

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II:  
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

# **Assessment Policy Guidelines**

**July 2024–June 2025**



**California Department of Education**

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## Preface

This document provides policy guidelines pertaining to standardized assessment practices in California’s adult literacy programs

These regulations require states to describe the assessments local programs are to use, when local programs are to administer pre-tests and post-tests, training requirements for assessments, and assessment administration and reporting requirements.

The California Department of Education (CDE), requires all eligible adult literacy program providers to use the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) standardized assessment instruments, and Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro®) Enterprise data collection and reporting software to report educational gain benchmarks by educational functioning levels.

The CASAS standardized assessment instruments are the only state approved instruments used for state and federal reporting requirements. The use of common assessment instruments based on the same standard score scale provides the National Reporting System (NRS) standardized data and progress reports across all of California’s adult literacy providers. All learners<sup>1</sup>, including distance learners, who receive 12 or more hours of instruction, must have a valid CASAS pre-test score entered into the NRS Federal Report Tables.

The CDE Adult Education Office (AEO) depends on accurate reporting of local student achievement data to negotiate performance standards with the federal government as well as to budget and allocate current and future fiscal resources to maintain a quality adult education and literacy delivery system. The data is used to report adult learner outcome, including workforce related outcomes to the California Legislature.

Adult literacy providers should use this document as the policy foundation, in conjunction with Test Administration Manuals, *Assessment and Accountability Administration Manual for California*, and regional training workshops to provide a basis for development of local procedures, guidelines, and implementation practices.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *adult learner* means learners who have attained 16 years of age; are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society; do not have a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

## **Acknowledgements**

The CDE recognizes the CASAS team for its efforts in creating a template by which California can develop its own assessment policy guidelines. Pat Rickard, CASAS Executive Director; Jim Harrison, Senior Research Associate; Linda Taylor, Director of Test Development; and Jane Egüez, Director of Program Development, worked collaboratively to develop the assessment template based on the outline furnished by the US Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE).

The CASAS National Policy Council, comprised of State Directors of Adult Education from (1) California, (2) Oregon, (3) Washington, (4) Kansas, (5) Minnesota, (6) Indiana, (7) Connecticut, and (Iowa), developed the original template.

## **Section 1: Introduction and Context**

### **A. Need and Importance for Assessment Policy**

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learner progress is essential to ensure that all learners become proficient in literacy and language skills. In California, adult literacy providers use CASAS-assessment data to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to monitor progress, and to certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education. To ensure assessment accuracy and consistency, the CDE prescribes that AEFLA funded adult literacy providers use CASAS assessments with proven validity and reliability that correlate to the NRS for adult education. All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association, the National Council for Measurement in Education, and the American Psychological Association. The *CASAS Technical Manuals* contain detailed information about test validity and reliability.

### **B. Purpose and Use of Standardized Assessments**

Subsequent sections of this document provide a more detailed discussion of the purposes, descriptions, policies, and test administration procedures of CASAS standardized assessments. In general, using CASAS assessments ensures accuracy in adult learner placement (appraisal tests), to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to inform instruction (pre-tests), to monitor progress (post-tests), and to certify learner mastery (certification tests). Standardized administration of tests and assessment results provide the basis for state and federal accountability reporting. The directions in each *Test Administration Manual (TAM)* must be carefully followed in the selection, administration, use, reporting, and security of the pre- and post-tests to ensure the accurate alignment of testing results to NRS Educational Functional Levels (EFL) and for documenting student achievement.

### **Use of Informal Assessments**

In addition to CASAS standardized assessments, the CDE encourages local adult literacy providers to use a variety of informal assessments to monitor learning and inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis, including the use of teacher developed formative tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations. These informal tests are not utilized for the federal NRS reporting requirements.

## **C. Summary and Overview of Standardized Assessments**

This document defines the CDE assessment policy for the following WIOA, Title II: AEFLA funded programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) including the General Educational Development (GED®) and HiSET exams, and English as a Second Language (ESL). This policy is applicable for classroom-based instruction as well as distance learning. This document identifies key assessment policies that support:

1. Selection and use of appropriate assessment instruments
2. Accurate learner placement into appropriate instructional levels
3. Appropriate test administration, scoring, and reporting of test scores
4. Appropriate use of test results to inform instruction and improve programs
5. Pre-testing and post-testing to monitor learner progress
6. Certification of level and program completion
7. Reporting valid and reliable assessment results and related information for accountability to local, state, and federal funding sources and policymakers.

The CDE assessment policy also includes staff training and test security requirements for all local staff that administer and use the results of CASAS standardized assessments, including paper-based and computer-based assessments.

### **Appraisal Tests: Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level**

Initial placement with an appraisal test gauges a learner's reading, math, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking skills. The CDE strongly encourages local agencies to use appraisals whenever feasible to ensure appropriate decisions regarding:

1. Appropriate educational placements
2. Administration of appropriate pre-tests
3. Selection of short- and long-term instructional goals

Placing learners in instructional levels that are not at their ability levels may lead to frustration or boredom, causing learners to leave the program. Learners who take inappropriate level pre-tests may "top out" or score below the accurate range of the test level, and adult literacy providers will not have accurate baseline (pre-test) information to inform instruction and monitor progress. Use of appraisals and appropriate pre-tests assist learners and teachers in establishing appropriate learner short-term goals.

Appropriate short-term goals enable learners to document successes leading to long-term goals. Learning gains and achievement of learner outcomes within a program year form the basis for the state’s required annual NRS report to the OCTAE.

