

# Rater Manual

Holistic Administrations



**TELPAS**  
**2023-2024**

Information about the Texas Assessment Program can be found on the [Student Assessment](#) website.

**[Texas Educator Committees](#)**

The Texas Education Agency encourages highly qualified educators to apply to participate in educator committees for the Texas Assessment Program. Click the link or scan the QR code for more information.



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# Resources

- [Texas Assessment Program](#)
- [TELPAS Resources](#)
- [Assessments for Special Populations](#)
- [Test Administration Resources](#)
- [Learning Management System](#)

Key Dates for TELPAS Holistic Administrations	
Online training opens	January 8, 2024
Online basic training courses for raters available	January 22, 2024
Calibration window opens for raters	February 5, 2024
Administration window	February 19–March 29, 2024
TIDE submissions due, including holistic ratings, score codes, and rater information	11:59 p.m. (CT) March 29, 2024

# General Information

## About This Manual

The instructions in this manual explain the responsibilities of holistic raters for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) administration. Test administrators must carefully read this manual prior to administering TELPAS holistic assessments. Test administration policies and procedures must be followed as written so that all testing conditions are uniform statewide. Raters are required to have this manual with them when holistically rating students. For special holistic or paper administrations of TELPAS for students in grades 2–12, refer to the *TELPAS Paper and Holistic Test Administration Information* in addition to this manual. For online administrations of TELPAS for students in grades 2–12, refer to the *TELPAS Test Administrator Manual*.

It is recommended that test administrators review the *TELPAS Educator Guide*, available on the [TELPAS Resources](#) webpage, prior to administering the assessment.

## The TELPAS Program

TELPAS is an English language proficiency assessment designed to assess the progress that emergent bilingual (EB) students make in learning the English language. The assessment is aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). TELPAS fulfills the Every Student Succeeds Act, which requires that all EB students be assessed annually until they are determined to be proficient in the English language.

TELPAS for kindergarten and grade 1 includes holistically rated observational assessments of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For grades 2–12, TELPAS consists of online assessments for listening and speaking and for reading and writing. TELPAS is administered once a year, in the spring, and retest opportunities are not offered.

## Policies and Procedures

In cooperation with district testing coordinators, campus coordinators will designate raters and assign them students to be rated. Designated raters are responsible for holistically rating the English language proficiency of assigned students in accordance with the prescribed holistic rating procedures. Rater training requirements must be completed, and assessment procedures in this manual must be followed. After training, raters will:

- assess the English language proficiency of students and assign one of four ratings: beginning, intermediate, advanced, or advanced high; and
- record the students' ratings and related information on the TELPAS Student Rating Roster.

Student ratings are based on classroom observations and written student work. The campus principal reviews student ratings, and campuses must maintain a file of the rating rosters.

## TELPAS Participation Requirements

All students enrolled in Texas public schools and open-enrollment charter schools are required by federal and state law to participate in the Texas Assessment Program. EB students are required to be assessed annually with an English language proficiency assessment until they are determined to be proficient by meeting the [EB reclassification criteria](#). This includes students classified as emergent bilingual (EB)/English learner (EL) in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) whose parents have declined bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) program services (PEIMS code C).

In rare circumstances, a student receiving special education services may not be required to participate in one or more TELPAS language domains for reasons associated with the student's particular disability. The reason for not assessing the student must be determined by the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee in conjunction with the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) and must be well supported by documentation in the student's individualized education program (IEP) by the ARD committee and in the student's permanent record file by the LPAC. Participation decisions must be considered individually for each student on a domain-by-domain basis.

Refer to the *LPAC Decisions Educator Guide* on the [Assessments for Special Populations](#) webpage for more information.

## Scheduling TELPAS Test Administrations

For kindergarten and grade 1, TELPAS listening, speaking, reading, and writing assessments are administered holistically. Students' holistic ratings must be entered in the *Holistic Ratings Upload* template and submitted in TIDE.

