score of 153 (the lowest possible score) and a note should be made in the MABE message section for that student. At the next testing session the person will be given the CASAS-*Life Skills 28* test unless the instructor has noticed a significant advancement of literacy skills. In that case staff would administer a Level A test to the learner to ensure score validity.
- Work Based Project Learners and those with a written referral (meeting MDE requirements) to the Transitions to Employment program are also exempt from CASAS/TABE testing. They will be given performance-based assessments specific to their area of instruction. This exception pertains to our partnership with Twin Cities RISE.

Learners should be assessed following the test publishers, MDE, and program guidelines in the modality that their instruction will be focused. If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different skill levels in the modalities, the ABE program will place the student according to the NRS lowest educational functioning level and manually designate the EFL of their lowest skill area in MABE. The lowest EFL should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments. The classroom teacher may determine that additional testing is needed after the learner is placed in class (i.e. math test) and should follow site procedures to assure this occurs. For example, at our South Campus location if a student does not have a valid math or listening test, the instructor would notify office testing staff and request an assessment be given before scheduling occurs for the additional math or listening class.

The person responsible for MABE monitoring at each site will determine whether all learners (other than WBPL and Transitions to Employment) have taken a pre-test by running the MABE-*TABLE A* report and looking at the “No Level Assigned” category. All students in this category with 12+ hours must have a valid pre-test on file. If a student does not have a pre-test the site tester/staff will be notified and they will be responsible for determining why there is no test information in MABE, finding the student in class and administering the test before the student accrues any more instructional hours. Best practice at our main site states that students cannot be scheduled for any classes unless they have a valid assessment on file.

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- **Special Testing Accommodations**

If a learner requests special accommodations for CASAS/TABE testing we will ask about previous educational experiences and past educational testing accommodations. If the person has an adult evaluation from LDA (or another recognized individual/institution) or has applied for and received special GED Testing Accommodations we will follow the LDA outlined accommodations as written. Testing accommodations involving extended testing time, a separate testing room and enlarged font are all currently offered at our North and South campus locations. Instructors who notice a significant previously un-documented learning disability in class that might affect a student's testing ability may request accommodations on behalf of their students for CASAS/TABE testing. These requests should be brought to the Testing Coordinator for approval and all requests/approvals of these accommodation are noted in MABE.

Documentation must show the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. We will determine whether our program can effectively make necessary accommodations available and if so, how this will happen. At times we may refer people to other programs until the person exhibits the skills necessary to succeed in the ABE environment.

If special testing accommodations are deemed appropriate and reasonable without changing what the test is supposed to measure a note indicating; who recommended the special accommodations, documented reason for special accommodations, and that specifics of how we are meeting these accommodations should be included in the MABE message section of the student's record. For post-testing purposes it is the responsibility of both the learner's instructor and testing staff to make sure similar/standard accommodations are given each subsequent testing session once the learner accrues at least 40 hours.

We have copies of the TABE 9 Survey and Complete Battery levels M and D on audio tape at our South Campus site. (TABE has not produced the 10 version of these tests) These audio versions are available to consortium members for short term loan if needed, through the Minneapolis Adult Education Testing Coordinator. We also have the TABE Limited Literacy available for low level native English speaking learners and TABE Complete Battery levels 9E/9M/9D Reading tests have been brailed for students with visual impairments.

We administer the CASAS Listening test to ESL students with visual impairments and in the past have enlarged the font of the test for learners with limited vision.

It is possible the State Services for the Blind may have additional copies of the CASAS/TABE brailed and we would contact them directly through our TOSA liaison should the need arise.

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- **Test Scores Outside the Validity/Accuracy Range**

If a learner's test score is outside the validity range for the specific test they were given, they need to be re-tested *immediately* with the appropriate test. If it is not possible to re-test immediately, please do this as soon as possible and note this in the student record message area of MABE. Refer to the test manual, MPS TABE suggested post-testing guideline charts, CASAS suggested next test documents, or the TABE/CASAS website if additional assistance is needed in determining which test to give the learner.

If re-testing is necessary due to assessment scores falling outside the validity or content range for the level of the TABE/CASAS test the learner was given but a second assessment also falls out of range, staff will decide where to place the student based on the content range of the test and enter the TABE/CASAS score in MABE.

