

From: Student Assessment
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2018 9:50 AM
Subject: Request for District Participation in the TELPAS Alternate Pilot Test

To the District and ESC Testing Coordinator Addressed:

This communication is a request for district participation in the 2018 Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Alternate pilot test.



As announced at the 2017 Texas Assessment Conference, the state is required to administer an alternate English language proficiency (ELP) assessment for English learners (ELs) with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general ELP assessment, even with allowable accommodations. In response, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has worked with Texas educators to develop TELPAS Alternate to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This assessment will evaluate limited English proficient (LEP) students whose admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee has determined eligibility for STAAR Alternate 2.

As with the general TELPAS, TELPAS Alternate is aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS); however, TELPAS Alternate is based on alternate Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) that were developed by Texas educators to appropriately determine the progress of English proficiency for students with significant cognitive disabilities. In addition, TELPAS Alternate is a holistic inventory that is intended to be accessible to all students in this population regardless of disability.

It is important to note that Texas is the first state in the country to create and pilot an alternate ELP assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities as required by ESSA.

Request for District Participation

For districts that plan to volunteer to assist Texas with the design and implementation of this innovative new ELP assessment, the TELPAS Alternate pilot test will be administered over a 10-day window from April 23 to May 4, 2018, to students in grades 2 through 12 who are eligible to participate. The pilot test is a preliminary study intended to evaluate the effectiveness and feasibility of this new assessment. Results from the pilot test will provide TEA an opportunity to make improvements to the assessment prior to the implementation of a full-scale operational assessment in 2019.

Districts that have students who meet **ALL** of the following criteria should participate in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test. Students who participate in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test must

- be enrolled in grades 2–12, **AND**
- be classified as LEP in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), **AND**
- be receiving special education services, **AND**
- meet the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2.

For LEP students enrolled in grade 2, only those students whose ARD committees have determined STAAR Alternate 2 eligibility for the 2018–2019 school year (i.e., grade 3) should participate. For LEP students enrolled in grade 2 whose ARD committees have not made this determination yet, there is no need to participate in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test. ARD

committee determinations about STAAR have not occurred for LEP students enrolled in kindergarten and grade 1, so these students will not participate in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test.

Based on PEIMS data, there are approximately 4,500 students who are eligible to be assessed with TELPAS Alternate. Due to this small number, it is imperative that all districts who have eligible students, even one eligible student, participate in the pilot test. This will help to ensure that TEA has reliable data to make valid decisions about the design of TELPAS Alternate. Registration information is provided in this communication for those districts who are assisting the state with this pilot test.

Participant Commitment

TELPAS Alternate is not a traditional test in which students answer questions about the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Instead, it is a holistic inventory that test administrators will use to determine a student's English language proficiency based on a standardized set of observable behaviors. Test administrators will consider a student's use of the English language related to each specific observable behavior and select the behavior that best matches how the student performs most consistently. It is not expected that the test administrator conduct classroom activities specifically for this pilot test. It is more appropriate to think about the student's use of English in a variety of instructional settings over a period of time. Test administrators or other designated testing personnel will enter the student's ratings from each of the four domains into the Assessment Management System.

Test administrators will receive a brief manual for the TELPAS Alternate pilot test that they should become familiar with; however, no additional training is required. TEA and Pearson will be hosting an optional webinar on April 16, 2018 to review the TELPAS Alternate pilot test manual and answer any questions districts may have prior to administering the assessment. Information about the time of the webinar and a registration link will be provided to districts once they register students for the pilot test. In addition, test administrators will be asked to complete a short post-administration survey on their experience administering TELPAS Alternate and their suggestions for changes to increase student accessibility to this assessment.

Student Registration

For districts that participate in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test, the window to import student registration files to the Assessment Management System is now open. Districts can continue to update student data through the testing window, which closes May 4, 2018. Districts should provide student registration information for all students who will participate in the pilot test. To register a student for the 2018 TELPAS Alternate pilot test, use the TELPAS student registration import file. For file specifications, review the student registration file format at <http://www.TexasAssessment.com/administrators/technology/>. For more information about the Assessment Management System, refer to the *TELPAS Assessment Management System User's Guide* at <https://tx.pearsonaccessnext.com>.

TEA will be reaching out to districts in the next few weeks to confirm participation in the TELPAS Alternate pilot test and answer any questions that may arise. In addition, TEA will be soliciting select districts for participation in a TELPAS Alternate cognitive lab that will also be conducted during the pilot test window. TEA staff will visit elementary, middle, and high schools around the state to gather feedback from test administrators about their experience using the holistic inventory to describe student performance. The intent of these visits is to provide teachers the opportunity to "think aloud" about their interaction with this new assessment and to determine how accessible it was for their students. Information obtained from both the pilot test

and the cognitive lab will be used to refine training materials and observable behaviors prior to the spring 2019 operational administration of TELPAS Alternate.

For questions about the TELPAS Alternate pilot test, contact TEA at assessment.specialpopulations@tea.texas.gov or 512-463-9536. For technical support related to the Assessment Management System, contact the Customer Service Center using the [live chat feature](#), the [Pearson Customer Support Form](#), or by calling 800-627-0225.

Thank you in advance for your support and participation in assisting with the creation of one of the first alternate ELP assessments in the country.

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division
512-463-9536