

**ACTION REQUIRED**

April 4, 2006

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) Rater Training for 2006-2007 School Year

This letter is to notify you of the Texas Observation Protocols (TOP) holistic rating training components and schedule for the 2006-2007 school year. Detailed information about next year's training is attached.

As you know, the validity and reliability of TOP is dependent on the quality of the rater training system. In developing the 2006-2007 training plan, our goal has been to ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment process while keeping the training requirements manageable.

In order to plan effectively for next year, agency staff sought input from district testing coordinators, curriculum directors, bilingual/ESL coordinators, and other leadership staff from education service centers (ESCs) and districts. We are especially grateful to last year's lead TOP trainers and to the district testing coordinators from the Texas Statewide Network of Assessment Professionals (TSNAP) who attended videoconferences and provided written input to assist with the planning.

We know that the implementation of this year's TOP training has been challenging, and we appreciate the support and patience shown as the online rater qualification system was launched. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the nearly 54,000 Texas teachers who completed the TOP training and qualifying requirements in the midst of numerous other important responsibilities. It is with great pleasure and pride that we report that 92 percent of the teachers were successful on the qualification activities.

We hope that the attached information about next year's training will be useful as your district prepares next year's calendar and budget. As a reminder, Title III, Part A administrative funds may be used to offset the costs of TOP training. Please distribute this letter and attachments to relevant district and campus level staff, and please continue to emphasize the instructional benefit that TOP rater training will have for the more than 700,000 English language learners (ELLs) in our state.

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If you have questions about the information in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact the Student Assessment Division by phone at (512) 463-9536 or by e-mail at [ell.tests@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:ell.tests@tea.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Susan Barnes

Associate Commissioner for Standards and Programs

Attachment A: TOP Holistic Rating Training Schedule for 2006-2007 School Year

Attachment B: List of 35 Districts with Largest LEP Student Populations

cc: ESC and district testing coordinator; ESC and district bilingual/ESL coordinator

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **TOP Holistic Rating Training Schedule for the 2006-2007 School Year**

#### **Raters of Students in Grade 2 or Higher**

These raters have a qualifying component as part of their training. Raters who have successfully completed the qualifying component will not need to requalify. Three groups of raters will be trained. The training needs for each group differ. The groups are as follows:

- **Group A:** These individuals were not trained in the 2005-2006 school year and are in need of in-depth training.
- **Group B:** These individuals have been trained but have not yet qualified.
- **Group C:** These individuals have been trained and have successfully completed the qualifying component of their training.

#### **Raters of Students in Kindergarten and/or Grade 1**

These raters do not have a qualifying component as part of their training. They are divided into two groups, as follows:

- **Group D:** These individuals were not trained in the 2005-2006 school year.
- **Group E:** These individuals were trained in the 2005-2006 school year.

#### **Rating and Training Responsibilities**

As in the past, district testing coordinators, in collaboration with bilingual/ESL coordinators and other district and campus personnel, are responsible for establishing procedures to designate and qualify appropriate numbers of raters to assess all eligible limited English proficient (LEP) students.

Each teacher selected to rate a LEP student must have the student in class, be knowledgeable about the student's ability to use English in instructional and informal settings, and hold valid education credentials such as a teacher certificate or permit. The teacher selected as a student's rater must be appropriately trained and must rate the student in all eligible domains: reading (K-2 only), listening, speaking, and writing. Raters are not permitted to be assigned to rate particular domains only.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will train trainers from each of the 20 regional education service centers (ESCs) and the 35 districts with the largest populations of LEP students. Together these sites will form 55 state training entities. The trainers from the 35 districts will be responsible for training the raters in their districts. The trainers from the 20 regional entities will be responsible for training the raters in their regions *minus* those from the 35 districts. The trainers will be responsible for training the raters directly. The individuals trained by TEA will not have the option of training additional trainers to, in turn, train raters. A letter with information about registering for the TEA training sessions will be sent to the 55 training entities later this month.