*Example:* A learner is given the TABE level D test and they score 5.9 GE on this test. This is below the grade range content for the TABE D test so a TABE M should be given. This person then scores 9.9+ on the TABE M test which is above the accuracy range for the M. The score that should be entered into the MABE data system would be the 5.9 TABE D (EFL of Low Intermediate ABE) as this more closely aligns with the skill level of the learner based on this test and the TABE D should be used to post-test this learner. A note should be made in the "Messages" function of MABE that the learner scored outside of the validity range on the TABE M form.

Testing/Registration/assigned staff will monitor MABE data monthly to review assessment scores for accuracy using the "*Student\_Last\_Assessments*" report in MABE. This report is under Program Reports and should be run by class. If inaccuracies are noted the monitor will either speak directly to the person who administered the test or their supervisor to determine the problem and adjustments will be made to correct the data entry error.

- **Learners Re-entering or Transferring**

When current learners are transferring directly from one consortium site/program to another or have "stopped out" and would like to re-enroll, the program staff may contact each other for past assessment details. The MABE historical assessment information will be used to determine whether additional testing is necessary prior to placing the student in the classroom.

- **ELL Learners** transferring/re-enrolling could be exempt from re-testing provided they:
  - have an accurate pre-test for this NRS Program Year (PY).
  - have accrued less than 40 instructional hours since their last assessment.

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-have completed an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) this PY.

- **All ABE/GED/Diploma Learners** should be tested upon transfer or re-entry if they have accrued more than 40 hours of instruction including students who scored in the High Adult Secondary-EFL range previously to assure correct placement.
- **All Learners** should be re-tested upon transfer/re-enrollment if their instruction will be in a modality they have not previously been assessed in.
- **All Learners** with over 40 instructional hours should be re-tested prior to classroom placement during the final quarter of the NRS PY when:
  - they have only one test this PY (pre and post-test are required).
  - they have not completed an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) this PY.
- **Post-testing**

Post-testing must be done on a regular basis to document Educational Functioning Level (EFL) changes for the year-end reports shared with funding sources. The post-test scores are what trigger EFL completions within the MABE data system and from this our NRS results are determined.

When deciding which test is appropriate to administer as the post-test:

- Review which test was given last,
  - Determine whether the last test was within the validity range for that specific test form/level,
  - Make sure the student has accrued at least 40 instructional hours in the modality being tested,
  - Be sure to review the testing history to assure the last test score is within the established pattern for this learner and if so,
  - Administer the same series (TABE or CASAS) and content area (Reading, Math, etc.) but use an alternate test form (TABE Reading 9 M or 10 M/CASAS 27 or 28).
  - If staff are unsure what post-test to administer the CASAS appraisal or TABE locator can always be re-administered prior to choosing a post-test form.
- **Site Post-testing Frequency Options**

Consortium members will submit their post-testing plan to the fiscal agent in the fall of each year. The plan will follow the MDE Assessment Policy and use the available data regarding the average amount of time program participants persist at that site. The plan will include strategies to meet or exceed the NRS Targets for the current NRS Program Year. This plan will also designate the person responsible for post-testing, how staff are trained /re-trained as an administrator or proxy, which tests are used, with whom, and when, and how they are administered (individual or group setting).

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**Option 1-** Test each individual as they reach X number of hours. The number of hours between tests should be based on the average number of instructional hours program participants remain in your program\* and the MDE testing guidelines. This option requires staff to continually monitor how many hours each student has attended and designated staff must be responsible to make sure each learner gets tested at the appropriate time.

\*Learners stay in programs for varying amounts of time. In order to determine the average amount of program participants stay at your program look at NRS Table 4, and divide column C by column B.

**Option 2-** Mass test all students, based on a calendar schedule, which considers the total possible contact hours within that time frame. Any student who does not have 40 hours of instruction will be given an alternative assignment or assessment to work on in class. You must include make-up test sessions for people who missed the regularly scheduled testing.

*Example:* Test everyone the second week of each month on Tuesday and have make-up testing on Wednesday and Thursday or the day the person returns to class for those who missed the regular day of testing.

**Other options** may be negotiated with the accountability staff and approved if within the NRS/MDE guidelines, necessary, and reasonable. All options will be evaluated quarterly by the site to assure the site is capturing the maximum number of learners and is on track to meet or exceed the MDE Negotiated NRS Educational Functioning Level Completion Targets.