Adult literacy providers may not use appraisals as pre-tests to measure learner progress. Each CASAS TAM includes specific recommendations regarding which level of pre-test to administer, using the appraisal test score. CASAS provides appraisals for reading, math, listening comprehension, speaking, and writing. Adult literacy providers should administer CASAS appraisal tests as follows:

**Table 1A  
CASAS Appraisal Tests  
for  
Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education**

<b>Skills Areas</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Locator</b>	<b>eTests® Appraisal/Locator</b>
Reading	Reading GOALS	<b>900R</b>	<b>104R</b>	✓
Math	Math GOALS 2	<b>919M</b>	<b>920M</b>	✓

**Table 1B  
CASAS Appraisal Tests  
for  
English as a Second Language**

<b>Skills Areas</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Locator</b>	<b>eTests® Appraisal/Locator</b>
Reading	Reading STEPS	<b>619R</b>	<b>620R</b>	✓
Listening	Listening STEPS	<b>619L</b>	<b>620L</b>	✓



## **Progress Testing: Pre-Test and Post-Test**

CASAS designed standardized progress tests to assess learning along a continuum, from beginning literacy and English language acquisition through the completion of secondary level skills. Several test series monitor learning progress, with test difficulty levels ranging from below Level A through Level E. Each test level has alternate test forms parallel in content and difficulty. The test series differ primarily in contextual focus (for example, employability versus general life skills and work skills).

Selection of the appropriate test series is based on a learner's goals and the instructional focus of the program (general life and work skills, employability, and workplace). The pre-test is administered to the learner as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given, or after placing the learner into the appropriate instructional level. All learners, including distance learners, with 12 or more hours of instruction must have a valid CASAS pre-test for placement into the NRS Federal Tables. Adult literacy providers may find guidance for pre-test and post-test selection in the Next Assigned Test Charts provided by CASAS in the TAM or in the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise Next Assigned Test Report. If using eTests<sup>®</sup>, the pre- and post-test selection happens automatically. Learner post-tests are administered at the same level or a higher level, depending on the learners' pre-test score. CASAS and TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise recommend an alternate test form within the same test series for post-testing. Additionally, the post-test must be in the same skill area as the pre-test, that is, programs cannot use a reading pre-test and a math post-test to determine learner gains. Learners are placed into the NRS Federal Reporting Tables based on their lowest accurate pre-test score when scaled pre-test scores from two different modalities fall into different EFLs. The skill area with the lowest first accurate pre-test matched to the highest accurate post-test measuring the same skill area is used for reporting learner gains for NRS Federal tables.

The CDE has established a statewide performance goal of at least 50 percent paired test scores. Other sections of this document cover post-testing policies and procedures in more detail.

## Appropriate Administration of CASAS Assessments

The appropriate use of CASAS assessments is as follows:

**Table 2**  
**CASAS Series Approved for Use by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funded Literacy Providers**

<b>CASAS ASSESSMENT Series</b>	STEPS	GOALS	GOALS 2	POWER*	
<b>Basic skills assessed in each series</b>					
Reading	✓	✓		✓	<i>Standardized Multiple Choice</i>
Math			✓		
Listening	✓				
<b>Programs that may use each series</b>					
English as a Second Language	✓				
Adult Basic Education		✓	✓	✓	
Adult Secondary Education		✓	✓		

\* POWER Assessments can be used as an accommodation for adults who have intellectual disabilities. This assessment is not approved to measure NRS level gains.

## Scoring and Alignment of CASAS with NRS Levels

Tables 3A-1, 3A-2, and 3B show the relationship between CASAS test levels, scale score ranges, and NRS levels for ABE, ASE, and ESL learners.

**Table 3A-1**  
**CASAS Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education - Reading**

	National Reporting System Levels	GOALS Reading Scale Score Ranges
<b>1</b>	Beginning Adult Basic Education Literacy	203 and below
<b>2</b>	Beginning Basic Education	204–216
<b>3</b>	Low Intermediate Basic Education	217–227
<b>4</b>	High Intermediate Basic Education	228–238
<b>5</b>	Low Adult Secondary Education	239–248
<b>6</b>	High Adult Secondary Education	249 and above

**Table 3A-2**  
**CASAS Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education - Math**

	National Reporting System Levels	Math GOALS 2 Scale Score Ranges
<b>1</b>	Beginning Adult Basic Education Literacy	192 and below
<b>2</b>	Beginning Basic Education	193-203
<b>3</b>	Low Intermediate Basic Education	204-213
<b>4</b>	Middle Intermediate Basic Education	214-224
<b>5</b>	High Intermediate Basic Education	225-235
<b>6</b>	Adult Secondary Education	236 and above

**Table 3B**  
**CASAS Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for**  
**English as a Second Language**

National Reporting System Levels	Reading STEPS Scale Score Ranges	Listening STEPS Scale Score Ranges
<b>1</b> Beginning English as a Second Language Literacy	183 and below	181 and below
<b>2</b> Low Beginning English as a Second Language	184–196	182–191
<b>3</b> High Beginning English as a Second Language	197–206	192–201
<b>4</b> Low Intermediate English as a Second Language	207–216	202–211
<b>5</b> High Intermediate English as a Second Language	217–227	212–221
<b>6</b> Advanced English as a Second Language	228–238	222–235

## D. Resources for Information and Assistance

For specific information about CASAS assessments, contact Daniel Esko, Assessment Development Program Manager, at CASAS by e-mail at [desko@casas.org](mailto:desko@casas.org) or by telephone at 1-800-255-1036, extension 186

## Section 2: General Assessment Requirements

### A. Authorized Assessments

All learners, including distance learners, must be assessed using authorized standardized assessments. See assessments listed in Table 2 that meet NRS requirements rules for reporting. Additionally, CASAS assessments:

- Are appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners.
- Have standardized administration and scoring procedures.
- Have alternate, equivalent forms for pre-testing and post-testing.
- Have evidence linking them to the NRS EFLs.

