Chapter 7 TELPAS Alternate

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Overview

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Alternate assessment measures the progress that emergent bilingual (EB*) students with the most significant cognitive disabilities make in acquiring the English language, as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

As with TELPAS, TELPAS Alternate is aligned to the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and measures English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS Alternate is based on Alternate Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) that were created to address the specific access needs of this student population.

TELPAS Alternate is not a traditional multiple-choice assessment. Instead, test administrators use their knowledge of eligible students to evaluate their performance against a set of performance descriptors. Administrators record student performance ratings through the Data Entry Interface (DEI).

*Note: As of the 2021-2022 school year, the term “emergent bilingual student” replaced the terms “English language learner” and “English learner” due to legislative requirements.

The TELPAS Alternate holistic inventory contains descriptions of Observable Behaviors aligned to the Alternate PLDs that test administrators use to document a student's progress in English language acquisition. The intent of this observational design is to increase student access to TELPAS Alternate and account for a student's communication mode, thereby resulting in a more accurate measurement of a student's English proficiency level.

TEA piloted the TELPAS Alternate assessment during a 10-day window from April 23 to May 4, 2018. The pilot test was designed to evaluate the feasibility of the alternate English language proficiency assessment. TEA used test results and a post-test administration survey from the pilot test to improve the test administrator instructions and training prior to the first operational implementation in the 2018–2019 school year.

TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate are used to show the extent to which districts and the state meet the ESSA requirements for development of English language proficiency. Composite performance, rather than performances on individual domains, is used to determine an EB student's progress toward achieving English language proficiency in TELPAS Alternate. For information about how TELPAS Alternate composite results are generated, refer to the TELPAS Alternate Composite Scores section in this chapter.

Participation Requirements

Students who are eligible to participate in TELPAS Alternate are identified as EB students who receive special education services and have the most significant cognitive disabilities. This includes all students classified as EB students whose parents have declined bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) program services. EB students are required to be assessed annually until they meet EB reclassification criteria and are reclassified as non-EB/English proficient. These students exhibit intellectual and adaptive behavior deficits that limit their ability to plan, comprehend, reason, and apply social and practical skills. Such skills include personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing, eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities require extensive, direct, individualized instruction, as well as a need for substantial supports that are neither temporary nor content specific. For these students, TELPAS Alternate has specific participation requirements that an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, in conjunction with the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC), must carefully consider. Prior to reviewing the eligibility criteria for TELPAS Alternate, the ARD committee and the LPAC must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice.

Documentation of eligibility is different for students in grade 2 compared to students in grades 3–12. When considering TELPAS Alternate for a student in grade 2, the ARD committee, in conjunction with the LPAC, must review the following six questions and indicate whether the description is applicable to the student. For a student to be eligible

to participate in TELPAS Alternate, the answer to all six questions must be "Yes." If the answer to any question is "No," the student is not eligible to participate in TELPAS Alternate and must be assessed with TELPAS. Each "Yes" answer must be justified by evidence that the student meets the criterion and the LPAC signs the assurances in Step II of the participation requirements. For students in grades 3–12, the LPAC will answer question 1 and initial the assurances in Step II.

1. **Is the student identified in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) as EB/EL (English learner)?**

2. **Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?**

   - A determination of significant cognitive disability is made by the ARD committee and must be based on the student's most recent full and individual evaluation (FIE) conducted by the multidisciplinary team that includes a licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP), educational diagnostician, or other appropriately certified or licensed practitioner with experience and training in the area of the disability. AND

   - Results from the FIE must indicate a deficit in the student's ability to plan, comprehend, and reason. FIE results must also indicate adaptive behavior deficits that limit a student's ability to apply social and practical skills such as personal care, social problem-solving skills, dressing and eating, using money, and other functional skills across life domains. It is unlikely to see these types of results in an FIE of a student with a high-incidence disability only, such as a specific learning disability or speech impairment.

3. **Does the student require specialized, extensive supports to access the grade-level curriculum and environment?**

   - Federal regulations mandate that all students have access to grade-level curriculum. A student with a significant cognitive disability requires extensive, repeated, specialized supports and materials beyond the support typical peers require. The student uses substantially modified materials to access information in alternate ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across all settings. AND

   - A student with a significant cognitive disability demonstrates adaptive behaviors that are significantly impaired. This most likely will impact the student's ability to live independently and will require specialized supports for the student to function safely in daily life across all life domains, not just the school environment.