- **Learners Exempt from Post-testing**
  - Students who previously tested into the High Adult Secondary EFL and have the goal of obtaining a GED/H.S. Diploma.
  - Learners who are enrolled in a Transitions to Employment or Work-based Project Learner programs only.
  - Sites could decide to exempt really new enrollees with very few instructional hours on a case by case basis.

If you chose to exempt someone from post-testing for one of the above reasons you could give the person another type of test while the other students take the TABE/CASAS test. Examples of tests you might give could include: tests that teach/strengthen test taking strategies, math inventories, pre-GED reading, GED practice tests, etc.

The person designated as the MABE data monitor for each site will determine whether all learners (other than WBPL and Transition to Employment) who have

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met the requirements for re-testing have taken a post-test based on the post-testing plan for that site. If this person notices any people needing to be tested they will notify the testing staff at that site and additional testing will be completed. The testing staff is responsible for determining why there is no test information in MABE and administering a test, if necessary.

- **Learners Leaving the AE Program**

Learners who inform us that they will no longer be attending and have over 40 instructional hours should be post-tested prior to their last day in attendance. (Please remember to update any NRS core or secondary goal achievements in MABE at the same time.)

If you notice a learner is no longer attending regularly, a staff person should give that learner a call or email them to inquire as to their intentions. Remind them that their goal was to improve their skills and in order to measure their improvement we need them to come back to take one final test. Testing is part of the state requirements and by following the requirements and showing learner gains we are better able to continue to provide free classes to people in our community. Please try to accommodate the person's schedule as much as possible. (Please remember to update any core or secondary goal achievements and record this information and their reason for not attending in MABE.)

- **New Teacher/Staff Orientation to Assessment Tools**

Each fall during the "Staff-Back to School Week" full CASAS and TABE Assessment Administration Certification/Proxy training sessions will be required of new staff and available to previously trained staff as desired. All staff who administer CASAS or TABE tests must hold a current certification and must re-attend trainings every 5 years. Staff who proctor tests but don't choose or administer CASAS or TABE tests MUST follow the state and consortium's standardized testing procedures as outlined by the state assessment trainers in accordance with Southwest ABE and state policy when proctoring these assessments in class.

The training will encompass:

- NRS outcome measures, EFL and Target goals
- MDE Mandates and policies
- Consortium assessment policies
- Site procedures that address MDE/Consortium mandates and policies
- Providing an understanding of how the skills necessary for TABE are the similar skills needed for the GED
- Test taking skills and curriculum necessary for EFL gains
- Assessment Administration Certification Training/Proxy Training

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- **Train/Re-train Teachers/Staff in the Use of Assessment Tools**

We will also offer short refresher sessions during “Staff-Back to School Week” for people who have reached the required MDE five year retraining mark and others interested in honing their skills. Staff will be made aware of; changes to our TABE/CASAS testing processes, assessment training available at ABE conferences, through MDE Supplemental Service providers, in house, and by appointment with MPS trainers via the MPS ABE newsletter, e-mail, team meetings, and at staff development opportunities. In addition to the refresher sessions at the beginning of each school year the consortium’s assessment trainers will make sure to provide training to any new staff that start throughout the school year as needed.

In addition to the publishers’ training curriculum we incorporate the following MDE and local assessment training information:

- MDE Mandates and policies updates
- Consortium assessment policies updates
- Site procedures that address MDE/Consortium mandates and policies
- Assessment Administration Certification Training/Proxy Training updates
  - Using proper timing
  - Being aware of invalid test scores and re-testing procedures
  - Reading testing scripts verbatim
  - Not answering or reviewing actual test questions with learners prior to Testing
  - Ensuring comparable testing environments uniformly throughout sites
  - Determining the proper post-test to administer
- Entering assessment information into MABE

Any new information or training needed will be provided by the Minneapolis State Trainers. It is also the responsibility of the State Trainers to provide training to any new staff who begin employment throughout the school year and work with the Accountability Specialist to ensure all staff working directly with any CASAS/TABE standardized tests are properly trained and certified.

MPS TABE Trainer: [Athena.Eleftheriou@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Athena.Eleftheriou@mpls.k12.mn.us)

MPS CASAS Trainer: [Kellie.Hoyt@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Kellie.Hoyt@mpls.k12.mn.us)

### **Using MIS Assessment and Testing Data to Monitor Performance**

MIS Tools-The MPS MABE Programmer has written a program to enable us to set the desired testing parameters for each class. When a learner has not been tested within the parameters (a designated number of hours or days) an alert shows up on the class page to remind teachers that the learner needs to be tested. Other reports have also been made available to monitor testing in MABE.



