Assessment Policy  
Robbinsdale Adult Academic Program (AAP)  
PY 2013-2014

Policy Purpose
Robbinsdale Area Schools Adult Academic Program (AAP) is committed to using approved, adult appropriate, standardized assessments to pre-test and assign learners to an NRS Educational Functioning Level as soon as possible, within the first 12 hours of instruction. We also administer subsequent assessments to measure NRS level completion and gains. Assessments will be administered in a standardized and consistent manner according to test publisher guidelines. The program staff administering assessments will be trained in the process of test administration and scoring.

Required Benchmarks
AAP is committed to meet or exceed NRS target percentages as set for Minnesota ABE each program year. Learners will post-test within 40-60 hours of attendance or sooner if their instructor feels they may show a level change or that a learner may exit the program. Teacher recommendations will determine any exceptions to this policy. (See post-testing policy below.) Staff will review all learner records on a monthly basis to monitor post-testing status and results.

AAP is committed to maintain the state minimum rate of 60 percent or greater post-testing rate for all participants within each program year. We adhere to a planned testing schedule to help us achieve this goal and have consistently exceeded it and fall in the mid to upper 70% range.

Local Program Benchmarks
AAP plans to continue to post-test as many learners as possible using a planned, monthly testing schedule. Our goal is to continue to meet or exceed the state goal of 60% in the coming years. In PY 2014, our composite post-testing rate was 79.7%
Our Student Data and Assessment Specialist (SDAS) has the specific assignment of working with teachers to monitor learner records and testing schedules to make sure we adhere to state guidelines and to achieve the strongest, most accurate results.

Plan to Implement
Initial Assessment/Pre-testing – Basic Skills
AAP offers individual intake appointments for Basic Skills learners on a daily basis. After completing intake paperwork, all enrolling learners are assessed on the TABE Survey for Reading. Math (only) learners are assessed only on the TABE Survey for Math. The timed tests determine entering skill levels. However, if enrollees do not complete the test in the allotted time, extra time is allowed and an “untimed” score is indicated along with the official timed score. The untimed score is to: 1) provide instructors with information on those who may have stronger skills than the timed test indicates or 2) form a basis for post-testing if the learner is identified as a learning-disabled learner.

Within the first 12 hours of instruction in the classroom, learners take the TABE Math Survey.
Initial Assessment/Pre-testing – ESL
ESL learners enroll in individual appointments with either the counselor or our lead ESL teacher. Appointments are available on a daily basis. After completing intake paperwork, staff completes an informal oral assessment and administers a “pre-CASAS” Reading Locator. Based on the oral assessment and the results of our Reading pre-test, the appropriate level of CASAS is administered. We have been using this system for many years and find that it yields accurate and useful pre-testing and placement results.

Initial Assessment/Pre-testing – Adult Academic Disability Program (AADP)
Learners who have survived a traumatic brain injury or stroke are part of our AADP classes. AAP offers individual orientations by appointment as needed. During their orientation, the TABE locator and Reading assessment are given to help determine class placement. An interview is also held with the learner to assist in the process of placement. Learners who qualify for the AADP program are not timed on their tests. All AADP learners in pre- and post-testing receive this accommodation.

Special Testing Accommodations
Learners test in our testing center within private cubicles located in our office. This generally provides a quiet and distraction-free testing environment. As mentioned earlier, learners who need extra time may continue beyond the time limit to yield an “untimed” score. If staff determines a learner has a learning disability, further untimed tests will be given to accommodate for the disability.

Test Scores Outside the Validity/Accuracy Range
If a learner’s score falls outside the validity range, intake staff catch the score and the learner is re-tested on a more appropriate level test.

Learners Re-entering or Transferring
Learners who re-enter the program during a new program year or transfer from another ABE consortium are re-tested on entry. Learners who re-enter after exiting without post-testing during the same program year will be reviewed for post-testing. The learner will be post-tested if he/she has completed 40 or more hours. If the learner has completed less than 40 hours of study, that learner’s progress will be reviewed by the teacher to determine if post-testing is appropriate. If not, the learner is monitored for post-testing on the same schedule with other learners.

Post-testing and Frequency Options – Basic Skills
Our Student Data and Assessment Specialist (SDAS) provides a monthly assessment report to all Basic Skills teachers that includes data on all of their learners. Teachers review the data to see who needs post-testing based on previous results and program hours accrued since learners’ last tests.