4. **Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in all instructional settings?**

   - A student with a significant cognitive disability requires a highly specialized, individualized curriculum linked to functional and academic individualized education program (IEP) goals and objectives. AND

- A student with a significant cognitive disability requires classroom assessments administered in alternate or non-traditional methods to demonstrate acquisition, maintenance, and generalization of discrete skills across academic settings. AND
- A student with a significant cognitive disability requires individualized instruction that is neither temporary nor limited to specific content areas.

5. **Does the student access and participate in the grade-level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through prerequisite skills?**

   - A student with a significant cognitive disability requires a highly specialized educational program with intensive supports and modifications to the curriculum to access the TEKS through prerequisite skills that are significantly below grade-level instruction. For instance, an elementary student may be 3–4 levels below grade-level instruction while a student in high school may be 7–9 levels below.

6. **Is the TELPAS Alternate assessment determination based on the student's significant cognitive disability and EB status and NOT on extenuating factors?**

   - The decision to administer TELPAS Alternate is NOT based on a student's racial or economic background, excessive or extended absences, location of service delivery, anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional distress, or any other such factors.

Students who are eligible for TELPAS Alternate must be evaluated in all four language domains. Unlike TELPAS, there are no domain-specific exemptions. Students may qualify for No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR) or Medical Exception (ME). More information on NAAR and ME designations can be found on the applicable form on the TELPAS Alternate Resources webpage.

Test Development

TELPAS Alternate assesses the ELPS, which districts are required to implement as an integral part of each foundation and enrichment subject of the TEKS. The ELPS are second language acquisition standards that include three instructional components: cross-curricular second language acquisition essential knowledge and skills, PLDs, and linguistic accommodations.

To achieve the state's educational goals for meeting the language and content needs of EB students who have one or more significant cognitive disabilities, TEA developed Alternate PLDs to describe how well EB students with significant cognitive disabilities can understand and use English. There are Alternate PLDs for each of the four language domains.

TELPAS Alternate uses the same language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as TELPAS; however, the definitions of the language domains are broader in TELPAS Alternate to allow for alternate forms of expressive and receptive language, as

shown below in Table 7.1. The italicized language in the TELPAS Alternate Refinement column indicates the broader definitions.

Table 7.1. Refined definitions of TELPAS Alternate language domains

Domain	TELPAS Definition	TELPAS Alternate Refinement
Listening	The ability to understand spoken language, comprehend and extract information, and follow social and instructional discourse through which information is provided	The ability to understand spoken *or signed language*, comprehend and extract information, and follow social and instructional discourse through which information is provided
Speaking	The ability to use spoken language appropriately and effectively in learning activities and social interactions	The ability to use spoken language *or alternative communication* appropriately and effectively in learning activities and social interactions
Reading	The ability to comprehend and interpret written text at the grade-appropriate level	The ability to comprehend and interpret written text, *including braille,* at a modified level
Writing	The ability to produce written text with content and format to fulfill grade-appropriate classroom assignments	The ability to produce written text or *alternative communication* with content and format to fulfill classroom *and community- based* assignments

For purposes of TELPAS Alternate, "English" is not limited to the typical spoken or written English of other state assessments. It is important to recognize that some EB students use sign language, braille, or another method of communication as a substitute for traditional English in one or more domains. Educators who evaluate how well their students participate in classroom activities in English should consider whether an alternate response mode is an appropriate way to demonstrate proficiency in a specific language domain. For a detailed list of response modes for each domain, see the TELPAS Alternate Test Administrator Manual.

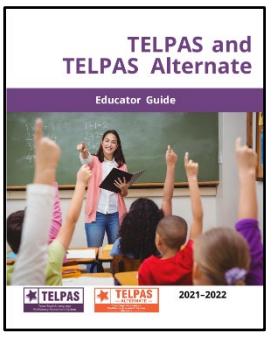
TEA involved a wide variety of educators, assessment experts, and administrators in the test development process. These included:

- bilingual and ESL and special education teachers
- bilingual and ESL coordinators
- district and campus testing coordinators and administrators
- assessment experts
- second language acquisition experts and researchers

These educators, assessment experts, and administrators provided feedback on many components of this alternate assessment. These included:

- Observable Behaviors for the holistic inventory

- alternate PLDs
- eligibility requirements
- classroom examples for each observable behavior



More information about TELPAS Alternate is available in the TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate Educator Guide on the TELPAS Alternate Resources webpage. This guide is provided to familiarize educators with TELPAS and TELPAS Alternate. It shows the integral relationship between TELPAS Alternate and the ELPS, and includes explanatory information on the TELPAS Alternate language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as a sample of Observable Behaviors for reading.