For more information on authorized assessments, refer to Section 3, Guidelines for Each Assessment.

### B. Uniform Test Administration Times

The majority of CASAS assessments have locator/appraisal tests for learners to take prior to taking a pre-test. Locator/appraisal test results indicate the appropriate level for instruction, as well as which pre-test form adult literacy providers are to administer. To optimize assessment results, pre-test learners as soon as possible upon entry into the program and before the occurrence of any substantial instructional intervention. Pre-test learners in the areas that are the focus of instruction, using the appropriate CASAS standardized test in reading, listening comprehension, or math.

Post-test learners using an alternate form occurs at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains. **Adult literacy providers are to ensure that testing times and conditions are uniform for both pre-tests and post-tests.**

CASAS designed pre-tests and post-tests so that most students are able to complete a test in one hour or less. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70–100 hours of instruction, with the following exceptions:

- Programs offering high intensity courses (for example, a class meets more than 15 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 100 hours of instruction.
- Programs offering low intensity courses with fewer than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other substantial block of instruction, may choose to administer a post-test at the end of the instructional period.

The testing Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. However, testing should not occur before at least 40 hours of instruction. Students that have fewer than 40 hours of instruction must be reviewed and approved by local authorized personnel (principal, vice principal, coordinator) and these approvals must be kept at the local agencies and made available for review by the CDE.

Factors that affect learning gains include intensity and duration of instruction, motivation of learners, competence of instruction, the link between learner goals and instruction, and other instructional factors.

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pre-test for the next semester or reporting period, if the interim does not exceed more than four months. Similarly, adult literacy providers may use the most recent assessment results for those students who have exited or completed a Period of Participation (PoP) and are returning to adult education classes and beginning a new PoP, if the last test administered does not exceed the same four month period. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing of learners. If more than four months have transpired since the last test, re-testing based on the last test is required.

Program personnel may wish to retest learners returning the following semester or reporting period and before four months have transpired if there is reason to believe that during the learner's absence or over the summer recess, a significant learning intervention occurred that might invalidate the learner's previous assessment results. In such circumstances, re-testing is always an option.

### **C. Testing for Distance Learning Programs**

Learners in distance learning settings must fulfill the same assessment requirements as all other learners. Agencies must assess distance learners in a secure proctored environment, either at the adult education site or other proctored and secure location with staff trained to administer the assessment.

### **D. Testing for Citizenship Certification**

To administer the *Citizenship Interview Test* for certification in the English Literacy and Civics Education, Citizenship Preparation program, adult literacy providers must complete certification training online for the CASAS *Citizenship Interview Test*. If re-

testing of a learner is necessary, a significant amount of intervening instructional hours must occur before re-testing.

## **E. Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities or Other Special Needs**

Accommodations in CASAS standardized testing modify the conditions for administering a test or learner response, allowing test takers with disabilities to demonstrate their skills and abilities more accurately. Appropriate accommodations meet the needs of learners with disabilities without changing what the test measures.

Adult education providers are responsible for providing fully accessible services and reasonable testing accommodations. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations for standardized testing and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. Adult education providers must document the need for learner accommodations in official learner records, such as the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on a standardized test.

If a learner had an accommodation in previous schooling but has no documentation, providers should contact the Disability Support Services office at their agency or district, if available, for more information on local procedures for testing accommodations. Information about testing accommodations can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. If no documentation is available, adult agencies can often contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or the learner's secondary school to request documentation of a disability. Providers without a Disability Support Services office at their agency or district can contact CASAS for information on appropriate accommodations.

### **Accommodations in Test Administration Procedures**

For learners with documented disabilities, local assessment staff may provide accommodations in administration procedures, such as allowing extra time, repeating directions, breaking an assessment into two sessions, using a separate room, giving frequent supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions.

### **Accommodations for Learner Response**

Accommodations in learner response may include using a sound amplification device, using a test reader and scribe, using a simple calculator for math, using a touch-screen monitor, typing on a Braille keyboard, using speech-to-text software, and using screen reader (text-to-speech) software.

## Use of Appropriate CASAS Test Forms

For some documented accommodations, adult literacy providers may need to access additional CASAS materials in order to provide the appropriate accommodation for CASAS test administration. CASAS test forms that are appropriate for some learners with a disability include CASAS eTests with magnification and paper-based tests in a large print format. A CASAS functional reading test in braille format measures basic literacy skills for learners who have visual impairment. CASAS also provides supplemental accommodations materials for learners with visual impairment/blindness for Reading GOALS, Math GOALS, and Reading STEPS. These test forms in eTests are also compatible with a screen reader.

For additional information on providing accommodations, go to <http://www.csas.org>

## Privacy Laws

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects student records and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects personally identifiable healthcare information. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Rehabilitation Plans contain personal and confidential diagnostic and medical information. Copies of IEPs and 504 Plans should not be included in emails to CASAS inquiring about testing accommodations.

## Section 3: Guidelines for Each Assessment

### A. Test Administration Manuals

The CDE, AEO requires that local adult literacy providers follow the test administration guidelines in each Test Administration Manual (*TAM*) published by CASAS for each test series used. It is essential that the directions for the test administration be followed uniformly across the ABE, ASE, and ESL programs offered. All local adult literacy providers must maintain copies of *TAMs* onsite for all assessments used by the provider. *TAMs* provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results. These manuals typically contain information on the following topics:

- The CASAS Assessment System
- Overview of CASAS Progress Testing
- Description of Tests
- Determining Pre-test and Post-Test Level
- Instructions for Administering Tests
- Scoring



- Test Security
- Data Collection
- Interpretation of Results
- Curriculum Planning, Instruction, and Assessment
- Skill Level Descriptors
- Next Assigned Test Charts
- Testing Accommodations
- Answer Keys and Score Conversion Charts (for converting raw scores to scale scores)
- Learner Profile Sheets
- Learner Performance by Competency
- Class Profile by Competency
- Training and Ordering

## **B. Information Included for Each Assessment**

Table 2 in Section 1, CASAS Series Approved for Use by WIOA, Title II: AEFLA Funded Programs, provides information about which assessments are appropriate for which learner populations. Tables 4A through 4G provide information about CASAS Test Forms by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series. The tables list multiple forms at each level; these are alternate forms for post-testing. The tables also list the appropriate appraisal test(s) to accompany different CASAS test series.