Post-testing and Frequency Options – ESL
Our SDAS provides a monthly assessment report to all ESL teachers that includes data on all of their learners. ESL teachers adhere to a planned, monthly testing schedule for all daytime learners and a six-week, planned testing schedule for our evening learners (due to the lower number of weekly class hours in the evening).
Post-testing and Frequency Options – Disability Program (AADP)
Our SDAS provides a monthly assessment report to our AADP teachers. Teachers can also access needed data directly through the MARCS database. AADP teachers adhere to a planned schedule of testing learners in reading every 12 weeks. The decision to test less often in this program was made because the hours that these learners attend are fewer, and testing is more stressful for this population. Post-tests are not timed for AADP learners. Additional tests in Math, Language, or CASAS Writing are given as needed per learners’ goals.

Learners Exempt from Post-testing
Learners who enter the Basic Skills program with TABE scores in the high adult-secondary level are exempt from post-testing but AAP still reports to the NRS on their secondary outcomes of GED/Diploma completion, post-secondary enrollment and employment.

Learners Leaving the Program
Any time staff know that a learner may exit the program, the learner takes an arranged post-test. For learners who complete the GED official exam or otherwise reach their goals and depart without post-testing, the teacher calls them to request that they return to take a post-test.

Teacher/Staff Orientation and Training on Assessment Tools and Procedures
When a new teacher starts, he/she receives a program orientation including an explanation of the NRS assessment requirements and procedures. The new teacher is also assisted by our SDAS in understanding our testing procedures and in setting up the tests as needed. New teachers then become members of either our “Basic Skills team” or our “ESL team.” Each team meets on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of issues including learner assessment. The monthly meetings provide new teachers with another resource for understanding procedures and requirements. New teachers are also asked to attend the Summer Institute or Support Services conference sessions on TABE/CASAS administration and/or attend onsite training, when offered.

Train/Re-train Teachers/Staff in the Use of Assessment Tools
AAP offers assessment training/refreshers are offered to staff on an as-needed basis determined either by staff request or by assessment changes that require it. For example, all ESL staff recently attended an on-site CASAS Administration training (October 18, 2013), and all Basic Skills staff recently attended an on-site TABE administration training (October 17, 2013). Our SDAS and other office staff attend regular, state-offered trainings such as those offered through the Support Staff Conference (Nov 13) or the “End of Year Refresher” offered by the MARCS Database Consultant (April 14). Staff members are also encouraged to attend the sessions at Summer Institute on this topic, if needed.

Using MIS Assessment and Testing Data to Monitor Performance
Monthly class reports to all teachers provide the basis for monitoring learner performance on NRS measures. In addition, the SDAS reviews the monthly MARCS data for the status of enrollments, participants, rate of post-testing and rate of level changes and gives a summary report to the Program Director for review. Any concerns that appear are addressed either in the monthly team meetings (Basic Skills or ESL) or individually with teachers, if needed.
Assessment Schedule
As indicated previously, the SDAS works with teachers to track learners in need of assessment on a monthly basis based on the number of hours a learner has completed (40 or more). For Basic Skills learners, teachers review the monthly data to see who needs to test based on previous results and program hours accrued since their last tests. For ESL, teachers adhere to a planned, monthly testing schedule for all daytime learners and a six-week, planned testing schedule for all evening learners (due to the lower number of weekly class hours in the evening). For special classes (Pre-CNA, Citizenship, College Prep, etc.), any learner not enrolled in our regular classes is tested at intake and then post-tested at the end of the special class.

All program instructors are aware of program accountability to post-test after 12 hours of instruction and to monitor and catch learners who appear likely to leave before completing 40 hours. School posters advertise a special certificate for those learners leaving or “stopping out.” Learners can obtain the certificate if they post-test before leaving the program. We use this post-test certificate as an opportunity to catch any needed post-tests before learners depart.

Allowable Consortium Program Assessments
Basic Skills programming (including AADP) - We use the following TABE forms for assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Locator 9 and 10 Survey</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>E: Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>M: Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>D: Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A: Advanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ESL programming - We use the following CASAS forms for assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name / Series</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Literacy</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>27 and 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Writing System</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>460, 461, 462, 463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and Work</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Level A: 81, 82, 81X, 82X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level B: 83, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level C: 185, 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level D: 187, 188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Responsible for Implementing Assessment Policy**

*Program Director* – Oversight of overall assessment process, monitoring, and adjusting practices as needed.

*SDAS* – Uses MARCS to keep track of completed assessments, learner hours, monthly assessment reports and communicates with teachers. Monitors/coordinates the testing schedules with teachers. Scores assessments and reports the results to teachers. Administers some assessments.

*Teachers* - Work with SDAS to set up appropriate assessments for learners based on monthly reports, learner hours and progress. Administer some assessments.

**Policy Contact Information**
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