

AHSRS Implementation Guidelines

Measures and Methods for the Adult High School Reporting System

APRIL 2008

CHAPTER I. HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL REPORTING SYSTEM

The Adult High School Reporting System (AHSRS) is the accountability system for the state funded, district-administered adult high school education program. This document presents (1) the AHSRS measures that allow assessment of the impact of adult education instruction, (2) methodologies for collecting the measures, (3) reporting forms and procedures, and (4) training and technical assistance requirements to assist districts in collecting and reporting the measures.

The Goal of AHSRS

The goal of the AHSRS is to develop a state accountability system for adult high school education programs by identifying measures for state reporting and their definitions, establishing methodologies for data collection, developing standards for reporting to the Nevada Department of Education, and developing training materials and activities on AHSRS requirements and procedures.

Demographic and Status Measure Definitions

Adult education programs always collect AHSRS demographic and status measures. Program staff either collects these measures from the student at intake into the program, or the student directly reports these measures, as defined below.

Demographic Measure #1: Race/Ethnicity

Definition: Racial or ethnic category to which the learner self-identifies, appears to belong to, or is regarded in the community as belonging. The racial/ethnic categories are:

- **American Indian or Alaska Native**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- **Asian**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent (e.g., China, India, Japan, and Korea).
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander**—A person who has origins as a native of the Hawaiian Islands or the other islands of the Pacific, such as the Philippine Islands and Samoa.
- **Black or African-American**—A person who has origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa but not of Hispanic culture or origin.
- **Hispanic or Latino**—A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **White**—A person who has origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East but not of Hispanic culture or origin.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners by ethnic group is reported.

Demographic Measure #2: Gender

Definition: Whether the learner is male or female.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners by gender is reported.

Demographic Measure #3: Age

Definition: Years since learner's date of birth.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners by age is reported using the following age categories: 16–18 years, 19–24 years, 25–44 years, 45–59 years, and 60 years and older.

Student Status Measure #1: Labor Force Status

***Definition:** Whether the learner is employed, not employed, or not in the labor force at time of entry into the adult education program, according to the following criteria:*

- **Employed**—Learners who work as paid employees, work at their own business or farm, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers at a farm or business operated by a member of their family. Also included are learners who are not currently working but who have jobs or businesses from which they are temporarily absent.
- **Unemployed**—Learners who are not working but are seeking employment, make specific efforts to find a job, and are available for work.
- **Not in the Labor Force**—Learners who are not employed and are not seeking employment or **who are incarcerated**.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners by category is reported.

Student Participation Measures

Student Participation Measure #1: Program Enrollment Type

Definition: Learner is enrolled in one of the following programs.

- **Adult High School Diploma Program** - A program of instruction designed to enable adults to earn an Adult High School Diploma.
- **GED Only Program** – A program of instruction designed to enable adults to pass the Tests of General Educational Development (GED Tests).
- **Proficiency Only Program** - A program of instruction designed to enable adults who need only to pass one or more Nevada Proficiency Tests to earn a regular diploma.
- **ESL Program** - A program of instruction designed to help adults with limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners in each program or category is reported. The number of learners in each program type can be used to analyze the performance of these participants separately from the overall adult education population.

Student Participation Measure #2: Credits Needed

***Definition:** Number of high school credits needed by learner in each subject area to achieve a high school diploma.*

Applicable Population: All learners in the Adult High School Diploma program sub-type.

State Reporting: (1) Total numbers of credits needed for each subject area are reported. (2) Total number of learners needing credits to graduate are reported using the following categories: needing 0 credits, needing 1-5 credits, needing 6-10 credits, needing 11-15 credits, needing 15+ credits.

Student Participation Measure #3: Proficiency Exams Needed

***Definition:** Number of proficiency exams needing to be passed by learner in each subject area to achieve a high school diploma.*

Applicable Population: All learners in the Proficiency Only program sub-type.

State Reporting: (1) Total number of learners needing to pass each of the different proficiency exams are reported.

CORE OUTCOME MEASURES

The AHSRS core outcome measures are: educational gain, receipt of an Adult High School Diploma and passing the GED tests. Districts set performance standards for these measures, and program effectiveness is judged in part by whether these standards are met. This section presents the definition, requirements, and methodology for each of these core measures.

Educational Gain

Educational gain measures the primary purpose of the adult high school education program: to improve the basic literacy skills of participants. This goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. Adult high school education programs serve two distinct groups of adults, those seeking secondary credentialing and those seeking to improve English language skills. The AHSRS defines educational gain differently for each of these two groups. Educational gain for Credential Seeking (CS) participants is measured by the attainment of high school credits and the passing of required proficiency tests. The AHSRS approach to measuring educational gain for English Language (EL) participants is to define a set of *educational functioning levels* at which students are initially placed based on their abilities to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas. After a set time period or number of instructional hours set by the district, EL students are again assessed to determine their skill levels. If their skills have improved sufficiently to be placed one or more levels higher, an “advance” is recorded for that student. Exhibit 2.1 describes the educational functioning levels.