For grades 2–12, TELPAS listening and speaking assessments and reading and writing assessments are administered online. An exception may be possible for a student who requires accommodations that cannot be provided online, for a student who is unable to participate in one domain of TELPAS, or for a student whose technology access precludes online testing. In

these rare and unavoidable circumstances, a special paper or holistic administration of a TELPAS assessment may be given. Any student who is administered a special holistic administration of TELPAS listening, speaking, or writing must have his or her ratings entered in the template available through the *Holistic Rating Upload* task and submitted in TIDE. Refer to the [Special Administration of an Assessment](#) page of the *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* for more information.

For the 2023–2024 school year, the six-week test administration window for TELPAS is February 19–March 29, 2024. Each district should establish a local schedule to administer the online assessments and complete the holistic ratings. District personnel should plan to test during the first five weeks of the testing window and reserve the last week to upload holistic ratings in TIDE. District personnel must verify that all students' ratings have been uploaded and processed in TIDE by 11:59 p.m. (CT) on March 29.

# Test Security and Confidentiality

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of all components of the Texas Assessment Program is critical for ensuring fair and equal testing opportunities for all Texas students. Given the many uses of student performance data and the need to assure educators, parents, students, and the public that test results are meaningful and valid, it is imperative that all individuals participating in the Texas Assessment Program preserve the integrity of test content and student data through strict adherence to the instructions and procedures contained in the *Coordinator Resources* and the test administration materials.

## Secure Materials

TELPAS assessments are secure assessment instruments. The contents of these assessments, including student information used or obtained in their administration, are confidential. Secure materials include TELPAS calibration activities and TELPAS holistic ratings. TELPAS Student Rating Rosters and TELPAS Writing Collection documents become secure once student information or ratings are recorded. Test security involves accounting for all secure materials before, during, and after each test administration.

## Testing Irregularities

This section describes the different types of testing irregularities that might result from district testing personnel actions taken before, during, and after testing and includes examples of both procedural irregularities and serious violations. Testing personnel should understand the distinctions between different types of irregularities so that any that occur may be properly reported and addressed.

### Procedural Testing Irregularities

Procedural testing irregularities are less severe and more common than serious violations and typically occur when district testing personnel deviate from specified testing procedures. Annual training on test security and administration procedures and administration-specific training are the best ways for district personnel to avoid procedural irregularities. Examples of specific types of procedural irregularities follow.

#### Accommodation Errors

Accommodation errors typically involve providing appropriate accommodations to ineligible students or not providing appropriate accommodations to eligible students. Many accommodation errors, when identified in a timely manner, can be resolved with minimal impact to students. Testing personnel should be instructed to immediately notify their campus testing coordinator if they discover an accommodation error. If the error is not detected until after the assessment is complete, the district testing coordinator should submit the assessment for scoring unless the lack of the specific accommodation has a significant effect on the student's ability to accurately demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills. If that is the case, the assessment should be invalidated. If the district coordinator decides to invalidate a student's assessment, campus personnel should notify the student's parent or guardian.

District coordinators should contact the [TEA Student Assessment Division](#) for guidance in resolving accommodation errors.

**Examples:**

- A student was provided an unallowable accommodation.
- A student was provided an accommodation for which he or she was not approved.
- An allowable and approved accommodation was not provided to a student.
- An allowable and approved accommodation was not properly administered or applied.

## Accounting Errors

Improperly accounting for secure materials typically involves late, lost, or missing materials; failure to maintain the security of the materials; or improperly accounting for students' tests, responses, or results. Most situations that involve the loss or late return of secure materials result from not establishing or implementing basic inventory procedures.

Testing personnel who locate any secure materials that were not returned after an administration must contact the TEA Student Assessment Division immediately. District coordinators should always question why materials were returned late or how these materials were discovered in order to determine whether there was a breach in security or confidentiality.

For all incidents in which secure materials were left unattended, district coordinators are required to submit a testing irregularity form indicating if there was a breach in security or confidentiality.

**Examples:**

- Testing personnel lost or misplaced secure test materials (e.g., rating rosters or assembled writing collections).
- Secure test materials were left unattended.
- A student's holistic ratings were submitted incorrectly (e.g., wrong domain, wrong student).
- Students' test results or test performance were improperly shared (i.e., a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] of 1974).

