



Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

Test Administrator Manual

Grades 2–12



TELPAS Alternate

2025–2026

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 Alternate Resources](#)
- [Assessments for Special Populations](#)
- [Test Administration Resources](#)

General Information

About This Manual

The instructions in this manual explain the responsibilities of test administrators for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Alternate administration. Test administrators must carefully read this manual prior to administering any TELPAS Alternate holistic inventories. Test administration policies and procedures must be followed as written so that all testing conditions are uniform statewide.

The TELPAS Alternate Program

TELPAS Alternate is an alternate English language proficiency assessment designed to assess the progress that emergent bilingual (EB) students with the most significant cognitive disabilities make in learning the English language. It is a holistic inventory aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). However, TELPAS Alternate is based on alternate proficiency level descriptors (PLDs). TELPAS Alternate fulfills the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires that EB students with the most significant cognitive disabilities be assessed annually until they are determined to be proficient in the English language.

TELPAS Alternate holistically assesses students in grades 2–12 in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students must be assessed in all four domains; there are no domain-specific exemptions. TELPAS Alternate is administered once a year, in the spring, and retest opportunities are not offered.

Policies and Procedures

TELPAS Alternate Participation Requirements

All students enrolled in Texas public schools and open-enrollment charter schools, including virtual schools, are required by federal and state law to participate in the Texas Assessment Program. EB students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not over the age of 21 are required to be assessed annually in English language proficiency until they are determined to be proficient by meeting the EB student reclassification criteria, available on the [Bilingual and English as a Second Language Education Programs](#) web page. 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). Refer to the *LPAC Decisions Educator Guide* on the [Assessments for Special Populations](#) web page for more information.

A student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, in collaboration with the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), must determine if an EB student receiving special education services meets the participation requirements for TELPAS Alternate, available on the [TELPAS Alternate Resources](#) web page. The following grade-level guidelines apply:

- Students in grades 3–12 who meet all participation requirements will take TELPAS Alternate. If students do not meet all participation requirements, they must take TELPAS.
- Students in grade 2 will take TELPAS unless they have an ARD committee. If a student has an ARD committee, the ARD committee, in collaboration with the LPAC, must make an assessment determination for TELPAS Alternate, as there is no State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2 assessment for grade 2.
- Students in kindergarten and grade 1 must be assessed with TELPAS holistically rated assessments, as there is no TELPAS Alternate assessment for those grades.

In rare circumstances a student's ARD committee may determine prior to the test administration that the student will not participate in TELPAS Alternate because the student meets the eligibility criteria for a medical exception or no authentic academic response. Refer to the eligibility criteria on the TELPAS Alternate Resources web page for more information.

Scheduling TELPAS Alternate Test Administrations

TELPAS Alternate is a holistic inventory for which observational ratings must be submitted in the Response Entry system (RE). For the 2025–26 school year, the six-week test administration window for TELPAS Alternate is February 16–March 27, 2026. District coordinators should establish a local schedule to administer TELPAS Alternate during the testing window. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) highly recommends that district coordinators plan to complete holistic ratings and submit data early in the testing window to ensure that all students have an opportunity to be rated in case of technical, weather, or emergency issues. District coordinators should reserve the last week of the testing window to ensure that all eligible students have been rated, that all Observable Behavior ratings are submitted in RE, and that all student

information, including score codes and years in U.S. schools, are submitted in in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE). All assessments must be completed and processed in the system and all students must be accounted for in the system by 11:59 p.m. (CT) on March 27.

Test Security and Confidentiality

Maintaining the security of all components of the Texas Assessment Program is critical for ensuring fair and equal testing opportunities for all Texas students. Test security for the Texas Assessment Program includes, but is not limited to, preserving the confidentiality of students' individual assessment results and personally identifiable information used or obtained in the administration of an assessment. 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 *District and Campus Coordinator Resources* and the test administration materials.

Training on test security and administration procedures should be provided annually to ensure a standardized test administration and the best testing experience for Texas students. Annual training is especially important for understanding and implementing new or updated policies and procedures. Lack of annual training typically results in testing incidents that may impact students' test scores, campus and district accountability ratings, and, ultimately, an educator's teaching certificate.

Secure Materials

TELPAS Alternate assessments are secure assessment instruments. The contents of these assessments, including student information used or obtained in their administration, are confidential. Observable Behaviors Inventory documents become confidential once student ratings are recorded on them. Test security involves accounting for all secure and confidential materials before, during, and after each test administration.

Testing Incidents

There are two different types of testing incidents that might result from district personnel actions taken before, during, and after testing: procedural testing irregularities and serious testing violations. Testing personnel should understand the distinctions between different types of testing incidents 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 testing 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.

Accounting Errors

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

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 district or campus 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.

Training Errors

Training errors involve mistakes in training or test security oaths, such as when district personnel are permitted to administer assessments or handle secure materials even though they were not properly trained or did not sign a test security oath.

