



OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT
ADULT EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM
89 WASHINGTON AVE., ROOM 306 EB
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12234
(518) 474-8940; FAX: (518)486-1751
[HTTP://WWW.NYSED.GOV/WORKFORCE/](http://www.nysed.gov/workforce/)

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TO: Directors of Continuing Education
Coordinators of Adult Basic Education

FROM: Tom Orsini

SUBJECT: New Policy on use of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

In order to improve the quality and reliability of New York State's assessment data, State Education Department policy regarding the use of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) has been revised as follows:

1. Because the standard error of measurement for the TABE Survey is so large as to affect its usefulness in obtaining reliable measures of student progress, only the complete battery of the TABE 7 & 8 and 9 & 10 may be used for reporting for the National Reporting System (NRS). This policy will go into affect on July 1, 2006. However, to assist in the transition, ALIES will continue to accept survey scores until October 1, 2006. A new version of ALIES will be provided at that time.
2. There has been a great deal of confusion regarding the range of acceptable scores for the TABE test. In statewide staff development on administering the TABE test, participants were told that scores on the high and low end of each range of scores on each TABE subtest were unreliable because of a large standard error of measurement. This means that high and low scores on each of the tests are less likely to be a true indication of the student's ability. Retesting with a higher or lower level of the test has been recommended for students scoring on the extremes of each range. It became clear that many test administrators either did not understand the concept or had differing opinions as to when a test was outside the acceptable range and consequentially when to retest. Using a methodology developed by the University of Massachusetts for the Massachusetts Department of Education, the State Education Department has established acceptable ranges for the Reading, Mathematics Computation and Applied Mathematics sections of the TABE 7 & 8 and 9 & 10. A comprehensive explanation of the new TABE testing policy and tables indicating the acceptable testing ranges can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/workforce/offices/adult.html> . This policy also goes into affect as of July 1, 2006. The new version of ALIES will not accept TABE scores outside of the acceptable ranges as of October 1, 2006.

New York State Education Department Policies for Using the TABE Test

Overview

The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment was designed to provide achievement scores that are valid for most types of adult education decision-making. New York State requires administration of the TABE tests for all students seeking entry into Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs supported by Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title 2, Welfare Education Program (WEP), Employment Preparation Education (EPE) and the Adult Literacy Education (ALE) funding for the purpose of reporting educational gain as required by the federal National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education. The TABE should also be used for students seeking entry into Occupational Education Programs to determine whether they have sufficient literacy skills to succeed in the program although these students are not included in the NRS.

Basic Assessment Policies

General assessment policies can be found in the New York State Education Department's NRS manual which can be found at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/workforce/offices/adult.html>. The following policies are relevant to TABE testing:

1. All students must be tested within 12 hours of intake. This test is considered to be a pre-test.
2. New York State allows the use of the TABE 7&8 and 9&10 full batteries. **Beginning in the 2006-07 program year, the use of the TABE Survey will no longer be allowed.** (This is a new policy which will appear in the next revision of the NRS manual.) There are four core content areas: Reading, Mathematics Computation, Applied Mathematics, and Language. There are five overlapping levels – L (Literacy), E (Easy), M (Medium), D (Difficult), and A (Advanced). Agencies are required to at least use the E, M, and D levels.
3. The Locator test must be administered to determine the appropriate level of the TABE test to administer. The locator is used as follows:

For TABE 7 & 8

Reading	Mathematics	TABE Level to Administer
# Correct	# Correct	
6 and Below	6 and Below	E
7 - 10	7 - 11	M
11 - 14	12 - 15	D
15 and Above	16 and Above	A

For TABE 9 & 10

Reading	Mathematics	TABE Level to Administer
# Correct	# Correct	
6 and Below	4 - 6	E
7 – 8	7 - 8	M
9 – 10	9 - 11	D
11 - 12	12 - 16	A

The correct locator must be used for the test. The locator for the 7 & 8 cannot be used for the 9 & 10 and vice versa.

Level L –As stated in the NRS manual, if an agency serves students pre-testing on NRS level 1 in reading, either the TABE L or the READ test must be used for the initial test. Once a student tests on level NRS 2 the TABE E should be used.

- **TABE 7 & 8** - For the TABE 7 & 8, there is only a level L in reading. If a student scores on the lowest end of the scale in reading on the locator test, the level L Word List can be used to determine whether level L or E is appropriate. Students can not be placed on NRS level 1 in mathematics using the TABE 7 & 8.
- **TABE 9 & 10** - For the TABE 9 & 10 there is a level L for reading, mathematics computation and applied mathematics. If a student scores on the lowest end of the scale in reading on the locator test, the level L Word List can be used to determine whether level L or E is appropriate. If a student scores in the lowest end of the scale in mathematics, teachers should use previous knowledge of the examinee’s performance to determine whether the E or L should be administered.

