

# Northwest Workforce Council

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVES

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Common Measures Literacy and Numeracy Gains

**REFERENCE #:** WIA 01-40

### **BACKGROUND:**

The U.S. Department of Labor's February 17, 2006, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 17-05 provides a national directive on the common measures for the WIA performance accountability system. There are three common measures that apply to WIA Title I-B programs serving youth: 1) Placement in Employment or Education; 2) Attainment of a Degree or Certificate; and 3) Literacy and Numeracy Gains.

The TEGL No. 17-05 requires that all WIA Title I-B out-of-school youth **must** be assessed in basic reading, writing, and math to determine if they are basic skills deficient and subject to the performance measure for Literacy and Numeracy Gains. A major WIA Title I-B program objective for out-of-school youth (assessed to be basic skills deficient) is to assist these youth to advance one or more educational functioning levels each year they are in the WIA youth program. There are two sets of educational functioning levels – six levels for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and six levels for English-as-a-Second language (ESL) students.

**Washington State Employment Security Department has issued a Literacy Numeracy Policy (Policy # 3685)** which further clarifies the Department of Labor Policy TEGL. All out-of-school youth must be assessed for basic skills, but only those determined to be basic skills deficient are included in the literacy and numeracy gains measure. Other than exceptions described in the "Testing Youth with Disabilities" section of this policy, Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) shall be the only two assessment instruments to be used in Washington State for determining WIA Title I-B literacy and numeracy gains.

The Northwest Workforce Development Council has adopted this Literacy and Numeracy Gains policy for out of school youth and is effective for all new enrollments starting July 1, 2006.

- A. The goal of the Literacy and Numeracy Gains is to obtain a measurable increase in the Educational Functioning Level of Out of School Youth.
- B. Basic Skills Deficient is defined as-
  - an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes or speaks English at or below the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade level as defined by the testing instrument as
    1. Using the TABE: Scoring at or below 8.9

2. Using CASAS: Scoring at or below 235 for Reading; and at or below 225 for Math

- is unable to compute solve problems, read, write or speak English at the level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.
- C. The attainment is a quantifiable, measurable and verifiable benchmark that specifies the learning object for youth deemed basic skills deficient.
- D. The level of achievement selected should enhance the youth's employability and/or educational goals.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### A. Testing Process

1. All out of school youth need to be tested, including those with GED or high school diplomas.
2. The testing tool used (TABE or CASAS) is dictated by the individual's circumstances, e.g., if the student will be receiving services to achieve their GED, CASAS should be used. The tool used at pre-test will remain the same testing tool for the youth during their program participation.
3. If test results reflect that the youth is basic skills deficient - a score equal to or less than grade level 8<sup>th</sup> grade- the participant must show one Educational Functioning Level gain in at least one of the three EFL measures - Numeracy, Literacy or Functional Workplace – each year, or until sufficient gain has been made

### B. Service Plans and Strategies

1. Eligible applicants must commit to activities that should result in grade level gains.
2. If they have been tested using CASAS or TABE within the six months prior to the date of first youth service, that test score can be used as a viable assessment as long as there has been no instruction subsequent to the testing..
3. The same standardized assessment must be used for pre and post-testing.
4. The National Reporting System for Adult Education has two sets of Education Functioning Levels- six levels for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and six levels for English as a Second Language (ESL). (see attachment)
5. Use of the assessment will result in assigning a youth to the appropriate learning activities/sites in the proper sequence to promote participant growth and development. The activities should remedy identified deficiencies and build upon strengths. Continued participation in such activities is a requirement of overall program participation. Program support may be suspended if the participant is not making appropriate good faith efforts to resolve their basic skills deficiencies.
6. The results of the pre- and post tests will be documented in the SKIES (see attachment B- Additional Priority: Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gain (Track Record 2113))

7. The assessment deficiencies will be addressed in the Services Plan to improve basic skills at least one Educational Functioning Level each year until the participant is no longer basic skills deficient.

### C. Testing Intervals

1. Participants identified as basic skills deficient should be post tested at least once prior to the end of the first year (based on the individual's participation date, not test date).
2. Post testing for CASAS should occur when learners have completed instruction (generally between 70-120 hours with at least a 5 point gain).
3. Participants, who remain basic skills deficient after completing one full year and continue to participate in the program, shall continue to receive basic skills remediation services as a condition of participation.

### D. Benchmark

1. Through a post-test, a participant must demonstrate that they have advanced one or more educational functioning level(s) above the level of the pre-test within one year from the date of the first youth program service. **(Note: the 12 months does not start at pre-test date, it starts at the first youth service date.)**

Note: Performance Measure Methodology: Of those out-of school- youth who are basic skills deficient: The number of youth participants who increase on or more educational functioning levels **divided** by the number of participants who have completed a year in the youth program **plus** the number of participants who exit before completing a year in the youth program. (Note: one year from date of first youth program service)

2. When administering assessment tools, individuals with disabilities should be accommodated. Accommodations for assessing youth with disabilities generally fall into the following categories:
  - Changes to the methods of **Presentation** of the test used as the assessment tool, (e.g., providing Braille versions of the test, interpreter, large print, visual clues, repeating directions, or reading aloud).
  - Changes to the methods of **Response** to the test questions, (e.g., having the test taker point to a response, mark answers in a book, use reference aids, calculator, tape recorder, word-processor, or computer administration).
  - Change to the **Setting** in which the test is provided, (e.g., permitting the test to be taken at home, or in small groups; separate room, or special lighting).
  - Changes to the **Time/Scheduling** of the test, (e.g., permitting frequent breaks, extending the amount of time generally provided for completion of the test, or giving the test over several days).

In some instances, use of CASAS or TABE, even with appropriate accommodations, may not provide a valid or reliable evaluation of the literacy and numeracy skills of participants with one or more disabilities. When this occurs, the NWC may use an alternate assessment tool to measure literacy and numeracy gains.

Alternate assessments may include, but are not limited to:

- **Portfolio:** Assessment method that uses collection of the participant's work that demonstrates the skills being assessed.
- **Performance Assessment:** Assessments that are a direct measure of skills and knowledge, usually in a one-on-one assessment.
- **Observation in Structured and Unstructured Setting:** Assessment method to observe whether participants are able to perform certain activities.
- **Samples of Participant Work:** Assessment method used to demonstrate skills being assessed.

Attachments:

- Workforce Investment Act Title 1B- WIA Policy 3685- Literacy and Numeracy Policy
- SKIES bulletin- Track Record 2113- Additional Priority: Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gain
- US DOL TEGL No.17-05- Attachment C: Educational Functioning Level Descriptors