Serious Testing Violations

Incidents caused by district personnel that violate the security and confidentiality of an assessment are considered serious testing 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 coordinators should contact TEA when they are unclear what constitutes a serious testing violation or whether a testing incident has occurred. Serious testing violations, as outlined in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) [§101.3031](#), are listed in the following table.

Violation	Explanation or Example
Falsifying holistic ratings or student responses	District testing personnel must NOT fabricate or misrepresent students' holistic ratings or responses.
Discussing or disclosing secure test content or student responses	District testing personnel must NOT talk about, write about, distribute, email, or post or chat on social media about test questions or student ratings, whether to aid a student or for their own interest.

Violation	Explanation or Example
Fraudulently exempting or preventing a student from participating in the administration of a required state assessment	District testing personnel must NOT falsify or misrepresent students' personal information, demographic information, or eligibility status.
Encouraging or assisting an individual to engage in the conduct described above or in any other serious violation of security and confidentiality	District testing personnel must NOT encourage others to participate or aid others in participating in serious testing violations.
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	District testing personnel must report any potential serious testing violations.

Penalties for Violating Security and Confidentiality of Assessments

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 on a certificate that the SBEC deems necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and professional development of the educator or to protect students, parents of students, school 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. Because TELPAS Alternate is an assessment based on a year of quality English instruction, the student performance described in the Observable Behaviors occurs while students have access to the instructional accommodations indicated in their individualized education program (IEP). A teacher’s determination of the English proficiency of a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities using TELPAS Alternate should reflect the student’s performance in English using the same accommodations used in daily instruction.

For purposes of TELPAS Alternate, “English” is not limited to the typical spoken or written English of other state assessments. It is important to recognize that some EB students use sign language, braille, or another method of communication as a substitute for typical spoken or written English in one or more domains. Teachers who are evaluating how well their students participate in classroom activities in English should consider whether an alternate response mode is an appropriate way for a student to demonstrate proficiency in a specific language domain.

Domain	Allowable Response Modes
For the listening domain, it is allowable for a student to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alert to • gaze at • point to • reach for • touch or pick up • draw • circle • nod • gesture toward the targeted stimulus
For the speaking domain, it is allowable for a student to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbalize • form responses with the assistance of a communication device with preprogrammed familiar vocabulary or programmed student vocabulary • sign responses
For the reading domain, it is allowable for a student to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read • alert to • gaze at

Domain	Allowable Response Modes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • point to • reach for • touch or pick up • draw • circle • nod • gesture toward the targeted stimulus • verbalize or sign by responding to letters, words, or numbers to form a response when a wide range of manipulatives is available • arrange letters, words, or numbers to form a response when a wide range of manipulatives is available • form responses with the assistance of a communication device with preprogrammed familiar vocabulary or programmed student vocabulary • indicate yes or no when presented with three or more choices and being asked, "Is this the ___?"
<p>For the writing domain, it is allowable for a student to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write • alert to • gaze at • point to • reach for • touch or pick up • draw • circle • nod • gesture toward the targeted stimulus • use adaptive writing equipment (typing, keyboarding) • arrange letters, words, or numbers to form a response when a wide range of manipulatives is available

Training

Test administrators and other campus personnel participating in TELPAS Alternate administrations are required to be trained in test security and administration procedures. Training should be provided annually to ensure a standardized test administration and the best testing experience for Texas students. Annual training is especially important for understanding and implementing new or updated policies and procedures. It is imperative that all individuals participating in TELPAS Alternate administrations preserve the integrity of test content and student data through strict adherence to the instructions and procedures contained in this manual. Lack of annual training typically results in testing incidents that may impact students' test scores, campus and district accountability ratings, and, ultimately, an educator's teaching certificate.

☐ Understand Test Administrator Responsibilities

Test administrators must understand their responsibilities, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- implementing the test administration processes and procedures stated in this manual and other test administration materials
- ensuring that students have the allowed accommodations for the assessments
- 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

Test administrators should review and become familiar with the following resources:

- this test administrator manual
- the following training modules in the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS):
 - Test Security for the Texas Assessment Program
 - Managing Secure Materials for the Texas Assessment Program
- [RE User Guide](#), as applicable

☐ Complete Holistic Training

- It is highly recommended that test administrators view the TELPAS Alternate holistic training modules since raters for TELPAS Alternate are not required to calibrate as they do for TELPAS.
- The short modules ensure that TELPAS Alternate ratings are valid interpretations of a student's English language proficiency for each Observable Behavior.

- These holistic training modules prepare teachers to use their knowledge and observations to measure an EB student’s ability to understand and use English when engaging in social and academic learning environments.