Definition for CS learners: *Learner earns high school credit and/or passes one or more Nevada Proficiency Tests after entry into the program.*

Definition for EL learners: *Learner advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program.*

Applicable Population: All learners.

Educational Gain by Earning High School Credits

Definition: The learner earns high school credit.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Districts report the total number of credits awarded to learners in each program type. Credits must be earned, not waived.

Educational Gain by Waiving High School Credits

Definition: The learner is awarded “waived” high school credit.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Districts report the total number of credits “waived” for learners in each program type. Count only those credits that are waived, not those that are earned.

Educational Gain by Passing Nevada Proficiency Exams

Definition: The learner obtains passes one or more proficiency exams.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Districts report the total number of proficiency exams passed by learners in each program type.

Receipt of an Adult High School Diploma

Definition: The learner obtains an adult diploma documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies.

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Districts report the total number of learners in each program type who obtain an Adult High School Diploma.

Receipt of GED Certificate

Definition: *The learner obtains a certificate documenting passing the Tests of General Educational Development (GED Tests).*

Applicable Population: All learners.

State Reporting: Districts report the total number of learners in each program type who obtain a GED certificate.

Educational Gain by Advancing One or More ESL Educational Functioning Levels

Definition: *Learner advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program.*

Applicable Population: English Language learners.

State Reporting: Total number of learners who advance level during the program is reported, and a rate or percentage of level advancement is computed.

ESL Educational Functioning Levels

The AHSRS divides educational functioning into six levels for ESL. The six ESL levels are beginning literacy, low beginning ESL, high beginning ESL, low and high intermediate ESL, and advanced ESL. The ESL levels describe speaking and listening skills and basic reading, writing, and functional workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level. The skill descriptors illustrate the types of skills students functioning at that level are likely to have. The descriptors do not provide a complete or comprehensive delineation of all of the skills at that level but provide examples to guide assessment and instruction.

Exhibit 2.1 ESL Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Beginning ESL Literacy</p> <p><i>Test Benchmark:</i> CASAS scale scores: Reading: 180 and below Listening: 180 and below</p>	<p>Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.</p>	<p>Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.</p>	<p>Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.</p>
<p>Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 181–190 Listening: 181–190 Writing: 136–145</p>	<p>Individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.</p>	<p>Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.</p>
<p>High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 191–200 Listening: 191–200 Writing: 146–200</p>	<p>Individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individual can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read most sight words, and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.</p> <p>Individual can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization and punctuation and has many spelling errors.</p>	<p>Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.</p>

Exhibit 2.1 ESL Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 201–210 Listening: 201–210 Writing: 201–225</p>	<p>Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p>	<p>Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).</p>
<p>High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 211–220 Listening: 211–220 Writing: 226–242</p>	<p>Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p>	<p>Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>

Exhibit 2.1 ESL Functioning Level Table

Outcome Measures Definitions			
EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS			
Literacy Level	Listening and Speaking	Basic Reading and Writing	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>Advanced ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 221–235 Listening: 221–235 Writing: 243–260</p> <p>Exit Criteria: CASAS Reading and Listening: 236 and above CASAS Writing: 261 and above</p>	<p>Individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech.</p>	<p>Individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. Individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.</p>	<p>Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.</p>

Placing Students in ESL Educational Functioning Levels

To assist in placement decisions, *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS) test benchmarks are provided for the levels. These benchmarks are provided as examples of how students functioning at each level would perform on the tests

The State requires that local programs assess and place all students into an educational functioning level at intake. Programs should administer the initial assessment at intake or within a short period thereafter and administer follow-up or post-test assessments according to State policy. The follow-up assessment should occur after a set instruction time, either in hours (e.g., after 50 hours of instruction) or calendar time (e.g., the last 2 weeks of November or the last week of instruction), and should conform to the test publisher's guidelines for the amount of time needed for a student to show a meaningful gain.

The State maintains a separate document, *Nevada Assessment Policy Guidelines*, which can be used by districts to develop their own assessment policies.

Level Advancement Policy Based on Post Assessment

Educational gain is determined by comparing the student's initial educational functioning level with the educational functioning level measured by the post-test. To allow local programs to determine gain, the district must use the educational functioning level definitions and correlate assessment scores to specific levels. It is important to note that *if a student is not post-tested, then no advancement can be determined for that student*. The student must remain in the same level as initially placed for State reporting.

Developing a Status / Outcome Reporting System

The basis of a Status / Outcome reporting system is; a) collecting status information about the student at the beginning of every reporting period, and then, b) collecting outcome data at the end of the reporting period to measure progress.

Status measures include such things as the number of credits and proficiency tests needed for graduation and also include demographic information. Outcome measures include such information as, how many credits were earned, which proficiency test were passed, etc.