For students on the lowest levels of reading and mathematics, it is not necessary or recommended to place them in NRS level 1 based on a TABE 9 & 10 score in mathematics. In these cases, only the reading score should be entered for NRS purposes. When the student’s skill level increases so that the student can be tested with the level E in mathematics, then the scores can be entered if appropriate.

4. Students must be tested to determine whether they are making educational gain as follows:
 - Students in a class that meets ten or more hours per week should be post-tested at least at the end of every 200 instructional hours.
 - Students in a class that meets nine hours or less per week should be post-tested at least at the end of every 100 instructional hours.
 - Students in a tutorial program should be post-tested at least at the end of each fifty hours of instruction.

This means that a student in a traditional classroom must be post-tested after 100 or 200 hours of instruction depending on intensity of instruction. An instructor may provide 200

hours of instruction, but only the student attending every hour of every session will receive 200 hours of instruction. The amount of instruction students receive will vary greatly based on attendance. Post-testing can be done in groups for students who have received a similar number of hours of instruction.

These guidelines are at-a-minimum. Students may be tested more frequently. The agency should determine whether more frequent testing is advisable. This should be done after reviewing NRS data to determine the average number of hours students remain so that students can be tested before they exit the program. More frequent testing may generate post-testing scores for students who otherwise might have left the program. However too frequent testing may not generate gain scores because not enough instruction has taken place. Also, testing can be stressful for adult students who are often anxious about testing.

5. Test administrators need not be certified teachers. However, all TABE test administrators must receive training in proper test administration through the Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN).
6. For the NRS, the use of the Reading, Mathematics Computation, and Applied Mathematics is required. The Mathematics Computation and Applied Mathematics tests must be used together to yield a total mathematics score that is reported to the US Department of Education. Both the mathematics tests and the reading test must be administered in programs focusing on both reading and mathematics. However, if a program focuses only on mathematics or only on reading, the mathematics tests or the reading test can be administered alone. Most typically this is the case with some distance learning programs that focus exclusively on one area such as Learn to Read, Another Page, or Math Basics.
7. To compute a Total Mathematics score it is necessary for the student to take the same form and level of both the Mathematics Computation test and the Applied Mathematics test.
8. When post-testing on the same level (e.g., pretest was on level M and post-test is on level M also) a different form of the test must be used. For example, the student is pre-tested on TABE Level M with form 7 and is to be post-tested on Level M, form 8 should be used. If the student is post-tested on a higher level, in the above example if the pre-test is on the higher range of level M, level D would be the higher level for post-testing and either form 7 or 8 can be used. Students pre-tested with form 7 or 8 cannot be post-tested with forms 9 or 10. Students pre-tested with form 9 or 10 cannot be post-tested with forms 7 or 8.

Retesting Guidelines

Staff development on the TABE test has stressed the need to use the correct form and level of the test and the need to retest when scores are in the extreme range of the individual test making them unreliable. The Norms Books for the tests indicate that the Standard Error of

Measurement (SEM) escalates rapidly at the extreme range of each test. As the SEM increases, the test scores become less reliable i.e. may not be a true indication of the student's ability. However, most test administrators do not have the technical expertise to understand the concept of SEM much less to make a testing decision based on it. For this reason, SED decided to establish a clear policy regarding when a student's test score on the TABE falls outside of an acceptable range and retesting is required on either a more difficult or easier test.

Using a methodology developed for the State of Massachusetts Education Department, by the University of Massachusetts, a model was developed that would require only the most reliable range of test scores to be used. The attached tables identify the acceptable ranges for the TABE 7 & 8 and the TABE 9 & 10 levels L through A for Reading, Mathematics Computation and Applied Mathematics. Agencies are required to use minimally levels E, M and D.

Teachers should administer the locator to identify the appropriate level to test. After the test is administered, the attached tables should be used to determine whether the student's score is within or outside of the acceptable range of scores on that test and level. If the score is within the acceptable range, the test can be considered valid. If the score is outside of the acceptable range the test administrator should follow the directions regarding whether to retest with a more or less advanced test. The table indicates when more or less advanced tests are not available.

During the 2006-07 program year, the ALIES system will be modified so that scores outside of the acceptable ranges will not be accepted. An ALIES update will be provided in which only scores in the acceptable range can be entered. This will go into effect on October 1, 2006.