**Tables 4A–4G: CASAS Test Forms by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series**

**Table 4A  
Reading for English as a Second Language**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education	CASAS Level	Reading STEPS Series Form Numbers
1–2	A	621 622
2–3	B	623 624
3–4	C	625 626
4–5	D	627 628
5–6	E	629 630

Appraisal – 619R	Paper, or eTests®
Locator - 620R	Paper, or eTests®

**Table 4B**  
**Reading for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education	CASAS Level	Reading GOALS Series Form Numbers
1	Beg. Literacy	
1–2	A	901 902
2–3	B	903 904
3–5	C	905 906
4–6	D	907 908

Appraisal	900 or eTests®
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**Table 4C**  
**Math for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels	CASAS Levels	Math GOALS 2 Series Form Numbers
1-2	A	921, 922
2-3	B	923, 924
3-4	C	925, 926
4-5	D	927, 928
5-6	E	929, 930

Appraisal - 919	Paper, or eTests®
Locator - 920	Paper, or eTests®

**Table 4D**  
**Listening for English as a Second Language**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels	CASAS Levels	Listening STEPS Series Form Numbers
1–2	A	621, 622
2–3	B	623, 624
3–4	C	625, 626
4–5	D	627, 628
5–6	E	629, 630

Appraisal - 619	Paper, or eTests®
Locator - 620	Paper, or eTests®

**Table 4E**  
**Speaking for English as a Second Language**  
(May be used for EL Civics)

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels	Level	Form Numbers	Series	Content
1–6	A–D	973*, 974*	Citizenship (Citizenship Preparation)	Simulates United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS, formerly Immigration and Naturalization Services [INS]) oral citizenship interview

\*These assessments are not used to measure NRS EFL gains.

**Table 4F**  
**Government and History for English Literacy and Civics Education,**  
**Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels	Level	Form Numbers	Series	Content
1-3	A	951, 952R	Reading for Citizenship	Multiple-choice questions; Progress testing in a citizenship-related context
2-4	AX	951X, 952X		
4-6	B-C	965*, 966*	Citizenship	Multiple-choice questions; Tests knowledge of U.S. government and history

\*These assessments are not used to measure NRS EFL gains.

**Table 4G**  
**Literacy for Special Needs (for learners with intellectual disabilities)**

National Reporting Systems Educational Functional Levels	Level	POWER Series Form Numbers*	Adult Life Skills (R) Form Numbers*
1	Beginning Literacy	301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, and 307	27, 28, 310 (312), 311 (313), 322-323 332-333 342-343
	Appraisal		352

\* These assessments are not used to measure NRS EFL gains.

## C. Training Requirements for Administering Standardized Assessments

The CDE contracts with CASAS to provide California Accountability training regionally and online, which provides guidance on specific state data and accountability requirements and timelines. The regional face-to-face training sessions occur in the late summer/fall, and spring each year. Online training is available throughout the year. Specific training sessions are designed for both new and experienced staff. Registration for all training is posted online on the CASAS Web site. All staff completing training are entered into a training database, which is reviewed quarterly to ensure that all agencies have participated in required training. The CDE requires each agency to participate in this training annually.

The CDE requires all AEFLA funded agencies to be trained in California Accountability and CASAS Assessment Implementation. Reimbursements are withheld when agencies are not in compliance. The CDE requires all adult literacy providers to train teachers and other local staff in gathering, analyzing, compiling and reporting data for the NRS. This includes training for newly hired staff and refresher training for existing staff. This training includes the following topics:

- NRS policy, accountability policies, and data collection process
- Definitions of measures
- Conducting assessments

The CDE requires that at a minimum, one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation Training. CASAS has a defined training policy that details how local education agencies must conduct assessments. Training of adult literacy provider personnel is essential to a quality CASAS implementation. Only adult literacy provider personnel that have completed training by CASAS certified personnel may use CASAS assessments. Once trained, this individual can train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency. For local training purposes, instructors may examine CASAS tests for review purposes only. It is essential that this occur in a controlled, supervised environment with test security safeguards in place. Adult literacy providers are to take special care to ensure the collection of all test booklets at the completion of training.

CASAS staff and certified trainers provide separate implementation training sessions for ABE, ASE, ESL, and Employability Skills. These training sessions teach participants to administer, score, and interpret CASAS reading, listening, and math assessments. Implementation training also addresses how to use the CASAS competency system and CASAS resources, such as *Quick Search*, to facilitate instruction. Separate training sessions are available for *CASAS Functional Writing*, *Citizenship Interview*, and *Workplace Speaking*, among others.

## **D. Raw Score Conversion and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into National Reporting Systems Levels**

Each *CASAS Test Administration Manual* provides charts and guidelines for converting raw scores to scale scores. The CDE requires adult literacy providers to use these as reference points. CASAS subdivided the scale score ranges to correspond to the NRS levels.

