TN Department of Education

Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee

ESSA State Plan

Tennessee Department of Education | **Updated December 20, 2018**

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Our State Plan

In the following sections, Tennessee will address all federal requirements, as well as outline other key initiatives at the state and local level that support our overall goals for all students.

- Standards
- Assessment
- Accountability
- District Empowerment
- All Means All
- Educator Support
- Early Foundations & Literacy
- High School & Bridge to Postsecondary

Federal Requirement Crosswalk

The State of Tennessee laid a solid foundation to achieve high quality education for all students with its strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*, launched in October 2015. We will continue to build upon what is working in our state through the new federal law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Tennessee ESSA State Plan, guided by the objectives and successes outlined in *Tennessee Succeeds*, frames our path forward. The following tables demonstrate how the state plan addresses both ESSA and the federal requirements outlined in the ESSA Consolidated State Plan template.

Tennessee's state plan will include the following programs as noted in 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(d)(iii).

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies
- Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
- Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
- Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
- Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
- Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act): Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies			

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies			
Eighth Grade Math Exception	1111(b)(2)(C); 3 4 CFR 200.5(b)	A.2.i-iii	pp. 46-47
Native Language Assessment*s*	1111(b)(2)(F); 34 CFR 200.6(f)(2)(ii) and (f)(4)	A.3.i-iv	pp. 51-52
Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities	1111(c) and (d)		pp. 55-132
Subgroups	1111(c)(2)	A.4.i.a-d	pp. 64-70
Minimum N-Size	1111(c)(3)	A.4.ii.a-e	pp. 69-70
Establishment of Long-Term Goals	1111(c)(4)(A)	A.4.iii.a-c	pp. 57-62
Indicators	1111(c)(4)(B)	A.4.iv.a-e	pp. 70-78
Annual Meaningful Differentiation	1111(c)(4)(C)	A.4.v.a-c	pp. 90-103
Identification of Schools	1111(c)(4)(C)(iii) and (D); 1111(d)(2)(C)–(D)	A.4.vi.a-g	pp. 90-103
Annual Measurement of Achievement	1111(c)(4)(E)(iii)	A.4.vii	pp. 63-70
Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement	1111(d)(3)	A.4.viii.a-f	pp. 103-107, 127-128, 167-170, 250
Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators	1111(g)(1)(B)	A.5	pp. 239-249
School Conditions	1111(g)(1)(C)	A.6	pp. 146-151
School Transitions	1111(g)(1)(D)	A.7	pp. 181-183, 194-200

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children			
Supporting Needs of Migratory Children	1304(b)(1)	B.1.i-iv	p. 196
Promote Coordination of Services	1304(b)(3)	B.2	pp. 200-204
Use of Funds	1304(b)(4)	B.3	pp. 201-203

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title I, Part D: Prevention & Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk			
Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs	1414(a)(1)(B)	C.1	pp. 204-206

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title I, Part D: Prevention & Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk			
Program Objectives and Outcomes	1414(a)(2)(A)	C.2	pp. 206-207

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction			
Use of Funds	2101(d)(2)(A) and (D)	D.1	p. 142
Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools	2101(d)(2)(E)	D.2	pp. 142-143, 177, 235-241
System of Certification and Licensing	2101(d)(2)(B)	D.3	pp. 251-253
Improving Skills of Educators	2101(d)(2)(J)	D.4	pp. 238-239
Data and Consultation	2101(d)(2)(K)	D.5	pp. 242-245
Teacher Preparation	2101(d)(2)(M)	D.6	pp. 246-250

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement			
Entrance and Exit Procedures	3113(b)(2)	E.1	pp. 209-210
SEA Support for English Learner Progress	3113(b)(6)	E.2.i-ii	pp. 172-174, 210-211
Monitoring and Technical Assistance	3113(b)(8)	E.3.i-ii	pp. 69, 75, 93-94, 107

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants			
Use of Funds	4103(c)(2)(A)	F.1	pp. 214-215
Awarding Subgrants	4103(c)(2)(B)	F.2	pp. 213-214

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers			
Use of Funds	4203(a)(2)	G.1	pp. 162-167
Awarding Subgrants	4203(a)(4)	G.2	pp. 163-164

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-income School Program			
Outcomes and Objectives	5223(b)(1)	H.1	pp. 215-217
Technical Assistance	5223(b)(3)	H.2	pp. 215-217

State Plan Requirements by Program	Statutory & Regulatory Requirements	Requirement	Page(s)
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B			
Student Identification	722(g)(1)(B)	I.1	p. 219
Dispute Resolution	722(g)(1)(C)	I.2	p. 222
Support for School Personnel	722(g)(1)(D)	I.3	pp. 220-221
Access to Services	722(g)(1)(F)(i)	I.4	pp. 217-218
Strategies to Address Other Problems	722(g)(1)(H)	I.5.i-v	pp. 218-221
Policies to Remove Barriers	722(g)(1)(I)	I.6	p. 219
Assistance from Counselors	722(g)(1)(K)	I.7	pp. 220-221

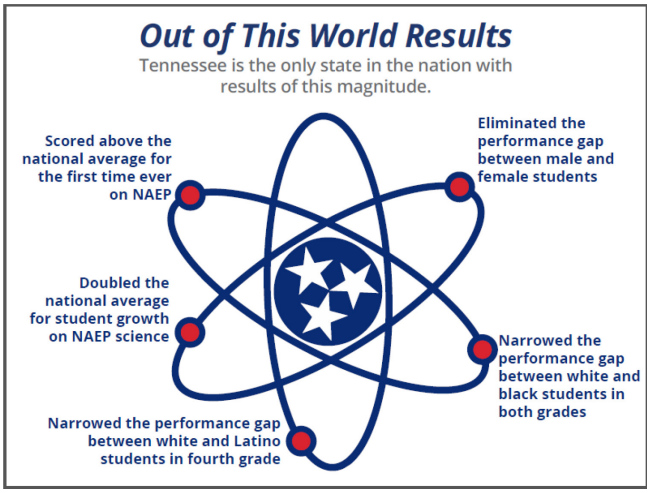
Introduction

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law. ESSA replaces the former federal education law, commonly referenced as No Child Left Behind, and reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Within this new law, there is more state-level decision-making authority, as well as new flexibilities for programs, and Tennessee is uniquely positioned to take full advantage of the opportunities. For the past several years, Tennessee has made education a top priority and continues to be the fastest improving state in the nation, with a clear vision and comprehensive strategic plan, called *Tennessee Succeeds*.

Tennessee Succeeds

Education in Tennessee continues to rise. Over the past decade, we have established a positive trajectory and celebrated a period of groundbreaking change in education. During this period, Tennessee has seen striking successes in student achievement that also called attention to the continued need to ensure long-term success for all students. Tennessee was named the fastest improving state on Nation's Report Card, or National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), in both math and reading for fourth grade and eighth grade between 2011 and 2015. Most recently, Tennessee students have achieved what no other state did on the 2015 NAEP science assessment. Our students doubled the national average student growth in both grades and scored above the national average for the first time ever in any subject—launching us into the top half of all states in fourth and eighth grade science.

Even better, we outperformed other states with impressive closures in our achievement gaps. We narrowed gaps among African American, Latino, and white students, and we completely eliminated the performance gap between male and female students. Tennessee is proud to report that the gaps did not close as a result of any student group dipping in performance. The opposite occurred—every single student group improved and we eliminated gaps in performance. In fact, Tennessee was referred to as the "star of the star states" by NAEP because of our remarkable performance in science.[1]



We know our work is not finished. Building on real progress and success, we have launched a new chapter where we will continue to build on the strong foundation in each of our schools and districts to realize our goals for Tennessee students. It is this vision that drives our comprehensive strategic plan, released in October 2015, called *Tennessee Succeeds*.

[1] Tennessee Department of Education. Classroom Chronicles. *Tennessee: Star of the States in Science*. Web.

This is our unifying vision:

Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

Our work is focused on preparing students such that they have choice and quality options after graduation. This is how Tennessee succeeds.

Tennessee has been on a pathway of rapid change in education, and making large-scale change since 2007. This has included multiple standards revisions and transitions to higher expectations, moving to a state assessment that will provide better information about whether students are *on track*, and creating greater accountability to ensure that we meet our responsibilities to provide all students with a world-class education. While significant gains have been made, our work must continue.

Tennessee is committed to preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion. The Drive to 55 alliance, which includes Tennessee Promise, is Governor Haslam's initiative to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or credential to 55 percent by the year 2025. The Drive to 55 is focused on ensuring that more Tennesseans are equipped with the skills and credentials that will be needed to support the state's economy now and in the future. Tennessee Promise is both a "last-dollar" scholarship and a mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students who attend college in our state. Launched in February 2014, Tennessee Promise creates a new opportunity for students who may have never considered college as an option due to the financial burden.

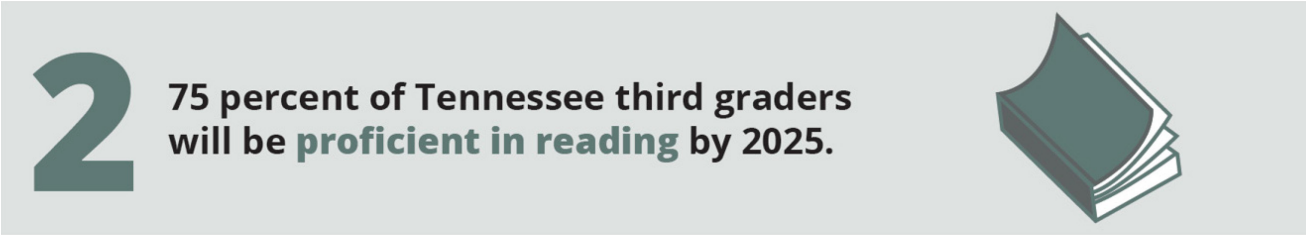
Currently, less than half of students in grades 3–8 score proficient or advanced in reading. In fall 2014, 43 percent of high school graduates did not enroll in postsecondary. Almost 60 percent of first-time freshmen in Tennessee community colleges took at least one remedial or developmental course. Nationally, Tennessee still ranks in the bottom half of all states on NAEP. While Tennessee continues to be the fastest improving state in the nation, we know our work is far from over, and we are moving forward, building on our successes with *Tennessee Succeeds*.

Ambitious Goals

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) has set four ambitious goals to guide our work through the next five years:

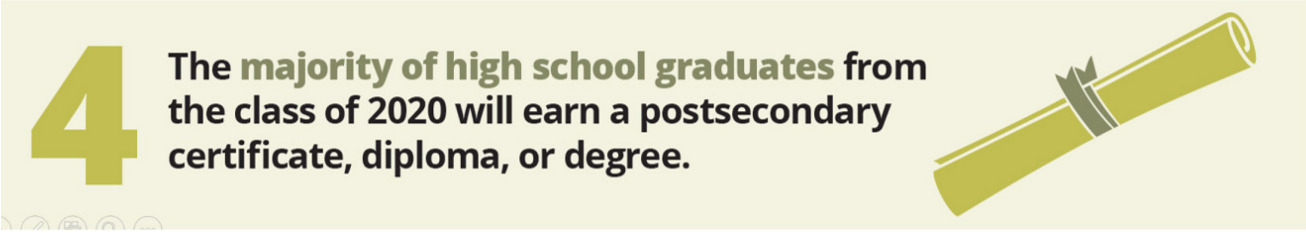
1 **Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 2019.**

In 2013, our state posted the largest improvements ever recorded on the NAEP test, also known as the Nation's Report Card. These gains brought the state's ranking from the mid-40s (rankings vary by subject) into the mid-30s. We hope to see the state's ranking continue to increase so that our students' achievement places Tennessee in the top half of states by 2019.



The Read to be Ready campaign and associated initiatives launched in February 2016 and strives to move 75 percent of Tennessee students to reading proficiency by the end of third grade by 2025. Currently only 43 percent of Tennessee students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

The ACT serves as a gateway to college and career in Tennessee, determining students' eligibility for the HOPE scholarship, requirements for postsecondary remedial or developmental coursework, and sometimes entry-level salary. Between 2011 and 2015, we have seen the average composite Tennessee ACT score for public students increase from 19.0 to 19.4. By 2020, we will raise this number to 21, signaling that the average student in Tennessee is prepared for postsecondary coursework.



Tennessee is the leader in FAFSA completion. As a state, we have increased the college-going rate by 5 percent, which is a greater increase than the previous six years combined. In 2015, however, only 62 percent of spring graduates matriculated at postsecondary institution in the fall. In order to reach this goal, we need to prepare more students to persist in postsecondary education.

Five Priority Areas

Tennessee's ambitious goals will be accomplished by maintaining Tennessee's emphasis on rigorous standards, aligned assessment, and strong accountability, and by focusing on five priority areas: *Early Foundations & Literacy*, *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary*, *All Means All*, *Educator Support*, and *District Empowerment*.

Early Foundations & Literacy
Building skills in early grades to contribute to future success

High School & Bridge to Postsecondary
Preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion

All Means All
Providing individualized support and opportunities for all students with a focus on those who are furthest behind

Educator Support
Supporting the preparation and development of an exceptional educator workforce

District Empowerment
Providing districts with the tools and autonomy they need to make the best decisions for students

Tennessee's Governor, Bill Haslam, has demonstrated his commitment and investment in education and in meeting these goals. Since 2011, Governor Haslam and the General Assembly have partnered to improve the Basic Education Plan (BEP), which the state's funding plan for its schools, by a half billion dollars. This includes more than $240 million in new money for teacher salaries from fiscal years 2012 to 2016 as we strive to be the fastest improving state in teacher salary growth. In 2016, Governor Haslam has proposed a budget and corresponding legislation to enhance the BEP by more than $220 million—the largest improvement without a tax increase in the history of the BEP. These investments, coupled with commitment to strengthening Tennessee's standards, assessment, and accountability system, has led to great improvements. We have now accomplished our goal to rank in the top half of the NAEP assessments on three tests—fourth grade math (25th), fourth grade science (19th), and eighth grade science (21st)—and the work continues.

In addition, the Tennessee Promise initiative, which makes community and technical college free to all Tennessee high school graduates, signals the commitment across the state to prepare students for a

future where most Tennessee jobs require postsecondary success. Yet, we are far from this goal. While almost 60 percent of high school graduates enroll in postsecondary, only 24 percent complete postsecondary. For the graduating class of 2020, we aim to shift the balance so that the majority of students earn a certificate, diploma, or degree within six years of graduation.

Tennessee views the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act as a real opportunity to build on our current successes and to support our larger state goals. The spirit of ESSA is to ensure states have increased autonomy and decision-making authority, in order to drive critical decisions on standards and assessment to the state and local level. Tennessee is also addressing requirements within accountability, developing the new measures for school quality and student success, and ensuring equity across the state through the state plan.

In this same spirit, Tennessee's plan for the implementation of ESSA will be framed around our state's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*. Using the provided template as a reference, we have addressed all state plan requirements through our three foundational areas (standards, assessment, and accountability) and five priority areas.

To facilitate the review of the plan and to ensure all ESSA requirements are met, Tennessee has provided a crosswalk to the federal template and references to program requirements throughout the plan.

Our rationale in organizing and presenting our plan in this manner is to demonstrate ESSA in practice, as well as increase understanding for state decisions and the importance of federal funding for education across Tennessee. Our efforts within the department, districts, and schools, are directly linked to our strategic plan and vision for the future. In order to continue on this path, we must engage stakeholders at every juncture. We believe presenting our plan in this manner, as a compliment to the strategic plan, will create greater support and understanding for our work moving forward.

Tennessee's Opportunities under ESSA

The new federal law offers increased flexibility and autonomy to states and districts. In order to best serve Tennessee students, the state has identified five opportunities for the work ahead under ESSA. The following sections of our plan will cover activities, initiatives, and supports that pertain to each of the five opportunities.

Opportunity One: Set high expectations that align to postsecondary and workforce readiness so all of Tennessee's students are able to pursue their chosen path in life.

The majority of Tennessee's college faculty and employers tell us that high school graduates are not ready for the expectations they have in their classrooms and the work place. By setting high standards for all students, and by aligning those to instructional practices and state assessments that ensure students stay on track each year, every Tennessee child will have the opportunity to pursue their dreams after high school.

Opportunity Two: Attend to the needs of all students in pre-K–12—especially historically disadvantaged students—so they can experience success after high school.

It is our responsibility to close our achievement gaps so each child—regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, or zip code—receives a world-class education. Through supporting the whole child and the environment in which he or she learns, we will promote equity and excellence for all of

our students, including students with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

Opportunity Three: Provide support, funding, intervention, and innovation for persistently low performing schools.

While many of our schools are continually improving, students in some of our schools have dramatically lower outcomes. We want to take a coordinated approach to turning around these schools by focusing on and investing in the people who are doing this hard work and the support networks around those educators.

Opportunity Four: Focus on strengthening and supporting educators.

Having a highly effective, high-quality teacher is the biggest in-school factor on a student's success, but often our students who are most behind do not have access to our most effective teachers. We want to comprehensively strengthen the profession by recruiting, retaining, and rewarding educators and by providing more—and better—opportunities for them to develop their craft.

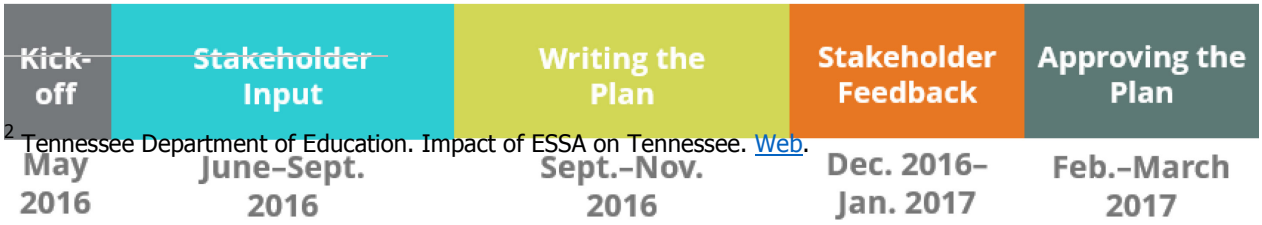
Opportunity Five: Empower districts to drive toward student goals.

We believe the state's primary role is to support districts and incentivize the right outcomes, rather than directly manage classrooms. Under this theory of action, we are increasing the tools, data, and support available for districts. Through the district accountability framework, we are encouraging districts to ensure that all their students are learning and that their classrooms meet the school-level accountability that ESSA and Tennessee state law requires. We are also providing opportunities for districts to take their strengths further.

Consultation & Stakeholder Engagement

In the development of its ESSA state plan, and in accordance with § 1111(a)(1)(A) of ESSA, Tennessee consulted with key stakeholders: the Governor, the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE), legislators, school districts, educators (including school leaders, charter representatives, specialized instructional personnel, and other staff), advocates, parents, students, and the public at-large on specific policies. The input received through meetings, webinars, conferences, and outreach directly informed the drafting process of Tennessee's ESSA state plan. The continued feedback from our key stakeholders informed our work throughout the drafting process, and will be reflected in the finalized state plan for submission. This plan will guide the department's work over the coming years and help the department to further promote district empowerment and local leadership under the new law.

With the passage of ESSA on December 10, 2015 and full implementation expected on July 1, 2017, the timeline for plan development included the meaningful engagement of stakeholders throughout the process. The timeline for plan development and process for engaging stakeholder during the plan development is detailed below.[2]



[2] Tennessee Department of Education. Impact of ESSA on Tennessee. Web.

Stakeholders included directors of schools, principals, educators, parents and students, legislators, governor's office, state board of education, school board members, CORE offices, community organizations, and advocacy groups.

Tennessee believes in the importance of crafting a plan that builds on what is working: taking the best ideas from the field, utilizing ESSA's new autonomies and flexibility where appropriate, and demonstrating how we will move forward in key policy areas—not conducting an exercise in compliance. The overarching goal was to develop a state plan through robust stakeholder engagement that reflects the great gains made in Tennessee and that outlines the path forward under the new law.

Opportunities for Stakeholder Input

In May 2016, Commissioner McQueen launched Tennessee's statewide feedback tour. The TDOE, in coordination with the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, hosted three meetings with 125 school leaders representing 99 districts. During June through September 2016, the state engaged with stakeholders in a variety of mediums to ensure increased access to diverse voices. We reached over 2,000 stakeholders representing 87 counties (out of 95) and 135 districts[3] (out of 146).

- During the 2016 session of the Tennessee General Assembly, Commissioner McQueen shared highlights from ESSA with legislators and shared the broad view of where the department was planning to engage further given additional flexibilities.
- In October 2016, the department published a draft status report on ESSA to share high-level feedback about common themes among the stakeholder input and areas where the department was working with stakeholders and the working groups to dig in further for the draft plan. This was publicized through a press release and continued engagement with media.
- The department heard from a variety of educators and teacher groups both in person and through webinars, including Tennessee's Hope Street Group fellows, State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) fellows, the department's Teacher Advisory Council, Governor Haslam's Teacher Cabinet, the Tennessee Education Association, Professional Educators of Tennessee, the Tennessee Association of School Librarians, and the Tennessee Librarians Association. The topics were broad in scope to enrich understanding of the requirements under the new law and address questions specific to areas of interest.
- School board members across the state have been convened via webinar, and the TDOE has participated in more than a dozen regional meetings hosted by the Tennessee School Boards Association to both inform and gather input from school boards about ESSA.

[3] Tennessee's 146 districts includes all LEAs and state special schools. The plan will refer to all as districts.

- SCORE co-convened several key stakeholder sessions with the TDOE to hear from a variety of groups, including the LIFT[4] superintendents, business leaders, school choice organizations, community groups, civil rights organizations, and other education advocates.
- The department gathered feedback through Conexión Américas to reach other key equity advocates.
- Existing advisory groups also had a chance to weigh in during their regular meetings, including the Assessment Task Force, the Career Forward Task Force, the Personalized Learning Task Force, the Consolidated Planning and Monitoring Advisory Council, Advisory Council for the Education of Students with Disabilities, TDOE's Parent Advisory Council, and the Superintendent Study Council.[5]
- Conferences and events that convened district and school personnel, like ESEA directors, English as a Second Language (ESL) directors, and special education supervisors, were also asked for input, specifically on accountability and assessment.
- The department hosted internal sessions with staff to gather ideas and make recommendations on key components – including accountability, assessment, school improvement, teacher leadership, and student supports.
- Online, the department posted the questions that were being posed in these discussion groups for public comment, and created a supplemental form for parents and students with higher-level questions to share their ideas. The latter form was translated into Spanish to further extend outreach to more families. The department received over 300 comments during the input phase.
- Commissioner McQueen launched her second Classroom Chronicles[6] tour this fall, focused on hearing from students. To date, she has heard from dozens of students about supports and resources they need to reach their potential in high school and beyond.
- The department also shared feedback on social media over the summer and fall to highlight common themes in the conversation.

Working Groups

To help craft the ESSA state plan, the Commissioner invited sixty-six individuals to join six working groups[7]. These working groups were organized around key topics: standards and assessment, accountability, school improvement, English learners, educator support and effectiveness, and student supports.[8]

[4] Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education. Web.
[5] See Appendix A.1
[6] Tennessee Department of Education. Classroom Chronicles. Web.
[7] See Appendix A.2
[8] Tennessee Department of Education. Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee. Web.

Each working group was led by two senior TDOE officials and included 10 to 12 leaders from different education communities and districts, including district leaders and teachers, as well as other civil rights and advocacy groups across the state. The working groups were charged with providing recommendations and responding to feedback from other stakeholders on what Tennessee's ESSA plan should include within the following six areas of focus. Tennessee has experienced a significant increase in the number of English learners over recent years. As a result, we felt a working group focused specifically on the needs of English learners was essential. In addition, with accountability for ELs moving from Title III to Title I, the need to explore English language proficiency measures and appropriate testing options was essential to developing a plan to meet the needs of all Tennessee students.

Members of the working groups met in person at least twice and had several follow-up calls to discuss key areas during summer and fall 2016. At each of the initial working group's convenings, feedback from the Commissioner's statewide meetings with Superintendents was shared, a process that was repeated as input from other stakeholders was received. Additionally, all working group members were encouraged to go back to their communities and individual constituencies to continue to gather additional feedback and ideas within their topic areas to inform their discussions and decisions. Through this process dozens of additional educators and stakeholders were engaged by working group members. The educator support and effectiveness working group conducted several additional meetings with their constituents and shared survey results from their own districts and organizations.

In October 2016, the TDOE released a status report describing from whom and what we heard during the input phase of our ESSA stakeholder engagement. There were areas of clear consensus across groups, as well as the need for further discussion and decision points. The critical decision points included the following:

- Accountability:
  - school grading system
  - school quality and student success measure
  - school improvement, including evidence-based requirements
- Assessment: areas of possible reduction of testing time
- Well-rounded students:
  - ways to include measures of career readiness within accountability framework
  - opportunities to expand curriculum and course-offerings for all students (including arts, music, physical education, and other CTE course offerings)

In November 2016, the working groups were reconvened to review and provide feedback on the initial draft of the plan. Each of the six working groups were provided an overview of the entire draft plan but were charged with providing feedback on the group's particular area of focus.

Opportunities for Stakeholder Feedback

The Commissioner and several members of the department's leadership team hosted regional town hall meetings in conjunction with the release of the draft ESSA plan for public comment, and provided an online feedback form.[9] Over 1,000 stakeholders attended these convenings and provided feedback.[10] Through the town hall meetings and online stakeholder feedback form, the department received over 2,000 comments from teachers, school leaders, district administrators, parents, students, and community members.[11] Through these activities and the continued meetings and feedback sessions with the Title I Committee of Practitioners (CPM Advisory Committee), webinars with specific stakeholder groups, and various other councils and task forces; Tennessee has engaged with all 95 counties and all 146 districts during the ESSA stakeholder engagement process.

Across the state, we received input and feedback from stakeholders on a host of topics which were reviewed and considered throughout our plan development process. Adjustments were made in key areas as a result of this engagement process: district and school accountability, school improvement (Priority and Focus schools), state-level supports for well-rounded education, supports for educators, English learners, and transparency metrics. A more detailed explanation of these changes can be found here.

Stakeholder Support for Implementation

As Tennessee begins to implement its state plan for ESSA, we are committed to continuing our engagement with stakeholders. We anticipate this engagement will inform our work as we identify new state priorities and needs in future years. We also expect this engagement will result in feedback on state programming uses of ESSA program funds. Finally, this ongoing feedback loop will hold the department accountable for implementing our plan with fidelity - knowing that in instances where updates or revisions are necessary, these will not be done in isolation. The department has created a number of advisory committees and working groups, and these groups will be part of this feedback process; however, the department is also working to develop other ways for stakeholders to provide meaningful feedback during ESSA implementation.