NYSED Acceptable Score Range TABLE 7 & 8 and TABLE 9 & 10

TABLE 7

Pre Test	Subject Area	Unacceptable Score Range	Acceptable Score Range	Unacceptable Score Range
TABE 7 Level L Full Battery	Reading	13 or Lower Cannot Retest*	14-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Retest with Level E
	Reading	23 or Lower Retest with Level L	24-44 Acceptable Range	45 or Higher Retest with Level M
TABE 7 Level E Full Battery	Math Computation	9 or Lower Cannot Retest*	10-22 Acceptable Range	23 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Applied Math	20 or Lower Cannot Retest*	21-44 Acceptable Range	45 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Reading	18 or Lower Retest with Level E	19-43 Acceptable Range	44 or Higher Retest with Level D
TABE 7 Level M Full Battery	Math Computation	11 or Lower Retest with Level E	12-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Applied Math	19 or Below Retest with Level E	20-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Reading	19 or Lower Retest with Level M	20-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level A
TABE 7 Level D Full Battery	Math Computation	10 or Lower Retest with Level M	11-24 Acceptable Range	25 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Reading	20 or Lower Retest with Level D	21-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Cannot Retest*
TABE 7 Level A Full Battery	Math Computation	8 or Lower Retest with Level D	9-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Applied Math	14 or Lower Retest with Level D	15-49 Acceptable Range	50 or Higher Cannot Retest*

* More advanced/less advanced level not available

TABLE 8

Pre Test	Subject Area	Unacceptable Score Range	Acceptable Score Range	Unacceptable Score Range
TABE 8 Level L Full Battery	Reading	13 or Lower Cannot Retest*	14-25 Acceptable Range	26 or Higher Retest with Level E
	Reading	23 or Lower Retest with Level L	24-43 Acceptable Range	44 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Math Computation	9 or Lower Cannot Retest*	10-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Retest with Level M
TABE 8 Level E Full Battery	Applied Math	16 or Lower Cannot Retest*	17-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Reading	15 or Lower Retest with Level E	16-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Math Computation	8 or Lower Retest with Level E	9-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Retest with Level D
TABE 8 Level M Full Battery	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level E	18-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Reading	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Math Computation	7 or Lower Retest with Level M	8-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Retest with Level A
TABE 8 Level D Full Battery	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Reading	19 or Lower Retest with Level D	20-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Math Computation	7 or Lower Retest with Level D	8-23 Acceptable Range	24 or Higher Cannot Retest*
TABE 8 Level A Full Battery	Applied Math	13 or Lower Retest with Level D	14-48 Acceptable Range	49 or Higher Cannot Retest*

* More advanced/less advanced level not available

TABLE 9

Pre Test	Subject Area	Unacceptable Score Range	Acceptable Score Range	Unacceptable Score Range
TABE 9 Level L Full Battery	Reading	14 or Lower Cannot Retest*	15-28 Acceptable Range	29 or Higher Retest with Level E
TABE 9 Level E Full Battery	Reading	21 or Lower Retest with Level L	22-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Math Computation	12 or Lower Cannot Retest*	13-38 Acceptable Range	39 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Applied Math	18 or Lower Cannot Retest*	19-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level M
TABE 9 Level M Full Battery	Reading	17 or Lower Retest with Level E	18-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Math Computation	16 or Lower Retest with Level E	17-37 Acceptable Range	38 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Applied Math	19 or Lower Retest with Level E	20-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level D
TABE 9 Level D Full Battery	Reading	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Math Computation	18 or Lower Retest with Level M	19-37 Acceptable Range	38 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Retest with Level A
TABE 9 Level A Full Battery	Reading	21 or Lower Retest with Level D	22-44 Acceptable Range	45 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Math Computation	12 or Lower Retest with Level D	13-37 Acceptable Range	38 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Applied Math	18 or Lower Retest with Level D	19-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Cannot Retest*

* More advanced/less advanced level not available

TABLE 10

Pre Test	Subject Area	Unacceptable Score Range	Acceptable Score Range	Unacceptable Score Range
TABLE 10 Level L Full Battery	Reading	15 or Lower Cannot Retest*	16-29 Acceptable Range	30 or Higher Retest with Level E
TABLE 10 Level E Full Battery	Reading	20 or Lower Retest with Level L	21-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Math Computation	14 or Lower Cannot Retest*	15-38 Acceptable Range	39 or Higher Retest with Level M
	Applied Math	17 or Lower Cannot Retest*	18-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level M
TABLE 10 Level M Full Battery	Reading	19 or Lower Retest with Level E	20-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Math Computation	16 or Lower Retest with Level E	17-37 Acceptable Range	38 or Higher Retest with Level D
	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level E	18-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Retest with Level D
TABLE 10 Level D Full Battery	Reading	19 or Lower Retest with Level M	20-45 Acceptable Range	46 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Math Computation	16 or Lower Retest with Level M	17-37 Acceptable Range	38 or Higher Retest with Level A
	Applied Math	17 or Lower Retest with Level M	18-47 Acceptable Range	48 or Higher Retest with Level A
TABLE 10 Level A Full Battery	Reading	23 or Lower Retest with Level D	24-43 Acceptable Range	44 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Math Computation	12 or Lower Retest with Level D	13-36 Acceptable Range	37 or Higher Cannot Retest*
	Applied Math	20 or Lower Retest with Level D	21-46 Acceptable Range	47 or Higher Cannot Retest*

* More advanced/less advanced level not available