TELPAS Alternate Holistic Inventory

TELPAS Alternate is a holistic inventory aligned to the ELPS and based on Alternate PLDs that describe the English language acquisition progress of a student with significant cognitive disabilities. The inventory includes 40 Observable Behaviors for test administrators to consider regarding each student's use of the English language in the four language domains. Each Observable Behavior has descriptions at each of the five levels of proficiency: Awareness, Imitation, Early Independence, Developing Independence, and Basic Fluency.

Each Observable Behavior includes descriptions of characteristics that students with significant cognitive disabilities learning English demonstrate as they gain proficiency. Test administrators read the continuum of descriptions for each Observable Behavior and indicate the description that most accurately describes a student's skills for that Observable Behavior at the time of the test administration. Test administrators then submit student ratings through DEI.

Training

To increase awareness of the TELPAS Alternate assessment, TEA posted optional training PowerPoint presentations to the TELPAS Alternate Resources section of the TELPAS Alternate webpage, as well as to the Learning Management System (LMS). The trainings were designed to provide test administrators, testing coordinators, and campus administrators an overview of the assessment, including eligibility, accessibility, and administration. Additional training materials were posted for test administrators. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing domain PowerPoint presentations help test administrators understand the language of the inventory, provide rating examples, and suggest ways that the Observable Behaviors could be demonstrated in class.

Test Administrations

During the 2021–2022 school year, more than 9,500 eligible students were tested on TELPAS Alternate assessments. This number is approximately 120% of the total number of test administrations from the 2020–2021 school year. Districts submitted ratings for eligible students for the TELPAS Alternate assessment as indicated in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2. TELPAS Alternate Assessments Administered in 2021–2022

Grade	Number of Assessments
Grade 2	1,335
Grade 3	1,349
Grade 4	1,226
Grade 5	1,179
Grade 6	1,067
Grade 7	906
Grade 8	782
Grade 9	611
Grade 10	443
Grade 11	376
Grade 12	286

Scores and Reports

English language proficiency tests are not designed to measure mastery of learning objectives with a pass or fail score because the process of acquiring and becoming academically proficient in a second language takes longer than a school year. TELPAS Alternate results provide an annual indicator of where each EB student is on a continuum of English language development designed for second language learners with significant cognitive disabilities. This continuum is divided into five proficiency levels: Awareness, Imitation, Early Independence, Developing Independence, and Basic Fluency. The progress of students along this continuum is the basis for the TELPAS Alternate reporting system, which enables districts and the state to evaluate whether EB students in this special population are making steady annual growth in learning to listen, speak, read, and write in English in the context of academic instruction.

Students who take TELPAS Alternate receive proficiency ratings in each language domain assessed—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as a composite rating that combines the domain ratings into one overall English language proficiency rating. While the TELPAS Alternate PLDs are domain specific, they derive from policy

definitions that remain constant from domain to domain. These policy definitions appear in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3. TELPAS Alternate Proficiency Levels and Policy Definitions

Awareness	Students who receive this rating may be aware of English sounds or print; however, they have little or no functional ability to participate in communication activities in English.
Imitation	Students who receive this rating match, imitate, or approximate some English in their environment; however, they are not able to independently understand or produce English. They participate in routine communication activities in a familiar environment when the activities are significantly linguistically accommodated.
Early Independence	Students who receive this rating understand short, simple messages and produce messages of one or two high-need, high-frequency words (e.g., book, cafeteria, teacher). They are starting to participate in linguistically accommodated communication activities in English in familiar environments.
Developing Independence	Students who receive this rating understand longer messages of multiple sentences in English and produce simple, descriptive, original messages by combining two or more words (e.g., new red bike, big fast truck). They participate meaningfully in linguistically accommodated communication activities in English in familiar environments.
Basic Fluency	Students who receive this rating understand and produce more detailed, complex, and elaborate messages with multiple sentences in English. These students participate independently in communication activities in English in familiar environments.

Language Domain Scores

Results for TELPAS Alternate include proficiency level ratings, the number of raw score points received, and scale scores. Test administrators submit their ratings via DEI.

RAW SCORE

The number of total points scored on the Holistic Inventory is provided separately for each domain. The raw score can be interpreted only in terms of the specific Observable Behaviors. To facilitate fair comparisons of student performance across domains, raw scores are converted to scale scores.

SCALE SCORE

A scale score is a conversion of the raw score onto a scale that permits direct comparisons of student performance between different test administrations. Scale

scores can also permit comparisons of student performance across different domains through scaling.

A student's scale score on a TELPAS Alternate domain determines that student's proficiency level for that domain. To facilitate the monitoring of a student's progress from one year to the next, TELPAS Alternate results for individual students include the student's proficiency level rating and scale score for both the previous and current year. Proficiency level cut scores are discussed in the Performance Standards section of this chapter.