## Eligibility Errors

Eligibility errors typically involve administering the incorrect assessment to a student, not testing an eligible student, or testing an ineligible student. Many eligibility errors, when identified in a timely manner, can be resolved with minimal impact to students. Testing personnel should be instructed to immediately notify their campus or district coordinator if they suspect a student is being tested or has been tested incorrectly. District coordinators should contact the TEA Student Assessment Division for guidance in resolving the issue.

**Examples:**

- A student was administered an incorrect assessment (e.g., wrong grade level).

- A student was administered the same assessment more than once in an administration (e.g., a holistic version and an online version).
- An eligible student (e.g., an EB student whose parents waived district ESL services) was not administered an assessment.
- An ineligible student was incorrectly administered an assessment.
- District testing personnel failed to upload ratings from TELPAS holistic administrations in TIDE.
- District testing personnel failed to properly account for all eligible testers.

## Training Errors

Training errors involve mistakes in training, calibration, or test security oaths.

### Examples:

- Personnel were permitted to administer assessments or handle secure materials even though they were not properly trained or did not sign a test security oath.
- Raters for TELPAS did not follow proper training or calibration procedures.

## Serious Testing Violations

Incidents caused by district testing personnel that violate the security and confidentiality of an assessment are considered serious violations. District coordinators must report serious testing violations to the TEA Student Assessment Division as soon as they are made aware of such incidents. District personnel should contact TEA when they are unclear what constitutes a serious violation or whether an irregularity has occurred. Serious testing violations include the following:

- falsifying holistic ratings or student responses;
- viewing secure test content before, during, or after an administration unless specifically authorized by TEA or by the procedures outlined in the test administration materials;
- discussing or disclosing secure test content or student responses;
- duplicating, recording, or electronically capturing confidential test content unless specifically authorized by TEA or by the procedures outlined in the test administration materials;
- fraudulently exempting or preventing a student from participating in the administration of a required state assessment;
- receiving or providing unallowable assistance during calibration activities (e.g., taking notes, providing answer sheets, or sharing answers);
- encouraging or assisting an individual to engage in the conduct described above or in any other serious violation of security and confidentiality; and

- failing to report to an appropriate authority that an individual has engaged in or is suspected of engaging in conduct described above or in any other serious violation of security and confidentiality.

## Penalties for Violating Security and Confidentiality of Assessments

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §101.3031 states that any violation of test security or confidential integrity may result in TEA taking the following actions:

- invalidating student test results;
- referring certified educators to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) for sanctions in accordance with TAC [§247](#), Educators' Code of Ethics, and TAC [§249](#), Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases; and
- lowering the school district's or charter school's accreditation status or a school district's, charter school's, or campus's accountability rating in accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) [§39.003](#) or appointment of a monitor, conservator, or management team to the school district or charter school in accordance with TEC [Chapter 39A](#).

In addition, TAC [§249.15](#) stipulates that while charter school test administrators are not required to be certified, any irregularity during the administration of any assessment required by TEC Chapter 39, Subchapter B, would cause the charter itself to come under review by the commissioner of education for possible sanctions or revocation, as provided under TEC [§12.115](#).

As indicated in TAC §249.15, any person who violates, assists in the violation of, or solicits another to violate or assist in the violation of test security or confidentiality, as well as any person who fails to report such a violation or fails to cooperate with a TEA investigation, is subject to the following penalties:

- placement of restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a certificate, either indefinitely or for a set term;
- issuance of an inscribed or non-inscribed reprimand;
- suspension of a certificate for a set term or issuance of a probated suspension for a set term;
- revocation or cancellation of a certificate, which includes accepting the surrender of a certificate, without opportunity for reapplication for a set term or permanently; or
- imposition of any additional conditions or restrictions upon a certificate that the SBEC deems necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and professional development of the educator or to protect students, parents of students, campus personnel, or school officials.

Specifically, TAC [§249.17](#) indicates a mandatory minimum sanction of a one-year suspension of the certificate for an educator who is found guilty of intentionally manipulating the results or violating the security or confidentiality of any statewide assessment.