□ Attend Test Administrator Training

- All test administrators and other campus personnel participating in the TELPAS Alternate administration are required to receive training in test security and administration procedures, as well as training in procedures unique to this administration.
- Test administrators or other campus personnel who are responsible for submitting student ratings in RE must be provided with additional training in specific security protocols regarding transferring student ratings. Tampering with or changing student ratings is strictly prohibited. As a reminder of this obligation, these individuals are required to complete a specific part of the test security oath.
- Campus coordinators will schedule and conduct training sessions before testing begins. Required topics for test administrator training include:
 - Test security
 - test security procedures and test security oaths
 - reporting testing incidents
 - handling testing incidents
 - consequences for adult cheating
 - Testing window
 - Preparing for test administrations
 - identifying eligible students
 - understanding the alternate PLDs
 - knowing how to rate students using typical classroom activities
 - receiving test materials
 - Testing with accommodations
 - understanding accommodations policies
 - understanding allowable response modes
 - understanding that student performance is indicated when practicing the skills in a typical classroom setting with the student’s individual accommodations applied
 - During test administrations
 - Completing all 40 Observable Behaviors for the student assigned
 - Submitting Observable Behaviors ratings in RE, as applicable

- Entering and verifying student data in TIDE, as applicable
 - score codes
 - program information
- Returning materials to the campus coordinator

□ Review and Sign an Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality

- Test administrators, principals, and other campus personnel participating in the TELPAS Alternate administration must complete and submit a copy (electronic or paper) of the [Oath of Test Security and Confidentiality](#) to the campus coordinator after training and before handling secure test materials and content.
- Test administrators and other campus personnel must initial each item on the test security oath, as applicable.
- Test administrators and other campus personnel who are responsible for submitting holistic ratings in RE must confirm compliance with security requirements by completing specific sections of the test security oath.

The campus coordinator is the contact person for all assessment-related matters on campus. Any questions that arise before, during, or after test administration should be directed to the campus coordinator.

Prepare for Administrations

□ Understand Responsibilities

Test administrators must:

- complete all training requirements before rating students in all four domains;
- maintain the security and confidentiality of test materials, including materials containing personally identifiable information and ratings; and
- rate students in all four domains.

□ Prepare to Rate Students

- Prior to rating students, test administrators should review the appropriate portions of the *TELPAS Alternate Educator Guide* and the domain-specific trainings in LMS.
- Obtain copies of the Observable Behaviors Inventory document from the campus coordinator. If additional copies are needed, they may be printed from the [TELPAS Alternate Resources](#) web page.
- Test administrators must complete all 40 Observable Behaviors for each student who participates in TELPAS Alternate. Test administrators must consider a student's use of English language related to each specific Observable Behavior and select the behavior that best describes how the student performs most consistently. The overall selection should be based on the student's consistent demonstration of the skill, meaning that the student is almost always acting, behaving, or responding in the same way.
- Test administrators should observe students' use of English in a variety of instructional activities that are targeted to address each specific ELPS-aligned Observable Behavior.
- Test administrators may collaborate with students' other teachers or service providers to help ensure that results in all domains reflect the ability of the students to understand and use English in different content areas. This is especially helpful to determine the ratings of students near the border between levels in the Observable Behaviors.

Rate Students

□ Complete the Observable Behaviors Inventory

- Use the Observable Behaviors Inventory and the other TELPAS Alternate training materials to rate students.
- Choose one student and one domain to consider first. Look at each of the 10 Observable Behaviors for that domain along with the five descriptions of student performance for each Observable Behavior. It is not necessary to consider the Observable Behaviors in the order in which they appear. Refer to the [TELPAS Alternate Glossary](#) for explanations of how some terms are used in the Observable Behaviors.
- Considering one Observable Behavior at a time, think about the description that closely matches the student's performance most consistently. Think about how well the student has demonstrated the ability to understand or use English in the context of skills the student is learning. Think about how well the student can understand or use English when practicing these skills in instructional settings.
- Collaborate with the student's other teachers as needed when considering where the student most consistently performs.
- Mark the description of the Observable Behaviors (A, B, C, D, or E) that most closely matches the student's most consistent use of English. Only one bubble may be marked.
- Once all 10 Observable Behaviors have been completed for the first domain, continue with the three remaining domains until all 40 Observable Behaviors have been addressed. Test administrators may complete all 40 Observable Behaviors at one time or may choose to complete the Observable Behaviors for each language domain on separate days within the testing window.
- When all 40 Observable Behaviors have been completed for a student, ensure that the information recorded on the inventory is accurate and complete.

Complete Administrations

❑ Collect Test Materials

- Collect Observable Behaviors Inventory documents and any other testing resources used.
- Ensure each Observable Behaviors Inventory has been completed, signed, and dated.

❑ Return Test Materials to the Campus Coordinator

- Prior to returning materials, test administrators must account for all secure test materials.
- Test administrators must return all secure and confidential materials to the campus coordinator. This includes TELPAS Alternate Observable Behaviors Inventory documents that have had student information or ratings recorded on them.

❑ Enter Student Responses in RE, as Applicable

- Test administrators who have been assigned by the campus coordinator to submit student responses in RE must receive access information and additional training.

❑ Enter Student Information in TIDE, as Applicable

- Test administrators who have been assigned by the campus coordinator to 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