

FAQ: Suspending TNReady/TCAP Testing for Grades 3–8

April 28, 2016

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General

1. *Who is still taking TNReady and TCAP tests, and who is not?*

- High school and all End of Course testing has not been suspended and should move forward as planned. Any middle school students who take End of Course tests, like Algebra I, will still take those assessments. The SAT-10 test for students in grades K–2 is also ongoing if districts chose to administer that assessment.
- TNReady Part II, as well as science and social studies TCAP tests, are suspended for grades 3–8 unless a district chooses to give the tests, which it can only do at this point if it has all the materials for a particular grade and subject. This applies to grades 3–8 TNReady for math and English language arts and grades 3–8 TCAP tests on science and social studies.
- Districts have the option to continue with grades 3–8 testing *ONLY if the district has all of the materials for a particular grade and subject (e.g. fifth grade math)*. If a district chooses to administer 3–8 tests in grades and subjects for which the district has all of the materials, it would need to give that test to *all* district schools.
- If districts do not have all of the materials for a grade and subject, or if they do not choose to move forward with testing in grades 3–8, those students will not take Part II or TCAP tests on science and social studies. If districts have all of the materials for a particular grade and subject, we would encourage them to consider giving that test to their students, as it will allow students to experience a new test that is fully aligned to Tennessee state standards, different, and more rigorous than they have seen in the past. Districts can determine what makes sense for them within these parameters based on the materials they received; however, all testing must end by May 10.

2. *What if students in grades 3–8 already finished some Part II testing? Will those tests be scored?*

- We will give students, parents, and educators as much feedback as we can about students' performance on TNReady Part II for grades 3–8, but that information will be limited. There will be some information about students' raw data, but there will not be broader context about the questions they answered correctly or those they missed nor the achievement level that raw score would fall in.

3. *Will grades 3–8 students still get a score from Part I?*

- TNReady was always designed to be one test given in two parts, so we are not able to provide a complete score based on performance on Part I.
- However, we will give families and educators as much feedback as we can about a student's raw data

from Part I for informational purposes.

4. Will high school students' tests be scored?

- Yes. High school tests, including from those students who took TNReady on block and traditional schedules, will still be scored and those students will still receive results. Full score reports for high school students will be provided as planned. We anticipate those results will be available in the fall of this year, as we previously expected.

5. Can teachers still access MICA?

- No, because the department terminated our contract with MI, access to the Measurement Incorporated Classroom Assessment, known as MICA, has ceased. However, high school practice tests are available in Ed Tools as PDFs.

Evaluation and Accountability

6. How will districts be held accountable?

- While districts will still report all the data they have available from this year, the department is proposing that no district should receive a designation as to their status, such as *Exemplary* or *In Need of Improvement*. The state board will make the final decision about the district accountability policy.
- All the data that are reportable, such as graduation rate, average ACT scores, and high school TCAP scores, will still be publically reported on the state report card in the fall.
- No data from grades 3–8 tests will be included on the state report card. Districts will receive some limited information and raw data for informational purposes if tests were administered for full grades and subject areas or were administered prior to suspending grades 3–8 testing.

7. How will schools be held accountable? Will there be Reward Schools?

- No Reward Schools will be identified from this school year.
- We will also not calculate Priority Exit or Priority Improving school lists.
- In the future, we will adjust how we determine the Priority School list to take into consideration that we do not have data from this year.
- For high schools, which will have data from this year, the department has already provided a hold harmless provision so that no school could be hurt by TNReady results this year: if using a two-year measure that excludes data from the 2015-16 year means that a school is not on the Priority list, it will be removed from the list.
- For elementary and middle schools that do not have data from this year, we will only calculate the future Priority list on two-year measure. We will also explore options under the new federal K-12 law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

8. How will teachers and principals be evaluated?

- All teachers and leaders will receive an evaluation this year, but as is the case every year, different educators will be in different situations based on their unique teaching responsibilities.
- **Teachers who have students who take a statewide assessment this year and who receive a complete score**—mostly high school teachers—will fall under the previous flexibility, which is outlined in [this FAQ](#). Data from TNReady and TCAP tests will only factor into their evaluation if it benefits their score. Otherwise, the data will be excluded.
- **Teachers whose students' TNReady and TCAP tests were suspended**—largely grades 3–8 teachers—will not have data from this year to factor into their score. Again, different educators will be in

different situations. For teachers who have TVAAS data from prior years, that will still factor into their score. If teachers do not have prior TVAAS data, the qualitative component of their evaluation will increase. The department will provide more detailed guidance on the evaluation composites for each scenario in the coming days.