State Plan Coordination

In 2013, the TDOE underwent a systemic reorganization[12] to align by streams of work rather than funding source. Through this process divisions which previously worked primarily in silos, including Federal Programs and Special Education, were reimagined into new work teams to support districts in a cross-divisional manner. As these new divisions were created, a new philosophy of how we serve students was also initiated. This reorganization signaled a shift in mindset from strict compliance to one

[9] See Appendix A.3
[10] See Appendix A.4
[11] See Appendix A.5
[12] See Appendix B

of continuous improvement and support. While our teams continue to ensure compliance with federal regulations and requirements, our engagement with districts has moved away from checking boxes and to having conversations about effective practices, examining data and other evidence, and supporting districts in how to improve outcome for all students.

The work of administering federal grant programs across Tennessee's 146 districts and agencies is more consolidated through its planning, application, and monitoring processes. Over the past four years, we have begun to see districts respond positively to this shift in emphasis. Districts are asking different questions about how they identify and fund initiatives; responding positively to our results-based monitoring surveys for our ESSA programs; and volunteering to participate in pilot opportunities in large numbers. These actions represent the shift we are experiencing in Tennessee, both at the state and local levels; and with this great commitment to continuous improvement and a growth mindset, we are seeing significant gains in student achievement.

Governor Haslam's administration has been committed to improving the level of service the state and its agencies provide to its constituents. The TDOE has embraced the Governor's Customer Focused Government (CFG)[13] initiative as a component of our work. Providing districts, schools, and educators the resources and support necessary to improve the achievement of all students and to prepare them for life after graduation characterizes our department's service to the 146 districts across our state.

Part of customer focused government is setting a clear vision for the students of Tennessee, and we believe that through the implementation of *Tennessee Succeeds*, our state will continue to make gains and prepare our students for choice after graduation. The funding and provisions under ESSA and initiatives within Tennessee's plan are integral to our work and to the success of Tennessee students.

[13] Tennessee State Government. Customer Focused Government. Web.

Standards

Standards

It benefits our whole community when all students learn and progress each year to become knowledgeable thinkers, good citizens, and valuable members of our community. Academic standards are an important part of that mission.

In Tennessee, we have laid a firm foundation for our students' future by raising standards to a more rigorous level that will prepare them for college and careers; establishing fully-aligned assessments to ensure all of our students are developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills; and using evaluation and accountability frameworks based on multiple factors. Tennessee developed rigorous state standards and fully-aligned assessments in math, English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies to continue preparing our students for choice after graduation, while also satisfying requirements of § 1111(b) of ESSA.

Academic standards provide a common set of expectations for what students will know and be able to do at the end of a grade. Tennessee's college and career ready standards are rooted in the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in postsecondary study and careers. While academic standards establish desired learning outcomes, curriculum provides instructional programming designed to help students reach these outcomes. Districts work locally to establish curricular programs that support student mastery of the Tennessee Academic Standards, while also reflecting unique community values. Instructional practices should provide each student with the best opportunity to meet these standards by supporting individual learning needs.

New standards for math and ELA will be implemented in classrooms in the 2017-18 school year. Revised science standards will be implemented in classrooms in the 2018-19 school year. The state board began the standards review process for social studies standards in 2016-17 for implementation in classrooms in 2019-20.

Subject	Standards Proposed to State Board for Final Read	LEAs: New Standards in Classrooms	New Assessment
Math	April 2016	2017-18	2017-18
ELA	April 2016	2017-18	2017-18
Science	October 2016	2018-19	2018-19
Social Studies	July 2017	2019-20	2019-20

Standards Review Process

The State Board of Education (SBE) is charged under Tennessee statute with setting and approving academic standards.[14] SBE policy 3.209 requires that the board review all sets of academic standards at a minimum of every six years. With each iteration of standards revision processes our goal is to listen carefully to the people of Tennessee so we can make adjustments while maintaining the high standards that Tennessee students will need to succeed, both now and in the future.

To engage educators and stakeholders in this process, Tennessee has established an extensive and thorough standards review process to ensure our state sets rigorous standards that will prepare students to be successful in higher education and in the workforce.[15] As part of this process, the SBE is charged with overseeing a transparent, comprehensive review of academic standards that provides an opportunity for feedback from multiple sources. Thousands of Tennessee teachers and stakeholders reviewed our Tennessee Academic Standards for math and English language arts.[16] The website asks commenters to identify themselves as one of the following: K–12 teacher, parent or guardian, higher education teacher, retired educator, K–12 student, elected official, or other community member.

With the more rigorous Tennessee Academic Standards, our goal is to reach every K–12 student with improved instruction and teacher quality, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status, or English language proficiency. Higher standards in Tennessee are a primary reason why we have continued to improve on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) each year, and continue to be the fastest improving state on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). To persist on this trajectory, Tennessee is committed to maintaining rigorous standards to ensure students are ready for postsecondary and the workforce.

We must continue our focus on helping educators understand the full depth of the Tennessee Academic Standards—especially in the transition to new math and ELA standards that will be implemented in the 2017-18 school year. This understanding happens through outcomes-focused training and resources designed for district teams, which is further explained in the *Educator Support* section.

These actions should be coupled with aligned assessments and practice tools that provide better information for decision making at every level—student, classroom, school, district, and state. Continuing to improve instruction and teacher quality through standards review will ultimately increase emphasis on rigorous content and critical thinking in the classroom, which we believe will result in more of our students having choices after high school to pursue high-wage, high-skill jobs in the future.

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[14] Tennessee State Board of Education. Standards Review. Web.
[15] Tennessee Education Standards Review. Web.
[16] See Appendix C

Steps in the Standards Review Process

In October 2014, Governor Bill Haslam and Tennessee's SBE announced the Tennessee Education Standards Review and Development process for English language arts and mathematics standards. In 2015, the Tennessee General Assembly codified a similar process for science and social studies standards. The new review process provides Tennesseans the opportunity to engage in the state's efforts to improve student outcomes and create rigorous college and career ready standards in Tennessee while continuing its trajectory as one of the fastest improving states in the country.[17]

The standards review process for all core subject areas entails four distinct phases:

The first phase of the process provides all Tennesseans with the opportunity to review and give detailed feedback about the current state standards. The standards review website affords all participants the opportunity to view individual standards and rate whether the standard should be kept as is, revised, or removed. Participants are also invited to provide additional commentary or explanations for their ratings.

The second phase of Tennessee's standards review process calls for a set of educator advisory teams for each subject area to review the public feedback collected from the website and draft a set of recommended revisions to the standards. Educator advisory teams are comprised of approximately 25 current teachers, principals, supervisors, and higher education faculty.

During the third phase of the process, the public website is re-launched containing the revised standards for additional public feedback. The SBE also conducts a series of educator and parent roundtables that allow stakeholders to provide more detailed feedback on the standards. Additionally, the SBE convenes a small group of higher education faculty from the state's three university systems to provide feedback, particularly with regard to the rigor of the standards and their ability to prepare students for postsecondary success. The final component of this phase of additional feedback is the development of an external feedback report by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public education.

The final phase is the review and approval of the standards by an appointed Standards Recommendation Committee (SRC). Each subject's SRC is composed of four gubernatorial appointees, and three appointees from the speakers of both chambers of the Tennessee General Assembly. SRC is responsible for reviewing and evaluating the work of the educator advisory teams and the additional public feedback collected. Upon final approval, the SRC-recommended standards are presented to the state board for consideration and adoption.

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[17] See Appendix D

Review of the math and English language arts standards began in November 2014 with the posting of standards for a period of public review. Educator advisory teams then reviewed the feedback and revised standards throughout summer 2015. The revised standards were posted for an additional round of public feedback from October 20 through December 1, 2015. During these review periods more than 2,600 people evaluated the standards, submitting 166,552 reviews and 7,009 and 27,353 comments. The majority of the feedback on the website came from Tennessee K–12 teachers who were responsible for more than 78 percent of all reviews. Parents and guardians made up another 11 percent of the total reviews. The math and ELA SRC met throughout fall 2015 to review the standards revisions and resulting feedback. They finalized the draft standards in January 2016, and the revised standards were presented to and approved by the state board for final read in April 2016.

Development of revised science standards began prior to the new standards review process through a state board convened Science Steering Committee. However, after the new review process was established, the draft standards developed by the initial educator committee were made available on the state's standards review website from September through December 2015. The draft standards received thousands of responses resulting in 29,474 reviews and 6,386 comments. After the data were compiled, it was reviewed by a second committee of science educators. The educators serving on this committee reviewed each standard individually and, using the public feedback and their expertise, made additional updates to the standards.

The revised science standards were posted for another period of public feedback during spring 2016. The Science Standards Recommendation Committee reviewed the revised standards and heard feedback from across the state through regional meetings and roundtables with educators, parents, the higher education community, and other stakeholders. The standards underwent another round of revision based on the feedback heard and were presented to and approved by the state board for final read in October 2016.

A similar review process was followed in revising social studies standards. The initial social studies standards review website was made available for public comment during winter 2015. The website drew over 63,000 public views with more than 1,400 reviewers specific to the current social studies standards. The feedback was shared with the educator advisory team during summer 2016 to directly inform their review and revision work. The educator advisory team created draft standards that were posted on the standards review website. The website review period was scheduled to close in fall 2016; however, based on public feedback the online review period was extended to December 15, 2016.

The current Tennessee Academic Standards for math and ELA will remain in place for the 2016-17 school year; updated standards as a result of the standards review and development process will be implemented and assessed in the 2017-18 school year. The updated standards for science will be implemented and assessed in the 2018-19 school year. The department remains committed to maintaining college and career ready standards through this process of review and subsequent adoption of updated standards.

Mathematics Standards

Tennessee's mathematics standards for instruction apply to all mathematics courses in all grades K–12. The Tennessee Academic Standards for math set high expectations for all students to ensure that Tennessee graduates are prepared for the rigorous demands of mathematical understanding for college and career. Students in Tennessee must earn credit in four high school level units of math in order to

graduate with a high school diploma, including Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the equivalent courses, Integrated Math I, II, and III) and an additional math course higher than Algebra I (further math courses).

The revised standards for math to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year include:

- Instructional shifts:
  - Focus: The standards are focused on fewer topics so that students can dig deeper within mathematical topics.
  - Coherence: The topics within a grade are connected to support focus. Additionally, standards are linked across grades to ensure vertical coherence.
  - Rigor: The standards set expectations for a balanced approach to pursuing conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, application, and modeling.
- Revisions:
  - Across all grades:
    - Overarching standards revisions:
      - Replaced "real world" terminology as "contextual problems"
      - Revised the language in the standards for clarity and consistency
      - Examples were added to, revised, or removed from the standards
      - Combined/deleted repetitive standards and split detailed standards that were lengthy in wording
      - Added standards to bridge gaps in the trajectory of learning
    - Revised structure:
      - Restructured the physical representation of the standards
      - Re-categorized standards into major and supporting work of the grade eliminating the category additional work of the grade
    - New literacy skills for mathematical proficiency:
      - Use multiple reading strategies
      - Understand and use correct mathematical vocabulary
      - Discuss and articulate mathematical ideas
      - Write mathematical arguments
  - Grades K–5:
    - Increased fluency expectations
    - Shifted introductory time and money standards to kindergarten
  - Grades 6–8:
    - Refined major work of the grade
    - Revised supporting work of the grade, especially in statistics and probability
  - Grades 9–12:
    - Revised scope and clarifications
    - Shifted standards from Algebra II (and the parallel Integrated course) into further year mathematics courses to focus standards on those determined to be a necessity for college and career readiness
    - Restructured fourth year courses to reflect postsecondary readiness

English Language Arts Standards

Tennessee's English language arts standards for instruction apply to core ELA courses in all grades K–12. The Tennessee Academic Standards for ELA set high expectations for all students to ensure that Tennessee graduates are prepared for the rigorous literacy demands of college and career. Students

must achieve four high school level units of ELA in order to graduate with a high school diploma, including English I, II, III, and IV.

The revised standards for ELA to be implemented in the 2017-18 school year include:

- Instructional shifts:
  - Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction
  - Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational
  - Practicing with complex text and its academic language regularly
- Revisions:
  - Across all grades:
    - Revised for clarity and continuity
    - Vertically aligned to demonstrate a progression of skills
    - Connected and grouped standards to emphasize integrated instruction
    - Added a suite of support documents:
      - Glossary of Terms
      - Text Complexity Framework
      - Performance Level Question Guide
  - Grades K–5:
    - Embedded foundational standards in new foundational literacy strand
    - Placed a heightened emphasis on writing
  - Grades 6–12:
    - Refined for clarity of language only

Science Standards

The Tennessee Academic Standards for science set high expectations for all students to ensure that Tennessee graduates are prepared for the rigorous demands of college and career. Tennessee students must achieve three high school level units of science in order to graduate with a high school diploma, including Biology I, either Chemistry or Physics, and one additional laboratory science course.

The structure of the proposed standards was developed from the Framework for K–12 Science Education[18] published by the National Research Council which describes a progression of key concepts, or disciplinary core ideas (DCIs), and gives grade-level end points. Focusing on a limited number of ideas, the proposed standards will deepen content knowledge and build on learning. The progressions are designed to build on student understanding of science with developmental appropriateness. Standards are included for grades K–8, the required high school courses of Biology I and Chemistry I and/or Physics, as well as several permanent elective offerings.

Teams of educators throughout the state developed initial revisions to the science standards in 2014-15. The SRC made the final recommendation for new science standards to the state board in October 2016.

[18] Next Generation Science Standards for States, by States. *A Framework for K–12 Science Education*. National Research Council. July 2011. Web.

The revised standards for science to be implemented in the 2018-19 school year include:

- Structural Changes:
  - Across all grades:
    - Revised structure utilizing inclusion of DCIs:
      - Physical Sciences
      - Life Sciences
      - Earth and Space Sciences
      - Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Sciences
    - Integration of crosscutting concepts that permeate all fields of science
    - Inclusion of science and engineering practices that combine scientific knowledge with skill
- Instructional Shifts:
  - Across all grades:
    - Make pertinent connections among scientific concepts to foster a comprehensive and scientifically-based understanding of the physical world, noting the importance across all fields of science
    - Identify and ask appropriate questions that can be answered through scientific investigations
    - Design and conduct investigations to generate evidence needed to answer a variety of questions
    - Think critically and logically to analyze and interpret data, draw conclusions, and develop explanations that are based on evidence and are free of bias
    - Communicate and defend results through multiple modes of representation (e.g., oral, mathematical, pictorial, graphic, and textual models)
    - Integrate science, mathematics, technology, and engineering design to solve problems and guide everyday decisions
  - Grades K–5:
    - Capture the curiosity of children through relevant scientific content
    - Focus on providing background knowledge and age-appropriate interaction with science as a platform to launch into deeper scientific thinking in grades 6–12
  - Grades 6–8:
    - Focus on integrated science
    - Strong reflection on content through the understanding of cross-cutting concepts
  - Grades 9–12:
    - Presence of a specific DCI focus and application for each high school course:
      - Biology – life science focus
      - Physics or Chemistry – physical science focus
    - Improved vertical alignment with grades K–8

The K–12 science standards to be implemented in the 2018-19 school year are intended to prepare all students for the challenges of the 21st century, including the integration of literacy within the science standards. Scientific information is presented in many formats with various tones and perspectives, and students must process and synthesize information effectively to generate new conclusions and ideas while avoiding the pitfalls of fallacious reasoning and bias. Specifically, effective communication within a scientific context requires students to apply literacy skills in reading, vocabulary, speaking and listening, and writing:

- **Reading:** Students should have regular practice with complex text and academic language beyond the textbook, such as scientific journals, popular magazines, and vetted Internet sites. Scientifically literate students should be able to read and decode information presented in

multiple formats, including charts, tables, info graphics, and flowcharts.

- **Vocabulary:** Understanding and applying scientific vocabulary correctly is essential to science literacy. Scientifically literate students appropriately link technical and academic vocabulary words in the communication of scientific phenomena.
- **Speaking and Listening:** Scientifically literate students listen critically and engage in productive discussions surrounding a critique of scientific evidence and the validity of resulting conclusions.
- **Writing:** Writing in a science classroom does not mimic that of writing in an English language arts classroom. Students in early grades should begin to employ technical writing skills to strengthen sequencing skills, as done through the writing of procedures. In high school, students should be able to write a report complete with introduction, methods, results, analysis, and conclusion.

Social Studies Standards

The Tennessee Academic Standards for social studies are focused on preparing students to be college, career, and civics ready. In order to achieve this, Tennessee students must achieve three high school level units of social studies in order to graduate with a high school diploma, including U.S. History and Geography, World History and Geography, U.S. Government and Civics (1/2 credit), and Economics (1/2 credit).

The current social studies standards were online for public review from January 21, 2016 through April 30, 2016. The revised social studies standards were online for public review from September 14, 2016 through December 15, 2016. In the 2019-20 school year, the new social studies standards will implemented and assessed.

The revised standards for social studies to be implemented in the 2019-20 school year are under revision using the following process:

- The Standards Review and Development Committee and the Advisory Team were provided with the public commentary report (produced by SREB) from the first round of public review that was specific to their grade level and/or subject.
- The Standards Review and Development Committee, based on the Advisory Team's recommendations for changes, were posted to a public website for the purpose of gathering additional public feedback.
- The Standards Review and Development Committee will propose recommendations to the Standards Recommendation Committee.
- The Standards Recommendation Committee will review the first and second round of public feedback and make the final recommendations on the revised set of standards to the state board in July 2017.
- The revised standards will be implemented and assessed in 2019-20 school year.

Alternate Achievement Standards

All students are assessed on their mastery of grade-level standards. As with all summative assessments, the alternate assessment is a snapshot of performance, regardless of which assessment a student takes. It is one data point for the student's mastery of core curriculum. The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, alternate assessment score, and a variety of other progress monitoring tools will be used throughout the year to help the team best plan for the most

appropriate instructional program to ensure the student is provided with increased postsecondary opportunities.

Alternate Assessment Targets

Tennessee offers alternate assessments based on alternate achievement targets (AATs) in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education (USEd) federal regulations and guidance. A student must have an IEP, and the primary disability must be recognized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).[19] Tennessee's special education, general education, and specialist educators are instrumental in the alignment between the alternate assessments and the high expectations set forth in the state adopted academic standards.

Tennessee has established specific AATs or specific statements of knowledge and skills that align to the most critical grade level standards in math, ELA, science, and social studies. The AATs were reviewed and revised by Tennessee educators.

All students can and should participate in daily core instruction. The annual assessment is the measure of how students perform based on grade-level content. How a student will access grade-level content will differ based on individual student needs. Students who participate in the alternate assessment system receive core instruction which is modified to provide students the opportunity to access and participate in rigorous instruction—based on a student's IEP. That instruction may occur in any setting within the school based on the student's least restrictive environment (LRE).

English Language Proficiency Standards

Tennessee's English learner (EL) population has more than doubled from 2006 to 2016.[20] We have averaged an annual gain of 20 percent enrollment of EL students each year. The recent growth has been averaging 4.96 percent annually for the past five years. If the current growth pattern continues, we will be exceed 60,000 EL students by 2020. Changes in this population will have a significant impact on the educational trends in the state.

In preparing our expanding EL population for access to academic content and success in college and career, Tennessee has increased the rigor in standards and assessments for English learners. The Tennessee standards and assessments for ELs meet the requirements under ESSA § 1111(b)(1)(F).

Tennessee will need more classroom teachers trained to work with students who are learning English as they learn academic content. The graduates of the future are more likely to be either bilingual or have family members who are bilingual. The teachers of the future will have a greater need to develop the skills necessary to serve diverse populations and adequately differentiate instruction.

Since March 2014, Tennessee has been a member of the World-class Instructional Design and

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[19] Tennessee Department of Education. Alternate Assessment. Web.
[20] See Appendix E

Assessment (WIDA)[21] consortium. The WIDA framework[22] is designed to raise English language development (ELD) standards for EL students which are aligned to Tennessee's college and career readiness standards. Together, the components of the WIDA framework support the instruction and assessment of ELs. The language represented in this framework should work alongside the content expectations in the classroom. Currently, college and career readiness standards guide many states in setting their curricular goals. These content standards exemplify many of the language features of WIDA's original standards framework, namely:

- a focus on oral language development;
- literacy across the content areas;
- attention to genre, text type, register, and language forms and conventions; and
- use of instructional supports.

WIDA has reviewed the college and career readiness standards to enhance their representation within its current framework. The language demands presented in these content standards have been intentionally addressed in numerous ways, from selecting particular instructional supports emphasized in the content standards, to ensuring that students at all levels of language proficiency have opportunities to engage in the cognitive challenges represented in those content standards.

In addition to the core knowledge and skills represented in content standards, students need to develop social language and cross-cultural competencies to be successful in school and beyond. ELs benefit tremendously from direct instruction in these aspects of language development as represented across the ELD standards. Educators should recognize and maximize the language, knowledge, and skills that students bring from their homes and communities, empowering them to explore their own unique pathways to college and career success.

Tennessee encourages ESL teachers to work with other core content teachers to use, at a minimum, one WIDA English language development standard and one content standard in each lesson plan. Ideally, the ESL teacher will work with the content teacher to ensure that s/he has a similar content standard and an ELD standard to use. By using the approach, the ESL teacher is responsible for teaching the ELD standards through the content standard, thereby supporting content learning. The general education teacher is responsible for teaching the content standard and supporting the ELD standard for the ELs in his/her class. This approach presents a win-win situation for the EL student by providing double exposure to the content ideas and academic vocabulary, as well as support for English language development.

Alignment Study for Content Standards

In 2011, WIDA conducted an alignment study[23] of content standards to WIDA's English language development standards. The study confirms the alignment of the Tennessee Academic Standards and the WIDA standards, in both depth and breadth. Depth refers to similarity of cognitive complexity and breadth to similarity in dispersion, or how linking is distributed among goals within a standard. Results

[21] WIDA. Mission & the WIDA Story. Web.

[22] See Appendix F

[23] Alignment Study between the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards, 2007 Edition, Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12.

suggest adequate linking across all grade clusters between the WIDA English language proficiency (ELP) standards model performance indicators (MPIs) and the state standards in English language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) and mathematics investigated in this study. The WIDA ELP standards and the Tennessee Academic Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics meet the criteria for alignment.

In 2015, a newly-developed assessment that is delivered on-line further supported the linkage and alignment. Studies to crosswalk Tennessee's former paper-based assessment with the newer assessment are currently underway. This study will continue as the assessment is refined. Tennessee will compare the WIDA ACCESS and the TNReady 2016-17 assessments to determine where ELA and mathematics assessments intersect WIDA ACCESS assessment and confirm alignment. This will inform any change in our exit criteria, since students who exit EL services should be able to access the core content assessments linguistically.

Graduation

Graduation rate is explicitly tied to accountability at the school and district levels as a measure within the state's framework (see *Accountability* section). Over the past few years, Tennessee has been raising expectations for both students and educators, and the state has seen significant gains as a result. These outcomes, including increases in graduation rates, are a testament to the work being done in schools across the state. The most notable gains and overall achievements are:

- Twelve districts improved their graduation rates by five percentage points or more.
- Ninety-five districts—over 70 percent of the districts in the state—have graduation rates at or above 90 percent, up from 81 districts last year.
- Seventy-six districts—roughly 60 percent of districts in the state—had graduation rates at or above 90 percent for both 2014-15 and 2015-16.

Regular High School Diploma

In order to graduate with a regular high school diploma and be equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life, Tennessee students must: (1) earn the prescribed 22 credit minimum; (2) complete the ACT or SAT; and (3) have a satisfactory record of attendance.[24]

- **Math:** Students must achieve four high school level units of math, including Algebra I, II, and Geometry (or the equivalent courses, Integrated Math I, II, and III) and an additional math course higher than Algebra I (further math courses). Additionally, students must be enrolled in a math course each year of high school.
- **ELA:** Students must achieve four high school level units in English language arts, including English I, II, III, and IV.
- **Science:** Students must achieve three high school level units of science, including Biology I, either Chemistry or Physics, and one additional laboratory science course.
- **Social Studies:** Students must achieve three high school level units in social studies, including U.S. History and Geography, World History and Geography, U.S. Government and Civics (1/2 credit), and Economics (1/2 credit).

[24] Tennessee State Board of Education. High School Policy (2.103). Web.

Students earning a regular high school diploma before, during, or at the conclusion of the fourth year of high school, including the summer session immediately following the fourth year of high school, will be included in the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in accordance with the requirements of ESSA § 8101(25).

In accordance with 34 CFR § 200.34(c)(2), "regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the state that is fully aligned with state standards, or a higher diploma. A regular high school diploma does **not** include—

- a diploma aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards described in § 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA; or
- a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or any similar or lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting individualized education program (IEP) goals.

Alternate Academic Diploma

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed with the state's alternate assessment and awarded a state-defined alternate diploma that is aligned to the state requirements for the regular high school diploma, will be included in the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in accordance with the requirements of ESSA § 8101(25). In Tennessee this will be the new alternate academic diploma.

In accordance with 34 CFR § 200.34(c)(3), "alternate diploma" means a diploma for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, as defined by the state, who are assessed with a state's alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards under § 1111(b)(2)(D) of the Act and is—

- standards-based;
- aligned with the state's requirements for a regular high school diploma; and
- obtained within the time period for which the state ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under § 612(a)(1) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(1)).

Occupational Diploma

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-6-6001(g) requires the state board to adopt, in addition to a full diploma, a certificate of attendance, or a special education diploma, and an occupational diploma for students with disabilities.

An occupational diploma may be awarded to a student with disabilities at the end of his or her fourth year of high school who has: (1) not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma; (2) received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an IEP; (3) satisfactory records of attendance and conduct; (4) completed the occupational diploma Skills,

Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) created by the TDOE; and (5) completed two years of paid or non-paid work experience. [25]

The determination that an occupational diploma is the goal for a student with a disability will be made at the conclusion of the student's 10th grade year or two academic years prior to the expected graduation date. Students who obtain the occupational diploma may continue to work toward the regular high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they reach age 22.

Special Education Diploma

A special education diploma may be awarded at the end of the fourth year of high school to a student with disabilities who has: (1) not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma; (2) satisfactorily completed an IEP; and (3) satisfactory records of attendance and conduct. Students who obtain the special education diploma may continue to work towards the regular high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they reach the age of 22.

Diploma Option and Postsecondary Success

The department recognizes that graduation rate is an important measure but is committed to individual student success. Therefore, a school should be supporting all students in their efforts to acquire the most appropriate diploma regardless of its inclusion in the calculation of graduation rate. The work of schools is preparing individuals for postsecondary success based on the individual's goals and aptitudes. The four diploma options in Tennessee support all students in achieving those goals.

For students with cognitive disabilities, this is a critical and life-long decision as the diploma earned can impact eligibility for adult support and employment services. In order to ensure that school leaders, teachers, students, and families are informed of each diploma including the benefits and consequences (i.e., enrollment options, employment options, eligibility for services such as vocation rehabilitation and Medicaid waivers through TNCare), the state will engage stakeholders, including but not limited to, the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities, TNCare, Vocational Rehabilitation, state Centers for Independent Living, the Tennessee Department of Labor, the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, and the Governor's Children's Cabinet as well as advocacy groups such as but not limited to The Arc and Disability Rights Tennessee.

[25] Tennessee Department of Education. Occupational Diploma. Web.