NRS guidelines require appropriate placement of learners in instructional areas. Adult literacy providers use the skill area (for example, reading and math) with the lower pre-test score to place learners, if the learner is to receive instruction in the skill related to the lower instructional level. Learners are placed into the NRS Federal Reporting Tables based on their lowest accurate pre-test score when scaled pre-test scores on two different modalities fall into different EFLs.

## **E. Test Security Policy**

The CDE requires that all AEFLA funded adult literacy providers sign an annual test security agreement and develop local guidelines for implementing state assessment policy that reflects the test security agreement (See Appendix B).

CASAS publishes this test security policy to maintain the integrity of each of its assessments and to assist with the implementation of and adherence to the test security practices contained in this document. Administrators and testing personnel are responsible for following these practices and ensuring that agency staff follow said practices.

It is the legal responsibility of the agency director, principal, or other primary administrator to enforce securing testing materials upon taking delivery of materials and at all times afterward. Only testing personnel and others qualified as part of the testing process may have access to any testing materials.

## **Security of Testing Materials**

All testing materials online or on paper, including but not limited to CASAS eTests®, (online or desktop), test booklets, CDs, answer sheets, and answer keys, must be kept secure.

No unauthorized personnel should be allowed access to CASAS eTests® or to paper test booklets. Security procedures for computerized testing and paper test booklets must be held to the same standard.

## **Test Administration**

When testing in person, testing personnel must remain in the testing room throughout each entire test session to ensure that students follow all testing rules. Examinees must sit three to five feet apart and refrain from talking during the testing session or seeking help from others in any way, including use of electronic devices.

When testing examinees remotely, testing personnel must follow the remote testing proctoring procedures established by CASAS. The proctor must have visual contact with the examinee while testing. WIOA Title II agencies must complete the Agency Remote Testing Agreement Form before conducting remote testing, and submit the form to CDE Education Programs Consultants and CASAS Program Specialists.

Testing personnel must ensure that they follow all test administration directions and language as stipulated in the appropriate CASAS Test Administration Manuals.

### **CASAS eTests®**

CASAS will occasionally embed unpublished test items into operational CASAS eTests® in order to maintain and build its item bank. These items are not scored. The security of these items cannot be compromised and must be maintained in the same manner as all testing materials.

### **Paper Test Booklets**

Paper test booklets and related test support materials should be kept in locked storage at all times when not in use. Prior to distribution of test booklets, the test administrator must number each test booklet for tracking purposes. As examinees finish the test, they must put their answer sheet inside their test booklet and wait until the conclusion of the testing session. The administrator must ensure that each test booklet is returned before anyone leaves the testing facility.

### **Confidentiality of Tests and Test Items**

No agency, school, or other entity may use any CASAS test or test item— published or unpublished—as a tool to prepare examinees for the testing process. CASAS tests may never serve as practice tests in any capacity or for any purpose. Test items may not be reviewed, discussed, or explained to anyone at any time.

If paper test booklets have been marked in or torn, agencies should shred these test booklets. If an agency is transitioning to a new test series, agencies should shred old test booklets and destroy related testing materials including CDs. It is never appropriate to retain test materials for use as a practice test or for instructional purposes.

No agency, school, or other testing entity may share or provide any testing materials to another agency or school. Agencies that make such requests should be advised to contact CASAS directly. Testing materials must remain at the testing site at all times.



## **Copyright Infringement**

No test materials may be duplicated, photocopied, or reproduced in any manner. Federal copyright law prohibits unauthorized reproduction and use of copyrighted test materials. Reproducing test materials is a violation of federal copyright law.

## **Test Security Policy Agreement**

Agency directors, principals, and other primary administrators need to maintain a specific test security policy that covers the proper handling and use of test materials.

All testing personnel must follow the Local Test Security Policy in agreeing to uphold the security policies of the agency, school, or testing entity. If the agency is conducting remote testing, the agency must follow the remote testing proctoring procedures established by CASAS.

Should any agency, school, or other testing entity violate any provision of this test security policy or should testing materials have been compromised in any manner, purposely or otherwise, CASAS reserves the right to take appropriate action to rectify the violation of its test security policy.

## **F. Quality Control Procedures**

### **Entry of Assessment Data**

The CDE requires adult literacy providers to enter assessment data into the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise database minimally on a monthly basis for all learners assessed during that month.

### **Quality Control Procedures**

The CDE uses the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise to ensure that quality control checks are in place for all assessment data collection and reporting.

- Local TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise Data Integrity Reports assist adult literacy providers to conduct data integrity checks to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data submitted. TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise logic prevents inappropriate assessments from being scored and reported (i.e. administering the same form for pre-testing and post-testing).
- Statewide quarterly reporting of data assists CDE in monitoring the data collecting and reporting process and in identifying data collection and assessment issues that may need to be addressed through targeted training and technical assistance. Monitoring of funded agencies also include onsite verification that local providers have policies and procedures in place to ensure accurate and complete data collection and to ensure the appropriate administration, scoring and reporting of assessment results.

## **Improper use of CASAS Tests include activities such as:**

- Teaching to the actual CASAS test item
- Copying and distributing a CASAS test item or CASAS test booklet to unauthorized personnel or learners prior to or after test administration as a study guide
- Administering a lower-level test to artificially increase the learning gain between pre- and post-tests
- Reducing the amount of time given on a pre-test (e.g., less than 20 minutes) while increasing the amount of time on a post-test (e.g., 40-60 minutes)
- Deleting test answers on the pre-test to lower the test score
- Deleting accurate tests to manipulate the learning gains
- Duplicating or copying the test of one learner and replacing the identification number of another learner
- Altering test items or test score information
- Providing the answers to test questions
- Translating test items and answers into another language
- Administering tests in quick succession without sufficient time for instructional intervention to maximize gains
- Failing to administer tests at specific agency sites or in certain program areas
- Excluding certain individuals or groups who have attended 12 hours or more from pre-post testing.