As stated in TEC [§39.0303](#), Secure Assessment Instruments, Criminal Penalty, a person commits an offense if:

- the person intentionally discloses the contents of any portion of a secure assessment instrument developed or administered under this subchapter, including the answer to any question in the assessment instrument; and
- the disclosure affects or is likely to affect the individual performance of one or more students on the assessment instrument.

An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

# Accommodations

TEA defines accommodations as changes to materials or procedures that enable students to participate meaningfully in learning and testing. The holistically rated assessments are based on student classwork and observations of students in daily instruction. When assessing EB students who receive special education services, raters consider the students' ability to use English to access the general curriculum at their enrolled grade in accordance with the accommodations designated in their IEP. Instructional accommodations do not interfere with the holistically rated assessment process if they do not invalidate the rater's ability to evaluate the student's English language proficiency levels according to the proficiency level descriptors (PLDs).

# Training

## ☐ Understand Rater Responsibilities

Raters, proctors, and verifiers must understand their responsibilities, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- using the ELPS and PLDs to holistically rate students
- participating in test administration training
- participating in online holistic rating training
- completing monitored calibration activities, if required
- implementing the test administration processes and procedures stated in this manual and other test administration materials
- maintaining the security of test materials until they are returned to the campus coordinator
- reporting any suspected violation of test security to the campus coordinator

## ☐ Review the Applicable Test Administration Materials

Raters, proctors, and verifiers should review and become familiar with the following resources:

- rater manual
- test administration instructions, as applicable
- training modules in the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#)

## ☐ Attend Test Administration Training

Campus coordinators schedule and conduct test administration training sessions.

- All raters, proctors, and verifiers are required to receive training on test security and administration procedures at least once; however, campus coordinators may require additional training at their discretion. Annual training is strongly encouraged, especially for new or updated policies and procedures. Training sessions should be completed by February 16, 2024. If necessary, additional individuals may be trained after this date.
- The applicable test administration materials should be available during the training session.
- Recommended training modules for raters, proctors, and verifiers in LMS include:
  - Test Security for the Texas Assessment Program
  - Managing Secure Materials for the Texas Assessment Program

Required topics for rater, proctor, and verifier training include:

- Test security
  - test security procedures and test security oaths

- reporting testing irregularities
- handling testing irregularities
- consequences for adult cheating, specifically collaborating or discussing calibration set responses or falsifying holistic ratings
- Establishing timelines for
  - completing online holistic rating training, as applicable
  - scheduling and completing holistic ratings
  - completing holistic rating rosters
  - verifying grades 2–12 writing collections for holistic administrations, as applicable
  - uploading holistic ratings in TIDE, as applicable
- Preparing for test administrations
  - identifying eligible EB students
  - understanding the fundamentals of the holistic rating process
  - using the PLDs for rating
  - online holistic rating training components, including grade cluster assignments
  - location and date of monitored calibration sessions, as applicable
  - process for calibrating, as applicable
  - support for raters who do not successfully calibrate
  - understanding procedures for special holistic administration of writing, as applicable
- During test administrations
  - proper testing procedures
  - completing ratings
  - completing and storing secure test materials such as rating rosters and writing collections
  - availability of campus coordinator and other testing supervisors
- Entering and verifying student data in TIDE, as applicable
- Returning materials to the campus coordinator