TELPAS Alternate Composite Scores

In addition to receiving a rating of Awareness, Imitation, Early Independence, Developing Independence, or Basic Fluency for each domain, students also receive a composite score and composite rating.

The TELPAS Alternate composite score and rating indicate a student's overall level of English language proficiency and are determined from the student's listening, speaking, reading, and writing proficiency ratings. Each domain is weighted, as shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4. Language Domain Weights in TELPAS Alternate Composite Scores

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
25%	25%	25%	25%

After a TELPAS Alternate composite score is calculated, a composite rating is determined according to the rules below. All the criteria listed for a rating must be met for a student to receive that rating:

- Awareness
  - A student whose composite score fails to meet the Imitation requirements will receive an Awareness rating.
- Imitation
  - A TELPAS Alternate composite score greater than or equal to 1.5
  - At least two domains with a proficiency level of Imitation or higher
- Early Independence
  - A TELPAS Alternate composite score greater than or equal to 2.25
  - At least two domains with a proficiency level of Early Independence or higher
  - At least three domains with a proficiency level of Imitation or higher

- Developing Independence
  - A TELPAS Alternate composite score greater than or equal to 3.25
  - At least two domains with a proficiency level of Developing Independence or higher
  - All domains with a proficiency level of Imitation or higher
- Basic Fluency
  - A TELPAS Alternate composite score greater than or equal to 4
  - At least two domains with a proficiency level of Basic Fluency
  - All domains with a proficiency level of Early Independence or higher

Figure 7.1 provides a student example to show how composite results are generated.

Figure 7.1. Sample Calculation of Composite Results

Each domain rating is converted to a domain score from 1 (Awareness) to 5 (Basic Fluency).

Domain	Proficiency Level	Domain Score
Listening	Developing Independence	4
Speaking	Early Independence	3
Reading	Developing Independence	4
Writing	Imitation	2

Each domain score is multiplied by the appropriate weight in Table 7.4 and then summed to obtain the TELPAS Alternate composite score, as shown:

Composite Score = (Listening × 0.25) + (Speaking × 0.25) + (Reading × 0.25) + (Writing × 0.25)
Using the sample domain scores from the chart above, the composite score is calculated as follows: Composite Score = (4 × 0.25) + (3 × 0.25) + (4 × 0.25) + (2 × 0.25) = 3.25

The TELPAS Alternate composite scores are converted to the TELPAS Alternate composite ratings. This example composite score of 3.25 would result in a composite rating of Developing Independence due to the ratings profile having

- a TELPAS Alternate composite score of 3.25 or higher,
- at least two domains with a proficiency level of Developing Independence or higher, and
- all domains with a proficiency level of Imitation or higher.

Assessment Reports

Standard reports for TELPAS Alternate are provided automatically to districts. Information contained in standard reports satisfies mandatory reporting requirements. Districts have the option to request additional reports through an online form and are required to pay a nominal fee for each additional report requested.

YEARLY PROGRESS INDICATOR

The student's yearly progress indicator provides information about the yearly proficiency level progress that an EB student with the most significant cognitive disabilities makes in acquiring the English language. This measure is based on a comparison of a student's composite rating in the previous year with his or her composite rating in the current year. The yearly statewide summary reports provide the number and percentage of students who progressed one, two, three, or four proficiency levels. The yearly statewide summary reports also provide the number and percentage of students who progressed at least one proficiency level. The yearly progress indicator is set as follows:

- If a student received a composite rating one level higher than the previous year, the student's yearly progress indicator is 1. Additionally, if a student received a Basic Fluency composite rating (5) in the current year and a Basic Fluency composite rating (5) in the previous year, the student's yearly progress indicator is also 1.
- If a student received a composite rating two levels higher than the previous year, the student's yearly progress indicator is 2.
- If a student received a composite rating three levels higher than the previous year, the student's yearly progress indicator is 3.
- If a student received a composite rating four levels higher than the previous year, the student's yearly progress indicator is 4.
- If a student with a current year composite rating is the same as (excluding a Basic Fluency composite rating of 5) or lower than the previous year's composite rating, the yearly progress indicator is 0.

The yearly progress indicator is provided on the summary reports for each grade assessed that contains information about every student for whom a TELPAS Alternate record was submitted.

For more information about reporting of the TELPAS Alternate results, refer to the TEA publication Interpreting Assessment Reports.