Assessment

Assessment

Tennessee believes in the value of statewide assessment of all students, in order to provide information and data to parents, teachers, education leaders, community members, officials, and advocates. In 1983, Tennessee began annual statewide testing to provide important information about the collective progress of students in the state with the Tennessee Proficiency Test. Five years later, the State Board of Education commissioned the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). The Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1992 made TCAP a state-mandated assessment. Tennessee began the process of raising the rigor of its assessments by resetting the cut scores on its TCAP End-of-Couse (EOC) exams and TCAP achievement assessments for grades 3–8 in math, ELA, and science for assessment results from 2009-10 and all subsequent school years.

During the 2015-16 school year, Tennessee transitioned to a new assessment, called TNReady, with multiple item types and more rigorous questions aligned to more rigorous standards for Tennessee students. Although testing was suspended in 2015-16 for students in grades 3–8, the assessments were administered to high school students across the state. Tennessee will utilize the same assessment, TNReady, for the 2016-17 school year for all grade levels.

While the proficiency cut on the former test was closely matched to correspond to a D-letter grade, the new TNReady proficiency cut was matched to a B letter grade. The new cuts were based on achievement level descriptors closely matched to those used by NAEP. The changes resulted in a sizable decrease in the number of students scoring at a proficient or advanced level.

Tennessee's statewide assessments exceed the requirements of ESSA § 1111(b)(2)(B) by requiring all students grades 3–8 to complete annual assessments in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies. High school students complete EOC exams in English I, II, and III, Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II (or Integrated Math I, II, and III), U.S. History, Chemistry, and Biology. All 11th grade students in Tennessee are also required to take the ACT or SAT.

2016-17 Testing

On July 14, 2016 the department executed a contract with Questar, a national leader in large-scale assessment, to develop, administer, score, and report the majority of its state assessments for the 2016-17 school year. Educational Testing Service (ETS) develops EOC exams and grades 3–8 end of year assessments for science and social studies, as well as the alternate assessments for grades 3–11 science and social studies. Questar will develop, administer, score, and report the optional second grade assessment. Measured Progress is the vendor for the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) for the math and ELA assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Due to the inability of the vendor to meet deliverables, Tennessee terminated its contract with its previous assessment vendor Measurement Inc. on April 27, 2016. After termination of the contract, the department began surveying the market, seeking a

partnership with a vendor that has successfully administered large-scale assessments. After researching multiple vendors, the department determined that Questar's proven track record of both administering large-scale assessments and developing a test quickly made them the best fit for Tennessee.

In collaboration with the state's central procurement office, the department began identifying the proper avenue to procure a new assessment in line with both the state's challenging time constraints and state and federal law. The department then reexamined its competitive requests for proposal (RFP) process from 2014. That examination revealed Questar as the vendor with the next highest score, which provided an avenue to move forward with urgency. A combination of the department's recent research on the market, coupled with the results of the previous competitive RFP process, makes Questar an ideal partner to build, administer, and score the statewide assessments for the next school year. Testing administration in 2016-17 will rely on progressive proof points to ensure that the vendor is meeting expectations, and all Tennessee schools are prepared for the phase-in of online assessments. Online assessments will be phased in over the 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20 school years.

Similar to the design of the 2015-16 assessments, the 2016-17 state assessments will continue to feature multiple types of questions that measure the depth of Tennessee Academic Standards, specifically students' problem solving and critical thinking skills.[26] Tennessee's new assessment program for 2016-17 will continue to produce data, for both student achievement and student growth that can be used to inform:

- determinations of school effectiveness for purposes of accountability under Title I;
- determinations of individual principal and teacher effectiveness for purposes of evaluation;
- determinations of principal and teacher professional development and support needs; and
- teaching, learning, and program improvement.

Tennessee previously added additional EOC exams for advanced coursework. As noted in Tennessee's original ESEA flexibility waiver application, the department began taking steps toward raising the rigor of our assessments through the Tennessee Diploma Project that took effect beginning in the 2009-10 school year.[27] The department has continued to implement more rigorous assessments over time, including adding EOC exams for Algebra II and English III in the 2012-13 school year and for Chemistry in the 2013-14 school year. Proficiency cut scores for these advanced assessments are benchmarked to national college readiness measures such as the ACT.

The new TNReady assessment for grades 3–11 for the 2016-17 school year, which replaces legacy TCAP assessments in ELA and math, is fully aligned to Tennessee's college and career ready standards. Multiple educator committees were used to ensure this alignment.[28] The new assessments were expanded to include additional high school subject areas for math: Geometry (in addition to Algebra I and II); and Integrated Math I, II, and III for districts and schools that offer these courses versus the traditional high school math sequence.

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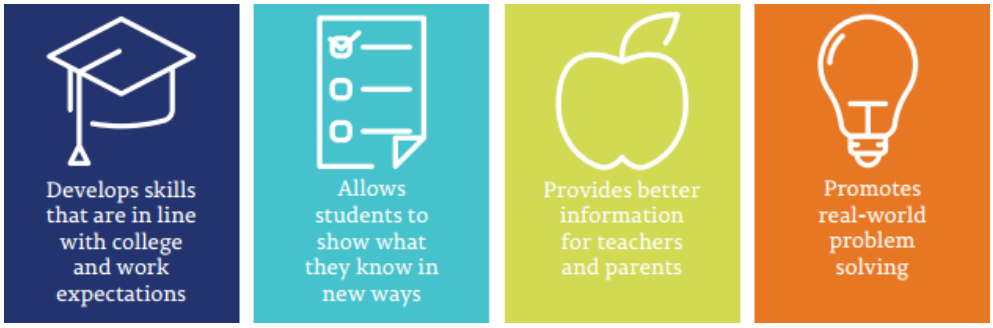
[26] Tennessee Department of Education. *Frequently Asked Questions, 2016-17 State Assessments*. Web.
[27] Tennessee Department of Education. Graduation Requirements. Web.
[28] Tennessee Department of Education. Assessment Blueprints. Web.

TNReady was designed to measure higher expectations and critical thinking skills for Tennessee students. The questions expand beyond multiple choice include: writing that requires students to cite text evidence at all grade levels; questions that measure mathematics standards without a calculator; and questions that ask students to problem solve demonstrating an understanding of the horizontal coherence that exists within grade-level domains in mathematics. It also includes more rigorous selected responses, such as multiple select and drag-and-drop items. Annual assessments will be administered for the 2016-17 school year. However, due to revised ELA and mathematics standards which go into effect for the 2017-18 school year, the TNReady assessment will be refined for the 2017-18 school year to ensure continued alignment to Tennessee's college and career ready state standards.



Tennessee's TNReady assessments meet the requirements under ESSA § 1111(b). The assessments are aligned with the state's challenging academic standards across subjects, and results will be disaggregated by each major racial and ethnic subgroup and all other required subgroups as explained in the *Accountability* section.

TNReady assessment results will represent the following: students' ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge and skills through the revised writing assessment; an accurate measure of student achievement across the full performance continuum, including for high- and low-achieving students; and an accurate measure of student growth over a full academic year or course. Performance levels are:

- **Level 4** – **Mastered** (mastered grade level)
- **Level 3** – **On Track** (on grade level)
- **Level 2** – **Approaching** (approaching grade level)
- **Level 1** – **Below** (below grade level)

New Score Reports

Tennessee shares student score reports with all teachers and families. The score reports have been newly designed for high school for 2015-16 results and all tested grades for 2016-17 to provide better, clearer information to parents, students, and teachers.

The process for improving the score reports was extensive. The Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment (Assessment Task Force 1.0) report included the recommendation to ensure annual tests

provide clear reports for educators, students, and parents that point to alignment to postsecondary readiness.[29]

Beginning summer 2015 the department collected initial input on single-subject and multi-subject portfolio reports. In spring 2016, the department received additional input from educator and parent groups, including the Teacher Advisory Council, the Governor's Teacher Cabinet, the Parent Advisory Council, parent survey, CORE Regional PTA, and educator roundtables. Through this feedback the student report design was finalized in summer 2016. Families of high school students received the new and improved score report in fall 2016.

The department reconvened the Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment (Assessment Task Force 2.0) in order to continue the dialogue around creating intentional and streamlined assessments. Membership of the reconvened task force included several new participants, joining members from a broad spectrum of stakeholders representing educators, legislators, parents, school board members, students, and communities across the state. The group met monthly throughout summer and early fall 2016 to learn of the progress on last year's recommendations, address items requiring further analysis from the first task force, review and assess tests implemented in the 2015-16 school year, provide additional recommendations on testing, and give feedback on specific assessment and accountability-related items as the department works to develop a plan to implement the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

Advanced Mathematics in Eighth Grade

Consistent with flexibility in ESSA, the regulations allow students taking advanced mathematics courses in eighth grade to avoid unnecessary, redundant testing by allowing these students to take the assessment typically administered to high school students enrolled in that course. Tennessee eighth graders that take advanced math are required to take the End-of-Course exam for Algebra I and are exempt from the eighth grade annual mathematics assessment.

The department will ensure that every student in the state has an equal opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school through our rigorous implementation of college and career ready standards and our practices regarding teacher licensure and credentials for Algebra I. We will ensure that all students also have an equal opportunity to be prepared for Algebra I by exposing them to a challenging curriculum that builds numeracy skills beginning in pre-K. These foundational skills that focus on the progress towards mastery of algebraic expression will result in the potential of all students to maintain a trajectory towards taking Algebra I in eighth grade. We also ensure that parents are aware of course offerings in middle school, as all schools are required to publish and distribute a course manual to parents.

Moreover, we have increased the ability for teachers with middle grades licensure to earn a specific endorsement to teach Algebra I. As such, these teachers are not required to complete the full certification pathway for all high school math content. Therefore, even in areas that are experiencing shortages in teachers to teach advanced math content in middle schools can pursue this alternative certification pathway to meet the demands of additional students taking Algebra I in eighth grade.

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[29] See Appendix G

The Future Assessment Landscape

Across a series of task forces and working groups, we have heard a variety of stakeholders—parents, community groups, superintendents, administrators, and teachers—describe the important role that annual statewide assessments play in defining expectations for student learning. Tennessee currently tests the four core subjects across all grades 3–8: mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies. We also require a wide variety of End-of-Couse assessments in high school. We believe that these tests make our standards tangible and allow for the accountability that has set the conditions for our recent successes in areas such as the 4th and 8th grade NAEP science tests.

All districts are required to post the testing calendar for state and local assessments on their website. This calendar must differentiate between what is required by the state versus a local requirement. The division of consolidated planning and monitoring is in the process of reviewing all district websites in the 2016-17 school year to ensure compliance with this requirement, and that parents and stakeholders have access to testing schedules.

At the same time, we recognize the need for balance in our assessment framework, and we have heard stakeholder feedback about the areas where our current assessment schedule may feel excessive or overly rigid. To this end, we are proposing several immediate changes and a series of ongoing investigations to ensure that our assessment requirements continue to serve the needs of the state over time.

In grades three and four, we will be reducing testing time in science and social studies. This will not eliminate the role of these tests in state accountability but will reflect the ways that these subjects are particularly integrated with mathematics and ELA in the early grades. In these grades, there will be two performance levels for science and social studies.

Additionally, we will be slightly modifying ELA tests to allow for more granular score reporting. These changes will allow the assessments to play a greater role in the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI^2) framework used across the state, potentially reducing the overlap between elementary testing and RTI^2. The department will roll out the reduced testing structure plan to districts in early spring 2017 and release full blueprints aligned to the new structure in May 2017. The new assessment structure will be implemented in 2017-18. In subsequent years, the department will continue to explore other opportunities for reducing overall testing times across all grade levels.

Tennessee will continue to investigate the possibilities for test reduction in grade 11, which has also been the focus of stakeholder feedback. During the 11th grade year students face an array of testing. This includes the annual state assessments and the ACT or SAT required by the state. Students also take early postsecondary assessments such as the advanced placement exams and dual credit exams. While we are actively exploring options for the 11th grade year, the department also recognizes that 2015-16 was the first year of implementation for the new TNReady high school assessments, and we see the need for an initial period of stability to review and make sense of the data from these assessments. Tennessee will undergo a two-year investigative period with extensive stakeholder input around testing in grade 11 rather than make any immediate changes to the high school testing landscape. This process will allow for the collection of three years of data from TNReady and the ability to evaluate any potential redundancies between the ACT and TNReady EOC assessments. Current analysis shows an incomplete correlation between ACT and TNReady.

Finally, as our assessment design process continues to evolve with TNReady, the department will seek new and improved ways to give our students the most meaningful experience within the requirements of statewide testing. As we move forward, we will continue to explore new question types and assessment designs that allow students to practice the inquiry and critical thinking that we know is necessary to their future success.

Student Participation

Tennessee will continue to require a 95 percent participation rate for all students and for each subgroup of students as required under § 1111(c)(4)(E) of ESSA, and use participation rate as an indicator for accountability. TNReady will assess all students, including English learners (ELs) and students with disabilities.

Schools that do not meet the 95 percent participation rate in any subject, either for all students or for any accountability subgroup included in the achievement indicator, will receive an "F" on the achievement indicator for the given group of students. We believe this consequence represents our strong commitment to ensure that all students are counted in the state's accountability system.

Alternate Assessment

The TDOE offers alternate assessments aligned with challenging alternate achievement standards in compliance with § 1111(b) of ESSA and the U.S. Department of Education federal regulations and guidance. A student must have an IEP and the primary disability must be recognized under the IDEA.

Alternate assessments are designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.[30] The structures of alternate assessments are designed around the students' physical and cognitive disabilities in a way that allows them to answer test questions and participate in the test as independently as possible. The alternate assessments were reviewed by Tennessee teachers and professionals most familiar with students with significant cognitive disabilities. Tennessee educators have had input in this process, in order to ensure alignment by reviewing the alternate assessment targets and items developed for the assessment. A variety of accommodations are built into the test design to accommodate each student's personal mode of communication (i.e., sign language, eye gaze, augmentative communication devices, etc.).

Tennessee's assessment program will provide for alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and alternate assessments based on alternate assessment targets for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2).

For the 2014-15 school year, Tennessee continued with its previous plan to eliminate the TCAP MAAS (Modified Academic Achievement Standards) assessment and to assess the vast majority of students with disabilities on grade-level academic achievement standards through the general TCAP assessment

[30] See Appendix H

with appropriate accommodations as needed. Students with disabilities will be included in regular classes to the maximum extent possible and with appropriate support and accommodations.

Students who fail to obtain a credit in a course that has an EOC assessment and whose disability adversely affects performance on that test will be permitted, through an approved process, to demonstrate the state identified knowledge and skills contained within that course through an alternate performance-based assessment (APBA).[31] The APBA provides students with a different way to demonstrate mastery of course content when a student's disability precludes them from demonstrating mastery through the EOC assessment. APBA is not a test; it is a rubric completed by the student's teacher that allows the student to demonstrate mastery of core knowledge and skills for that course. The APBA rubric score may only be used to replace the End-of-Course score if the EOC score prevents the student from obtaining that course credit. The department will review existing guidance around the application of the APBA and consider any needed clarifications or support.

English Learners

Since March 2014, Tennessee has been a member of the WIDA[32] consortium, a non-profit cooperative group promoting educational equity for English learners. WIDA assessments for ELs are designed to meet and exceed the goals of ESSA. The college and career readiness standards that guide the department in setting curricular goals exemplify many of the language features of WIDA's standards framework, specifically:

- a focus on oral language development;
- literacy across the content areas;
- use of instructional supports; and
- attention to genre, text type, register, and language forms and conventions.

Beginning in 2015-16, Tennessee transitioned from the current English Language Development Assessment (ELDA) to the ACCESS for ELs (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State). Developed in partnership with the WIDA consortium and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), ACCESS for ELs is a standards-based assessment for measuring English language proficiency in ELs in grades K–12. ACCESS for ELs serves as a measure for student growth, ESL program effectiveness, and student language proficiency attainment. It assesses social and instructional English used within the school context as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, across the four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Native Language Assessment

Tennessee defines "languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population" as the five languages other than English that are most commonly spoken by English Learners at home and present in

(1) at least four percent of the overall student population or

[31] Tennessee Department of Education. Alternate Performance Based Assessment. Web.
[32] WIDA. Mission & the WIDA Story. Web.

(2) 20 percent of the student population within a single LEA or
(3) 20 percent within a single grade level at the state.

Tennessee administers the Home Language Survey (HLS). Districts use the HLS as the first step in meeting the federal requirement to identify languages spoken by minority students, including migrant students, SIFEs, and Native Americans. The department requires every student to be administered the HLS one time in their educational career upon their initial enrollment.

Based on 2015 data, most ELs in Tennessee are Spanish speakers, which account for about 4.1 percent of the overall student population, and is therefore present to a significant extent given Tennessee's definition. Arabic is the next most prevalent language with less than 1 percent of the overall student population. Additionally, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somali, and Kurdish are present in .05 to .08 percent of the population. The district in Tennessee serving the most English Learners has 17.6 percent of its student body, so it does not meet the second criteria. The most common language in this district is also Spanish.

English has been established as the official and legal language of Tennessee and requires instruction in the public schools to be conducted in English unless the nature of the course would otherwise require (T.C.A. § 4-1-404). Thus, Tennessee does not administer summative assessments in languages other than English. The department, however, will monitor native languages that are present to a significant extent.

English Language Proficiency Alternate Assessment

WIDA's Alternate ACCESS for ELs is an English language proficiency assessment designed for ELs in grades 1–12 who have significant cognitive disabilities. The assessment measures English language proficiency in all four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Only students who take an alternate state assessment may take the Alternate ACCESS for ELs. Alternate ACCESS for ELs is intended for those ELs whose cognitive disabilities prevent their meaningful participation in ACCESS for ELs. It is not for students who can participate in ACCESS for ELs with accommodations.

English Language Proficiency Levels

All WIDA assessments provide an English language proficiency performance level score based on a scale of 1.0 to 6.0. The expectations for students at each performance level are as follows:

Full English Proficiency

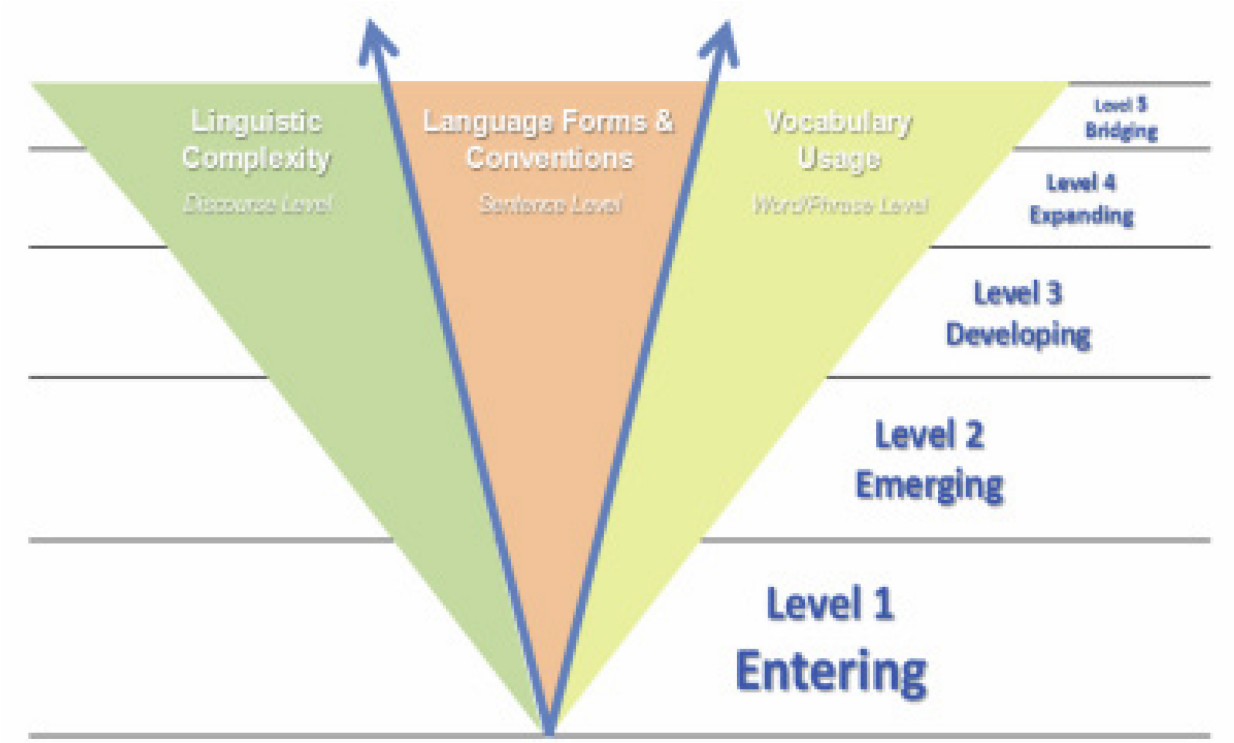
- **Level NELB** (Non-English Language Background)
  - The student was never classified as an EL and does not fit the definition for limited English proficiency outlined in either state or federal law.
- **Level 6 Reaching**
  - The student may be a former EL/moving into the transition phase.
  - The student was formerly limited English proficient and is now English proficient.
  - The student reads, writes, speaks, and comprehends English within academic classroom settings.

English Learner

- **Level 5 Bridging** (Advanced)
  - The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English well.
  - The student is near proficient in reading, writing, and content area skills needed to meet grade-level expectations.
  - The student requires occasional support.
- **Level 4 Expanding** (Advanced Intermediate/Early Advanced)
  - The student understands and speaks conversational English without apparent difficulty but understands and speaks academic English with some hesitancy.
  - The student continues to acquire reading and writing skills in content areas needed to achieve grade-level expectations with assistance.
- **Level 3 Developing** (Intermediate)
  - The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with decreasing hesitancy and difficulty.
  - The student is post-emergent, developing reading comprehension and writing skills in English.
  - The student's English literacy skills allow the student to demonstrate academic knowledge in content areas with assistance.
- **Level 2 Beginning** (Beginner/Production/Early Intermediate)
  - The student understands and speaks conversational and academic English with hesitancy and difficulty.
  - The student understands parts of lessons and simple directions.
  - The student is at a pre-emergent or emergent level of reading and writing in English, significantly below grade level.
- **Level 1 Entering** (Beginner/Preproduction)
  - The student does not understand or speak English with the exception of a few isolated words or expressions.

English Language Acquisition

Growth in English language acquisition varies depending on what level the student begins the process, and in what stage the student is currently functioning. When the student is a beginner, as depicted in the graphic below, gains appear large in complexity, language forms and conventions, and vocabulary usage. As the student moves towards English proficiency, the breadth and depth of knowledge required to function alongside native English speaking peers, slows the growth between levels. WIDA articulates how students in lower levels progress more quickly versus students at the upper levels progressing more slowly.



Tennessee is continuing to focus on equity and meaningful instruction for ELs. The department provides support to districts and schools in navigating the unique challenges of English Learners, and will be expanding state-wide, regional support through three new EL facilitators. During summer 2017, standards training will include EL training for general education teachers. We encourage all ESL teachers to be trained to teach the full depth and breadth of Tennessee's ELA standards. Districts are empowered through state sponsored but regionally driven PLCs that empower them to meet the needs of each district's population of ELs. For our goals to be met, it is necessary that not only ESL professionals, but also general education teachers, school based social workers, administrators, guidance counselors, and educational administrators must understand and support the process of English language acquisition.

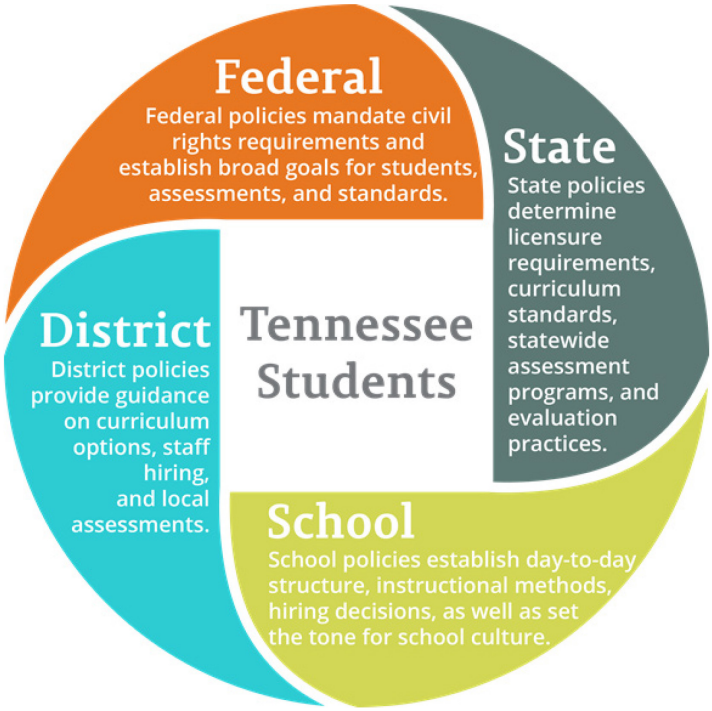
Accountability

Accountability

Tennessee recognizes and supports the federal department of education's interest in ensuring that states implement effective accountability systems to ensure that all children have the opportunity to pursue their chosen path in life. Through Race to the Top, we created a framework that necessitates all districts, schools, and classrooms focus on advancing student achievement for every child. With the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Tennessee remains committed to a rigorous accountability system. Our proposed accountability plan represents a system that promotes our top-line goals, supported by effective state policies and oversight, and driven by local innovation and execution.

Responsibilities

Tennessee's accountability and reporting system is rooted in the following beliefs about federal, state, and local responsibilities.



Federal

We believe that the role of U.S. Department of Education (USEd) is to hold states accountable for state's development of and progress towards rigorous top-line goals for both student achievement and for closing the achievement gap between different groups of students. USEd is also responsible for monitoring annual progress against these goals, as well as reporting and highlighting the progress of states against these goals.

State

We believe that the state is responsible for setting all long-term and interim goals, defining a measurement system, and reporting state results to the USEd. While the federal government requires states to maintain rigorous state-established top-line goals, it is also the state's responsibility to determine the interim measures that will lead to achieving its top-line goals. The state defines measurement tools, including how to measure growth in outcomes and reduce gaps in student achievement. Additionally, the state sets district goals, measures district and

school-level progress annually (disaggregated by historically underserved student groups), and reports district and school results publicly. Because the state is responsible for ensuring the attainment of state-level goals, the state also has the duty to support districts that are failing to make progress against goals and to intervene in the lowest-performing schools.

District

We believe that districts should receive greater freedom and flexibility when they are successful, support when they demonstrate progress but are failing to reach ambitious goals, and intervention when their results regress or demonstrate growing achievement gaps between groups of students. Districts are responsible for implementing the reforms needed to meet targets determined by school and district accountability frameworks. Districts manage their schools to ensure they make progress towards goals. When schools fail to make progress, districts have the obligation to work with the state to develop plans for improvement. When schools are consistently underperforming, the state has the obligation to intervene and provide additional oversight as defined by state policy. However, in nearly all cases, the district is ultimately accountable for the management of its schools and for its students' growth and outcomes.