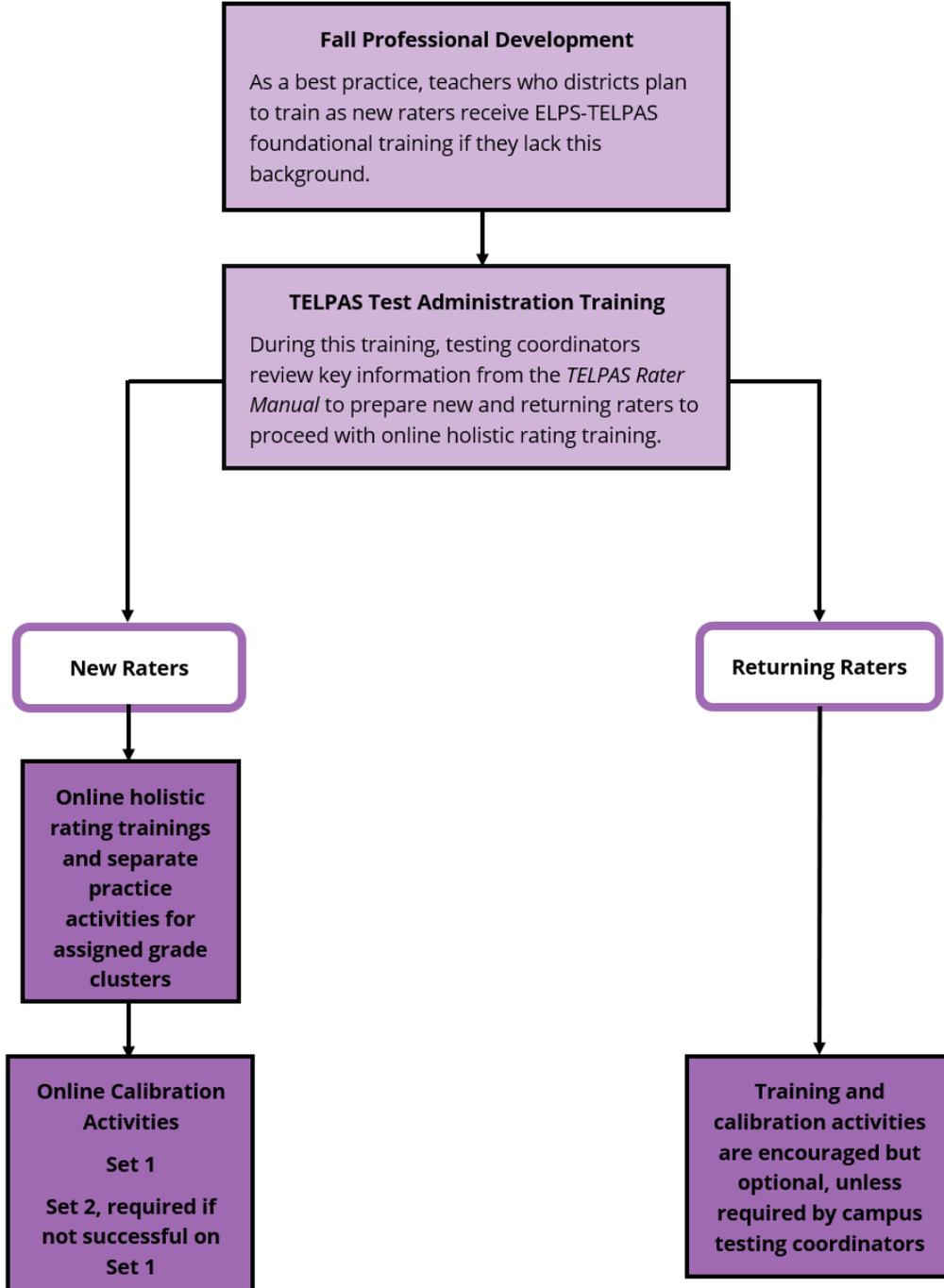
## □ Participate in Online Holistic Rating Training

The online holistic rating training prepares teachers to rate English language proficiency consistently with the holistic rating rubrics—the PLDs from the ELPS.

- The online holistic rating trainings are available in LMS until the end of the TELPAS assessment window. However, raters should complete their training requirements by the first day of the TELPAS testing window.