## **Purchasing Procedures for Each Assessment**

The CDE requires programs to order CASAS assessments authorized for use in California directly from CASAS. The CDE provides CASAS with a list of approved assessments to ensure that local adult education programs order appropriate materials.

## Appendix A: Validity and Reliability

### Validity

*The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014) states that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. There are various evidences of validity with construct validity encompassing the overriding issue of proper use and construction of test items, and with content-related and criterion-related validity as subcomponents. Item content evidence is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure. Detailed discussion of CASAS content validity evidence is published in the *CASAS Technical Manuals*.

Criterion-related validity, also referred to as predictive validity, assesses the ability or effectiveness of an instrument in predicting something it should theoretically be able to predict. CASAS created ABE Skill Level Descriptors (reading, math, and writing skills) to show a continuum of skills from beginning ABE through advanced adult secondary levels; CASAS also created ESL Skill Level Descriptors (listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills) for ESL from beginning literacy/pre-beginning ESL through proficient skills. Skill Level Descriptors provide general content information on how an adult learner's numerical scale score on a CASAS test in a specific skill area corresponds to the job-related and life skills tasks that a person can generally accomplish.

A common numerical scale reports results from most CASAS tests. CASAS has successfully used this scale with more than three million adult and youth learners. Five broad levels divide the CASAS scale: A (beginning literacy) to E (advanced secondary), each encompassing a range of scores. CASAS further subdivides levels A and B to guide instructional placement and to monitor learner progress. CASAS defines each level scale score range with corresponding competency descriptors of performance in employment and adult life skills contexts.

Expert teachers, members of the CASAS National Consortium, as well as external validation studies have validated the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors. See the *CASAS Technical Manuals*. During the late 1990s, staff from the Center for Applied Linguistics and CASAS worked together to review and update the correlation between Student Performance Levels and CASAS levels to ensure that the NRS Skill Level Descriptors used for reporting learner gains were consistent with research already done in the field. Large-scale CASAS implementing states such as California, Connecticut, and Oregon participated in a national-level NRS advisory committee and provided guidance in the initial development and implementation of the NRS.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices together with the Council of Chief State School Officers developed and published a set of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010.

At the request of the CASAS National Consortium, an alignment study between the CCSS and the CASAS Content Standards for Reading and Mathematics was completed in 2010 by an independent third party. The resulting report—[CASAS Content Standards](#)

[and Common Core Standards: A Comparative Analysis](#)— is posted on the CASAS Web site.

Subsequently, the OCTAE commissioned a study to answer the following questions on how CCSS relate to Adult Education:

1. What content in the areas of English language arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics is most relevant to preparing adult students for success in higher education and training programs?
2. What content in the areas of ELA/literacy and mathematics of is most relevant to preparing adult students for success in higher education and training programs?
3. Which standards in each content area are most important for adult students?

The resulting report titled [Promoting College and Career Ready Standards in Adult Basic Education](#) (Pimental, 2013).

Again, at the request of the CASAS National Consortium, CASAS requested a review of the original comparative analysis in light of the results of the study commissioned by OCTAE. The study shows the relationship between the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) in Adult Basic Education for Reading and CASAS Content Standards for Reading as well as the CCRS deemed priority for Adult Education.

## **Reliability**

The *CASAS Technical Manuals* provide data on the reliability of the item bank and specific test series. The test administration manuals for each test series also contain information about reliability.

Reliability (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents — consistency and stability. For each scale score attained on a CASAS test, a standard error of measurement (SEM) is given. In addition to reporting a scale score for raw scores attained on a test, CASAS established a range of accuracy for each test form. For every score in the accurate range, a SEM for each scale score is given. For scale scores exceeding the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable, conservative scale score estimate. However, test administrators are encouraged to administer a test at the next more difficult test level to obtain a more accurate scale score estimate. CASAS does not report scale scores for raw scores falling below the accurate range. Information on test forms including SEMs, test information function, correlation and classification consistency are published in the *CASAS Technical Manuals*.

CASAS uses the most currently researched and recommended methodology in educational measurement practice—Item Response Theory—to establish indexes of item bank, test, and test score reliability. For indexes of consistency, CASAS tests for the uni-dimensionality of the item bank ensuring items all measure the same underlying construct. The *CASAS Technical Manuals* present classical item statistics, including item point bi-serial correlations and their p-values, for all the test series.

The test for item stability is found under “parameter invariance” and “differential item functioning”. Parameter invariance analyses test whether the item difficulties have changed over time. Differential item functioning tests whether the item difficulties change in the measurement of different kinds of learners, such as learners of different gender and different ethnicity. As part of ongoing maintenance for the assessments, the stability of item parameter estimates are evaluated by CASAS periodically.

## **Studies Conducted**

The Program Effectiveness Panel of the U.S. Department of Education (1993) evaluated and upheld three claims of CASAS implementation of effective educational programs. Each claim centered on adult learners in adult and alternative education programs. The adoption of key elements of the CASAS system determined the degree of program implementation. These key elements include identifying CASAS Competencies necessary for learners to meet their goals, linking these competencies to instructional materials using the CASAS Instructional Materials Quick Search, and linking these competencies to appropriate CASAS assessment tools. Learners within education programs that adopted the key elements demonstrated:

- Significant learning gains
- Increased hours of participation
- Achievement of higher goal attainment compared to programs that have not adopted the key elements

Numerous studies such as the National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (1991) have repeatedly confirmed this claim. In addition, two California studies, an Oregon study as well as a North Carolina study, among others, confirm these three claims.