- **Teachers in non-tested grades and subjects** and **school leaders** will be in different situations depending on whether their school has a calculable schoolwide TVAAS score. If the teacher or leader is at a school with a schoolwide TVAAS score from this year, like a high school, previous guidance applies; as we had previously outlined, if the student growth data from this year does not benefit an educator's score—including those in non-tested grades or subjects—that data will be eliminated and the qualitative portion of the score will increase. More details are available [here](#). If the educator is at a school for which there is no schoolwide TVAAS data available, the student growth portion of their evaluation will be removed and the qualitative portion of their evaluation will increase.
- **Teachers who are evaluated through a portfolio model** are largely not impacted by this announcement. The bulk of their evaluation will remain the same, but depending on the achievement measure the educator chose, they may need to adjust what data factor into that component.
- If educators chose an **achievement measure** that includes TVAAS data, TVAAS data will be included if it is available, such as for high school educators. If TVAAS data is not available for that educator's school, the educator will need to choose to a new achievement measure. The department will share details on how educators can make that adjustment as soon as those are available.

9. What data will factor into the achievement measure?

- If an educator chose an achievement measure based on TVAAS, TVAAS data will be included if it is available, such as for high school educators. As previously mentioned, districts can provide educators the option to change their achievement measure to one that is not based on TVAAS if they would like to do so.
- If an educator chose an achievement measure based on TVAAS and TVAAS data is not able to be calculated, the educator will need to choose a new achievement measure. Available achievement measures are outlined on [this worksheet](#).
- If an educator chose an achievement measure not based on TVAAS, such as graduation rate, average ACT score, universal screener, or another assessment given in their district, that data will remain as their achievement measure.

10. Can teachers still receive tenure status this year?

- Yes. All teachers will receive an evaluation score this year, and these evaluations may determine eligibility for tenure.
- Per the Tennessee Teaching Evaluation Enhancement Act, local districts have complete discretion in how they choose to factor test data into employment decisions like promotion, retention, termination, and compensation. In other words, local school districts have considerable flexibility to pause any policies or programs that emphasize the use of TNReady and TCAP results in these types of personnel decisions.

Scoring

11. Who will score the completed TNReady tests?

- We are still determining the vendor who will score our tests, but it will not be Measurement Inc. (MI) as we are terminating our contract with that company.
- We have other options for scoring, and we are working with general services' central procurement

office to expedite a new plan for scoring current test documents. We will communicate that determination to districts as soon as possible.

12. When will reports be available for scoreable tests?

- Scores were always going to be delayed to the fall for this year. We still anticipate we will be able to share high school reports with parents, educators, and students on the fall 2016 timeline.
- All raw data and information for grades 3–8 will be provided on a similar timeframe.

13. What should schools do with their tests, both those that have been completed and those that are blank?

- High school and end-of-course testing, including tests for middle school students, should continue as scheduled. The testing window for these assessments runs through May 10. However, schools should keep completed test materials in a secure test environment until we provide labels to ship materials.
- TCAP and TNReady testing has been suspended for grades 3–8. If schools have completed test materials, whether those are tests that were administered earlier this week or are tests that the district chooses to give moving forward based on the parameters noted in No. 1 of the FAQ, those should be kept in a secure location until we provide labels indicating shipping location.
- If districts cannot or do not administer grades 3–8 tests, those materials are still considered secure testing documents and should be similarly kept in a secure location until we provide labels to ship materials. No materials should be disposed.
- The department will communicate information on where and how to mail testing materials as soon as possible.