## **Training of Raters of Students in Grade 2 or Higher**

### **Training of Group A (individuals not trained in the 2005-2006 school year)**

- TEA will train the trainers from the 55 state training entities. TEA will conduct multiple holistic rating training sessions in July (see dates on next page) to train sufficient numbers of trainers. The Group A training materials will be the materials from the 2005-2006 school year with minor modifications.
- The trainers will conduct face-to-face Group A training sessions in early fall. ESCs will offer a set of grade cluster training sessions before school starts if doing so meets the needs of their districts to have some Group A individuals trained before school starts. The 35 district training entities may make local decisions about whether to offer training sessions before school starts. Training entities will offer grade cluster training sessions after school starts as needed to train all Group A individuals in the fall.
- The training will be designed so that all components can be delivered in one day. The training will include a set of guided-practice writing collections. There will be no preliminary qualifying round.
- Group A individuals will have a fall online qualifying opportunity. Results will be available to the raters immediately.
- Individuals unsuccessful on the fall qualifying round will receive supplemental face-to-face training and have another online qualifying opportunity in the spring.
- Individuals who are successful on the fall qualifying round will become part of Group C.

### **Training of Group B (individuals already trained but not yet qualified)**

- Group B will complete an online refresher training course (about 3-4 hours in length) in December-January. The course will include practice in rating writing collections at the rater's grade cluster.
- Group B individuals who are unsuccessful on the online refresher training course will receive supplemental face-to-face training.
- Group B individuals will complete the online qualifying component of their training in the spring.
- Alternatively, at the discretion of the local district, Group B individuals may be trained in the manner described for Group A.

### **Training of Group C (individuals already trained and qualified)**

- Group C will complete an online refresher training course (about 2-3 hours in length) in the spring. No other training activities will be required.

## **Training of K-1 Raters**

### **Training of Group D (individuals not trained in the 2005-2006 school year)**

The training requirements for Group D are the same as for Group A except as follows:

- Training for Group D will be the same length as it was this year. It can be delivered in half a day.
- There is no qualifying component for K-1 raters.
- A state-recommended online refresher training course will be available for these raters in the spring.

### **Training of Group E (individuals trained in the 2005-2006 school year)**

- Group E will complete an online refresher training course (about 1-2 hours in length) in the spring. Alternatively, at the discretion of the local district, Group E individuals may be trained in the manner described for Group D.

## **About the Online Training Courses**

Raters' participation in all online activities will be scored and monitored electronically so that districts receive automated information. Trainers will not be required to score anything by hand or prepare records by hand of who needs supplemental training and who has completed online training courses. The online training courses will include a mechanism to ensure that individuals complete the required activities of the course and do not simply log on and off. The online courses will be divided into modules so that teachers can complete modules over time during planning periods, if desired.

## **Training Dates**

July 14	TETN update training for trainers trained by TEA in Austin in fall 2005 (this session will brief these trainers on the materials to be used and modifications from the 2005-2006 materials)
July 18, 19, 31, and Aug 1	TEA provides multiple one-day training sessions in Austin for additional trainers
Aug 7–Oct 27	Trainers offer training sessions to Groups A and D
Aug 14–Nov 3	Fall online qualifying window
Dec–Jan	Online refresher course for Group B (exact dates to be announced)
Beginning Jan 3	Supplemental face-to-face training
Jan 29–Mar 2	Online refresher course for Group C and E; recommended online refresher course for Group D
Jan 29–Mar 2	Online qualifying window for Groups A and B

**Attachment B**  
**List of 35 Districts with Largest LEP Student Populations**

Representatives from the following districts will become rater trainers and conduct TOP holistic rating training for their districts. These 35 districts have the highest LEP student populations in the state as reported through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System in spring 2005.

<b><u>County-District No.</u></b>	<b><u>District</u></b>
101912	Houston ISD
057905	Dallas ISD
031901	Brownsville ISD
220905	Fort Worth ISD
071902	El Paso ISD
227901	Austin ISD
240901	Laredo ISD
240903	United ISD
101903	Alief ISD
101902	Aldine ISD
057909	Garland ISD
101917	Pasadena ISD
071905	Ysleta ISD
108909	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
101907	Cypress-Fairbanks ISD
108912	La Joya ISD
057912	Irving ISD
071909	Socorro ISD
220901	Arlington ISD
101920	Spring Branch ISD
015907	San Antonio ISD
108906	McAllen ISD
108904	Edinburg CISD
079907	Fort Bend ISD
057916	Richardson ISD
108902	Donna ISD
057903	Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD
043910	Plano ISD
101910	Galena Park ISD
159901	Eagle Pass ISD
214901	Rio Grande City CISD
101914	Katy ISD
015915	Northside ISD
057910	Grand Prairie ISD
061902	Lewisville ISD