Other important studies have examined the relationship of CASAS to past and current versions of the GED® and to the HiSET®. For the latest study results and more detailed information go to [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) > product-overviews > research-and-evaluation > assessment-research.

## Appendix B: Local Guidelines for Implementing State Assessment Policy

***[Local Agency Name]***  
**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II: Adult Education  
and Family Literacy Act**  
**Local Guidelines for Implementing State Assessment Policy**  
**Program Year *[2023-2024]***

*[Local agency name]* developed and implemented the following local procedures for assessment and data collection consistent with the CDE *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Assessment Policy Guidelines*.

### **I. Training and Dissemination of Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Assessment Policy**

The CDE requires annual training of local agency staff and dissemination of the agency's assessment guidelines. Please refer to the CASAS Web site [https://www2.casas.org/online\\_registration/](https://www2.casas.org/online_registration/) for the list of regional and online trainings.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide a description of the local agency's guidelines to provide training to agency staff and disseminate local assessment guidelines, e.g., who will be trained and frequency of training and timeline. Training of staff may include any of the following: individual, group, electronic, bound paper format, PowerPoint, video, or other means of conveying appropriate assessment and data collection procedures. Use a sign-in sheet to document staff participation.]*

### **II. Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level**

The CDE strongly encourages the use of appraisal/locator tests for newly enrolled adult learners whenever feasible to ensure appropriate educational placement, appropriate administration of pre-test forms, and appropriate selection of short- and long-term instructional goals.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) a description of the local agency's initial class and level placement process for Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and (2) the names and/or titles of the person or persons responsible for student orientation, initial appraisal, and placement.]*

### III. Progress Testing: Pre-test and Post-Test

Adult education local agency staff must administer pre-tests for learners as soon as feasible after enrollment but no later than two weeks after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given or after placing the learner into the appropriate instructional level.

- *Instructions for local agencies: Provide a description of the following: (1) how the local agency administers a pre-test as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program, and (2) the local agency testing schedule for pre-testing and post-testing, including the number of hours between pre-testing and post-testing.*

### IV. Use of Test Administration Manuals

The CDE requires that local adult literacy providers follow the test administration guidelines in each Test Administration Manual (TAM) published by CASAS for each **test series** used. All local adult literacy providers must maintain copies of TAMs onsite for all assessments used. TAMs provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) a description of how the local agency follows the test administration guidelines in each TAM, (2) a copy of TAM inventory, and (3) the storage and safekeeping process, and the name or title of the person responsible for maintaining the security of the TAMs.]*

### V. Training Requirements for Administering Standardized Assessments

The CDE requires all adult literacy providers to comply with the CASAS training policy. The CDE also requires each agency to participate annually in California Accountability Training, which provides guidance on specific state data and accountability requirements, including timelines. Training in CASAS assessments is also required to ensure accurate use of tests and appropriate interpretation of learner results, and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CDE requires that at least one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Assessment Implementation Training. Once trained, this individual will train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency. Agencies may use the packet titled *California Teachers New to CASAS*, which is included in the CASAS Implementation Training packet, to train others within the agency. Please refer to the CASAS Web site [https://www2.casas.org/online\\_registration/](https://www2.casas.org/online_registration/) for the list of regional and online trainings.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) the names and/or titles of persons responsible for attending CASAS Implementation Training and California Accountability Training and for providing training to other agency staff, if appropriate, and (2) a description of how the local agency trains all staff within the agency on implementation and accountability procedures. Include dates and times, location, and sign-in sheets.]*

## VI. Test Security Agreements

The CDE requires that all WIOA, Title II: AEFLA funded adult literacy providers sign an annual test security agreement. The following stipulations must be part of the local assessment guidelines:

To protect the quality and standardization of CASAS assessments, I agree to:

1. Follow all test procedures as required in this Test Security Policy document.
2. Secure all CASAS test materials, whether paper-based or computer delivered, under lock and key except during testing sessions.
3. Ensure that before or after any test administration, all test materials are secure and inaccessible to any non-testing personnel, examinees, or others not responsible for test administration.
4. Remain in the testing room at all times during the testing event and monitor all examinee activity as appropriate and in compliance with test security procedures.
5. Ensure that examinees sit at least three to five feet apart and do not talk or seek help from others during the testing event in any way, including use of electronic devices.
6. Refrain from assisting examinees with test answers on any test before or during the testing event.
7. Refrain from reviewing test questions with examinees after the testing event.
8. Ensure that agency staff members follow all specific testing procedures as stated in CASAS Test Administration Manuals (TAM).
9. Disallow use of any CASAS assessments as practice tests or as instructional tools.
10. Advise any agency, school, or testing entity to contact CASAS, and not my agency, with any inquiry about sharing or duplicating CASAS testing materials.
11. Refrain from duplicating or in any way reproducing any CASAS testing materials, including but not limited to test booklets, answer keys, answer sheets, CDs, and CASAS eTests®.
12. Report any violation of this test security policy.

My signature on this document certifies that I have read the above policy, will follow all test administration directions as stated in my CASAS TAM, and agree to abide by all test security procedures.

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Signature

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Position/Title

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Date

Date above policy was reviewed with appropriate staff: \_\_\_\_\_

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Print Name

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Agency Name



## Appendix C: Curricula and Proxy Hours

**Definition of Distance Learners:** Learners who receive more than 50 percent of instructional hours in a distance learning format during the program year are considered distance learners for NRS reporting purposes.

**Testing:** Learners in distance learning settings must fulfill the same assessment requirements as all other learners (see Section 2).

Agencies must assess distance learners in a secure proctored environment, either at the adult education site or other proctored and secure location and with staff trained to administer the assessment.