School

We believe that schools have the most significant influence and impact on student learning. By establishing day-to-day processes and procedures that prioritize learning, schools are uniquely positioned to be the primary driver for student achievement. Schools that demonstrate a clear commitment to instructional leadership, evidence-based instructional strategies, and differentiated instruction and supports create a rich, supportive learning environment for all students.

State Report Card

The Tennessee state report card will reflect accountability metrics and additional transparency metrics for all districts and schools. ESSA clearly outlines the requirements for the state report card in § 1111(h)(1)(C), and Tennessee will meet these reporting requirements, as well as share additional information relevant to our parents, educators, students, school board members, legislators, and community members. Through our stakeholder engagement during the plan development process, we heard from thousands of Tennesseans about what is most important to understand the successes and challenges within our public schools more clearly.

In addition to the accountability metrics shared on the annual report card, Tennessee proposes to incorporate the following as transparency metrics to provide additional information to all stakeholders. Transparency metrics provide relevant and understandable information for parents, educators, and stakeholders to better understand and compare schools and districts. Over time, Tennessee will continue to review transparency metrics to add or include in accountability framework. Initially, these metrics will not be included in accountability, unless specifically noted in the following sections. For accountability measures, Tennessee will continue to use the minimum n-size of 30 students; however, for reporting purposes, Tennessee will reduce n-size to 10 students. The department engaged education stakeholders and community advocates through the six working groups and other opportunities to specifically discuss n-size during the public input and feedback process.

These metrics will be disaggregated by Tennessee's accountability subgroups, and, when available and applicable, these metrics will be disaggregated by all subgroups under ESSA. Unless otherwise noted, all metrics will begin to appear on the report card in December 2018, reflecting data from the 2017-18 school year.

Metric	Measure	Timeline	Level	By Subgroup
Postsecondary matriculation	Percent of graduates that matriculate into postsecondary program (4-yr, 2-yr, or credential) the fall following high school graduation	Tennessee currently collects this data	State, district, and school	Yes
Postsecondary completion	Percent of graduates that complete postsecondary program within six years of high school graduation	Tennessee currently collects this data and continues to refine the associated data practices	State, district, and school	Yes
Equitable access to highly-effective teachers	Percent of students *below* level with access to highly effective teachers compared to the percent of *mastered* level students with access	Tennessee currently collects this data and shares with districts through the human capital/equity reports to districts	State, district, and school	Only at state level
Teacher retention	Percent of teachers retained/continuing to teach within the district and state	Tennessee currently collects this data	State and district	No
Types of Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) offered	Types of EPSOs offered	Tennessee is working to improve our data quality for this metric.	State, district, and school	No
Students earning ESPO credit	Percent of students earning EPSO credit	Tennessee is working to improve our data quality for this metric across all EPSO offerings.	State, district, and school	Yes
Students completing 1+ EPSO	Percent of students completing at least 1 EPSO	Tennessee currently collects this data	State, district, and school	Yes
Students complete 2+ EPSO and earning recognized industry credential	Percent of students completing 2+ EPSO and earning industry credential	Tennessee is working to improve our data quality for this metric.	State, district, and school *included in *Ready Graduate* indicator	Yes
Students completing 4+ EPSO	Percent of students completing 4+ EPSO	Tennessee currently collects this data	District and school metric *included in *Ready Graduate* indicator	Yes
Students earning industry credential[33]	Percent of students earning industry credential	Tennessee is working to improve our data quality for this metric.	State, district, and school	Yes
Extended cohort graduation rate	Percent of students graduating in five years and a summer	At the earliest December 2019 (for 2018-19 school year)	State, district, and school	Yes
Exclusionary Discipline	Percent of students not in class due to all exclusionary	December 2019 (for 2018-19 school year)	State, district, and	Yes

[33] See Appendix I

Metric	Measure	Timeline	Level	By Subgroup
	disciplinary practices (e.g. in school suspension)	Tennessee currently reports out of school suspension and expulsion data	school	
Long-term English Learners (LTELs)	Percent of students identified as LTELs	Tennessee is working to improve our data quality for this metric.	State, district, and school	Only at state-level

Future Consideration for Transparency Metrics

The following metrics are under consideration for reporting in future years subject to collection and availability of data. Based on stakeholder feedback, the department is exploring these metrics, among others, as areas for further study.

Metric	Measure	Current Status	Level	By Subgroup
Teacher chronic absences	Percent of teachers missing 10 percent or more of the school year	Tennessee will begin collecting data, engaging stakeholders, & creating business rules for what is included in this metric and how it will be shared.	Potential state, school, and district	No
Educator Effectiveness data	Percent of educators at or above expectations on annual teacher evaluation framework (to replace highly qualified metric)	Tennessee currently collects this data	State, district, and school	No
Work Based Learning (WBL)	Percent of students participating in WBL	Tennessee does not currently collect this data	State, district, and school	Yes
Capstone Completion	Percent of students participating and completing a WBL capstone OR Percent of students earning credit for a non-WBL capstone	Tennessee currently collects this data	State, district, and school	Yes
Student mobility	Number of students entering, reentering, and withdrawing after the first day of school as a percent of total enrollment	Tennessee currently collects this data	District and school	Yes
Students participating in at least one extracurricular activity	Percent of students participating in at least one extracurricular activity	Tennessee does not collect or monitor this information	Reported by schools on website	No

Tennessee's Long Term Goals

Tennessee articulated four overarching goals within *Tennessee Succeeds*. As part of our ESSA state plan, we defined long-term goals and interim targets for the next eight years: school year 2016-17 through school year 2024-25. These goals represent Tennessee's commitment to ensuring all students are college and career ready and to closing achievement gaps of historically underserved student groups. In order to adequately and accurately determine the projected target for each subject and all students, Tennessee will use the 2016-17 assessment results to determine the baseline.

Tennessee Succeeds **Goals**	**Interim Targets**
1 **Tennessee will rank in the top half of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 2019.** Tennessee's 2015 NAEP rank: • 25th on 4th grade math • 37th on 8th grade math • 36th on 4th grade reading • 30th on 8th grade reading • 19th on 4th grade science • 21st on 8th grade science	2017: • 31th on 8th grade math* • 27th on 4th grade reading • 28th on 8th grade reading 2019: • 25th on 8th grade math* • 25th on 4th grade reading • 25th on 8th grade reading ***Goal met** (in 2015) on 4th grade math
2 **75 percent of Tennessee third graders will be proficient in reading by 2025.** In 2015, Tennessee had 43 percent of third graders reading proficiently.	Baseline to be set following the 2016-17 school year when assessments are aligned to revised state standards.
3 **The average ACT composite score in Tennessee will be a 21 by 2020.** In 2015, Tennessee's average composite equaled 19.4 on ACT.	ACT average composite: • 2016 – 19.7[34] • 2017 – 20.0 • 2018 – 20.3 • 2019 – 20.6
4 **The majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.** Of spring 2015 graduates, 62 percent matriculated into postsecondary in fall 2015.	Five percent increase in matriculation each year, based on first year results of TN Promise: • 2016 – 67 percent • 2017 – 72 percent • 2018 – 77 percent
As of fall 2015, 24 percent of the class of 2008 earned a postsecondary credential within six years.	• 2–3 percent annual increase in students earning postsecondary credential within six years • Fall 2026 = 50 percent of class of 2020 earning credential

Student Progress Goals

Within the District Accountability and School Accountability frameworks, districts and schools will be

[34] Tennessee interim target for ACT average composite in 2016 was 19.7. The 2016 ACT average composite score was 19.9 [using "best of" scores].

recognized and rewarded for student progress across the continuum of student achievement within both the Value-Added pathway and Growth Indicator, respectively. Therefore, all growth is prioritized, and the focus is not simply limited to moving students to proficiency. Districts and schools are accountable for ensuring that students progress from *below* to *approaching*, *approaching* to *on track*, and from *on track* to *mastered*. The accountability frameworks are designed such that every student should be challenged to achieve the highest level of his or her academic potential.

The targets below reflect the percent of students who are *on track* or *mastered* which is the focus of the Absolute Performance pathway in the district framework or Achievement Indicator in the school framework. However, these goals are but one component of the overall accountability framework and should be placed in the context of emphasizing student progress across the continuum of achievement.

Due to the suspension of testing in grades 3–8 in the spring of 2016 and a shift to a more rigorous and better-aligned assessment, the department will elect to submit updated data and annual goals after the successful testing program administered in spring 2017. The goals and targets detailed below are subject to change based on the data from 2016-17 in order to ensure these goals are ambitious and achievable**.**

Math Achievement Goal

By 2024-25, Tennessee will achieve a 50 percent reduction in the number of students not meeting the *on track* or *mastered* level on the state's annual assessment.

HS Math										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
All students	20.8	25.8	30.7	35.7	40.6	45.6	50.5	55.5	60.4	65.4
Economically Disadvantaged	9.5	15.2	20.8	26.5	32.1	37.8	43.4	49.1	54.8	60.4
Students with Disabilities	3.4	9.4	15.5	21.5	27.6	33.6	39.6	45.7	51.7	57.7
English Learners	4.8	10.8	16.7	22.7	28.6	34.6	40.5	46.5	52.4	58.4
African American	7.4	13.2	19.0	24.8	30.6	36.3	42.1	47.9	53.7	59.5
HS Math										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
American Indian or Alaska Native	19.4	24.4	29.5	34.5	39.6	44.6	49.6	54.7	59.7	64.7
Asian	45.4	48.8	52.2	55.6	59.1	62.5	65.9	69.3	72.7	76.1

Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	33.1	37.3	41.5	45.6	49.8	54.0	58.2	62.4	66.6	70.7
Hispanic or Latino	13.9	19.3	24.7	30.0	35.4	40.8	46.2	51.6	57.0	62.3
White	25.4	30.1	34.7	39.4	44.1	48.7	53.4	58.0	62.7	67.4

English Language Arts/Reading Achievement Goal

By 2024-25, Tennessee will achieve a 50 percent reduction in the number of students not meeting the *on track* or *mastered* level on the state's annual assessment.

HS ELA/Reading										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
All students	30.4	34.8	39.1	43.5	47.8	52.2	56.5	60.9	65.2	69.6
Economically Disadvantaged	16.7	21.9	27.1	32.3	37.5	42.7	47.9	53.1	58.4	63.6
Students with Disabilities	5.5	11.4	17.3	23.2	29.1	35.0	40.9	46.8	52.8	58.7
English Learners	3.4	9.4	15.5	21.5	27.6	33.6	39.6	45.7	51.7	57.7
African American	15.7	21.0	26.2	31.5	36.8	42.0	47.3	52.6	57.9	63.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	33.8	37.9	42.1	46.2	50.4	54.5	58.6	62.8	66.9	71.0
Asian	49.8	52.9	56.1	59.2	62.4	65.5	68.6	71.8	74.9	78.0
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	40.6	44.3	48.0	51.7	55.5	59.2	62.9	66.6	70.3	74.0
Hispanic or Latino	22.9	27.7	32.5	37.4	42.2	47.0	51.8	56.6	61.5	66.3
White	35.7	39.7	43.7	47.8	51.8	55.8	59.8	63.8	67.9	71.9

Science Achievement Goal

By 2024-25, Tennessee will achieve a 50 percent reduction in the number

of students not meeting the *on track* or *mastered* level on the state's annual assessment.[35]

HS Science										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
All students	48.9	52.1	55.3	58.5	61.7	64.9	68.1	71.3	74.5	77.6
Economically Disadvantaged	32.7	36.9	41.1	45.3	49.5	53.7	57.9	62.1	66.4	70.6
Students with Disabilities	16.2	21.4	26.7	31.9	37.2	42.4	47.6	52.9	58.1	63.3
English Learners	14	19.4	24.8	30.1	35.5	40.9	46.3	51.6	57.0	62.4
African American	27.8	32.3	36.8	41.3	45.9	50.4	54.9	59.4	63.9	68.4
American Indian or Alaska Native	56.1	58.8	61.6	64.3	67.1	69.8	72.6	75.3	78.1	80.8
Asian	69.6	71.5	73.4	75.3	77.2	79.1	81.0	82.9	84.8	86.7
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	62.4	64.8	67.1	69.5	71.8	74.2	76.5	78.9	81.2	83.6
Hispanic or Latino	39	42.8	46.6	50.4	54.3	58.1	61.9	65.7	69.5	73.3
White	56.5	59.2	61.9	64.7	67.4	70.1	72.8	75.5	78.3	81.0

High School Graduation Rate Goal

By 2025, Tennessee will reach a 95 percent, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students. Note: Tennessee does not use extended adjusted cohort graduation rates for accountability purposes. Therefore, no long-term or interim goals are set for extended graduation rates.

Graduation Rate										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
All Students	88.5	89.2	89.9	90.7	91.4	92.1	92.8	93.5	94.3	95.0
Economically Disadvantaged	85.5	86.4	87.3	88.2	89.1	90.0	90.9	91.8	92.8	93.7
Students with Disabilities	71.8	73.6	75.3	77.1	78.9	80.6	82.4	84.1	85.9	87.7

[35] Tennessee is currently updating its science assessment, which will result in a new baseline and review/revision of interim targets.

English Learners	75.6	77.1	78.7	80.2	81.7	83.2	84.8	86.3	87.8	89.3
African American	82.3	83.4	84.5	85.6	86.7	87.8	88.9	90.0	91.2	92.3
American Indian or Alaska Native	86.5	87.3	88.2	89.0	89.9	90.7	91.6	92.4	93.3	94.1
Asian or Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	92.9	93.3	93.8	94.2	94.7	95.1	95.6	96.0	96.5	96.9
Hispanic or Latino	83.7	84.7	85.7	86.8	87.8	88.8	89.8	90.8	91.9	92.9
White	91.3	91.8	92.4	92.9	93.5	94.0	94.6	95.1	95.7	96.2

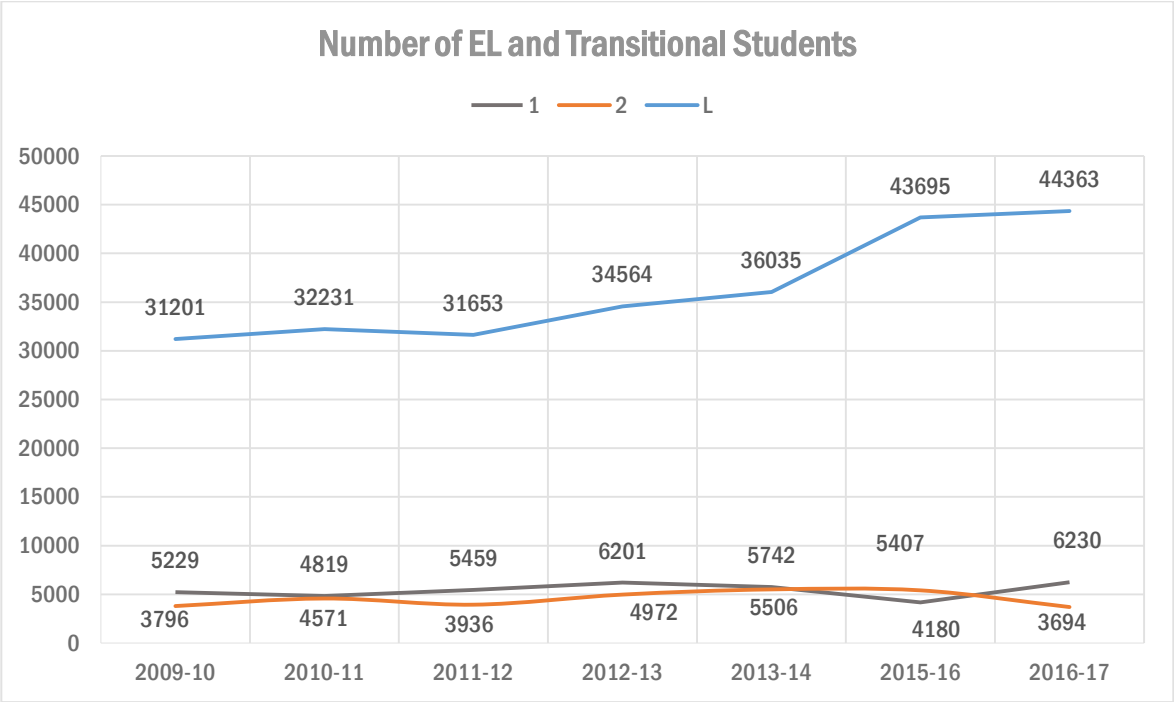
Progress in Attaining English Language Proficiency Goal

At this time, the department proposes that, by 2024-25, 75 percent of English learners will meet the appropriate growth standard on WIDA ACCESS. In order to meet our goal for 2024-25, Tennessee must demonstrate an annual increase of 2.37 percentage points in terms of students meeting the average growth standard based on prior English proficiency level.

The WIDA research team has recently notified the department that a new standards setting process will update the cut-scores to attain each performance level on ACCESS. Therefore, it may be necessary to adjust the long-term goal and/or the annual progress towards that goal based on a change to the baseline data resulting from WIDA's most recent standards setting. The department will ensure that our long-term goal remains ambitious after adjusting for WIDA's revised data.

Percent of English Learners Meeting the Growth Standard										
Subgroup	**2015-16 baseline**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
English Learners	51.3	56.0	58.4	60.8	63.2	65.5	67.9	70.3	72.6	75.0

Tennessee is improving results with EL students, as demonstrated in the chart below. The number of EL students in Tennessee has continued to increase over the past five years. In 2015, Tennessee began administering WIDA ACCESS for ELPA to better assess student proficiency in English with an aligned assessment. In the first year, 10 percent of students (3,690 in number) scored proficient on WIDA ACCESS, compared with 14.9 percent (6,168) in 2016. In addition, 47 percent of students met the growth standard on WIDA ACCESS in 2015, compared with 51.3 percent in 2016.



Accountability Framework Elements

Tennessee proposes an accountability framework focused on increasing student achievement for all students and increasing achievement at faster rates for those student groups that are furthest behind.

Tennessee establishes its goals on growth using the current baseline, with plans to revise as necessary due to assessment changes. We believe that all students, schools, and districts have capacity to improve against their current baseline. As a result, our goals set targets to advance proficiency levels at an ambitious rate over the next eight years for all districts and schools. This focus on growth starting from our current performance levels meets schools and districts where they are and creates accountability that is fair but rigorous.

The core elements of the department's accountability framework provides for the following:

- An accountability system requiring, in aggregate, significant growth in student achievement in core subjects and overall improvement in subgroup performance and closing achievement gaps for historically underserved student groups
- An accountability system that recognizes and rewards growth across the full continuum of student achievement (including the highest levels) and not simply focused on moving students to proficiency
- An accountability structure that recognizes the top-performing schools
- An accountability structure that creates meaningful, tailored interventions for the lowest five percent of schools in absolute performance that do not exceed growth expectations across all indicators
- An accountability structure that identifies and creates support for schools with historically underserved subgroups.

Historically Underserved Student Groups

Tennessee is strongly committed to supporting all students, especially those in historically underserved student groups. Tennessee is a largely homogenous state with pockets of districts and schools serving a large, diverse student body. The state's accountability framework is designed to hold as many schools

accountable for subgroup performance as possible while maintaining statistical soundness, reliability, and validity, as well as providing safeguards to ensure student information is protected.

In §1111(c)(2) ESSA requires that statewide accountability systems include the following subgroups of students:

1. economically disadvantaged students;
2. students from major racial and ethnic groups;
3. children with disabilities; and
4. English learners.

Tennessee defines the statutorily required subgroups using the definitions below.

1. The "**economically disadvantaged students"** subgroup includes all students who are directly certified to receive free lunch without the need to complete the household application. Homeless, runaway, and migrant children and children from households that receive benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are deemed "categorically eligible" for free school meals and are directly certified.

2. The "**students from major racial and ethnic groups**" subgroup includes students from **all** racial and ethnic groups (as referenced in the Identification of Focus Schools for Targeted Support and Additional Targeted Support section) **and those** that have been historically underserved in Tennessee. Tennessee defines "major" as those racial and ethnic groups that are the most important from an equity standpoint. Tennessee believes that in order to close achievement gaps and emphasize equity, it is important to focus on these three racial/ethnic groups by placing additional weight on them in our accountability system. Tennessee includes three racial and ethnic groups, out of the six federally-recognized groups, which score the lowest on the state's achievement tests. These are Black, Hispanic, and Native American students.

   For purposes of the state's school accountability framework, the state will use a combined racial and ethnic group that includes students from each of the state's major racial and ethnic groups: Black, Hispanic and Native American students. The reasons for the use of the combined subgroup in the state's school accountability framework appear in the next section.

   For the identification of Targeted Support schools as outlined below, the state will identify schools for targeted support based on the individual performance of all six federally-recognized groups present in Tennessee including Asian, Black, Hawaiian-Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Native American, and White students. In addition to the identification of schools for each of the six federally-recognized groups, the state will identify schools for targeted support based on the performance of the combined BHN student group.

3. The "**children with disabilities"** subgroup, known as students with disabilities, includes students with a federally-recognized disability, including autism; speech or language impairments; deaf-blindness; emotional disturbance; hearing impairments; deafness; intellectual disability; orthopedic impairments; other health impairment; specific learning disabilities; traumatic brain injuries; developmental delay; multiple disabilities; or visual impairments, including blindness.

2. The "**English learners"** subgroup includes all students who are identified based on the state's EL entrance screener and have not achieved the state's exit criteria, as outlined in the Title III,

Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners & Immigrant Students section of this plan. The EL subgroup will also include recently exited EL students for the first four years after they exit.

As described above, Tennessee will hold districts and schools in the state's school accountability framework accountable for four primary subgroups of students: Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN), economically disadvantaged (ED), English learners (EL), and students with disabilities (SWD). Though racial/ethnic student groups have geographic concentrations in Tennessee, these students are present in smaller numbers across nearly all schools in our state, such that they comprise 40 percent of our student population. For purposes of the identification of Targeted Support schools, the state will identify schools for each major and racial ethnic student group described above.

The spirit of the Every Student Succeeds Act, as well as the original and previous reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, has been to underscore the importance of equity and achievement for all students, regardless of background. Tennessee's accountability model uses Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) targets to set goals for schools and districts. To increase confidence of the sample, Tennessee will continue to use 30 as its n-count threshold. This is considered a best practice from a statistical basis to minimalize potential sampling errors.

In order for more students who identify as racial or ethnic minorities to be included in the accountability system, Tennessee uses the combined BHN subgroup for its school accountability framework and **in addition to** the individual racial and ethnic groups in the identification of Targeted Support schools. The aim of grouping Black, Hispanic, and Native American students together for purposes of the state's school accountability framework into a single subgroup is to hold as many schools as possible accountable for the performance of students from historically underserved backgrounds. In 2015, 1,684 schools had 30 or more valid tests in all subjects. Of these schools, 1,405 (83.4 percent) were eligible for a BHN subgroup, while only 1,193 (70.8 percent) were eligible for a Black/African-American-only subgroup; 945 (56.1 percent) were eligible for a Hispanic-only subgroup; and 11 (0.7 percent) were eligible for a Native American-only subgroup.

Of the 1,405 schools eligible for a BHN subgroup, 107 (7.6 percent) were not eligible for any of the individual subgroups (Black, Hispanic, and Native American) alone. Additionally, 212 of these schools (15.1 percent) would be held accountable for Black/African-American students as part of a BHN subgroup but do not have sufficient numbers of students to be eligible for a Black/African-American-only subgroup, while 460 of these schools (32.7 percent) would be held accountable for Hispanic students as part of a BHN subgroup but do not have sufficient numbers of students to be eligible for a Hispanic-only subgroup. It is also worth noting that 1,394 of those 1,405 schools eligible for a BHN subgroup (99.2 percent) would not be eligible for a Native American-only subgroup. In total, more than 43,000 Black, Hispanic, and Native American students would be excluded from subgroup accountability if we did not use the BHN combined racial ethnic subgroup in addition to the individual racial and ethnic groups described above.

To determine if the BHN subgroup was in the best educational interest of Tennessee's students, Tennessee ran the school accountability framework outlined in this plan using the BHN subgroup and then with each racial and ethnic group separately described above. We then used the results to analyze the benefits of the BHN approach, which are summarized below. Based on this analysis, Tennessee determined the continued use of the BHN subgroup as part of its framework for Focus School (Targeted support) identification is in the best interest of Tennessee students. The second column in the table below outlines the actions Tennessee will take to monitor and report on this approach from an equity and student achievement perspective. Through annual monitoring of data trends, Tennessee will review whether each individual subgroup within the major subgroups continues to make progress and that the correlation continues to be strong. If annual data analysis determines that the progress of student groups and/or the correlation weakens, Tennessee will alter its approach and revise its plan based on the best interest of Tennessee students that are the furthest behind.

Benefits of using the BHN group in the School Accountability framework AND in addition to the individual racial groups for Focus school identification	Transparency and Monitoring Measures
More Students Included In Accountability System: As described above, approximately 43,000 students	Reporting: Publicly report data for each racial subgroup separately at an n count of 10 for all indicators
More Schools Held Accountable: More schools included in the accountability system for subgroup performance, which results in more Focus schools	Monitoring: Continuously monitor, analyze, and review individual subgroup improvement to determine if all groups are moving forward and narrowing gaps
Stability: Tennessee began using the BHN subgroup in 2012. Tennessee schools and districts are familiar with and supportive of this approach.	
Track Record of Success: Gaps have narrowed for all individual racial groups on both state tests and NAEP science tests since 2012.	
Strong Relationship between Black, Hispanic, and Native American Achievement: A strong, positive correlation exists between subgroup performance and change in performance at the school-level. These patterns suggest that strategies to improve achievement for one subgroup leads to improvement for others.	
Reduced Error: Tennessee's model reduces the likelihood of random error. Research provides evidence that the more "steps" states include in their accountability system, the more "volatile" data variance becomes and the more likely it is for random error to occur[36]. The use of the combined racial subgroup reduces error due to random chance, such that Tennessee has increased certainty and validity of the model.	

Tennessee began the use of the BHN subgroup under its 2012 waiver, and since this time Tennessee has seen improvements in student performance. The department closely monitored subgroup results over the past few years across multiple metrics and currently has no evidence that the use of the combined racial minority subgroup resulted in adverse consequences for these students. In fact, since the introduction of this subgroup, Tennessee has narrowed or eliminated several achievement gaps, as illustrated below.

Gap Target Results: All Students v. BHN			
A value of "Y" means that the target for a particular gap was met while a value of "N" indicates that the target was not met			
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
3–8 Math	Y	N	Y
3–8 ELA	N	Y	N
Algebra I + II	Y	Y	Y
English II + III	N	Y	Y

[36] Kane, T.J. and Staiger, D.O. *The Promise and Pitfalls of Using Imprecise School Accountability Measures.*.Web.