Use of Test Results

The TELPAS Alternate student performance reports are used in the following ways:

- helping parents monitor the progress their child is making in acquiring English
- informing instructional planning for individual students
- reporting results to local school boards, school professionals, and the community
- evaluating programs, resources, and staffing patterns
- evaluating district effectiveness in accountability measures

Performance Standards

Performance standards relate levels of test performance directly to what students are expected to learn, as defined in the statewide curriculum. This association is made by establishing cut scores that distinguish between proficiency levels or categories. Standard setting is the process of establishing these cut scores that define the proficiency levels for an assessment.

TELPAS Alternate proficiency level standards were established in summer 2019. Table 7.5 shows the scale score ranges as established by the standard-setting committee. The scale score ranges will remain constant from year to year. More detailed information about the standard-setting process is available in the TELPAS Alternate Standard-Setting Technical Report on the TELPAS Alternate Resources webpage.

Table 7.5. Approved Scale Score Cut Scores from 2019 TELPAS Alternate Standard Setting

Domain	Awareness Level	Imitation Level	Early Independence Level	Developing Independence Level	Basic Fluency Level
Listening	600–698	699–749	750–799	800–857	858–1000
Speaking	600–681	682–749	750–799	800–863	864–1000
Reading	600–703	704–749	750–799	800–848	849–1000
Writing	600–700	701–749	750–799	800–852	853–1000

Scaling

Scaling is a statistical procedure that places raw scores on a common scoring metric to make test scores easier to interpret and compare across test administrations. As with many of the other programs in the Texas Assessment Program, the TELPAS Alternate assessments for grades 2–12 use the Rasch partial-credit model (RPCM) to place test questions (Observable Behaviors) for a given TELPAS Alternate assessment on the same scale across test administrations. Once performance standards have been set for an assessment, its Rasch scale is then transformed to a more user-friendly metric to facilitate interpretation of the test scores. Details of the RPCM scaling method used in Texas are provided in Chapter 3, “Standard Technical Processes.”

Reporting Scales

Scale scores for TELPAS Alternate are reported on a separate scale by domain. Scale scores allow for direct comparisons of student performance between specific sets of Observable Behaviors from different test administrations. TELPAS Alternate is administered to all grades 2–12 students using one form. Refer to Chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes," for detailed information about the scaling process for the different types of reporting scales.

Scale scores are reported on a horizontal scale for each TELPAS Alternate domain. The reporting scale for the four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are independent scales with the lowest obtainable scale scores of 600 and the highest obtainable scale scores of 1000. The cut scores on the reporting scale for the Early Independence and Developing Independence proficiency levels are 750 and 800, respectively, to create common points of reference across the assessments for each domain. It is important to note that although the Early Independence and Developing Independence scale score values are fixed across horizontally scaled assessments, the Imitation and Basic Fluency scale score values vary across TELPAS Alternate domains. For a given assessment, the scale score values of the proficiency level cut score remain constant over time.

The TELPAS Alternate scale scores represent linear transformations of Rasch proficiency level estimates (θ). Specifically, the transformation is made by first multiplying θ by a slope constant (A) and then adding an intercept constant (B). This operation is described by Equation 1 below:

$$SS_\theta = A * \theta + B \quad (1)$$

where SS_θ is the scale score for a Rasch proficiency level estimate (θ). A and B are referred to as horizontal scaling constants. The values of A and B for the TELPAS Alternate assessments are provided in Table 7.6. Once established, these same transformations are applied each year to the proficiency level estimates for that year's set of test questions.

Table 7.6. Scaling Constants for TELPAS Alternate Tests

	A	*B*
Listening	22.6974	770.8089
Speaking	20.9486	772.9659
Reading	22.0080	778.9801
Writing	20.3990	785.4575

Further information about scaling appears in Chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes."

Scale for Composite Scores and Rating

The TELPAS Alternate composite score and composite rating use a scale from 1.0 to 5.0. More information about the calculation of the composite rating is available in the TELPAS Alternate Composite Scores section of this chapter.

Reliability

Reliability estimates for the TELPAS Alternate scores were obtained mainly through analyses of internal consistency, classical standard error of measurement (SEM), conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM), and classification accuracy. Refer to Chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes," for detailed information about reliability.

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency reliability was estimated using coefficient alpha, which is an estimate of the ratio of true-score variance to observed-score variance. In practice, reliability estimates can range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating greater reliability of scores. However, what is considered appropriate might vary depending on how assessment results are used. For the spring 2022 TELPAS Alternate assessments, internal consistency estimates for the overall test ranged from 0.97 to 0.98. This indicates that the reliability estimates were all very high in terms of appropriateness for student-level interpretations. In addition to the overall test reliability, Appendix E presents reliability estimates by reporting category and by gender as well.

