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Dear State Board of Education and Dr. Nixon:

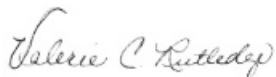
As the State Board considers the future of English as a Second Language education in Tennessee, it is important that we recognize the value of adopting the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) standards with which the Early English Language Development (E-ELD) standards for dual language learners have been aligned.

The importance of this decision has significant ramifications for the youngest children in our State who are a critical and vital part of the next generations. Tennessee has adopted WIDA and the TN-ELS for four-year-olds have been revised, thus the next important step should be to further pursue the alignment of E-ELDs with these same standards.

Through UTC's work with a National Professional Development grant which focuses on preparing both pre-service and in-service educators, we have seen the confidence educators have in their own ability through better preparation. In addition, the value of culture and diversity are crucial as a part of the attitudes and behaviors which will make the classrooms of the future the best places in which to work with children from many different backgrounds.

Tennessee's recent academic success, as noted by the improvement in NAEP scores, has set the stage for continued success. The adoption of the E-ELDs will provide another important step forward. Overall, this will be a solid component in the progress we hope to sustain. In conclusion, I fully support the E-ELDs for our children, our State, and our future. Best wishes as you work toward continued improvement in education.

Sincerely,



Dr. Valerie C. Rutledge, Dean
College of Health, Education and Professional Studies