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The person responsible for entering the assessment information into MABE for each site will use the *Student Last Assessments* or *Student Assessment Summary* reports to ensure;

- the NRS instructional area has been correctly assigned,
- the EFL is being recorded,
- there have been adequate hours between each assessment,
- the assessment administered is within the validity range for the form used, and
- the EFL completions/gains are showing up in MABE.

Administrators use MABE data to:

- Assure assessment data is being entered into MABE,
- Influence assessments and instruction processes,
- Evaluate program NRS Table reports and performance compared to MDE Negotiated NRS Target percentages and look at historical data patterns and changes over time,
- Communicate individual program and full consortium performance to teachers/staff, and
- Facilitate program changes needed based on data.

Teachers use assessment data to:

- Track individual learner and class progress,
- Encourage learner regular attendance as a means to increase goal achievement,
- Communicate progress with learners in a way that makes sense to the individual and shows growth in multiple areas,
  
- Evaluate curriculum and instruction in their classrooms after testing to look for patterns of competencies that students need additional instruction in,
- Re-align curriculum and instruction as necessary to improve learner performance,
- Track which learners need to be post-tested, and
- Call non-attending learners to return to the program for instruction and/or post-testing.

Registration and Testing Staff use assessment data to:

- Assist learners in setting achievable short and long range personal goals,
- Re-align testing practices to meet or exceed NRS EFL goals,
- Find learners who have not been assigned an EFL,
- Determine which currently enrolled learners needing post-test,
- Decide who needs to be post-tested and carefully choose the correct test form/level,
- Assure learners they are being tested using the appropriate test form/level,
- Correctly place new students in orientation classes,
- Correctly place returning students into regular education classes, and

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- Call non-attending learners to return to the program for instruction and/or post-testing, as assigned.

**Assessment Schedule for ABE Programs (TABE)**  
(Program Type/Site/Person Responsible/Frequency)

CDA /teacher/TABE Complete Battery- Reading. Students are pre-tested during a group CDA orientation to make sure they meet the minimum CDA class reading requirement. They are then post-tested once they accrue 40 hours or more or at the end of the semester depending on course load.

MCTC Math /teacher and MCTC Coordinator/TABE Survey-Total Math/Learners are pre-test in the math classroom, by the teacher, at the beginning of each quarter. The MCTC Coordinator will be available to pre-test people who join the math class for up to two weeks after the start date. People who accrue over 40 hours will be post-tested at the end of each quarter (summer, fall, and spring). The math teacher and MCTC Coordinator are responsible for this testing, data entry and sharing a summary of data with the Testing Coordinator and Accountability Specialist quarterly to show progress.

North Campus Day /ABE Registration Staff/TABE CB-Reading and Language, and Survey- Math tests are given during the GED class registration session. Learners are then post-tested once they reach 40 hours in each modality for which they receive instruction.

North Campus Evening /ABE Registration staff/TABE CB-Reading and Language, and Survey- Math tests are given during the GED class registration session. Learners are then post-tested once they reach 40 hours in each modality for which they receive instruction.

South Campus Day /ABE Registration Staff/TABE CB- Reading and Language, and Survey- Math tests are given during ABE orientation. All students receive all three modality tests before starting regular education classes. During the GED class group registration students are given both TABE math and TABE reading locators. They are also given the TABE Complete Battery Reading test. After this initial testing students are registered for ABE Orientation where they take the TABE Survey Total Math and

TABE Complete Battery Language tests. Learners are then post-tested once they reach 40 hours in each modality for which they receive instruction.

South Campus Evening /ABE Registration Staff/ TABE CB- Reading and Language, and Survey- Math tests are given during ABE orientation. All students receive all three modality tests before starting regular education classes. During the GED class group registration students are given both TABE math and TABE reading locators. They are also given the TABE Complete Battery Reading test. After this initial testing students are registered for ABE Orientation where they take the TABE Survey Total Math and

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TABE Complete Battery Language tests. Learners are then post-tested once they reach 40 hours in each modality for which they receive instruction.

Wells Fargo /Registration and teaching staff/TABE CB-Reading and/or Survey-Total Math are given at intake on a one-on-one basis. After 40 hours of instruction all learners are given a post-test based on MPS and TABE guidelines.