Classical Standard Error of Measurement

Classical SEM represents the amount of variance in a score that results from factors other than what the assessment is intended to measure. The SEM is helpful for quantifying the margin of uncertainty that occurs on every test. Refer to Chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes," for detailed information about SEM. The SEM values (shown in Appendix E) for TELPAS Alternate are between 1.66 to 1.9 raw score points across domains.

Conditional Standard Error of Measurement

The SEM index provides only an estimate of the average test score error for all students regardless of their individual levels of proficiency. By comparison, CSEM provides an estimate of test score error at each score point on a test. More specifically, CSEM is an estimate of the average test score measurement error that is conditional on the proficiency or scale score estimate. Appendix E provides CSEM values for all domains of TELPAS Alternate.

Classification Consistency and Accuracy

Classification consistency provides an estimate of the consistency of student classifications into proficiency levels if students were to take a parallel test form. Classification accuracy provides an estimate of the accuracy of student classifications

into proficiency levels based on current test results. Appendix E provides classification consistency and accuracy rates for TELPAS Alternate by domain.

Composite Reliability

The composite score reliability estimates of TELPAS Alternate are analyzed annually to evaluate the impact of the reliability of the listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains on the TELPAS Alternate composite reliability estimates. The composite score reliability estimates were calculated using a stratified alpha approach. The internal consistency values of listening, speaking, and reading on the categorical scale were estimated based on their internal consistency values on the continuous scale.

The spring 2022 results of these analyses, presented in Table 7.7, show that the weighted TELPAS Alternate composite score has a reliability estimate of 0.981.

Table 7.7. Estimated Reliability of the TELPAS Alternate Composite Score

Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Internal Consistency	Composite Reliability
Listening	3.239	1.266	0.930	0.981
Speaking	3.178	1.382	0.937	
Reading	2.913	1.403	0.934	
Writing	2.606	1.338	0.934	

Validity

Validity refers to the extent a test measures what it is intended to measure. The results of TELPAS Alternate are used to guide instructional planning related to the progress that EB students with significant cognitive disabilities make in acquiring English. Validity evidence for an assessment can come from a variety of sources, including test content, response processes, internal structure, relationships with other variables, and analysis of the consequences of testing.

The sections that follow describe how these types of validity evidence are collected annually for TELPAS Alternate.

Evidence Based on Test Content

Validity evidence based on test content refers to evidence of the relationship between tested content and the construct the test is intended to measure. TELPAS Alternate measures student performance in direct alignment with the English language acquisition skills and Alternate PLDs, defined by the Texas ELPS that are part of the TEKS curriculum. The ELPS outline the instruction that EB students must receive to support their ability to develop academic English language proficiency. TELPAS Alternate assesses the ELPS for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Test Design and Alignment with Standards. TELPAS Alternate is designed to assess English language proficiency in a manner that provides information about how well grades 2–12 EB students with significant cognitive disabilities understand and produce the English they need for academic success in Texas schools, as well as the types of language supports they require to independently comprehend written or spoken English.

The tests are built using five levels, or degrees, of linguistic support, addressing the gradually reduced degree of linguistic accommodation that EB students need as they progress from knowing little or no English to approaching the level of Basic Fluency. The levels of linguistic support are integrally related to the proficiency levels assessed.

The test blueprints require 10 Observable Behaviors per domain, for a total of 40. Score reports inform administrators about how successfully students demonstrate the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of the ELPS at the five proficiency levels.

Test Development. The test development process for TELPAS Alternate adheres to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME], 2014), is grounded in the state's standards, and is guided by assessment experts, as well as by bilingual and special education educators, who have firsthand knowledge of the standards and the students.

Evidence Based on Response Processes

An additional source of validity evidence is whether the way students are evaluated on Observable Behaviors supports the accurate measurement of the construct.

Theoretical and empirical evidence was gathered to confirm that the way administrators engaged with the Observable Behaviors does not add construct-irrelevant variance.

Additionally, evidence was gathered confirming that response processes do not result in an advantage or disadvantage for any student group. When the Observable Behaviors were first considered for TELPAS Alternate in 2018, cognitive labs were used to gather this type of evidence and to study the way test administrators engage with the Observable Behaviors and classroom examples.

Student response evidence was also gathered about Observable Behaviors through educator and expert reviews and analyses of responses. When Observable Behaviors were field tested during the pilot year in 2018, response data were gathered and evaluated. For additional information, see the Item Analyses section of Chapter 3, "Standard Technical Processes."

Evidence Based on Internal Structure

Texas collects evidence that reflects the relationship between test item performance and proficiency levels to verify that patterns of item performance are consistent with the constructs the test is intended to measure.

Evidence of the validity of TELPAS Alternate is supported by training and administration procedures that prepare administrators to perform their duties and prepare district administrators to follow procedures to maintain the integrity of the test administration.