- The trainings are specific to grade clusters, and raters should complete the holistic rating training in the grade cluster that corresponds to the grade levels of the students they will rate.
  - Raters who are assigned multiple clusters within grades 2–12 for special holistic administrations are required to complete the trainings and separate practice activities in the cluster in which they have the most EB students. They should also review the separate practice activities in the other clusters to ensure their readiness to apply the PLD rubrics appropriately.
  - Raters who are assigned multiple clusters including kindergarten through grade 1 are required to complete the trainings and separate practice activities for kindergarten through grade 1 and for at least one other cluster within grades 2–12. Raters with more than one additional cluster within grades 2–12 should complete the training and practice activities for the cluster in which they have the most EB students. Raters should also review the separate practice activities in the other clusters to ensure their readiness to apply the PLD rubrics appropriately.
- New raters are required to complete the online holistic rating trainings and separate practice activities for the grade cluster they are assigned. These online trainings may be completed independently or in a group. New raters must successfully complete the assigned online trainings and separate practice activities before they access rater calibration activities.
- Returning raters are encouraged to take the online holistic rating trainings each year that correspond to the grade levels of the students they will rate. However, they are not required to complete the trainings unless otherwise directed by the campus coordinator.
- Optional trainings and practice are available in LMS for educators who are required to assemble and verify special holistic administrations of TELPAS grades 2–12 writing.
- A certificate of completion for the online holistic rating trainings is available to print in LMS upon completion of the trainings and practice activities.
- Raters will be awarded professional development hours upon completion of the online trainings and practice activities.
  - Five hours are awarded for the kindergarten through grade 1 training.
  - Three hours are awarded for the grades 2–12 training.
  - One hour is awarded for the optional assembling and verifying trainings.

## Kindergarten–Grade 12 Holistic Rating Training Flowchart



## □ Attend Monitored Calibration Sessions

Campus coordinators schedule and conduct monitored calibration sessions.

- New raters are required to successfully complete rater calibration activities.
- Returning raters are not required to repeat calibration activities if they have successfully completed the activities at least once. However, campus coordinators have the discretion to require returning raters to complete calibration activities or other training.
- Calibration activities must be completed in a monitored setting.
- Most raters will need 1–2 hours to complete a calibration set.
- Calibration sets 1 and 2 may be completed in one session or in separate sessions. Once a rater completes a set, he or she cannot revisit that set on another day.
- The use of headphones is required for raters to complete the calibration activities for the listening and speaking domains.
- Raters are provided the calibration passcode once they have logged in for their calibration session and must only access calibration sets during the monitored calibration session.
- Raters may use a copy of the PLDs during their calibration activities. Raters may also be provided with scratch paper, as requested. Copies of the PLDs and any scratch paper used during the calibration session must be destroyed.
- Calibration activities must be completed individually. Collaborating or discussing responses to calibration activities is **NOT** allowed.
- Raters must begin with calibration set 1. If raters are successful on set 1, they should provide a copy of their certificate to the proctor.
- If raters are unsuccessful on set 1, they should be notified as to how to proceed to set 2.
- Educators are not authorized by TEA to serve as TELPAS raters unless they have successfully completed calibration activities at least once. If a rater does not successfully calibrate by the end of set 2, the rater may still be authorized to serve at the discretion of the district. District testing personnel are required to provide rating support for these teachers so that their assigned students are assessed consistently with the PLDs.
- After completing a calibration set, a rater's summary page will indicate a Pass or Fail and how many responses were correct out of the total number. Only raters who have passed the calibration will receive a certificate of completion in LMS.
- Certificates will be available to print immediately after successful completion of a calibration set.
- Calibration certificates must be maintained at the local level.

It is a serious testing violation to record, discuss, or share answers from the rating practice and calibration activities. TELPAS testing violations must be reported as indicated in the “Test Security and Confidentiality” section of this manual.

After entering the passcode for a calibration set, raters are required to read a statement and affirm that they will complete the rating activities independently. While collaboration is encouraged for holistically rating students, it is imperative that rater calibration is performed individually to ensure that raters can apply the PLDs accurately and consistently.

Individuals are not authorized by TEA to serve as TELPAS raters unless they complete the state-required training and calibration activities.

## □ Review and Sign an Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality

- Raters, proctors, verifiers, and other campus personnel participating in the TELPAS administration must complete an [Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality](#) after training and before handling secure test materials and content.
- Raters, proctors, verifiers, and other campus personnel must initial each item on the test security oath, as applicable.
- In addition, raters and other campus personnel who are responsible for uploading holistic ratings in TIDE must confirm compliance with security requirements by completing specific sections of the test security oath.
- A copy of the completed test security oath (electronic or paper) must be submitted to the campus coordinator.

The campus coordinator is the contact person for all assessment-related matters on campus. Any questions that arise during testing should be directed to the campus coordinator.

