

First Mondays

Monthly Notes for Virginia's Adult Education Providers

March 7, 2016

Calendar

Data Summit
March 14
Charlottesville

**Regional Program Managers
 and IEL/Civics Program
 Managers Meeting**
March 15-16
Charlottesville

IEL Civics Symposium
April 28-29
Richmond

VAILL
James Madison University
Harrisonburg
July 27-29

BEST Plus 2.0

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) will launch BEST Plus 2.0 on July 1, 2016 to coincide with the new program year. Programs should continue to use the current BEST Plus for pre- and post-testing until June 30, 2016. Starting on July 1, 2016, only BEST Plus 2.0 should be used.

BEST Plus 2.0 Rollout

- Cal will provide each state and each program with one complimentary BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide and one USB drive that includes the BEST Plus 2.0 test administration software and the new score management software.
- CAL began contacting programs in February 2016 with a link to a Web page for programs to update their contact and shipping information.
- For test security, please note that CAL will only send the complimentary BEST Plus 2.0 materials to programs that have confirmed their shipping information.

Pre-Order BEST Plus 2.0 Starting May 16, 2016

- BEST Plus 2.0 print-based examinee test booklets and picture cue books (Forms D, E, and F) will be available for pre-ordering on the CAL Store starting Monday, May 16, 2016. Orders for print-based test materials received by June 20, 2016, will be shipped to arrive by June 30.
- Prices for BEST Plus 2.0 are now available on the BEST Plus 2.0 web page. Price changes for computer test administrations will go into effect on July 1, 2016.
- Computer test administrations ordered at any time will continue to be credited to the programs' accounts and will not be affected by the transition to BEST Plus 2.0.

Did You Know

Did you know that PBS has a bank of standards-based lesson plans drawn from its broadcasts and supplementary materials? You can even search for a lesson focused on a specific CCR standard. PBS is also featuring a number of lessons related to this year's presidential election.

Check out

<http://www.pbslearningmedia.org>

Score Ranges

The new NRS score ranges for BEST Plus 2.0, effective July 1, 2016, are listed below.

Beginning ESL Literacy	88 to 361
Low Beginning ESL	362 to 427
High Beginning ESL	428 to 452
Low Intermediate ESL	453 to 484
High Intermediate ESL	485 to 524
Advanced ESL	525 to 564

Pre- and Post-Testing

Please note that you cannot pre-test with the original BEST Plus and post-test with BEST Plus 2.0 for NRS reporting.

- Starting July 1, 2016, programs must use BEST Plus 2.0 for pre- and post-testing for NRS reporting. This means that scores from the original BEST Plus cannot carry over into the new program year.
- Returning students will need to be retested (pre-tested) with BEST Plus 2.0.

Instructional Hours

- CAL recommends re-testing students at the end of their period of instruction, with 60 hours minimum (80–100 hours recommended) of instruction prior to re-testing.
- It is important to note here that during a February webinar, CAL stated that students with fewer than 60 hours of instruction but who could reasonably be expected to show a gain may be accommodated with an opportunity for post testing in accordance with state assessment policies and NRS guidelines. According to OCTAE, however, because the only post-test requirement published by CAL is the 60 hour minimum, none of the states, including Virginia, may permit testing that is not consistent with this requirement.

GED® Stats

January 1 – March 4,
2016

Test takers – 1,920

First-time completers –
699

Passers – 1,617

Original BEST Plus Materials and Computer Administrations

- Programs with computer test administration balances in their accounts and on testing computers will not have to make any changes once the BEST Plus 2.0 software is installed. Computer test administrations from BEST Plus will carry over into BEST Plus 2.0.
- For the print-based version used for NRS reporting, CAL recommends that original BEST Plus examinee test booklets (Forms A, B, and C) be used by June 30, 2016. NRS users will not be able to use them after July 1, 2016.
- To finish your Program Year 2015 data collection (i.e., scoring, data entry, and NRS reporting), NRS users will need to use the original BEST Plus score management software on the red Test CD (dated February 2005) or on the original BEST Plus USB. Programs should save a copy of the red BEST Plus CD or original BEST Plus USB for this purpose.
- Any unused print-based scoring administrations in your program account balance will be converted to use as computer test administrations as of July 1, 2016. This is especially important for NRS users.
- There are no changes to the scoring rubric.
- Programs will be able to download a free PDF of the scoring and software sections of the new BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide (TAG) to update their current TAG. New test administrators will need a new BEST Plus 2.0 TAG after July 1, 2016.
- On July 1, 2016, programs and test administrators using BEST Plus for NRS purposes will need to destroy all original BEST Plus examinee test booklets and picture cue books (Forms A, B, and C) and the black Administrator Practice CD. All red BEST Plus Test CDs and original BEST Plus USBs should be destroyed as soon as Program Year 2015 NRS reporting has been completed.
- Original BEST Plus test materials will not be valid for NRS reporting for Program Year 2016 or beyond.

Money Matters

Reminder:

Final reimbursement requests for approved technology purchases are due by April 18, 2016.

A significant number of AEFLA funded programs still have unspent reallocation funds from 2014-2015. As you begin to prepare your third quarter AEFLA reimbursement requests, please deplete 2014-2015 funds before requesting reimbursement of 2015-2016 funds.

An Education and Workforce Challenge

An assessment of adult skills by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) found that about 18 percent of 16- to 65-year-olds in the United States have *low literacy skills and 30 percent have low skills in working with and using mathematical information (numeracy). This represents millions of American adults, including many working adults, who struggle to use written text and numbers.

Although the challenge to adult education providers that these numbers represent is daunting, it is probably not surprising to most of us. Another set of percentages, although again not surprising to those of us in the field but which may be surprising to the general public and legislative policy makers, concerns employment and educational attainment.

Employment Status – Although adults with low literacy or math skills were more likely to be unemployed and out of the labor force than those with high skills, the study showed that millions of employed individuals have low literacy or low numeracy skills.

- 23 million employed adults have low literacy (16 percent of the employed population)
- 36 million employed adults have low math skills (25 percent of the employed population)

Educational Attainment – A high school education does not guarantee that a person will have high levels of skills. More than half of those with the low levels of skills have at least a high school diploma and many have higher degrees.

- 63% of adults with low literacy have a high school education or higher
- 69% of adults with low math skills have a high school education or higher.

For more information on the complete study, visit the [OECD Web site](#).

*Low literacy or numeracy is defined as being in the lowest two of six possible categories. The *Survey of Adult Skills* (PIAAC) defines literacy as “understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written text” and numeracy as “the ability to access, use, interpret, and communicate mathematical information and ideas.”