Notes on Status Measures

Ethnicity/Race

Students should be allowed to self-select the ethnicity/race that they identify with. If student selects multiple categories, report the highest numbered ethnicity/race according to this hierarchy:

1. White
2. Hispanic or Latino
3. Black or African American
4. Asian
5. Pacific Islander or Filipino
6. American Indian or Alaska Native

Example: If student selects both 'White' and 'Asian', report 'Asian'.

Gender

Students should self-select the gender (male or female) that they identify with. If the student selects both genders or does not select a gender, staff may select a gender for reporting purposes.

Age

Collect the student's birth date so that age may be calculated. The student's age should be calculated at the date of entry into the program and again at the beginning of each program year.

Employment Status

Students should self-report their employment status on entry into the program and again at the beginning of each program year. There are three categories; employed, unemployed – seeking work, and unemployed – not seeking work.

Program Type

Students are placed into one of the four program types depending upon their need. The program type that a student is placed in is determined at entry into the program and again at the beginning of each program year. While the program type may change during the program year (i.e. a GED-Only student may elect to seek a diploma), report the program type that the student was in at the beginning of the program year.

Academic Status

The academic status of a student, prior to instruction in the program year, is collected and reported. The kinds of status to report differ by program type:

- **Adult High School Diploma Program**
 1. The number of credits needed in each course (subject) area. There are nine course areas; American Government, American History, Arts, English, Health, Math, Science, Computers, and Electives.
 2. Report which of the three Proficiency Exams needs to be passed.
- **GED Only Program**
 1. None required as it assumed that these students have neither a high school diploma nor have previously passed the tests of GED. Programs are encouraged to evaluate the credit history of these students in case of transfer to the AHS Diploma Program.
- **Proficiency Only Program**
 1. Report which of the three Proficiency Exams needs to be passed.
- **ESL Program**
 1. ESL students must be pre-tested to determine placement in one of the six “Entering Educational Functioning Levels”. Pre-testing must be done before or shortly after instruction begins. Report the Educational Functioning Level that corresponds to the assessment results.

Notes on Outcome Measures

Once the beginning status of a student has been noted, and a period of instruction has occurred, the results of the instruction can be measured. This is accomplished by counting and reporting certain outcomes. While some outcomes pertain only to participants of certain program types (such as ESL level advancement), it is important to record and report any and all positive outcomes (such as credits earned) regardless of program type.

Credits Earned

For reporting purposes, any credit awarded by the program, except credits waived by GED test passing, is considered an “earned credit”.

For AHS Diploma Program students:

Report the number of credits earned by students in each of the nine course/subject areas.

For GED-Only Program students and ESL Program students:

Report the total number of credits earned by students in each program type.

Credits Waived

For reporting purposes, any credit awarded because it was waived by GED test passing, is considered a “waived credit”.

For AHS Diploma Program students:

Report the number of credits waived by students in each of the nine course/subject areas.

For GED-Only Program students and ESL Program students:

Report the total number of credits waived by students in each program type.

Completed Course/Subject Area

For reporting purposes, in each of the nine course/subject areas, a course/subject area is considered “completed” if a student is awarded a sufficient number of credits to fulfill the graduation requirement for that course during the program year.

For example, a student begins the year needing 3 of the required 4 English credits. He takes and passes the GED tests at the beginning of the school year and 2 English credits are waived. He also completes regular classroom instruction and earns an additional 1 credit. He has fulfilled the English credit requirement and has “completed” the English course/subject area.

For AHS Diploma Program students:

Report the number of course/subject areas completed by students in each of the nine course/subject areas.

For all other students:

Do not report this measure.

Passing the GED Tests

For all students:

Report the number of students in each program type that successfully passed the GED tests.

Passing Proficiency Exams

For Proficiency Only Program students:

Proficiency-Only students are sub-grouped by which of the exams are needed (all three exams, two of the three exams, or just one of the exams). Report the number exams passed by exam type in each of the seven sub-groups.

For all students:

Report the number of exams passed by students in each program type.

ESL Level Advancement

ESL level advancement is determined by comparing the student's initial educational functioning level with the educational functioning level measured by a post-test. Post-testing occurs after a significant amount of instruction or time in the program, and/or at semester breaks, depending on district assessment policy. ESL students are usually post-tested if a pre-mature exit from the program is anticipated. Students must be post-tested to show any level advancement. Students not post-tested must remain in their entering level. For students with more than one post-test, use the last post-test for reporting.

For ESL Program students only:

Report the number students, in each Educational Functioning Level, that post-tested with a score that exceeds the score range for his/her entering level. For example, a student enters the program with a pre-test score of 185. This places the student at the entering level of "Low Beginning" which has a score range of 181-190. After instruction, the student scores 192 on the post-test. This score is higher than 190, which is the upper limit for "Low Beginning", so a level advancement is reported.