Gap Target Results: All Students v. BHN			
A value of "Y" means that the target for a particular gap was met while a value of "N" indicates that the target was not met			
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
3–8 Math	Y	N	Y
3–8 ELA	N	Y	N
Algebra I + II	Y	Y	Y
English II + III	N	Y	Y

On our state tests, the achievement gaps between black, Hispanic, and Native American students and their peers narrowed in almost every subject in 2015, the last year for which the state has data. Looking at each group individually (see table below) Tennessee saw improvement in achievement for **each** student group in every subject except

Subgroup Participation and Improvement: State of Tennessee, All Schools				
		Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native American
Participation Rate	3–8 Math	Y	Y	Y
	3–8 Reading Language	Y	Y	Y
	Algebra I + II	Y	Y	Y
	English II + III	Y	Y	Y
Subgroup Improvement	3–8 Math	Improved	Improved	Improved
	3–8 Reading Language	Declined	Declined	Declined
	Algebra I	Improved	Improved	Improved
	Algebra I + II	Improved	Improved	Improved
	Algebra II	Improved	Improved	Improved
	English II	Improved	Improved	Improved
	English II + III	Improved	Improved	Improved
	English III	Improved	Improved	Improved

grade 3–8 reading and language arts, which is where the state also saw declines for all students.

More notably, achievement gaps on NAEP narrowed for Black and Hispanic students. In both grades fourth and eighth grade science the gap in achievement scores between white and African-American students narrowed, and the gap has narrowed between white and Latino students in fourth grade in Tennessee. These gains were the most significant in the nation.

Though racial/ethnic student groups have geographic concentrations in Tennessee, these students are present in smaller numbers across nearly all schools in our state, such that they comprise 40% of our student population. By using the BHN combined subgroup, in addition to the individual racial student groups for Focus school identification, Tennessee ensures the vast majority of schools are held accountable for students from historically underserved racial/ethnic student groups. Tennessee believes this element of our framework is essential to advance equity and close achievement gaps. Further, the BHN subgroup was approved under Tennessee's waiver and demonstrably increases incentives for schools and districts to target the performance of historically underserved subgroups of students, especially when coupled with disaggregated reporting at lower n-count to increase transparency around achievement for individual racial/ethnic groups.

In instances when schools do not meet the minimum required n-size for any one of the four aforementioned subgroups, they will be accountable for student performance in that subgroup in the state's school accountability framework through a combined subgroup, which will include any student who is a member of any one of the four focus subgroups—BHN, ED, EL, and SWD. This combined subgroup

option results in more schools and districts being held accountable specifically for the outcomes of students from historically underserved populations.

For transparency purposes, Tennessee will be reporting at the level of individual racial and ethnic groups and lowering the n-size to 10 for the purposes of reporting. An n-size of 10 ensures that individual student privacy will be protected. All data values associated with n-sizes less than 10 will be suppressed to guard against the identification of individual student level data. In addition to reporting at an n-size of 10, Tennessee also top and bottom codes student data to protect student privacy in instances where nearly all (or none) of the students in a population or subgroup achieve a certain outcome. In accountability, Tennessee uses an n-size of 30 to minimize sampling error since Tennessee includes a metric in most accountability indicators that takes a sampling perspective. Tennessee views the reporting of student data as a representation of the population. Therefore, a lower n count for reporting purposes is statistically sound. The proposed n-sizes were discussed during the input and feedback stages of Tennessee stakeholder engagement process through the working groups, community organizations, and other meetings.

The state report card will include the progress of all subgroups, including each racial/ethnic subgroup, when the above privacy protections and thresholds are met. Data will be disaggregated including progress against subgroup AMO targets. We believe this addresses any concern that the performance of an individual racial or ethnic group could be masked by the performance of another in the aggregated group.

Accountability for English Learners

Tennessee serves students from many languages and many countries. Currently, there are more than 150 languages and more than 100 countries represented in our English learner population. The department sets minimum standards for English as Second Language (ESL) services in Tennessee school districts and works to help ELs fully access all curriculum materials and supports. In addition, the department partners with districts to train general education and ESL teachers to provide accommodations and modifications to ensure the success of English learners.

Students enrolled prior to the beginning of a school year must be screened within 30 calendar days of the start of the school year. Students enrolled during the school year must be screened within 30 calendar days of enrollment. Upon determining that a student is an EL, the student must be scheduled for appropriate ESL services, and those services must begin immediately.

All districts are responsible for serving their English learners and ensuring that they are afforded the same opportunities as non-EL students. Districts may not exclude ELs from any program or extra-curricular activity based on national origin, minority status, or English proficiency.

One significant change under ESSA is the shift of Title III accountability into Title I. Tennessee supports this shift and thus has included English Language Proficiency as an indicator in both school and district accountability frameworks. Additionally, the department has revised the district accountability framework to include the percent of students that have recently exited EL students scoring *on track* or *mastered* on the state English Language Arts. This measure will provide more robust information to the state, districts, and schools about how students who have transitioned from ESL that are progressing towards proficiency in grade-level academic content.

Recently Arrived ELs

TDOE defines recently arrived ELs (RAELs) as English learners who arrived to the U.S. within the last twelve months and are within their first year of ESL services. This group contains refugees, students with limited and interrupted formal education (SLIFEs), immigrants who have recently moved to the U.S., and others who are new to the program. RAELs do not include the preschool and kindergarten students who were born in the U.S. or students who have lived here for most of their lives.

Tennessee proposes utilizing the new flexibility option in ESSA that allows states up to three years before fully including RAELs achievement results on state assessments in accountability. In year one, RAELs would participate in state assessments, and those results would be excluded from accountability. In year two, RAELs will participate in state assessments, and those results will be included *only* in the TVAAS growth metric for accountability. Results for all ELs in year three and beyond would be included in both achievement and growth metrics for accountability.

Based on the input provided by the ESSA working groups for both ELs and accountability, Tennessee will utilize this option because we will be able to better serve all students by demonstrating growth in year two without placing undue pressure on an EL student's first testing experience. Prior to ESSA, Tennessee elected to delay the first testing experience for an RAEL until the second year of attendance in a U.S. school, but those assessment results were immediately included in accountability for achievement. The new option under ESSA affords students the opportunity of up to three years of English language instruction before schools and districts are held accountable for achievement results of RAELs on state assessments. This option provides a phased-in approach to accountability, gives the student more time in ESL instruction prior to testing, and gives teachers more information on student's baseline and growth.

Long-term ELs

TDOE defines long-term ELs (LTELs) as those students finishing their sixth year of ESL instruction without qualifying for exit. All students beginning a seventh year of ESL instruction will be highlighted as LTELs. Tennessee is increasing capacity to serve English learners by adding up to three regional positions and specialists to work directly with schools and districts. Technical assistance for working with this group of ELs will be offered through professional development (PD) beginning in summer 2017 to regional professional learning communities (PLCs). Overall, our goal is to reduce the number of long-term ELs by intervening the first time a student does not meet the growth standard on the ELPA. During the 2017-18 school year, the department will release an implementation guide, which will include research and promising practices. The department will continue to convene stakeholders and external partners to determine state-level support for serving long-term English learners.

Exiting ESL Services

As an EL reaches high levels of English proficiency, the district must determine when they are ready to exit from ESL services. Any exit criteria must ensure that these students have attained a degree of English proficiency that will allow them to access and demonstrate mastery of content standards—without direct ESL support.

Exiting from ESL service is based on a student's proficiency in all areas of language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. WIDA ACCESS scores must support the decision to exit a student. This determination is based on attaining fluent English proficiency on the summative, spring WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment. At a minimum, ELs must obtain both a composite and a literacy score of 5.0 on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs to exit ESL services. The department is currently researching additional exit criteria that may be appropriate and will include this information in the implementation guide. Performance on an academic content assessment is not used in the exit criteria for EL students.

Students scoring fluent English proficient are exited from ESL services but will continue to be monitored academically for a four-year period. Student being monitored during the four transitional years are considered transitional former ELs. As with any student, all ELs and former ELs should receive services to be successful in academic classes. During those four years (T1 – T4), transitional ELs may continue to receive necessary accommodations on state assessments. Students currently receiving ESL services and transitional former ELs are included in the English learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes. After the four-year monitoring period, a student is considered a former EL and is no longer included in the subgroup.

Long-Term Goal for English Language Proficiency

Currently, Tennessee's long-term goal for English learners is that 75 percent of English learners will meet the expected growth standard on WIDA ACCESS based on prior English proficiency level by 2024-25. This goal may be revised based on WIDA's new standard setting, which may impact baseline data. Additionally, the majority of EL students will exit within a six year period from English language development programs. After exit, the ELs will begin the transition period. The field recognizes that it takes the average English learner between five to ten years to reach proficiency comparable to that of native English speaking peers. The earlier the student begins the English language acquisition educational process in his or her career, the sooner he or she may exit from these services.

Tennessee will use the results from WIDA ACCESS for the ELP measure in its accountability framework, focusing on two areas:

1. Percentage of students scoring proficient (exiting) and
2. Percentage of students meeting the growth standard based on prior English proficiency level

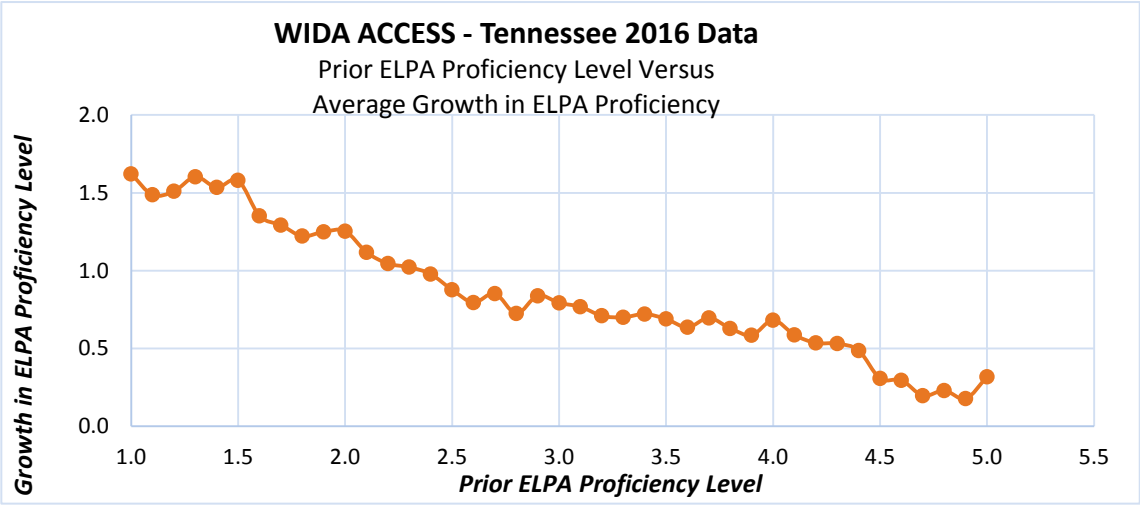
Growth Standard for English Learners

Tennessee is consulting with national partners and experts regarding English learner education in order to finalize our accountability metrics for progress on WIDA ACCESS, which will also be included in the implementation guide. Through our continued research, we have determined that applying a uniform growth standard is not necessarily the best practice in terms of ensuring that all students are on track to exit ESL services within six years. Therefore, we plan to develop and use differentiated growth standards that are dependent on a student's level of English proficiency in the prior year to better define support for students and address stakeholder feedback.

In literature, this concept known as "lower is faster, higher is slower." English language proficiency growth is non-linear as articulated in the research findings:

> *Research on second language learners has shown that language growth varies depending upon the starting year's proficiency level or grade level. Cook, Boals, Wilmes, & Santos (2008), established the following principle when looking at ELL student growth: Lower is faster, higher is slower. Basically, the language growth of students at lower grade levels or proficiency levels is faster than the language growth of students at higher grade levels or proficiency levels. The breadth and depth of academic language students are expected to comprehend and produce increases as they advance in proficiency level. Specifically the language students need to demonstrate in terms of linguistic complexity, forms and conventions, and vocabulary usage is greater and more complex at higher levels of proficiency level. The "lower is faster, higher is slower" concept is also evident as students advance in grade levels.* [37]

On average, students with low levels of proficiency display the highest levels of growth on the ELPA, while students at higher levels of proficiency grow slower. The chart below confirms that student data from Tennessee follows the findings in broader research.



Based on the evidence from peer-reviewed research and Tennessee's own student data, we believe that determining expected growth standards based on prior year proficiency levels will ensure that Tennessee maintains a trajectory for English language acquisition that enables the most students to exit ESL services in five years or less.

[37] WIDA Focus on Growth. Wisconsin Center for Education Research. University of Wisconsin—Madison. (11 March, 2009)

Graduation Rates

Four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

With the cohort graduating in the 2010-11 school year, Tennessee began calculating a four-year adjusted cohort graduation, disaggregated by all subgroups, at the school, district, and state levels. While Tennessee has continued to graduate a high percentage of students, the disaggregation and reporting of graduation rate data by all subgroups highlight gaps in graduation rates of historically underserved student groups. The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years and a summer with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.[38]

From the beginning of ninth grade, students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently "adjusted" by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the ninth grade and the next three years and subtracting any students who transfer out during that same period.

The four-year graduation rate counts a student who graduates with a regular high school diploma within four years and a summer as a high school graduate in his or her original cohort—that is, the cohort with which he or she started ninth grade. For example, a student who enters the ninth grade for the first time in the 2011-12 school year and graduates in three years would be included in the cohort of students expected to graduate in the 2014-15 school year, even though that student would receive his or her diploma in the 2013-14 school year.

The student who graduates in less than four years is included only in the graduation rate calculated for the cohort of students who started ninth grade in 2011-12. Effectively, the student's graduation information is "banked" for a year until his or her cohort graduates in 2014-15.

Any student who graduates in more than four years and a summer is counted as a non-graduate in the four-year graduation rate. Students graduating in more than four years and a summer, are included in the denominator of the four-year graduation rate and are not included in the numerator because the students did not graduate in four years or less with a regular high school diploma. The student who graduates in more than four years and a summer is not removed from the cohort or assigned to a different cohort when calculating the four-year graduation rate.

A student with a disability who does not graduate with a regular high school diploma—or an alternate academic diploma obtained within the time period for which the state ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under § 612(a)(1) of the IDEA—but instead receives special education diploma, certificate of completion, or any other degree or certificate that is not fully aligned with a state's academic content standards will not be counted as a graduate in calculating graduation rate.

While most students graduate within the expected four years and a summer, some students require additional time to earn a diploma. The current analysis and discussion has focused almost solely on the four-year rate that treats all students who have not earned a diploma within four years as non-graduates.[39] The department believes that the vast majority of students can complete the high school diploma within the allotted time of four years and a summer. In the most recent school year, 88.5 percent of students

[38] U.S. Department of Education. High School Graduation Rate. Non-regulatory Guidance. (22 December, 2008). Web.

[39] Everyone Graduates Center at the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. *Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates*. (2016) (pg. 42) Web.

completed their high school diploma within this timeframe. As such, the district and school accountability frameworks include the typical four-year graduation rate to evaluate school and district performance. Extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates will not be included in the state's accountability systems. As stated earlier in the plan, the state will report extended-year adjusted graduation rates.

School Quality and Student Success

In developing Tennessee's new measures for school quality and student success, we balanced numerous priorities. These priorities included ensuring alignment with our strategic plan goals, addressing opportunity and inequities, and highlighting success and areas for growth within and across schools and districts. The majority of stakeholders strongly agreed that multiple measures should be included to represent school quality and student success. They also emphasized that it was equally important that all metrics and each component are easily understood by all stakeholders.

Though there were wide variations in stakeholder perspective on these new measures, most feedback could be categorized into two key concerns: **opportunity to learn** and **readiness for success after graduation**. The metrics described below—*Chronically Out of School* and *Ready Graduate*—represent additional measures of school quality and student success that reflect the priority interests of stakeholders.

Chronically Out of School

The *Chronically Out of School* indicator is intended to measure the amount of class time a student has with his or her teacher of record. Tennessee will use chronic absenteeism as the metric in this indicator in the initial implementation of our accountability framework in 2017-18. Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more school days that a student is enrolled. Students who are absent or suspended out of school will also be included in the metric. Students that serve in school suspension are not included, whereas students suspended out of school are considered absent.

Given the feedback we have received from stakeholders, as well as other data considerations, we are exploring all exclusionary discipline practices, including in-school suspensions, teacher absenteeism metrics, and access to effective teachers to determine whether they are appropriate for inclusion in an expanded *Opportunity to Learn* indicator in future years. However, in the first year, the indicator will be known as *Chronically Out of School* on the school accountability dashboard.

- For the 2017-18 school year the department will use chronic absenteeism, and include days missed due to out-of-school suspension.
- The department will continue to research other metrics to include within a broader "opportunity to learn" metric based on data quality, evidence-base, and stakeholder buy-in. Some metrics under consideration are noted in the transparency metrics in the State Report Card section.

The department will create greater visibility on discipline practices and improve the collection of teacher absenteeism through updated reporting and transparency metrics. After we have collected at least three years of data regarding (1) student days of missed instruction due to in-school suspension, (2) student days of missed instruction due to teacher attendance, and (3) access to effective teachers, we will evaluate the viability of incorporating additional metrics to this indicator after seeking stakeholder input.

Ultimately, there is strong evidence that all of these indicators (student absenteeism, teacher absenteeism, teacher effectiveness, and exclusionary discipline) have a profound influence on student academic outcomes. Student absences reduce academic achievement, increase risk for future truancy, and increase

probability of dropping out of school.[40] Moreover, absences have a larger negative impact on students with low achievement.[41] We believe reducing chronic absenteeism will help improve life outcomes for students in Tennessee. Exclusionary discipline incidents remove students from the classroom or from school. These practices result in students missing significant instruction time. Data show that historically underserved student groups are disproportionately impacted by exclusionary practices.[42] Teacher attendance matters for student achievement, and extensive rigorous research has been conducted showing teacher absences reduce student achievement.[43] When teachers are absent 10 days, the decrease in student achievement is equivalent to the difference between having a brand new teacher and one with two or three years more experience. Negative impacts can be both academic and emotional for students. We know non-academic factors have a critical role in student success. More information can be found in the Multi-Tiered System of Support section in All Means All.

Ready Graduate (for high schools)

The *Ready Graduate* indicator will drive a statewide focus on readiness for postsecondary, military, and the workforce. The department believes that students may demonstrate college, military, and/or career readiness through four pathways.

- The *Ready Graduate* indicator will be calculated as Graduation Rate multiplied by the percent of students:
  - scoring 21 or higher on ACT/SAT equivalent OR
  - completing 4 EPSOs OR
  - completing 2 EPSOs + earning industry certification (in approved CTE program of study, EPSOs may be general education OR included in CTE pathway)
  - completing 2 EPSOs + scoring state-determined designated score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT)
- This metric defines four "checks" for evidence that graduates have demonstrated postsecondary, military, and workforce readiness.

The first pathway reflects the eligibility criteria for our HOPE scholarship and admissions to our university system—which means earning a composite score of 21 on the ACT or equivalent on the SAT. In addition, we analyzed our data to identify additional rigorous criteria for meeting college and/or career readiness.

Based on our 2015 graduating cohort, the department determined that students who completed at least four early post-secondary opportunities had a 50 percent chance of scoring at least a 21 on the ACT. However, less than 17 percent of students in that cohort completed four or more EPSO credits. In fact, less than 40 percent completed even one or more EPSOs. Therefore, this requirement will initially be focused on increasing access to EPSOs. The criteria will be based on student participation in and completion of both the course and any accompanying qualifying exam, as applicable. The department supports a robust offering of EPSOs ranging across the full spectrum of student interests and aspirations – including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual credit/dual enrollment courses.

Over the first three years of the new accountability framework, the department will evaluate moving to a performance-based criteria, which requires that the credit be awarded and/or minimum score earned on

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[40] Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997
[41] Gottfried, 2009
[42] Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). Morris, E. W., & B. L. Perry. (2016). Rausch, M. Karega & R. J. Skiba. (2005).
[43] Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2009). Miller, R. T., Murnane, R. J., & Willett, J. B. (2008).

the qualifying exam. However, we believe that our initial strategic focus must be ensuring that all students are engaged in rigorous coursework that prepares them for post-secondary.

For students who have a specific career focus in mind, our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, culminating in industry certification, is the third readiness pathway. The industry certification pathway requires that the student actually earn the credential that reflects the professional standards of the awarding body. We believe that students who participate in at least two EPSOs (which may be from general education studies or within the CTE program of study) and earn an industry credential have demonstrated evidence of workforce readiness at the completion of high school.

The final check for military readiness includes the completion of two EPSOs and scoring at or above Tennessee's designated score on the ASVAB AFQT. Tennessee will use the next year to conduct a concordance study to ensure that the designated score is rigorous and meaningful for all students. The AFQT is comprised of the following subtests of the ASVAB:

- word knowledge (WK),
- paragraph comprehension (PC),
- arithmetic reasoning (AR),
- mathematics knowledge (MK)

The inclusion of this military readiness option in the "Ready Graduate" indicator is contingent upon the availability the TDOE to collect AFQT performance data for all Tennessee students.

The *Ready Graduate* criteria reflects research that student participation in Dual Enrollment and Advanced Placement programs is positively correlated with higher college GPA and higher college graduation rates.[44] Similar findings have been supported for International Baccalaureate programs[45] regarding increased rates of matriculation and persistence in postsecondary. Thus, this choice for the additional indicator has sufficient evidence of having a positive influence on improved student outcomes.

Additionally, the department will include transparency metrics on participation and completion in EPSOs at the district and school level. We will continue to review data regarding access and success in EPSOs with a plan to review this indicator after three years of data to determine how best to incorporate success within EPSOs into the school and/or district accountability frameworks.

District Accountability Framework

Tennessee's approach to accountability is based on a theory of action that one of the primary roles of the state is to monitor district outcomes (rather than school outcomes), both by evaluating current performance and by providing supports that promote equity, excellence, and continuous improvement. This system is designed to accelerate growth for all students and especially for those who are farthest behind. The department sets district-level targets for state assessments and graduation, measuring overall improvement and achievement gaps for the neediest students. Districts are then expected to manage school performance within the framework provided by the state.

ESSA requires additional indicators of student success and/or school quality in school accountability, Tennessee will introduce new metrics in the district accountability framework to align with the school accountability framework. Tennessee will differentiate all schools annually; the department created a

[44] An, 2012; Speroni, 2011; Hargove, Godin, et. al, 2008
[45] Coca, Johnson, et. al, 2012

framework for school accountability that aligns with our state goals and priorities. Moreover, the school accountability framework builds on the district model, where possible, as well as meets the provisions of new state legislation[46] which currently requires an A–F grade for all schools.

The department has proposed to add metrics that capture the *Chronically Out of School* and *Ready Graduate* indicators in school accountability, as well as make additional methodological changes to align district and school accountability as much as possible. Close alignment of the accountability frameworks avoids conflicting goals between schools and districts, while ensuring coherence of district efforts to improve school outcomes. This alignment is also reflective of stakeholder feedback received from during the plan development process.

The department's theory of action, integrated with the feedback we received around the strengths and weaknesses of district accountability system originally proposed in our 2011 flexibility waiver application, suggests the following principles used to develop our revised district accountability framework:

- The district accountability system should particularly ***identify districts failing to show minimum progress with their students***, such that those districts may receive ***customized support*** and ***additional resources towards improvement***.
- ***All means all.*** Meeting the needs of all students is a priority. If a district is ***failing to make progress*** with its ***lowest achieving students***, it is ***in need of improvement***.
- ***All growth should be recognized.*** Much progress is overlooked when targets are binary
- Absolute ***achievement alone*** is ***not sufficient***. ***All students must be growing***.
- The metrics in school and district accountability should be ***conceptually aligned*** so that schools and district are focusing on the same metrics.
- ***District and school accountability*** should ***work together*** to drive ***continuous improvement*** and ensure a ***focus on priorities*** as defined in strategic plan.
- ***District and school accountability*** should ***align to school improvement efforts***.

Given these principles, Tennessee developed a district accountability system that:

- recognizes the hard work districts do to make incremental gains by awarding partial credit for improving but not meeting targets;
- recognizes districts that greatly exceed their targets or expected growth/performance; and
- includes multiple pathways to *Exemplary*, the highest district performance determination.

Design Overview

Based on these guiding principles, the chart below illustrates an overview of the district accountability framework that includes four steps to determine district performance.

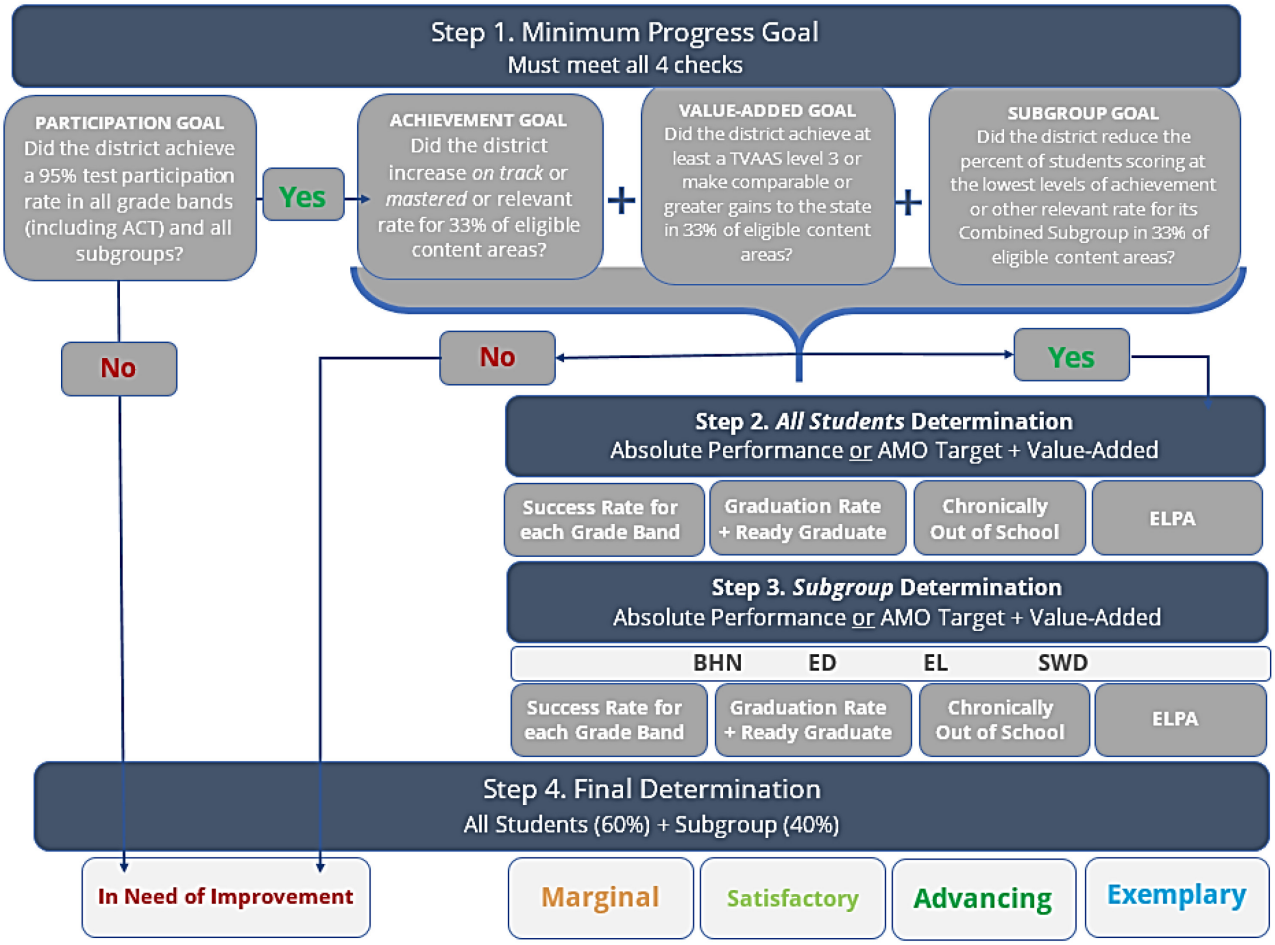
In the first step, districts are evaluated according to a "minimum progress goal" that identifies districts that are not showing even minimal evidence of meaningful student progress. The minimum progress goal affirms the emphasis on continuous improvement for district accountability. In order to advance to the minimum progress goals, districts must first meet a participation rate of 95 percent. Districts that do not meet the participation rate goal move directly to a final designation of *In Need of Improvement*.