14. What will you do with the scoring documents and completed tests that were sent to MI?

- The contract speaks to all items owned by the state, including scoreable materials, and we will retrieve those from MI and move forward on scoring with another vendor.

15. How will you ensure scoring comparability with high school fall block testing?

- We are committed to ensuring TNReady is scored reliably so the data that educators, parents, and students receive is valid and informative.
- Each year, the scoring process involves different scorers in the fall than the spring due to scorer hiring and availability. Therefore, there is already an established scoring, scorer training, and equating process to ensure scale scores are comparable across test forms and administrations.
- Additionally, for all testing in Tennessee, Tennessee teachers inform the scoring process. They establish anchor papers that all student responses are graded against and drive the rangefinding process, which helps to interpret students' raw performance data and determine achievement measures.

Contract with Measurement Inc.

16. What will you do with Measurement Inc. moving forward? Will you assess damages?

- We are terminating the contract today, and we are currently reviewing the contract with our attorneys to ensure we utilize all remedies available to the state, including the assessment of damages.

17. How much have you paid Measurement Inc.?

- So far, the state has paid Measurement Inc. \$1.6 million for test development. We have not paid the company anything in 2016.
- All options and issues, including potential future payments, are under review by the state's legal team, and we will provide more information at a later date.

Next year

18. When will educators receive blueprints for next year's test?

- The department is still determining the vendor for next year's test, but we still plan on sharing blueprints with educators in May.

TIMELINE

Contract with Measurement Inc.

Contract with MI Begins

Measurement Inc (MI) was awarded the contract to be the state's new testing vendor. MI was charged with providing a state test on an online platform with a paper-pencil back-up option.

Break MIST Day

In preparation for the TNReady assessment online, the department requested that all schools with grades 3-11 help test the capacity of the online platform. This capacity test was designed to assess the network and server capacity and provide a check of schools' internet, hardware, and logistical readiness.

iPad Challenges

The department confirmed challenges with iPads, including unexpected test rebooting or reloading, lack of precision with touch gestures, and difficulty typing in a textbox. MI was unable to resolve issues prior to Feb. 8 testing window, resulting in the need for some districts to select paper-based test in the absence of having other devices.

Capacity Failure for Part I

On the first day of online administration of TNReady Part I, the online testing platform experienced a major network outage because MI's network failed.

Shipping Delays for Part II

While MI had 11 weeks to plan and prepare for the distribution of Part II, MI delayed the shipping schedule three times in April. Ultimately, MI was able to deliver Part II tests for high schools but was unable to deliver all paper tests for schools with grades 3-8.

Termination of MI Contract

Due to MI's repeated inability to deliver on their obligations to Tennessee schools and students, the state cancelled the contract with MI.

April
2014

General Assembly Action

The Tennessee General Assembly voted to require the department to procure a new testing vendor for English language arts and mathematics through a competitive bidding process.

July-
Sept
2014

Vendor Bidding Process

Multiple companies submitted bids to the state to be the new testing vendor.

Nov.
2014

Test Development Begins

MI worked with the department to develop new test items and determine the quality of items from existing banks.

Feb.
2015

Oct. 1,
2015

Department Leads Additional Troubleshooting

The department encouraged schools to participate in additional Break MIST Days on Jan. 12 and Jan. 22. In addition, the department led on-site analysis and troubleshooting sessions in districts to uncover and mitigate system challenges.

Jan.
2016

Jan.
22,
2016

Transition to Paper and Pencil

Due to the inconsistency of MI's online platform, the department decided to shift to paper and pencil testing for TNReady during the 2015-16 school year. The department extended the Part I testing window because of the unexpected shift to paper and pencil.

Feb. 8,
2016

Feb. 8,
2016

Feb.
26,
2016

Shipping Delays for Part I

MI was unable to meet the shipping deadline for providing test materials to 13 districts, including large, metropolitan districts serving nearly a half-million students.

April
13,
2016

Suspension of TNReady Part II for Grades 3-8

After multiple changes to the delivery schedule, MI was unable to provide paper and pencil tests for all schools with grades 3-8. As such, the department made the decision to suspend all TNReady Part II testing for grades 3-8.

April
27,
2016

April
27,
2016