Internal structure is evaluated annually by estimating the internal consistency reliability for the TELPAS Alternate ratings of student performances. Internal consistency reliability estimates provide a measure of the consistency with which test administrators evaluate students. The internal consistency of the online TELPAS Alternate assessments is evaluated each year using coefficient alpha statistics that can be found in Appendix E.

The TELPAS Alternate assessments directly support the state's goal of having a valid and authentic assessment. These holistically rated assessments also serve an ongoing and critical role as a professional development tool that supports effective instruction, enabling administrators to better understand and meet the educational needs of EB students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Evidence Based on Relationships to Other Variables

Another way that Texas provides validity evidence for TELPAS Alternate is by analyzing the relationship between test performance and performance on external measures. By examining this relationship, evidence can be collected to show that the relationships are consistent with those expected at the level of the construct underlying the proposed score interpretations.

TELPAS Alternate Reading Proficiency Levels and STAAR Alternate 2 Reading Performance Standards

Evidence based on external measures comes from an analysis of the relationship between TELPAS Alternate reading performance and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) Alternate 2 reading or English I and English II end-of-course (EOC) performance.

As indicated earlier in this chapter, TELPAS Alternate reading measures English language proficiency in reading, or, how well EB students are learning to understand written English and apply reading skills for meaningful engagement in content-area instruction. STAAR Alternate 2 assumes that students already understand the English language and focuses on assessing the degree to which students can apply literary and analytical reading skills as required by the language arts TEKS. Because of the differences in the designs and purposes of these two assessments, one would not expect EB students to perform at the same level of proficiency on the two assessments. One would, however, expect EB students who have comparatively little difficulty understanding and reading English to score higher on the STAAR Alternate 2 reading tests when compared with EB students who are in earlier stages of English fluency.

To examine the relationship between performance on the two tests, average

performance for STAAR Alternate 2 grades 3–8 reading, English I, and English II is calculated separately for the students classified in each of the TELPAS Alternate reading English language proficiency levels (Awareness, Imitation, Basic Independence, Developing Independence, and Basic Fluent). For each grade level, starting with grade 3, and including the TELPAS Alternate proficiency level breakout group, two types of performance data are examined:

1. average STAAR Alternate 2 scale scores
2. STAAR Alternate 2 passing rates (Level II: Satisfactory)

Data are presented on the following page for STAAR Alternate 2 grades 3–8 and English I and II. Table 7.8 shows that within a grade level, the average STAAR Alternate 2 scale score increases as a student's TELPAS Alternate proficiency level increases. In addition, the passing rate on STAAR Alternate 2 increases as the TELPAS Alternate proficiency level tends to increase within each grade level. State passing rates for all STAAR Alternate 2 students can be found in the Test Results section of Chapter 5, "STAAR Alternate 2."

Table 7.8. 2022 STAAR Alternate 2 Grades 3–8 Reading, English I, and English II Performance by TELPAS Alternate Reading Proficiency Level for Students Who Participated in Both Assessments

Grade/ Course	TELPAS Alternate Reading Proficiency Level	N	2022 Average STAAR Alternate 2 Reading/ English Scale Score*	STAAR Alternate 2 Passing Rate, 2022 Level II: Satisfactory Standard
3	Awareness	356	313	71%
	Imitation	310	334	86%
	Early Independence	357	341	92%
	Developing Independence	233	353	97%
	Basic Fluency	77	356	99%
4	Awareness	228	315	72%
	Imitation	268	342	88%
	Early Independence	312	354	95%
	Developing Independence	243	367	98%
	Basic Fluency	156	374	98%
5	Awareness	191	317	66%
	Imitation	192	346	91%
	Early Independence	269	360	94%
	Developing Independence	262	369	99%
	Basic Fluency	247	381	100%
6	Awareness	194	317	75%
	Imitation	186	341	96%
	Early Independence	214	348	96%
	Developing Independence	228	358	98%
	Basic Fluency	224	361	99%

Grade/ Course	TELPAS Alternate Reading Proficiency Level	N	2022 Average STAAR Alternate 2 Reading/ English Scale Score*	STAAR Alternate 2 Passing Rate, 2022 Level II: Satisfactory Standard
7	Awareness	110	324	80%
	Imitation	127	338	83%
	Early Independence	180	362	96%
	Developing Independence	208	371	99%
	Basic Fluency	254	374	99%
8	Awareness	126	316	71%
	Imitation	104	341	90%
	Early Independence	153	359	97%
	Developing Independence	179	376	98%
	Basic Fluency	206	388	100%
English I (reading and writing)	Awareness	143	321	74%
	Imitation	75	342	91%
	Early Independence	120	356	97%
	Developing Independence	122	370	99%
	Basic Fluency	147	393	100%
English II (reading and writing)	Awareness	73	312	75%
	Imitation	61	346	90%
	Early Independence	84	361	96%
	Developing Independence	95	373	98%
	Basic Fluency	138	387	99%

* A 300-scale score is necessary to meet the STAAR Alternate 2 Level II: Satisfactory performance level.