Districts must then satisfy requirements for each of the three additional checks of the "minimum progress goal." These checks include:

[46] If state legislation were to change, Tennessee will continue to meaningfully differentiate schools based on the proposed framework but would, however, change letter grades to a different summative rating.

1. Achievement goal: Did the district increase *on track*/*mastered* for 33 percent of eligible areas?
2. Value-added goal: Did the district achieve at least a TVAAS level 3 or make comparable or greater gains as compared to the state's gain in 33 percent of eligible areas?
3. Subgroup goal: Did the district reduce the percent of students scoring at the lowest levels of achievement for its Combined Subgroup in 33 percent of eligible areas?

Districts that do not meet each of these four checks move directly to a final designation of *In Need of Improvement*.



After advancing beyond the minimum progress goal, the model determines an "All Students" status for the district, based on the outcomes of all students. The model also determines a "Subgroup" status based on the outcomes of students within four historically underserved student groups. The district's "final determination" is comprised of the weighted average of the district's performance with all students (60 percent) and all subgroups (40 percent) and results in one of four final determinations: *Marginal, Satisfactory*, *Advancing*, *Exemplary*.

To maintain a focus on historically underserved student groups, district performance will be assessed for the following **student groups**:

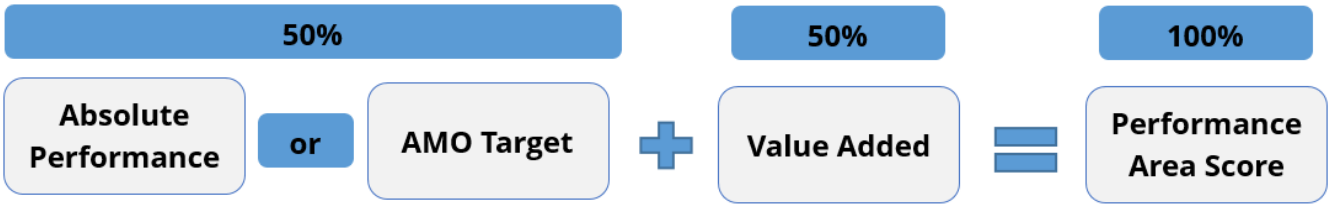
- All students
- Black/Hispanic/Native American students (BHN)
- English learners (EL)
- Students with disabilities (SWD)
- Economically disadvantaged students (ED)
- Combined subgroup (for districts not meeting minimum n-size for any individual subgroup)

District Performance Areas

Districts will be assessed based on the **six performance areas**:

- Grade band success rate: grades 3–5 TCAP data, including math, English language arts, and science
- Grade band success rate: grades 6–8 TCAP data, including math, English language arts, and science
- Grade band success rate: grades 9–12 TCAP EOC data, including math, English language arts, and science, and ACT composite/SAT equivalent
- Graduation rate
- Chronically Out of School
- English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)

Each of the six performance areas will be measured by three pathways: **absolute performance, AMO targets,** and **value-added.** The district will be evaluated based on the better of the first two pathways: absolute performance and AMO targets. The better score will account for 50 percent of the performance pathway, and the value-added score will account for the remaining 50 percent.



Both **absolute performance** and **AMO target** pathways are determined at the cohort-level, meaning they measure student groups, not individual students. For example, we understand that the grade 3–5 success rate will include a new set of students (third grade students) who may not have been included in the prior year's results. In addition, cohort-level results will also include students who may be new to the district. Cohort-measures are important for measuring longitudinal success and relative progress.

Currently, all **AMO targets** are based on a goal of reducing by 50 percent in eight years the percent of students who are not *on track* for state assessments or not meeting the criteria as defined by the performance area. The AMO targets are intended be ambitious, yet achievable. The department will evaluate the methodology for setting AMO targets for all performance areas as we transition to the new accountability framework. The methodology may be updated to ensure that the goals remain ambitious, yet achievable.

The third pathway, **value-added**, is the pathway that focuses on student-level progress. The value-added measures evaluate individual student results on the performance measures and set an expectation for growth based on progress at the state level.

Grade Band Success Rate

The success rate is determined for each grade band and includes math, English language arts, and science. For grades 9–12, the ACT/SAT will also be included. Social studies may be included in future years.

- The absolute performance pathway is evaluated based on the district success rate. The district success rate is equal to the number of students *on track* or *mastered* in each subject divided by the number of valid tests for each subject.

- The AMO target pathway is the target set to reduce the percent of students who are not scoring *on track* or *mastered* in the district.
- The value-added pathway is the TVAAS district composite in each grade band.

Area	Absolute Performance	AMO Target	Value-Added
3–5 Success Rate	{# of students *on track/mastered* in **math**, and **ELA,** and **science**} / {Sum total # of valid tests in each subject/test}	Target to reduce the percent of students who are not scoring *on track/mastered*	TVAAS district composite in each grade band
6–8 Success Rate			
9–12 Success Rate	{# of students *on track/mastered* in **math**, and **ELA,** and **science,** and **21+ on ACT composite** or SAT equivalent} / {Sum total # of valid tests in each subject/test}	Target to reduce the percent of students who are not scoring *on track/mastered* and scoring 21+ on ACT composite or SAT equivalent in the district.	

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate pathways measure graduation rates, as well as the readiness of graduates.

- The absolute performance pathway measures the percent of students in a graduation cohort who graduated within four years and one summer in the district.
- The AMO target pathway is a target to improve the percent of students who graduate within four years and a summer in the district.
- The value-added pathway is a student-level comparison that measures the percent of students who graduate "ready" as defined by the percent of students meeting the ***Ready Graduate*** criteria within the school accountability framework. The growth expectation will be set based on the state-level performance.

Chronically Out of School

The chronically out of school metric accounts for students who are chronically absent and includes out of school suspension. This metric captures the percent of students missing 10 percent or more of school year due to absences or out of school suspensions. This metric may potentially include additional metrics in the future.

- The absolute performance pathway measures the percent of students who are chronically out of school in the district.
- The AMO target is a cohort-level comparison target to reduce the percent of students who are chronically out of school in the district.
- The value-added pathway is a student-level comparison to measure reduction in chronic absenteeism for students who were chronically absent in the prior year, setting a growth expectation based on state-level performance versus the prior year. This pathway is based on research that shows students who are chronically out of school in the prior school year are very likely to be chronically out of school in the current year.

English Language Proficiency

The English Language Proficiency Pathways measure student performance and progress toward exiting EL status, as well as including a focus on the EL growth on WIDA ACCESS. WIDA ACCESS is the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA).

- The absolute performance pathway measures percent of students exiting EL status, weighted by time in ESL services.
- The AMO target is a target to increase the percent of students meeting the growth standard based on prior EL proficiency level.
- The value-added pathway is a student-level metric based on the percent of students who recently exited EL service (T1–T4) scoring *on track* or *mastered* on the TNReady ELA assessment in the current year.

Performance Area	Absolute Performance	AMO Target	Value-Added
Chronically Out of School	Percent of students who are chronically absent in district	Target to reduce the percent of students who are chronically absent in the district (cohort-comparison)	Student-level comparison to measure reduction in chronic absenteeism for specific students who were chronically absent in previous year
Graduation Rate	Percent of students in graduation cohort who graduated within 4 years + 1 summer in district	Target to increase percent of students who graduate in 4 years + 1 summer in district	Student-level metric that measures percent of students meeting *Ready Graduate* criteria
ELPA	Percent of students exiting EL status, weighted by time in ESL services	Target to increase percent of students meeting the growth standard	Student-level measure percent of recently exited EL students scoring *on track/mastered* on TNReady ELA.

Step 1: Minimum Progress Goal

At the minimum progress goal, a district must show some improvement in the following four areas for student performance in grades 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12, with performance in math, ELA, and science aggregated (the success rate) across each grade band:

- Participation Rate Goal as measured by district achieving at least 95 percent participation rate in all grade bands (including ACT) and subgroups
- Overall student achievement goal as measured by change in the percentage of students scoring *on track/mastered*
  - Must show improvement in at least 33 percent of grade bands (i.e. at least one grade band)
- Overall value-added goal as measured by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) across measures
  - Must be at or above state growth expectation (level 3 or higher) for overall TVAAS in at least 33 percent of grade bands (i.e. at least one grade)
- Subgroup improvement goal as measured by reducing the percent of students scoring at the *below* level across measures for the *combined subgroup*, meaning any student included in the BHN, EL, SWD, or ED subgroup and counting a student only once, regardless of if eligible for multiple subgroups
  - Must show reduced percent of *below* students in combined subgroup in at least 33 percent of grade bands (i.e. at least one grade band)

The graphics below show sample heat maps demonstrating a district passing and a district failing the Minimum Progress Goal.

Sample Minimum Progress Goal Heat Map

The heat map below provides an example of how a district that has met the 95 percent participation rate could meet the minimum progress goal.			
Area	**Achievement Goal**	**Value-Added Goal**	**Subgroup Goal**
3–5 Success Rate	Yes	No	No
6–8 Success Rate	Yes	Yes	Yes
9–12 Success Rate	No	Yes	Yes
Measures Met	3	2	2
Eligible Measures	3	3	3
Percent of Measures Met	100.0% ☑	66.7% ☑	66.7% ☑
☑ **PASS – Proceed to Step 2 to determine overall designation**			

The heat map below provides an example of how a district that has met the 95 percent participation rate could fail to meet the minimum progress goal.			
Area	**Achievement Goal**	**Value-Added Goal**	**Subgroup Goal**
3–5 Success Rate	Yes	No	No
6–8 Success Rate	Yes	No	Yes
9–12 Success Rate	No	No	Yes
Measures Met	3	0	2
Eligible Measures	3	3	3
Percent of Measures Met	100.0% ☑	0.0% ⊗	66.7% ☑
⊗ **Fail – Designated as *In Need of Improvement* District**			

Step 2: All Student Status Determination

A score for each of the six areas will be calculated by averaging the better of the district's result on Absolute Performance **or** AMO Target pathways **and** Value-Added pathway. The overall score to determine the All Students status will be based on the weighted average of the six areas.

Six Areas		
3–5 Success Rate	6–8 Success Rate	9–12 Success Rate
Chronically Out of School	K–12 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Graduation Rate

Measured by:

Three Performance Pathways

Absolute Performance	OR	AMO Targets	A	Value-Added

Please see the District Performance Areas section for detailed information on how Absolute Performance, AMO Targets, and Value-Added are defined and calculated for each area. Outcomes for each pathway will result in score points being awarded based on the following scale:

4 = exemplary performance or greatly exceeding targets/expected growth
3 = advancing performance or exceeding targets/expected growth
2 = satisfactory performance or meeting targets/expected growth
1 = marginal performance or not meeting targets/expected growth
0 = lowest performance or regressing/making no progress

A sample of an All Students heat map is depicted below.

Sample All Students Determination Heat Map

Area	Absolute Performance	AMOs	Best Score (Performance or AMOs)	Value-Added	Average Score
3–5 Success Rate	1	4	4	2	3.0
6–8 Success Rate	2	3	3	0	1.5
9–12 Success Rate	1	2	2	3	2.5
Chronically Out of School	2	2	2	0	1.0
Graduation Rate	3	3	3	4	3.5
ELPA	3	1	3	2	2.5
All Students Determination	2.33				
	Advancing				

Step 3: Subgroup Status Determination

An overall score will be factored for each of the four key subgroups by taking better of the district's result on Absolute Performance **or** AMO Target pathways **and** Value-Added pathway. The overall score each subgroup (BHN, ED, EL, and SWD) will be based on the weighted average of the six content areas. Next, each subgroup score will be averaged together to determine the overall score and Subgroup Status.

Six Areas		
3–5 Success Rate	6–8 Success Rate	9–12 Success Rate
Chronically Out of School	K–12 English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA)	Graduation Rate

Measured by:

Three Performance Pathways

Absolute Performance	OR	AMO Targets	Value-Added

Evaluated for each of the four accountability subgroups:

BHN	ED	ELL	SWD

Please see District Performance Areas for detailed information on how Absolute Performance, AMO Targets, and Value-Added are defined and calculated for each area. Outcomes for each pathway will result in points being awarded based on the following scale:

4 = exemplary performance or greatly exceeding targets/expected growth
3 = advancing performance or exceeding targets/expected growth
2 = satisfactory performance or meeting targets/expected growth
1 = marginal performance or not meeting targets/expected growth
0 = lowest performance or regressing/making no progress

An individual heat map will be created for each of the four subgroups similar to the Sample All Students heat map. The final output for each subgroup will be combined to generate the overall subgroup heat map as depicted below.

Sample Subgroup Determination Heat Map

Area	Black/Hispanic/ Native American	Economically Disadvantaged	English Learners	Students with Disabilities
3–5 Success Rate	3	1	3	1
6–8 Success Rate	1	2	3	2
9–12 Success Rate	2	2	2	1
Chronically Out of School	3	2	2	2
Graduation Rate	2	3	2	2
ELPA	1	0	1	1
Subgroup Average	2.00	1.67	2.17	1.50
Subgroup Determination	1.83			

Step 4: Final District Determination

Final district determinations are calculated by using a weighted average of the district's scores on the All Students and Subgroup status, with all students weighted at 60 percent and subgroups at 40 percent. The table below illustrates the final determination for a district based on previous examples.

- Districts that generally exceed expectations for both all student and subgroup performance in given

year would be commended to an *Exemplary* districts list, relieved of some state reporting requirements for that year, and, where possible, granted increased latitude in funding flexibility.

- Districts that sometimes exceed and generally meet expectations in all student and subgroup performance would be recognized as *Advancing* districts and adhere to regular strategic planning and reporting requirements for that year.
- Districts that generally meet expectations in all student and subgroup performance would be deemed *Satisfactory* and adhere to regular strategic planning and reporting requirements for that year.
- Districts that incrementally improve but generally do not meet expectations in all student and subgroup performance would be deemed *Marginal* and be required to submit a detailed analysis of the results along with plans for the coming year to achieve goals, subject to TDOE discussion and approval. This process will be developed by the department during the next twelve months.

Sample Final Determination Heat Map

Pathway	Average	Determination	Overall Average	Final Determination
All Students	2.33	Advancing	2.08	**Advancing**
Subgroup	1.83	Satisfactory		

On average, the district is ***meeting expectations*** when considering both ***all students*** and ***subgroup performance***. Though the district is typically meeting targets, it is sometimes falling short of subgroup targets. This could indicate the need for the district to better support historically underserved students, in order to meet targets for subgroup performance and ultimately change the trajectory of all students.

Building Capacity for Districts In Need of Improvement

If a district fails to meet the minimum progress goal for achievement, growth, subgroups or participation rate, it will be deemed *In Need of Improvement* as its final determination. These districts will receive support from the department for planning and intervention, in order to build capacity of district and school leadership. Districts that are *In Need of Improvement* will be engaged in customized efforts to improve capabilities in those areas key to drive continuous improvement.

First, districts in need of improvement will receive regional support through CORE offices on plan development via data analysts and interventionists. The department is currently enhancing the planning functions in ePlan to give districts data in a more user-friendly, actionable manner. The department is using our data to provide districts information on how to implement strategies to not only address areas of challenge but also to capitalize on areas of promise. Through the annual dissemination of the District Strategies report, districts will now have more tools and data to develop district plans that are aligned both to their needs and the department's strategic plan. The department expects to make updates to ePlan over the course of the next school year with feedback from districts throughout the process.

Districts *In Need of Improvement* will also receive prioritized support in monitoring the fidelity of implementation of their district plans. The CPM regional consultants and program directors, in collaboration with other divisions where appropriate, will monitor district plan implementation and partner with the department's CFO to review district's funding allocations as related to the goals articulated in the plan. As part of the continuous cycle of improvement, CPM will engage with *In Need of Improvement* districts during the plan review process, the consolidated funding application review process for federal funds, and at several intervals throughout the year.

As appropriate, districts *In Need of Improvement* may be required to participate in certain programs or pilot opportunities offered by various TDOE divisions. These may include, but are not limited to, initiatives offered on the following: resource allocation, human capital management, educator development, curriculum development, strategic planning, and evidence-based decision-making. Appropriate supports and requirements will continue to be determined during the implementation process. The overarching goal of these activities is to build the capacity of districts and school leadership to continuously improve schools.

Transparency, Support, and Interventions

In summary, we believe that the most important state function with regard to district performance is to ensure appropriate goal setting, provide public reporting of progress against goals, and support districts as they manage their schools locally. To accomplish this function, the department will follow this basic process for implementing the district accountability framework:

- The state will publish the goals for each district, and for schools within the district.
- The state will report on progress against those goals.
- When districts earn the designation of *Exemplary or Advancing*, the state will continue to support existing plans and provide flexibility where possible to innovate.
- When districts earn the designation of *Satisfactory*, the state will continue to support existing plans and proceed with regular program monitoring.
- When districts earn the designation of *Marginal or In Need of Improvement,* the state will provide differentiated levels of intervention, depending on the district's progress.
  - Districts designated as *Marginal*, making incremental progress, but less than growth targets, will have a lower tier of intervention.
  - Districts that fail to meet the minimum progress goal in achievement, value-added growth, or subgroup performance will have a higher level of intervention, including public identification on the list of districts in need of improvement and increased state engagement and oversight, potentially resulting in more prescriptive supports based on the district needs assessment.
- Regarding subgroup performance expectations specifically:
  - When districts meet expectations for subgroup performance, the state will continue to support them and provide flexibility where possible.
  - When districts fail to meet expectations for subgroup performance, the state will provide differentiated levels of intervention.
    - Districts that are demonstrating incremental progress in subgroup achievement, but are failing to meet expectations for subgroup performance, will have a lower tier of intervention.
    - Districts that fail to meet the minimum progress goal for subgroup improvement as defined in the accountability framework will have a higher level of intervention, including public identification on the list of districts in need of improvement and increased state engagement and oversight, potentially resulting in more prescriptive supports based on the district needs assessment.

School Accountability Framework

ESSA requires states to meaningfully differentiate public schools on an annual basis. To meet this requirement.

The annual differentiation of schools shall include:

- **Proficiency** on annual assessments
- **Growth** measure on annual assessments
- **Graduation** rates
- Consequences for failing to meet **95 percent participation rate** requirement
- Additional indicator of **school quality and student success**

- Progress in achieving **English language proficiency** (ELPA)

In 2016, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law requiring the annual state report card to include an A–F grading system for all schools. This new summative grade will give parents, educators, and stakeholders a summative overview of their schools and a baseline comparison across schools and districts. Through extensive stakeholder feedback, a consensus view emerged that the annual differentiation of schools required by ESSA should be aligned to the state statutory requirement to assign an A–F summative letter grade to all schools. Stakeholders believed that having two systems would be confusing and would potentially create conflict regarding which goals should take priority. In response to this feedback, beginning with data from 2017-18 school year, every school will earn a summative A–F letter grade that is aligned to the Tennessee school accountability framework under ESSA.

In 2018, however, the Tennessee General Assembly passed additional legislation that prohibits the use of 2017-18 state testing data to be utilized in assigning letter grades to schools. The department has revised its plan for school accountability to instead use numeric averages for each indicator and not provide an overall designation with the exception of Reward, Priority, and Focus schools. The department believes this plan continues to meet the intent of both state and federal law, while also prioritizing the robust feedback from stakeholders during the ESSA development process.

In partnership with educators and community members, Tennessee developed a school accountability framework that encompasses the following goals and purposes, meeting both federal and state requirements:

- **Annual differentiation** of all schools (ESSA)
- Identification of **comprehensive** and **targeted support** schools (ESSA)
  - **Comprehensive or Priority schools:** Those among lowest five percent of performance for all schools (encompassing Title I), schools with graduation rates below 67 percent, and Focus schools that are consistently underperforming
  - **Targeted or Focus schools:** Schools with underperforming subgroups *each year*

This proposal for school accountability incorporates feedback from multiple stakeholder groups, beginning with the state's directors of schools (superintendents). The model includes elements from the current school framework such as the historical methodology for Priority (comprehensive support) school identification, with the addition of a safe harbor based on TVAAS results exceeding the state growth standard and participation rates meeting or exceeding 95 percent requirement for each year. In addition, the school accountability framework continues a statewide focus on performance for all students and subgroup performance across all indicators.

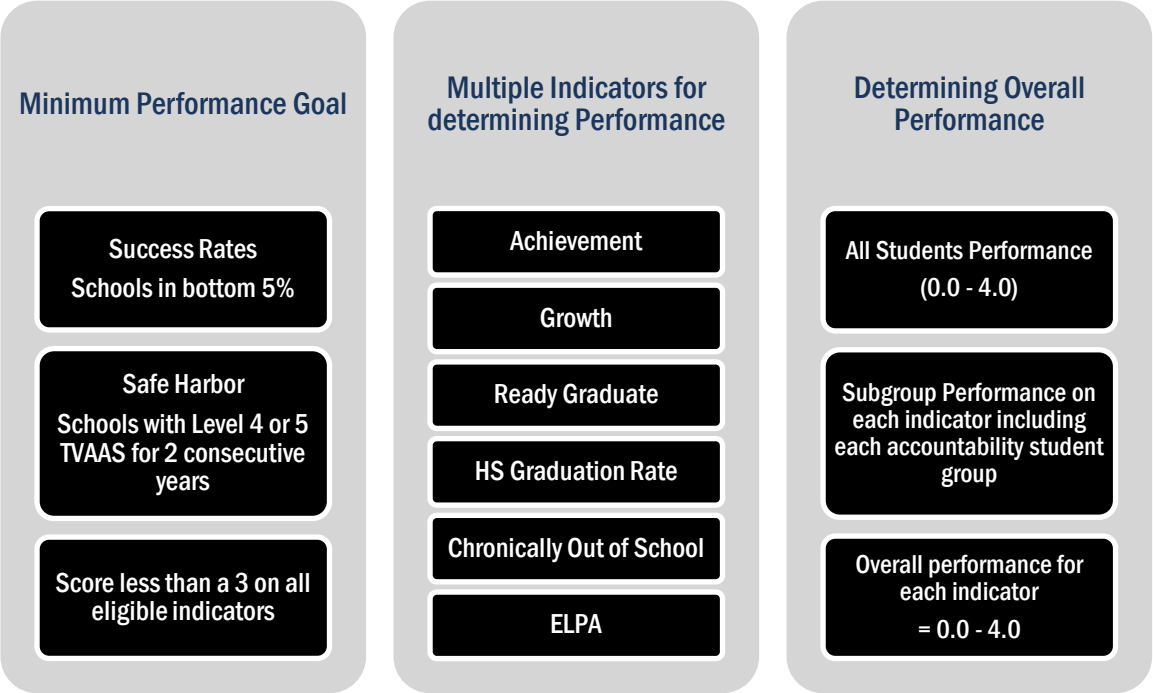
The following principles undergird the design of school accountability framework:

- **Poverty is not Destiny:** All schools should be able to achieve Reward Status if high performing (and meeting growth expectations) or if making extraordinary achievement gains for all students.
- **All Means All:** Each indicator should be graded by subgroup and subgroup performance should have a significant impact on any overall school designation.
- **All Growth Matters:** Each indicator should have multiple levels of performance that differentiate and reward a school's progress (both achievement and TVAAS). High achievement alone, in the absence of expected growth, will not earn greatest reward.
- **Alignment:** Model should allow for weighting of indicators according to state goals and priorities, as well addressing ESSA annual school identification requirements.
- **Transparency:** Each school should receive a dashboard with numeric results for each indicator (e.g., achievement, growth, additional Indicator) that show how the school is performing overall.

Design Overview

The school accountability framework follows a similar logic as that of district accountability, with a "minimum goal" applied to all schools to identify schools needing comprehensive support.

The *Minimum Performance Goal* determines those schools that will be eligible for comprehensive support. These schools, will be identified once every three years, but will have the ability to exit on an annual basis by meeting or exceeding exit criteria for comprehensive support schools. In 2018, Tennessee will identify schools eligible for Comprehensive Support based on all applicable indicators and serve all schools meeting the eligibility requirements. Schools eligible based on 2015-16 and 2016-17 data will be labeled as Priority schools. Schools identified based on the inclusion of 2017-18 data will receive Comprehensive Support, but will not be labeled a Priority school. All schools receiving Comprehensive Support will be served by the office of school improvement to meet the intervention requirements outlined in the section below titled, "Improving Our Lowest Performing Schools." In every instance where Tennessee, the SEA, has indicated that a school is "eligible," the SEA, LEA and school will meet the ESEA requirements for CSI and ATSI schools.



Schools eligible for Comprehensive Support will include schools:

- failing to meet both the minimum performance goal by performing in the lowest five percent of schools based on success rate[47] and TVAAS below level 4 or 5 in the most recent **two** consecutive years and scoring less than a 3 on all other eligible indicators (growth, chronically out of school, graduation rate, ready graduate, and/or ELPA); or
- demonstrating a graduation rate below 67 percent; or
- consistently underperforming with the same subgroup (Focus schools) and failing to meet AMO targets for that subgroup over three consecutive years.

[47] The success rate is defined as the combined achievement for English language arts, math, and science based on the percentage of students scoring at *on track* or *mastered* divided by the total number of valid test takers.

The TDOE will report a minimum of 5 percent of Title I schools identified as eligible for Comprehensive Support based on failing the minimum performance goal. As schools earn safe harbor based on two years of exceeding the growth expectation on TVAAS performance, additional schools will be added among those on the "cusp" of the fifth percentile. In order to uniquely identify 5 percent of Title I schools, Tennessee will add additional schools based on being the lowest performing that do not meet the TVAAS safe harbor, nor the threshold for the other indicators. This may result in Tennessee's CSI identification including schools that are above the bottom 5 percent success rate. This means that schools that have success rates at the sixth or seventh percentile, for example, could be identified as comprehensive support schools if they do not meet the TVAAS safe harbor, in order to reach five percent of schools.