**Update for PY 2022-23:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OCTAE released memorandums 20-3 (March 27, 2020), 20-4 (April 17, 2020), and 20-5 (May 29, 2020). These directives eased the requirement for in person proctoring, and gave more flexibility to the states to implement progress testing remotely. These memos also required states to indicate whether it will allow pre- and post-testing remotely, and also to identify all students exempted from testing in response to agency closures related to COVID-19.

The CDE allows remote testing for California WIOA Title II agencies.

Curricula and Proxy Hours:

- **Curricula used for distance education:** Agencies may use curricula approved by the CDE that field-based distance learning programs have implemented successfully. Programs may also submit other curricula for CDE approval that meet the needs of the population they are serving.
- **Proxy Hours:** Proxy hours are determined by a review of CDE-approved range for each curriculum and may include hours for additional activities to meet local needs. CDE provides proxy contact hours for curricula that are used extensively in distance learning programs throughout California. CDE-recommended proxy hours are determined by a field group convened from each program area to review the most widely used curricula and determine an appropriate number of proxy hours per unit for each. The field colleagues are distance learning professionals with experience using the curricula in question. Agencies requesting a number different from the suggest number of proxy hours provide a justification, and if the CDE consultant has questions about the request, he or she contacts the agency to discuss and gather additional information.
- CDE promotes a rigorous outcome-based learner mastery model with designated benchmark levels for program completion verified by an identified process that may include teacher and/or external certification.

## **Addendum to Appendix C: Distance Learning**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this addendum to the California WIOA Title II Adult Education Assessment Policy for Program Year 2022-23 is to provide clarification and support to WIOA Title II agencies as they provide continuity of operations for adult learners in the current COVID-19 environment. The California Department of Education (CDE) will take the effect of the COVID-19 outbreak into consideration when reviewing PY 2022-23 data.

### **12 hours of “actual contact”**

All eligible individuals receiving services under AEFLA: WIOA Title II must complete at least 12 hours of instruction to be considered a “participant” under 34 CFR 463.150. Program closures due to COVID-19 have resulted in placing students in distance learning settings, and those students may be in various stages of progress. Learners can still obtain 12-hours of instruction through distance learning, by accruing contact hours through telephone, teleconference, online communication, or other channels where the participant and program staff can interact and through which participant identity is verifiable.

### **Remote Testing**

Starting PY 2019-20 CDE permitted agencies to implement remote testing and will continue that policy through PY 2023-24. Agencies that choose to use this flexibility must have procedures to ensure that (1) the student who is testing can be properly identified; (2) any approved test (i.e., any test determined suitable for use in the NRS) that is used is properly secured; and (3) the remote proctor can properly administer the test. Only secure electronic versions of a test are administered by a remote proctor and are deemed secure by the test publisher, are allowed.

In addition, WIOA Title II agencies must follow the guidelines listed below:

1. CASAS assessments, GED® and HiSET® are the only remote tests approved at this time.
2. Administrators of California WIOA Title II agencies that must complete the Agency Remote Testing Agreement Form before conducting remote testing, and submit the form to CDE Education Programs Consultants and CASAS Program Specialists.
3. Testing Administrators or Proctors must have a certificate of completion (as a certified CASAS eTests Proctor, which covers all test proctoring including online testing) before commencing remote assessments.
4. The testing credentials or training records of each proctor or administrator must be available to the CDE upon request for monitoring purposes.
5. California WIOA Title II funded agencies must incorporate a written standard operating procedure for remote testing into the Local Assessment Policy which addresses:
  - a. Test security,
  - b. Test integrity,
  - c. Protection of personally identifying information,
  - d. Specify the certification or trainings to administer the specific assessment tests,

- e. Process for pre-screening students to verify identity,
- f. Orientation of students to remote online testing environment,
- g. List technology tools used to test, per publisher guidance, and
- h. A plan to respond to video or technical glitches and communicate plans clearly to students.

### Approved MSG Assessments per California Adult Education Assessment Policy for Program Year 2023–24

Publisher	Verification of Student Identity	Approved Test determined suitable for use in the NRS	Agency Remote Testing Agreement Form	Certification or Training for Remote Testing
CASAS	Remote administration of specific CASAS Tests will be allowed using a video conferencing program which allows the test administrator to identify the student.	Remote Administration of specific NRS Approved CASAS tests will be allowed following the standard test administration protocols.	Only WIOA Title II agencies that have submitted an Agency Remote Testing Agreement form will remote test.	Remote Testing Guidelines are available for CASAS remote testing approaches. CASAS Remote Testing Webinar Trainings are also available.

### Approved HSE Assessments per California Adult Education Assessment Policy for Program Year 2023-24<sup>2</sup>

Publisher	Status for Remote Testing	Website for more information
GED Testing Service GED®	GED Testing Service offers online testing. Students will have to meet certain screening criteria prior to testing.	<a href="#">Take the GED Test Online   Online Proctored GED Test - GED</a>
HiSET®	PSI offers online testing for the HiSET exam.	<a href="#">The HiSET Exam   High School Equivalency Diploma   HiSET</a>

\* Students considering taking the GED® or HiSET® test, be aware of the following:

- Official testing center information can only be found on the websites above. Although some high school equivalency test preparation programs may issue “diplomas or certificates” demonstrating *program completion*, these documents ARE NOT official California high school equivalency credentials and not eligible for payment points.
- As of January 1, 2020, the California Department of Education (CDE) only authorizes the companies offering the GED® or HiSET® to issue a California High School Equivalency Certificate or Official Transcript. Free test preparation programs are available at [California Adult Education Provider Directory](#), [GED®](#) or [HiSET®](#)

<sup>2</sup> Recommendations remote testing requirements are based on from U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Program Memo 20-3, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions published on March 27, 2020 and found at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/octae-program-memo-20-3.pdf>