TELPAS Alternate Writing Proficiency Levels and STAAR Alternate 2 Writing Performance Standards

TELPAS Alternate writing performance is also compared to STAAR Alternate 2 writing performance by looking at average STAAR Alternate 2 English I and English II scale scores and passing rates for each of the five TELPAS Alternate writing proficiency levels. Table 7.9 shows that within a grade level, the average STAAR Alternate 2 scale score increases as a student's TELPAS Alternate writing proficiency level increases. In addition, the passing rate on STAAR Alternate 2 tends to increase as a student's TELPAS Alternate writing proficiency level increases within a grade level. However, there is no direct comparison given the removal of writing from Grades 4 and 7 and the inclusion of both reading and writing sessions for the English I and II tests,

Table 7.9. 2022 STAAR Alternate 2 English I and English II Performance by TELPAS Alternate Writing Proficiency Rating for Students Who Participated in Both Assessments

Grade/ Course	TELPAS Alternate Writing Proficiency Level	N	2022 Average STAAR Alternate 2 English Scale	STAAR Alternate 2 Passing Rate, 2022 Level II: Satisfactory Standard
English I (reading and writing)	Awareness	152	322	76%
	Imitation	99	342	91%
	Early Independence	126	363	98%
	Developing Independence	123	379	99%
	Basic Fluency	107	394	100%
English II (reading and writing)	Awareness	83	317	80%
	Imitation	72	351	90%
	Early Independence	88	361	97%
	Developing Independence	110	381	98%
	Basic Fluency	98	385	98%

Evidence Based on Consequences of Testing

Another source of validity evidence comes from documenting the intended and unintended consequences of administering an assessment. The effect an assessment has on the instructional environment after the assessment is given is referred to by some researchers as consequential validity (Kane, 1992; Messick, 1989; Shepard, 1997). The administration of the TELPAS Alternate assessments leads to improvements in students' academic language acquisition resulting from what educators learn during the test administration training process and through direct application of the assessment process for both formative and summative purposes. Logical consequences of administering TELPAS Alternate are that educators

- learn how developing academic language proficiency in English relates to and supports academic achievement in English,
- learn how to adjust content instruction for EB students with significant cognitive disabilities to make it more comprehensible and how to target steady progress in English acquisition, and
- practice observing student behaviors in the instructional environment for making better instructional decisions about students.

A 2019 survey of TELPAS Alternate test administrators suggested that the administration of TELPAS Alternate assessments has led to an increase in students receiving support from bilingual and ESL staff and an increase in special education teachers getting ESL certified to better serve this population of students. A total of 37 respondents (7.5%) reported that students started receiving services as a result of learning about the TELPAS Alternate assessments, and 187 (38%) reported additional opportunities to get certified or attend professional development for ESL.

Sampling

The 2021–2022 school year was the fourth operational administration of TELPAS Alternate. For the first three operational test administrations, there were no audits, and therefore, no sampling has been conducted for this test administration.

Test Results

Appendix E provides frequency distributions and summary statistics for the TELPAS Alternate assessments administered in 2021–2022, based on scale scores as well as mean *p*-values and reliability estimates by grade level. The percentage of students in each of the TELPAS Alternate composite proficiency levels is provided in Table 7.10. The percentages are available by domain in the 2022 TELPAS Alternate Statewide Summary Reports on TEA's Student Assessment Division website.

Table 7.10. Percentages* of Students in Each of the TELPAS Alternate Composite Proficiency Levels in 2022

Grade	Number of Students	Composite Proficiency Levels				
		Awareness	Imitation	Early Independence	Developing Independence	Basic Fluency
2	1,335	26%	32%	26%	13%	3%
3	1,349	17%	25%	29%	22%	7%
4	1,226	12%	21%	26%	25%	16%
5	1,179	11%	15%	21%	29%	23%
6	1,067	12%	16%	22%	26%	24%
7	906	8%	15%	19%	27%	31%
8	782	10%	14%	20%	25%	30%
9	611	14%	16%	20%	23%	26%
10	443	12%	15%	16%	24%	33%
11	376	13%	16%	19%	22%	30%
12	286	13%	18%	20%	23%	27%

* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.