Alignment of District and School Accountability	
District Accountability	**School Accountability**
• Minimum Progress Goal identifies *In Need of Improvement* districts not making minimum progress • Districts evaluated on six areas, including English language proficiency for EL students and chronically out of school students • Multiple pathways to demonstrate success for all indicators: 1) absolute performance, 2) Improvement measured by AMOs, and 3) value-added • Ready graduate is value-added pathway within graduation rate • All Students (60%) and Subgroup designation (40%) combined for final determination • Five determinations (*Exemplary, Advancing, Satisfactory, Marginal,* or *In Need of Improvement)*	• Minimum Performance Goal identifies schools with the lowest performance that are not making progress • Schools evaluated on up to five indicators, including English language proficiency for EL students and chronically out of school students • Multiple pathways to demonstrate success for most indicators: 1) absolute performance and 2) Improvement measured by AMOs • Graduation rate included within ready graduate • Each indicator~~s~~ is combined into a weighted average for All Students (60%) and Subgroups (40%) ~~grade~~ for an overall indicator rating

Indicators in School Accountability

The following indicators will be used to determine a school's performance by calculating a numeric average for each measure for all students and overall subgroup performance:

Math and ELA Achievement: Percent of students performing at *on track* or *mastered* at the school-level. As required by ESSA, this metric measures proficiency at the school level. This measures how a school performs on proficiency in math and English language arts in absolute terms or how a school improves from one year to the next. The school is the focus of this indicator since a school's population changes from one year to the next. Regardless of where individual students begin, we expect that the each school improves its proficiency, just as Tennessee aims to improve proficiency at the state-level each year.

- Two pathways:
  - absolute achievement as measured by the percent of students scoring on track or above (Tennessee's proficiency level) or
  - school improvement relative to AMO targets set to increase the percent of students scoring on track at the school-level, regardless of where individual students scored in the prior year
- 30% of total weight for K–8; 23% of total weight for high school
- Math and ELA are equally weighted in the indicator

Science Achievement[48]: Percent of students performing at *on track* or *mastered* at the school-level. As required by ESSA, this metric measures proficiency at the school level. This measures how a school performs on proficiency in science in absolute terms or how a school improves from one year to the next. The school is the focus of this indicator since a school's population changes from one year to the next. Regardless of where individual students begin we expect that the school improve its proficiency, just as we aim to improve proficiency at the state-level each year.
During the 2018-19 school year, Tennessee will administer a non-operational science test, which will not be included in school accountability. For accountability purposes, the weight of the science indicator will be allocated to the math and ELA achievement indicator. During the 2019-20 school year, Tennessee will administer an operational test and will include science in school accountability.

- Two pathways:
  - absolute achievement as measured by the percent of students scoring on track or above (Tennessee's proficiency level) or
  - school improvement relative to AMO targets set to increase the percent of students scoring on track at the school-level, regardless of where individual students scored in the prior year
- 15 percent of total weight for K–8; 7 percent of total weight for high school

Student Growth: The student growth indicator measures an individual student's growth, not whether or not a student is proficient. This indicator considers an individual student's prior achievement and measures growth from one year to the next.

- For all students, Tennessee measures student growth using the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TVAAS measures the impact schools have on their students' academic progress. TVAAS is a powerful tool because it measures how much students *grow* in a year and shines more light on student progress than solely considering their score on an end of year test.
- The Growth indicator for subgroups will measure the percent of students increasing their performance in a given subject, as demonstrated by movement from one achievement level to a higher achievement level. This indicator provides schools credit for moving students from *below* to *approaching*, *approaching* to *on track*, and *on track* to *mastered*.
- 35 percent of total weight for K–8; 25 percent of total weight for high school

Graduation Rate: percent of the adjusted ninth grade cohort that graduates within four years and a summer. Over the past few years, Tennessee has been raising expectations for both students and educators, and the state has seen significant gains in graduation rate as a result. Part of raising expectations is including graduation rate within the accountability framework in two indicators (graduation rate and Ready Graduate).

- Two pathways:
  - absolute achievement or
  - school improvement relative to AMO targets set to increase the percent of students graduating on-time
- 5 percent of overall weight for high school

Ready Graduate: percent of high school graduates who demonstrate the necessary skills for postsecondary, military, and workforce readiness by meeting either ACT, EPSO (early postsecondary opportunities), or military criteria
- Two pathways:

[48] For the purposes of federal accountability, science is used as an additional academic indicator for schools serving grades k-8 and as a measure of school quality and student success for high schools.

  - absolute achievement or
  - school improvement relative to AMO targets set to increase the percent of students graduating **on-time and ready**
- 20 percent of overall weight for high school

Chronically Out of School: percent of students who are chronically out of school due to absences or out of school suspensions (missing 10 percent or more of school year)

- Two pathways:
  - absolute achievement (relative to other schools) or
  - performance on AMO targets (reduction in percent of students chronically out of school)
- 10 percent of overall weight

ELPA: progress toward English language proficiency

- Two pathways:
  - Percent of students exiting EL, weighted by initial ELP
  - Percent of students meeting or exceeding the growth standard based on prior English proficiency
- 10 percent of overall weight[49]

Indicator	All Students Metric	Subgroup Metric
Math and ELA Achievement (Progress toward *on track*+)	Absolute proficiency or school-level improvement on proficiency	Absolute proficiency or school-level improvement on proficiency.
Science Achievement (Progress toward *on track*+)	Absolute proficiency or school-level improvement on proficiency	Absolute proficiency or school-level improvement on proficiency.
Growth (Progress toward *approaching*, *on track*, *mastered*)	TVAAS (student level growth measure across achievement continuum)	Percent of students advancing to the next performance level
Graduation Rate	Absolute graduation rates or school-level improvement on graduation rates	Absolute graduation rates or school-level improvement on graduation rates
Ready Graduate	Graduation Rate x [percent of graduates scoring 21+ on ACT or EPSO/Industry Cert Achievement/ASVAB] (Absolute or Targets)	Graduation Rate x percent of graduates scoring 21+ on ACT or EPSO/Industry Cert Achievement/ASVAB] (Absolute or Targets)

[49] For schools that do not meet the n-size of 10 for ELPA, no weighting will be applied to ELPA. Thus, the weighting for Achievement and Growth will increase equally to 50 percent and 40 percent, respectively for K–8 and 35 and 30 percent, respectively for high school.

Indicator	All Students Metric	Subgroup Metric
Chronically Out of School	Chronic Absenteeism and out of school suspension (Absolute or Targets)	Chronic Absenteeism and out of school suspension (Absolute or Targets)
ELPA (based on 10 or more valid tests)	Performance on WIDA ACCESS	Performance on WIDA ACCESS

Rationale for Indicator Weighting

Tennessee engaged stakeholders in extensive feedback loops regarding the weighting of indicators in the school accountability framework. In settling on the proposed weightings, the department was also mindful that ESSA prescribed that academic indicators should receive significantly more weight than non-academic indicators. Tennessee has revised the school accountability indicator weightings to accommodate graduation rate and science as stand-alone indicators. Tennessee strongly believes that this framework provides clarity and consistency for stakeholders, while also allotting substantial weight to each indicator and maintaining much greater weight for achievement in math and English language arts, student growth, graduation rate, and ELPA. This proposed weighting reflects stakeholder feedback, the guiding principles for school accountability, and the priorities of our *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan. Below is what we heard from stakeholders and how this feedback determined how we have revised our plan:

- **The Achievement indicator should not only include absolute proficiency but also school improvement on proficiency.**
  - In consideration of both absolute achievement and AMO pathways, stakeholders agreed that it was reasonable to put slightly more emphasis on Achievement indicator versus the Student Growth indicator. Our accountability framework places a strong emphasis on progress; however, we do believe that school improvement towards proficiency and mastery must be at a level for students to be on a life trajectory to achieve their given goals.

- **The Chronically Out of School indicator should be weighted appropriately as a single metric.**
  - Initially, the framework will only include chronic absenteeism for this indicator, which encompasses out of school suspension. Thus, the weighting of this metric should be limited to prevent undue influence of a single metric, as other indicators reflect multiple content areas or measures.

- **The ELPA indicator should be included for All Students.**
  - Though ELPA is a measure for English Leaners, we must ensure that the importance of ACCESS results is not diluted by only reflecting in subgroup performance. ELPA is an indicator – not a subgroup. The weighting for ELPA should be a result of reduced weighting in the Achievement and Growth indicators, as these are based on state content assessments. For EL students who are "pre-production," ELPA is likely a more meaningful indicator of student academic progress, since low English language proficiency may be a barrier to demonstrating content mastery.

- **The *Ready Graduate* indicator should reflect significant weighting for high schools.**
  - Readiness, as defined by *Ready Graduate* metrics, represents the importance of postsecondary and workforce readiness for high school students. Students who earn a high school diploma must demonstrate the ability to be successful in college and/or compete for a living wage job. Graduation rate alone is not a meaningful measure of differentiation for schools and students. The Ready Graduate indicator also aligns with Tennessee's vision and priorities for all students to earn a postsecondary credential, diploma, or degree. The combined weight of Graduation Rate and Ready Graduate indicators is of substantial weight within Tennessee's system, since the

Ready Graduate indicator also includes four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the calculation.

- **The weighting of All Students and Subgroup should reflect statewide demographic trends.**
  - Students in racial/ethnic subgroups are somewhat concentrated in the state's largest cities, with nearly 40 percent of all students identifying as racial/ethnic groups statewide. However, nearly all schools enroll students representing these groups in smaller proportions. Moreover, over 35 percent of students in Tennessee reside in families that are considered economically disadvantaged, defined as eligible via direct certification. Therefore, the weighting of subgroups for all schools should be set to reflect statewide demographics.

Based on the feedback from stakeholder groups and the rationale articulated above, the final accountability reporting for each school will result in a dashboard summary available on the department's website after SY 2017-18.

Identification of Reward Schools for Special Recognition

Since 2012, Tennessee has recognized schools with the highest performance and progress as Reward schools. Based on the structure of the accountability framework, Reward schools will include those schools with high absolute achievement, as well as lower achieving schools with extraordinary progress in achievement that equates to changing the life trajectory of students. The department will transparently report Reward schools earning the designation for performance and those earning the designation for progress (or both) on an annual basis. Schools eligible for comprehensive, targeted, or additional targeted support are not eligible to be a Reward school.

Identification of Focus Schools for Targeted Support and Additional Targeted Support

In addition to schools eligible for comprehensive support, states must also identify schools for targeted support and improvement and additional targeted support and improvement. In Tennessee, these schools are called "Focus schools." Focus schools are identified in two ways: first if the overall school performance is considered "consistently underperforming" or second if the school's student population includes "consistently underperforming subgroups," as defined by the state.

For the 2018-19 school year, Tennessee will identify schools for additional targeted support. Beginning in 2019-20 school year, Tennessee will identify schools for targeted support and additional targeted support. All schools identified will be labeled as Focus schools.

A "consistently underperforming" school is a school that earns an overall rating of 1.0 or less in the accountability system for meaningful, annual differentiation. As described in the previous section, the school accountability framework is weighted at 40 percent for the performance of students from historically underserved student groups. Based on this weighting, it is nearly impossible for a school earning a 1.0 or less not to be in need of improvement for subgroup performance.

Additionally, a school will be identified as Focus if one or more of its subgroups are a consistently underperforming subgroup. Tennessee defines a **'consistently underperforming' subgroup** as any student group in a school that is performing in the bottom five percent of all schools meeting the minimum n-size of 30 to be held accountable for one or more of the six federally-recognized groups— Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, Hawaiian-Pacific Islander, White, Black/Hispanic/Native American combined (BHN), economically disadvantaged (ED), English learners (EL), and students with disabilities (SWD). Tennessee will review all schools that meet the n-size for any of the major racial and ethnic

subgroups and identify schools with student performance in the bottom 5% for Black or Hispanic or Native American as additional targeted support schools.

Any school can be identified as a Focus school (for additional targeted support) based on the performance of its student groups meeting the definition of a consistently underperforming subgroup. Schools can be identified for one of the federally recognized student groups or for multiple subgroups.

In summary:

- Focus schools are schools identified for targeted support and additional targeted support
- Any school can be identified as a Focus school based on the performance of its subgroup(s)
- Any school earning a 1.0 or less will be identified for targeted support
- Any school (that is not eligible for Comprehensive Support) that performs in the bottom 5 percent for any of the four accountability subgroups will be identified for targeted support
- Any school earning a 1.0 or less and in the bottom 5 percent for any of the four accountability subgroups will be identified for additional targeted support
- Any school that performs in the bottom 5 percent for more than one of the four accountability subgroups, including the six federally-recognized subgroups, will be identified for additional targeted support
- Any school that meets the n-size of 30 for any of the six federally-recognized subgroups and performs in the bottom 5 percent will be identified for ~~additional~~ targeted support

Schools that are eligible for Comprehensive Support will not be eligible for targeted support, nor additional targeted support. A school can be identified for multiple subgroups, and five percent of eligible schools will be identified for each subgroup. Additionally, all schools earning an overall rating of 1.0 or less will be identified as Focus schools. Based on analysis of historical data, the vast majority of schools earning an overall rating of 1.0 or less would be identified as a Focus school based on low subgroup performance. But, for those schools who do not meet criteria based on the subgroup pathway, the department recognizes that the marginal performance of that school also requires targeted support. Our stakeholder feedback also indicated the need to ensure all schools earning a letter grade of D would receive increased engagement and support from the department. Designating these schools as Focus will satisfy stakeholder concerns. We estimate that approximately 13–14 percent of schools will be identified as Focus schools and receive targeted support from the district and state resources.

Sample High School Dashboard for Focus School determinations

	Achievement Grade (35%)	Growth Grade (30%)	Graduation Rate (5%)	Ready Graduate Grade (20%)	Chronically Out of School Grade (10%)	Weighted Average
BHN	0 Points	1 Point	0 Points	0 Points	2 Points	**.50**
Black	0 Points	1 Point	0 Points	0 Points	2 Points	**.50**
Hispanic	–	–	–	–	–	**–**
Native American	–	–	–	–	–	**–**
ED	0 Points	1 Point	0 Points	0 Points	1 Point	**.40**
EL	–	–	–	–	–	**–**

SWD	1 Point	1 Point	–	–	3 Points	**1.27**
Asian	4 Points	3 Points	4 Points	4 Points	2 Points	**3.5**
Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	**-**
White	3 Points	3 Points	3 Points	2 Points	3 Points	**2.8**

Focus schools will be identified annually, and the first identification will occur in 2018. The Focus list will utilize the new methodology and be released following completion of the 2017-18 school year. Once identified, districts must develop and implement school improvement plans describing the supports for Focus schools. This would include strategies and interventions with federal funds, as well as additional state and local resources. The new office of school improvement will support districts and schools identified as Focus through a tiered service model. This model will allow for leadership to better understand data and have the opportunity to partner with external organizations and network with schools demonstrating success in the areas identified.

Exit Criteria for Schools Eligible for Targeted Support and Additional Targeted Support

Schools will exit Focus school status, and not be eligible for targeted support nor additional targeted support, if the school is not identified on the next Focus school list in the following year. A Focus school must make progress annually for each student group for which it is identified to exit Focus status. Should a Focus school remain on the Focus list for the same subgroup for three consecutive years and fail to meet AMO targets for that subgroup for three consecutive years, it will be designated as a Priority school (eligible for comprehensive support) and be subject to the tracks of intervention as described in the School Improvement Continuum.

The department will continue to evaluate exit criteria to determine meaningful indications of progress that warrant removal from this designation.

Improving Our Schools with the Lowest Performing Subgroups

District plans, which are submitted annually, must describe how the district will support its Focus schools. These plans include strategies and interventions supported with federal, state, and local funds. The department will offer timely assistance and support to Focus schools through the state's CORE offices, new office of school improvement, and office of research and strategy. This support will include identification of evidence-based professional development opportunities, robust data analysis, and timely instructional assistance through reading and math consultants. In addition, the consolidated planning and monitoring (CPM) division will work with districts through the monitoring framework to support Focus schools. The ESSA-required resource allocation review for Focus schools will also be part of the consolidated funding application (CFA) within applicable titles. This process will be aligned with that of Priority schools.

Considering the anticipated number of Focus schools (over 200) and variance in demographic make-up, grades served, geographic location and specific need; a service model that adds value to schools and districts must take these myriad of factors into account. We regularly ask teachers to differentiate their

instruction by using student data to plan lessons that cater to individual student needs. Yet too often our policy solutions and interventions are crafted as one size fits all policies that fail to differentiate based on the highly variable data coming from individual schools and districts. Just as teachers need to understand the unique challenges of each student, states and districts must recognize the particular needs of different schools and classrooms. For Focus schools, we aim to drive improvement by elevating partnership and collaboration toward creating a differentiated set of supports.

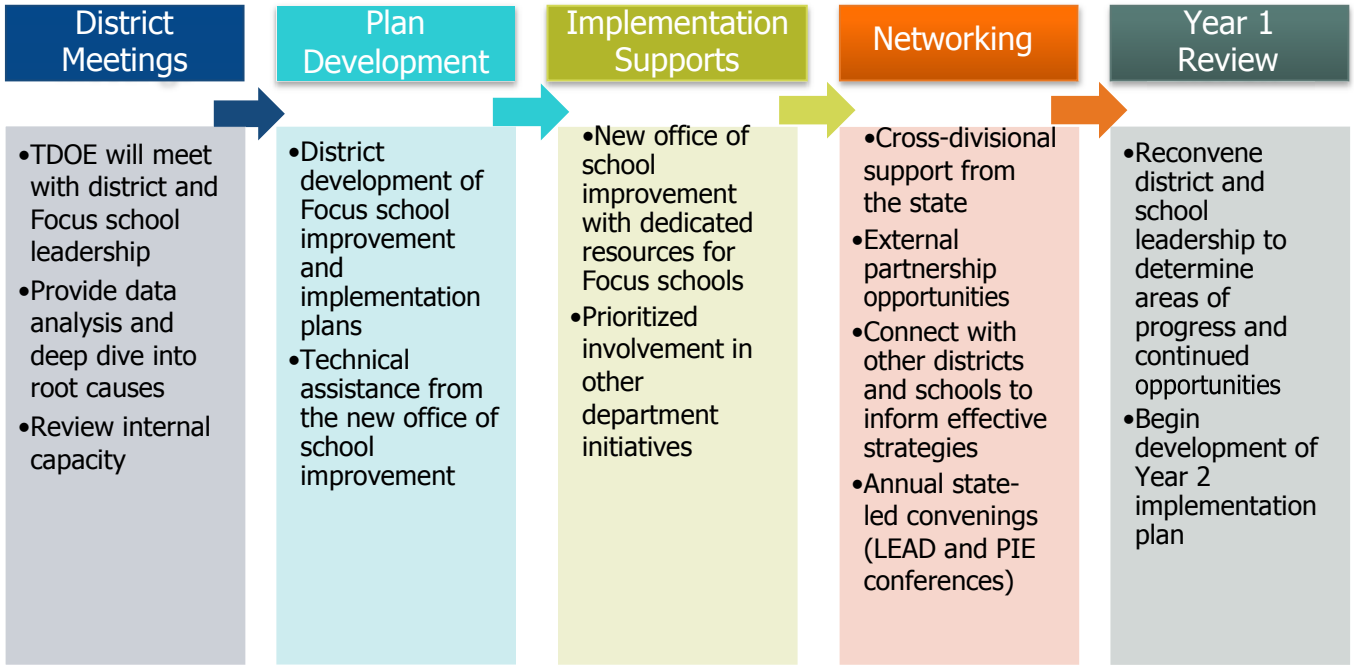
As such, we propose a customizable service model managed by the new office of school improvement with the following components:

- TDOE Resource Guide for Focus Schools
- Needs Assessment and Data Analysis
- Bi-annual Convenings, Communities of Practice, and networking opportunities
- Priority access to trainings, conferences, and other state initiatives
- More prescriptive, evidence-based support, as appropriate
- More intensive support for repeat Focus schools

Service Model

The department's service model for Focus schools is a tiered approach that will allow for Focus schools to access supports currently available at the state-level and leverage best-practices from the field through networking and partnerships. The new office of school improvement will have dedicated staff and resources to serve Focus schools and connect school leaders with the tools needed to make progress.

The graphic below illustrates our approach to service and the steps taken by the department.



Resource Guide

Over the next six months, the CPM division, in collaboration with the new office of school improvement, the office of research and strategy, and other divisions, will develop a resource guide for Focus schools designed to inform districts and schools of key initiatives, services, trainings, and supports offered across the department. We understand that districts and schools rarely have time to scour the department's website or with other divisions within their agency to find what TDOE offers its districts. This catalogue or guide would be designed with Focus schools in mind – organized around key topic areas that would be helpful in addressing needs of specific gaps and challenges, as well as supporting students that are historically disadvantaged. This guide would be made available to district leadership, as well as school leaders, in order to coordinate and align interventions and initiatives between schools and the district. The resource guide would be available for review with district and school representatives in late 2017 and would be a companion aid to the needs assessment, such that districts are able to leverage state initiatives and programs to address identified needs. This resource will be published for districts via the department's website (in an area specifically designated as a Focus School portal) and via ePlan.

Needs Assessment and Data Analysis

As Focus schools are identified, staff from CPM, OSI, data and research, and CORE offices will offer data deep-dives with these schools. Using the comprehensive needs assessment in ePlan, the department will offer sessions where data analysts will assist schools in analyzing their data more deeply, with a focus on identifying root causes and aligning strategic initiatives.

To build capacity within schools and districts, the department will facilitate these data deep-dives with school and district leads—rather than simply providing them with the results of independent analysis. Part of this deep dive will focus on determining the level of capacity within these schools/districts to review, interpret, and draw conclusions from multiple points of data. Based on any identified gaps in capacity, the department may recommend and develop follow-up training sessions to bolster the district's ability to turn data into actionable information toward improving student outcomes.

Once school plans have been developed, Focus schools will receive ongoing assistance from the new Office of School Improvement at least quarterly to review progress toward and barriers to plan implementation. These quarterly school reviews may be conducted through submission of a status update report, conference call, or on-site visit, as determined by the new OSI. The department may consider the following factors in its school review process: how many subgroups are identified as underperforming, complexity of plan, perceived barriers, and other factors (internal and external) which may impact success of plan implementation. The OSI will also engage with other divisions at the department to provide more focused technical assistance within individual districts or regions, based on need.

Networking

Once identified, the department will host Focus school convenings, networking, and mentoring as part of the department's annual LEAD and Partners in Education (PIE) conferences in October and February respectively, as well as new Focus school opportunities. These in-person meetings will provide pertinent information to districts and Focus schools including the following:

- what does the Focus school designation mean,

- how your school was identified (which subgroup(s)),
- what responsibilities schools and districts have,
- what resources are available and opportunities for connecting with partners
- what type and level of oversight the department can provide

These convenings and networking opportunities will also enable representatives at the department to engage directly with Focus schools. As applicable, school improvement and program staff will deliver meaningful technical assistance and monitor progress on school plans at these two different points in the year. Most importantly, these convenings will be a conduit for communities of practice to form between schools with similar challenges in terms of subgroup performance and schools that have demonstrated success. The department recognizes there is deep expertise within districts and schools to innovate solutions to problems of practice involving subgroup performance. The department will structure opportunities for consultancy protocols between schools and districts that allow sharing of best practices and accelerate improvement through collaboration.

Priority Access to Trainings, Conferences, and Other State Initiatives

The department will provide early notification and opportunities for advance registration to participate in state-offered trainings and other initiatives including, but not limited to, instructional leadership series, standards training, and competitive grant opportunities. Where appropriate, Focus schools will be given first-option status for these opportunities. For example, Focus schools and their districts applying for competitive grant opportunities and demonstrating alignment with their subgroup improvement strategies may be awarded "bonus points" in the application process, such that they are prioritized for funding versus non-Focus school applicants. In addition, statewide conferences such as LEAD and PIE will include strands that are targeted to the needs and interests of Focus Schools based on the needs assessment and data analysis.

More Prescriptive Support, As Appropriate

As the department continues to innovate and grow in our services to districts, new initiatives are being developed and delivered on an ongoing basis. Typically, the department may expand these services through program pilots or make these offerings available statewide as a district or school option. For the state's Focus schools, these optional initiatives may become required as deemed appropriate based on the specific needs assessment and root cause analysis. For example, participation in the Read to be Ready instructional coaching network could be required for districts/Focus schools struggling to improve student literacy outcomes. The department will work with districts and schools to secure local buy-in for participation in those state initiatives most aligned with their strategic priorities toward improving subgroup performance.

More Intensive Support for Repeat Focus Schools

With limited resources and capacity at the department and an anticipated 200+ Focus schools across the state, we must determine where state support is most needed. The department's new accountability model under ESSA is intended to shine a light on historically underserved student groups. We anticipate that in many cases, a district having a school identified as a Focus School will be the impetus for change in how certain student groups are served and, as such, many schools will exit Focus status after one year of identification.

However, in instances where schools are identified for a second year for the same subgroup, the department would increase the intensity of support and engage more directly with these schools and districts. This more intensive support may include required quarterly check-in with CORE offices and CPM, identification of risk analysis for monitoring (CPM), more frequent technical assistance from state program offices based on identified area of need.

This more intensive approach would provide districts and schools with layered supports - with the understanding that if the school continues to underperform with the same subgroup for a third year, it will be identified as a school in need of comprehensive support and will be deemed a Priority school in the state's School Improvement Continuum.

Improving Our Lowest Performing Schools

Since 2012, Tennessee has identified its lowest performing five percent of schools and awarded competitive grants to districts and schools to implement plans for turnaround. In addition, we have utilized our school improvement dollars to bolster statewide resources through our regional CORE offices, including data, reading, mathematics, and interventionist positions. With its Race to the Top grant, Tennessee committed to and delivered on creating an intervention for schools in need of a more rigorous intervention, the Achievement School District. In addition, we have also created space for districts to create similar autonomy within their own structures through the development and implementation of Innovation Zones. From these intervention options, we have seen over 20 schools move out of the bottom five percent since 2012. We have also learned both from the successes and struggles in our Priority schools. As we developed our continuum of intervention and support for our lowest performing five percent of schools, much of what we have learned is embedded in our model. First and foremost, we know that improving low-performing schools is challenging work and requires additional capacity, funding, and opportunity to innovate.

We also know districts and schools have unique needs and barriers to implementation. To this end, Tennessee empowers district and school leaders to craft solutions tailored to their local context, guided by evidence-based strategies that impact student achievement. These key levers in school turnaround can be adapted to meet the specific needs of our Priority schools:

- School plan development
- Strong leadership
- Effective instruction
- Student supports

Our guiding principles for school improvement are evident in the framework and processes established to support our lowest performing schools:

- **First, empower districts.**
  - Districts should have an opportunity to improve Priority schools first with state support, if the schools are new to Priority list.
  - The department will establish and communicate clear criteria for the Achievement School District (ASD) eligibility through the School Improvement Continuum.
- **Invest in what works.**
  - Schools that are exceeding growth expectations should be supported to sustain those gains.
  - Evidence-based strategies that support strong leadership, effective instruction, and supportive learning environment (wrap-around student supports) will be the focus of school improvement planning.
- **Students can't wait.**
  - Schools that have been historically underperforming and are not showing adequate growth must have state intervention.
  - Schools with a history of underperformance do not begin with a clean slate and may require intervention within the three years before a new priority list is run in accordance with the school accountability framework.