# Prepare for Holistic Administrations

## ☐ Understand Responsibilities

Raters must:

- complete all training requirements before rating students in the applicable domains;
- maintain confidentiality of test materials, including materials containing personally identifiable information and ratings;
- rate students in kindergarten and grade 1 in all four domains; and
- rate students in grades 2–12 in the applicable domains.

## ☐ Receive Test Materials from Campus Coordinator

Raters must have the required test materials, including access to online documents or printed copies of the following (available via the [TELPAS Resources](#) webpage):

- TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors
- TELPAS Student Rating Roster
- TELPAS Writing Collection, as needed

## ☐ Prepare to Rate Students

- Prior to rating students, raters should review the appropriate portions of the [TELPAS Educator Guide](#), which reinforces key points from the basic training course.
- Make copies of the PLDs for all students being rated. Put the students' names on the copies of the PLDs and use them to make individual notes about observations of students' English language proficiency.

## ☐ Collaborate as Needed

- Raters should keep in mind the value of collaboration with other teachers and school personnel during preparation to determine students' proficiency ratings.
- Collaboration will help ensure rating accuracy and is particularly important when a student has different content-area teachers or is near the border between proficiency levels.
- District personnel may require collaboration with other raters or content-area teachers to ensure the validity and reliability of TELPAS ratings.
- While collaboration with others is important, remember raters are ultimately responsible for the ratings assigned.

# Rate Students

Before rating students, consider the following questions:

- Have the students participated in enough contexts that require them to use everyday English, routine academic English, and cognitively demanding content-based English?
- Have the students been placed in situations in which they need to show the ability to express themselves in English in extended ways, not just through brief answers or short written responses?
- Have students been in enough situations in which they express themselves in their comfort zone and in which they are pushed to show areas of second language acquisition they still need to develop?

## □ Follow Guidelines When Rating Students

- Use the PLDs and other TELPAS holistic rating training materials.
- Do not factor in other student abilities or characteristics.
- Start with the students whose English language proficiency levels are clearest.
- Base ratings on observations from a variety of social and academic settings over time.
- Evaluate the current level of English language proficiency exhibited by the student for each applicable domain.
- Ensure that the proficiency rating designated represents the level at which the student performs most consistently.
- Collaborate with other teachers and school personnel as needed to determine a student's English language proficiency rating.
- Complete all ratings for one student before proceeding to the next student.
- Compare each student to the PLDs, and do not let the proficiency levels of other EB students influence ratings.
- Determine a student's rating by reflecting on the PLDs and the student's current ability to understand and use English in social and academic settings. In most cases, it will not be necessary to conduct specially designed language observation tasks.
- Remember that academic language proficiency is not the same as academic achievement. An EB student who has academic language proficiency can understand and use the English students need for effective participation in regular all-English instructional settings with minimal second language acquisition support. A student does not have to be a high academic achiever to have an advanced high level of English language proficiency.
- Ensure that the information recorded on the rating roster is accurate and complete.

TELPAS Student Rating Rosters and TELPAS Writing Collection documents become secure test materials once student information has been added. Keep TELPAS Student Rating Rosters and TELPAS Writing Collection documents that contain confidential student information in secure storage (for example, in a locked filing cabinet or closet or on a secure server) when not in use.

# Complete Holistic Administrations

## ☐ Collect Test Materials

- Collect TELPAS Student Rating Rosters and TELPAS Writing Collection documents, as applicable.
- Raters must review the accuracy of any student data or test status information they have been asked to verify.
- Ensure each TELPAS Student Rating Roster and TELPAS Writing Collection document has been completed, signed, and dated.

## ☐ Return Test Materials to the Campus Coordinator

- Prior to returning materials, raters must account for all secure test materials.
- Raters must return all secure materials to the campus coordinator after the holistic administration process is complete. This includes completed TELPAS Student Rating Rosters and TELPAS Writing Collection documents.

## ☐ Enter Student Information in TIDE, as Applicable

Raters who have been assigned by the campus coordinator to submit holistic ratings, enter and update score codes, verify student demographic information, or enter other information in TIDE must receive access information and additional training.

TE★AS ASSESSMENT