**Assessment Schedule for ELL Programs (CASAS)**  
(Program Type/Site/Person Responsible/Frequency)

Cedar-Riverside /Coordinator and teachers/CASAS-Reading every two months on a calendar schedule for students with over 40 instructional hours.

English Learning Center /Director and staff/CASAS-Reading every 40 hours of instruction. CASAS Life and Work Listening pre-test for students enrolled in ELL classes. Post-tests are administered after 40 hours of instruction.

Learning in Style /testing staff/CASAS-Reading by end of October, December, February, April for students who have accrued over 40 instructional hours. (This program is closed for three months in the summer.)

South Campus Day /Testing Coordinator and ELL Registration staff/CASAS-Reading test given to all learners who have accrued over 40 hours in October, December, March, late-April only for anyone without an EFL completion and over 40 hours, and May.

CASAS-Listening pre-tests given to all learners during their two week ELL orientation regardless of whether they are going to be placed into a Listening/Speaking class. Only learners enrolled in Listening/Speaking classes will receive a post-test once they accrue 40 hours of ELL instruction (CORE and FOCUS).

CASAS-Math pre-tests are given to all learners during their two week ELL orientation regardless of whether they are going to be placed into a Math class. Only learners enrolled in ELL Math classes will receive a post-test once they accrue 40 hours of ELL instruction (CORE and FOCUS).

South Campus Evening /Testing Coordinator and ELL Registration staff/CASAS-Reading test given to all learners who have accrued over 40 hours in October, December, March, late-April only for anyone without an EFL completion and over 40 hours, and May.

CASAS-Listening pre-tests given to all learners during their two week ELL orientation regardless of whether they are going to be placed into a Listening/Speaking class. Only learners enrolled in Listening/Speaking classes will receive a post-test once they accrue 40 hours of ELL instruction (CORE and FOCUS).

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CASAS-Math pre-tests are given to all learners during their two week ELL orientation regardless of whether they are going to be placed into a Math class. Only learners enrolled in ELL Math classes will receive a post-test once they accrue 40 hours of ELL instruction (CORE and FOCUS).

North Campus Day /ELL Registration staff/CASAS- Reading test given to all learners who have accrued over 40 hours in October, December, March, late-April only for anyone without an EFL completion and over 40 hours, and May.

CASAS- Listening given to learners enrolled in ELL CORE classes once students accrue 40 hours of instruction.

CASAS-Math given to Math learners enrolled in Math class at the beginning and once at the end of the focus class session once they have accrued 40 hours of instruction in math.

North Campus Evening /Site Coordinator and ELL Registration staff/CASAS- Reading test given to all learners who have accrued over 40 hours in October, December, March, late-April only for anyone without an EFL completion and over 40 hours, and May.

CASAS- Listening given to learners enrolled in ELL CORE classes once students accrue 40 hours of instruction.

CASAS-Math given to Math learners enrolled in Math class at the beginning and once at the end of the focus class session once they have accrued 40 hours of instruction in math.

Somali Success School /Coordinator/CASAS-Reading once learners have accrued 40 hours of instruction with make-up testing Monday through Thursday for those individual who missed the regularly scheduled testing.

Volunteers of America /Director and staff/CASAS-Reading and TABE-Reading every 45 hours of instruction.

Twin Cities RISE! - No NRS assessment post-testing is required at Twin Cities RISE! as it is a Work Based Project Learner program.

### **Allowable Consortium Program Assessments**

For the purposes of this policy and in accordance to the State of Minnesota's assessment policy, ABE staff may use –

- ELL programming – *CASAS Life and Work - Reading and Listening*
- ABE programming – *TABE 9/10 Reading and Language-Complete Battery, Total Math-Survey*  
*CASAS – Life and Work-Math*
- Work-based Project Learners will be assessed using the tools developed for each ABE aligned course in the Foundations 1 component and as approved by the fiscal agent.

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- Essential Skills Certificate Program – CASAS *Life and Work-Reading and Listening, and CASAS Life Skills-Math*

**Staff Responsible for Implementing Assessment Policy** are noted above with program administrators being ultimately responsible.

**Policy Contact Information**

If you have questions regarding this policy please contact Athena Eleftheriou at 612-668-3800 ex 0 or [Athena.Eleftheriou@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Athena.Eleftheriou@mpls.k12.mn.us)