With ESSA affording more decision-making to both the state and district levels, Tennessee expects to maximize this authority by empowering districts to lead turnaround in its low-performing schools. Tennessee's school improvement continuum and intervention strategies provide meaningful guidance and structure for Priority schools and the districts serving those schools, while also providing districts with key decision-making authority in how they intervene in their schools.

Theory of Action

Tennessee has the unique ability to review the elements of successful school turnaround since 2012 when the state published its first Priority school list. This past year, the department reviewed a subset of schools that have exited the Priority school list over the past five years. Based on this state-specific review and from the review of evidence-based practices across the country, the department has developed a theory of action that will define how we will support, resource, and monitor school improvement plans and subsequent implementation. Tennessee's theory of action is an evidence-based one that will set priorities and boundaries for the state's turnaround efforts.

If Tennessee creates:

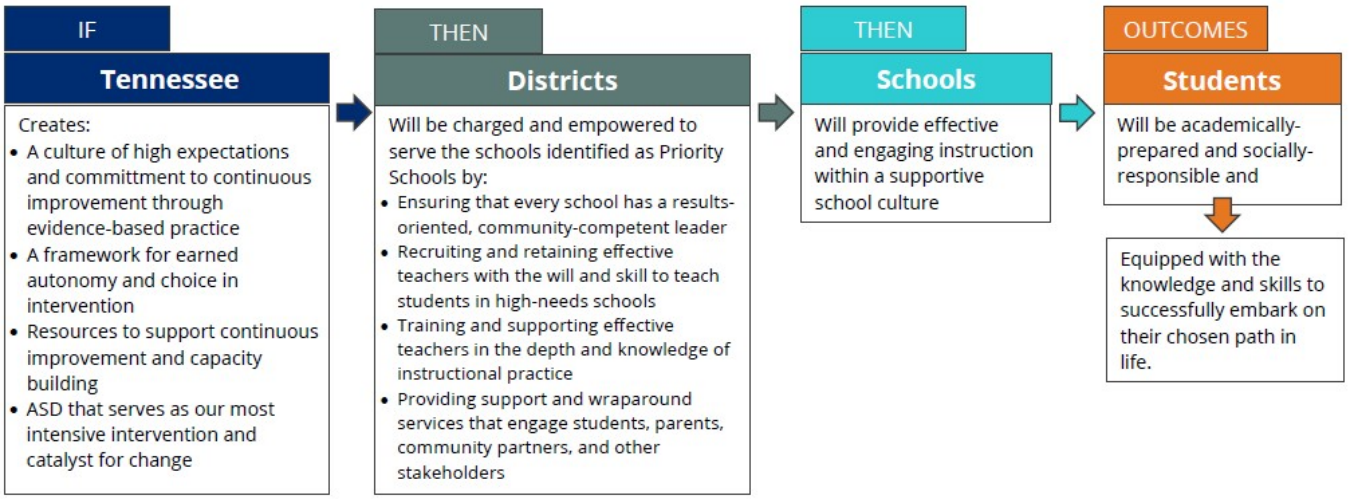
- A culture of high expectations and commitment to continuous improvement through evidence-based practice
- A framework for earned autonomy and choice in intervention
- Resources to support continuous improvement and capacity building
- An Achievement School District that serves as our most intensive intervention and catalyst for change

Then:

- Districts will be charged and empowered to serve the schools identified as Priority schools by:
  - Ensuring that every school has a results-oriented, community-competent leader
  - Recruiting and retaining effective teachers with the will and skill to teach students in high-needs schools
  - Training and supporting effective teachers in the depth and knowledge of instructional practice
  - Providing support and wraparound services that engage students, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders

Then:

- Schools will provide effective and engaging instruction within a supportive culture, resulting in academically-prepared and socially-responsible students who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.



Priority School Interventions

Tennessee will provide support to its Priority schools through continuation of current policies, expansion of processes and projects with demonstrated effectiveness, and new opportunities for innovation. These interventions are part of a continuum comprised of multiple tiers of intervention and support. Our experience has confirmed that no two districts, schools, or communities are alike; and a "one size fits all" model is insufficient. Interventions and supports that are effective in one school may not be effective in another. Thus, approaching our Priority schools work in a tiered model allows us to differentiate the levels of state intervention and support. Within this continuum, Tennessee will capitalize on the increased autonomy to states and districts, under ESSA, and will support its Priority schools through the interventions below:

- **Achievement School District (ASD):** The state-level intervention is a statewide district, which was created to grow the bottom five percent of schools based on success rates to be the most improved schools in the state. Through partnerships with charter school operators and increased autonomy at the school level, the ASD will continue to improve educational opportunities and academic achievement for students in Priority schools.
- **Partnership Model:** The Partnership Model is an option for districts with at least five priority schools. This model represents an opportunity for districts to collaborate with the state—allowing the schools to remain with the district—rather than full state takeover. The Partnership Model is more intensive than an Innovation Zone (iZone) and may be structured as either a Partnership Network or Partnership Zone.
  In a Partnership Network, the department and district provide intensive support, and a jointly appointed advisory board provides transparency over the schools' performance through a set of public goals. Districts retain decision-making authority in consultation with the advisory board.
  In a Partnership Zone, a governing board comprised of state and district stakeholders directs school leaders. The governing board has decision-making authority on key issues like finances, talent, and programming and is charged with oversight of the Priority schools in the iZone.

- **District-led Interventions:** The intent of district-led interventions is to provide districts with flexible funds to support multiple Priority schools with evidence-based strategies and state oversight. One example is the Innovation Zone (iZone) model, which operates as a district within a district. A successful and sustainable iZone is able

to accelerate school turnaround in the state's Priority schools by providing opportunity for innovation and increased autonomy to principals and teachers through the exemption from specific district-level policies and procedures.

- **School-level Grants:** All Priority schools will be eligible for school-level grants to support school improvement and turnaround, funded under § 1003. Districts will apply for grants on behalf of some or all eligible schools. The competitive application process will support the eligible school for a period of three years: one year of planning and two years of implementation. The school plan for implementation will be aligned with the needs assessment and addresses the three focus areas for improvement planning: leadership, effective instruction, and wrap-around supports for students.

School Improvement Continuum

As noted, Tennessee will continue to identify the bottom five percent of schools as Priority schools. Under ESSA, these schools are eligible for comprehensive support. Based on input from stakeholders who voiced the need for consistency, Tennessee will continue to refer to schools eligible for comprehensive support as Priority schools. Tennessee first identified Priority schools in 2012-13, and again in 2014-15. ESSA requires that districts with Priority schools have a period of time not to exceed four years to develop and implement a plan to intervene in its Priority schools. If the intervention is unsuccessful, the state must apply a more rigorous intervention. To address this requirement, Tennessee developed interventions track for schools to be supported through a district-led strategy, state partnership with a district, or by the ASD.

The continuum defines three tracks of intervention for Priority schools based on multiple factors including: (1) previous identification as a Priority school (2) overall TVAAS composite, (3) one-year success rate across all tested subjects, (4) length of time in current intervention, (5) feeder pattern, and (6) graduation rate.

All Priority schools, including ASD schools, will be annually evaluated through the school accountability framework, as described above, and through monitoring and evaluation of the school's implementation of its school improvement plan. Based on the annual evaluation, a school may exit priority status. Any Priority school that is not effectively implementing its school improvement plan and/or not making progress on leading indicators may face additional requirements and potential loss of grant funding.

Alpha Track schools are Priority schools that have been identified on the two most recent Priority Lists, and have earned a composite TVAAS score of 3 or less. These schools are eligible for the state-led intervention by the Achievement School District. Schools in the Alpha track will be reviewed based on feeder pattern, success rank/rate, graduation rate, and other relevant indicators to determine whether Alpha 1 or Alpha 2 is the more appropriate track of intervention. The Commissioner will ultimately determine which schools are on Alpha Track 1 or immediately ASD eligible based on the comprehensive review of all relevant indicators.

Alpha Track 1 schools are the Priority schools that will be immediately begin planning for ASD governance. These schools will begin a planning year for entry into the ASD, and will operate under the ASD beginning in the following school year.

Alpha Track 2 schools are Priority schools meeting the same criteria as Alpha Track 1; however, these schools have an additional year, a transition year, to demonstrate progress and take the steps necessary to implement a new plan within boundaries set by the state in the following school year. Schools will have an opportunity to continue under district-led intervention based on the proof point at the end of the school year. If these schools earn a composite TVAAS of 4 or 5, or a success rate exceeding a specified threshold then the intervention may continue. If a school has earned a

composite TVAAS score of 3 or less, or a success rate below a specified threshold, the school will move to Alpha Track 1 and may begin its planning year with the ASD. Alpha Track 2 schools are evaluated annually for evidence of progress that would with either maintain their status as Alpha Track 2, or elevate them to Alpha Track 1.

During this transition year on Alpha Track 2, the district must implement one of the following evidence-based interventions in the chart below. Each intervention has an associated proof point by which the school will be monitored and evaluated. A school that does not meet its proof point will move to Alpha Track 1 and begin its transition to the ASD. The new office of school improvement, with approval from the Commissioner, will determine whether a school is eligible to continue implementation of evidence-based interventions for one additional year and remain on Alpha Track 2.

Options are offered to districts based on the landscape of schools being served, funding available, and capacity. Alpha schools are served by a district and state partnership. The final determination is based on a proposal to the Commissioner with approval by the Commissioner and the new office of school improvement.

Alpha 2 District Options	Description	Considerations	Proof Point at end of current school year
1. Initiate a district-led charter conversion	District shall partner with an eligible charter operator with a record of effectiveness to operate the school.	Requires approval by local school board.	Submit application according to state charter processes and deadlines. District must execute charter agreement by July of the current school year.[50]
2. Develop transition plan with ASD	District will commit to partnering with ASD to begin transition and plan for conversion in the following school year.	This option is only available to a district that currently has schools served by the ASD or school(s) on Alpha Track 1. If a district has a school in the ASD planning process or in the ASD then this option would be available.	District and ASD will have a formalized agreement by end of current calendar year.
3. Continue current intervention	Submit plan to TDOE for approval of evidence-based interventions.	A school with a current evidence-based intervention in place may continue, pending approval by the TDOE	A school that does not achieve a TVAAS of 4 or 5 overall in current school year will be moved to Alpha Track 1 and begin ASD planning in following year.
4. Create a Partnership Model for zone of schools	Develop Partnership Model with enhanced state oversight. The model may consist of a Zone approach with an independent governing board or a Network approach with an advisory board	The commissioner must offer this option for the district. District must serve five or more schools within the Partnership Model.	Commissioner must initially offer the Partnership Model as a potential option based on community conditions. The district's plan must be approved by the state per the timeline, and the state, district advisory, or governance board must be in place by the end of the current school year.
5. Close School	District elects to close school and send students to higher-achieving school.	This option is only available to districts that have evidence of declining enrollment, proximity of higher performing schools, and availability of transportation. Districts may also propose a reassignment or re-zoning plan for state approval.	Submit a plan to the TDOE by end of calendar year with articulated plan for closing the school and identification of school(s) for those students to attend beginning in the following school year.

[50] See Appendix S

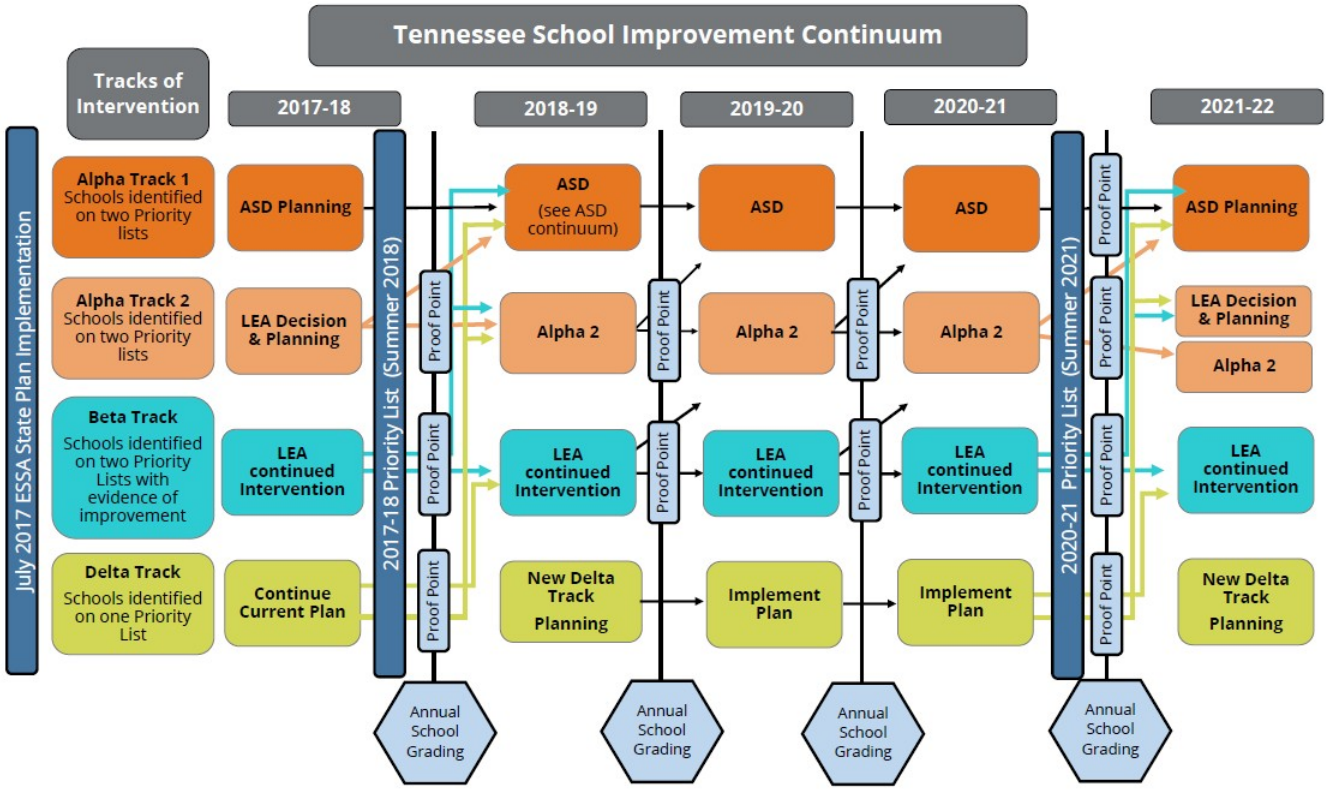
Beta Track schools are Priority schools that have been identified on two most recent Priority lists. However, these schools are not immediately eligible for the ASD and will work in partnership with TDOE to ensure that the plan for intervention is appropriate based on identified need and level of evidence.

Criteria for Beta intervention track includes the following:

- school has been identified on two prior lists; **and**
- earned composite TVAAS of 4 or 5; **or**
- undergone two or fewer years in previous interventions; **or**
- earned a success rate that meets or exceeds designated threshold; **or**
- demonstrates other Commissioner-approved evidence of improvement or progress.

The Beta track will allow districts to continue the effective practices and strategies in these Priority schools, since they are demonstrating a certain level of success and growth. The department expects a continued, positive trajectory for schools implementing Beta intervention.

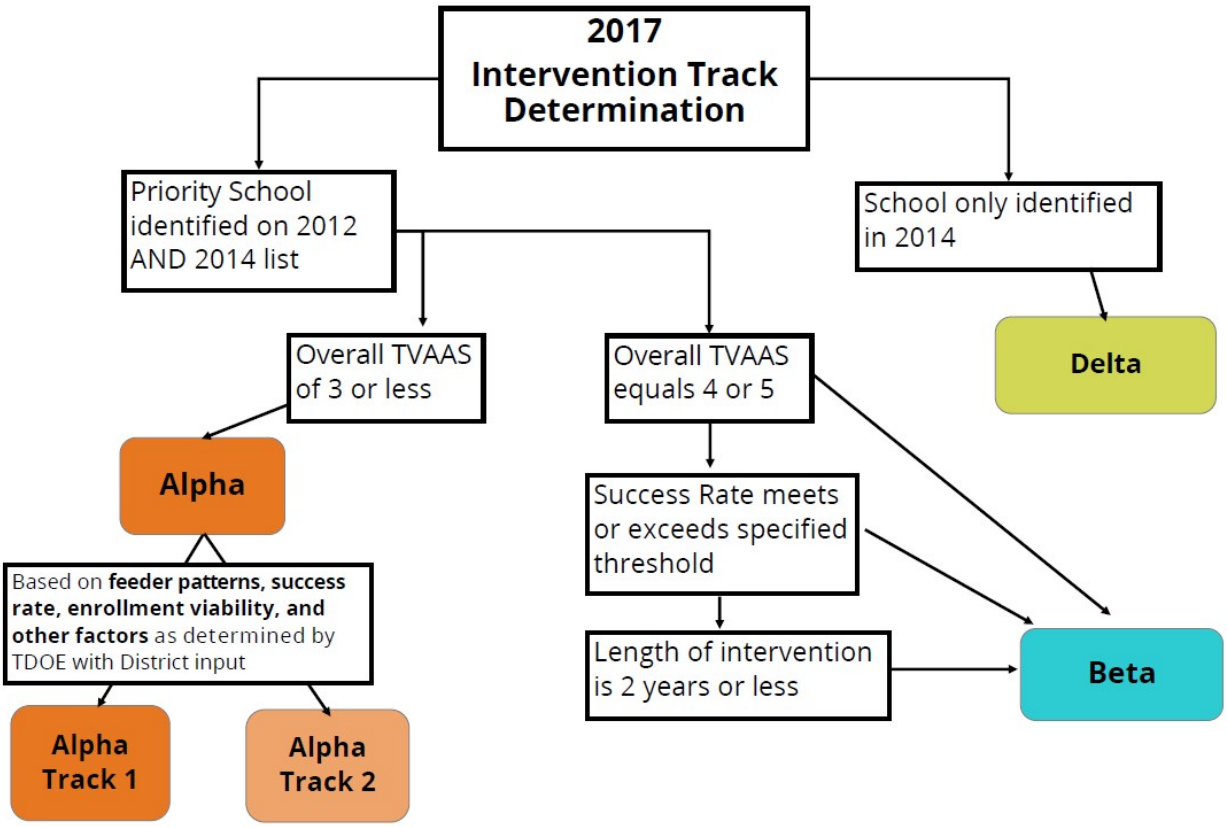
Delta Track schools are Priority schools that have been identified on one Priority list. Schools on the Delta track will undergo a rigorous school improvement planning process, including a readiness review led by TDOE leadership and will implement new, district-led, evidence-based interventions with support from the new office of school improvement. These schools are not immediately eligible for the ASD.



Determining Intervention Tracks in 2017

The School Improvement Continuum begins with the 2017-18 school year, as ESSA implementation

begins July 2017. Current Priority schools will begin on the designated tracks below for intervention. The 2017-18 school year will be a planning year for school improvement with full implementation in the 2018-19 school year. The cycle for intervening in Priority schools is illustrated in the continuum graphic above and represents process which repeats as new Priority lists are generated every three years, or as Priority schools are added via Focus schools failing to improve or high schools that fall below 67 percent graduation rate. This cycle allows for the department to differentiate support to schools —through districts—utilizing the new office of school improvement.



First, the department will identify schools that only appear on the current Priority list, which are schools that were identified only on the 2014-15 list. Those schools will be on the Delta intervention track. Next, the department will review the repeating schools from the two Priority lists (2012 and 2014).

In order to distinguish between Alpha and Beta track schools, the office of accountability, with approval from the Commissioner and the new office of school improvement, will determine what schools meet the required evidence for progress to continue intervention. Repeating schools which earn a TVAAS of 4 or 5 will be placed on the Beta track. Schools with evidence of improvement or a success rate from the preceding year at or above the specified percent, or schools receiving two or fewer years within an intervention will also be placed on the Beta track. Schools on the Alpha track are repeating schools with a TVAAS less than or equal to 3, success rates lower that the defined threshold and/or three or more years of an intervention without significant evidence of progress.

Tennessee will identify schools eligible for Comprehensive Support in the summer of 2018. The 2017-18 Priority list will be based on data from 2015-16, and 2016-17, In addition, any school that does not meet the minimum performance goal in the school accountability framework based on 2017-18 data will also be eligible for Comprehensive Support and be placed on the Delta track of intervention. These schools will not be labeled as Priority schools based on legislation passed in

April 2018 (SB 1623/HB 1981 and SB 578/HB 75), but will be served by the office of school improvement.

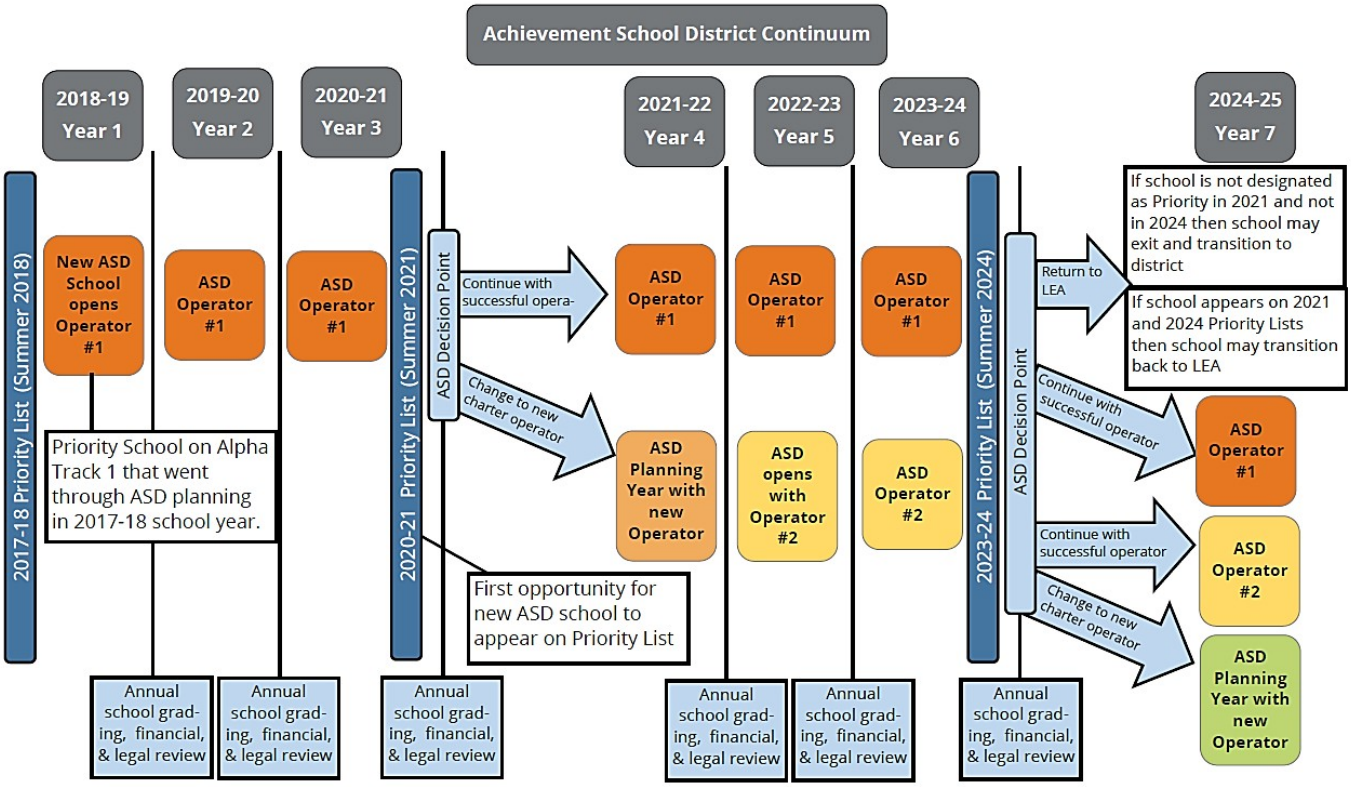
The Priority List in 2020-21, and all subsequent years, will include three years of assessment data. All schools eligible for Comprehensive Support will receive the overall designation of "Priority school."

Achievement School District (ASD)

The Achievement School District is Tennessee's statewide school district that was established by state law in 2010, and serves as our most intensive intervention for Priority schools. Currently, the ASD is in its fourth year of operation and serves 33 schools (31 in Memphis, 2 in Nashville) under 15 charter operators and five directly-managed schools.

ASD Performance Framework

The ASD ensures that schools are meeting the targets necessary to run a quality school in Tennessee through its rigorous performance framework. While a school is in the ASD, it will be reviewed annually based on the state's new A–F school accountability framework along with additional annual financial and operational reviews. If a school in the ASD does not meet or exceed growth expectations (Level 4 or 5 TVAAS growth) by year three, the current operator would be replaced with a new operator after a requisite transition period. School operator replacement could occur up to three times (at years 3, 6, and 9) while a school is in the ASD if results are not meeting growth expectations. No school would remain in the ASD for more than 10 years. If a school does not appear on the Priority school list for two consecutive cycles, the school would begin a transition to back to the district with a plan approved by the commissioner that supports the school's continued growth. If a school has not been served well in the ASD with up to three different school operators and/or met the 10-year point, a transition plan would be put in place with new state-supported, district-led interventions.



ASD Exit Criteria

A Priority school that is removed from the district and placed in the ASD will remain in the ASD until the school is no longer identified as a Priority school for two consecutive cycles beginning with the 2017 priority school list; provided, however, that no school shall remain in the ASD for more than a ten-year period. After a school has demonstrated sufficient student performance and progress that the school is no longer identified as a priority school for two consecutive cycles, the Commissioner, in consultation with the district, will develop and approve a transition plan for the school's return to the district.

The ASD shall remain the chartering authority through the duration of the charter agreement and the school shall remain under the authority of the ASD. Upon expiration of the charter agreement, the school will return to the district and the terms of the charter agreement may be renewed upon submission of a renewal application by the governing body of the charter school to the district. Additionally, Tennessee state law grants authority to the Commissioner to remove a school from the jurisdiction of the ASD at any time (T.C.A. § 49-1-614).

Per state law, a charter agreement must be revoked or denied renewal if the department identifies the charter school as a Priority school, and the school must close in the school year immediately following the year in which it was identified as a Priority school. If an ASD authorized charter school were identified on two consecutive Priority lists, then the charter would be revoked and could be replaced with a new, quality operator.

Exit Criteria for Schools Eligible for Comprehensive Support

Schools will exit by meeting one of the following exit criteria:

- The school is not identified on the next Priority school list.
- The school exceeds the 10th percentile in the state using a one-year success rate for two consecutive years.
- The school earns a level 4 or 5 TVAAS performance in all subject/grade content areas for two consecutive years.
- The school exceeds the 15th percentile in the state using a one-year success rate.
- If identified for consistently underperforming subgroups, schools may exit by meeting AMO targets for that specific subgroup for two consecutive years; and
- If identified for graduation rates below 67 percent, schools may exit by exceeding graduation rate of 67 percent for two consecutive years.

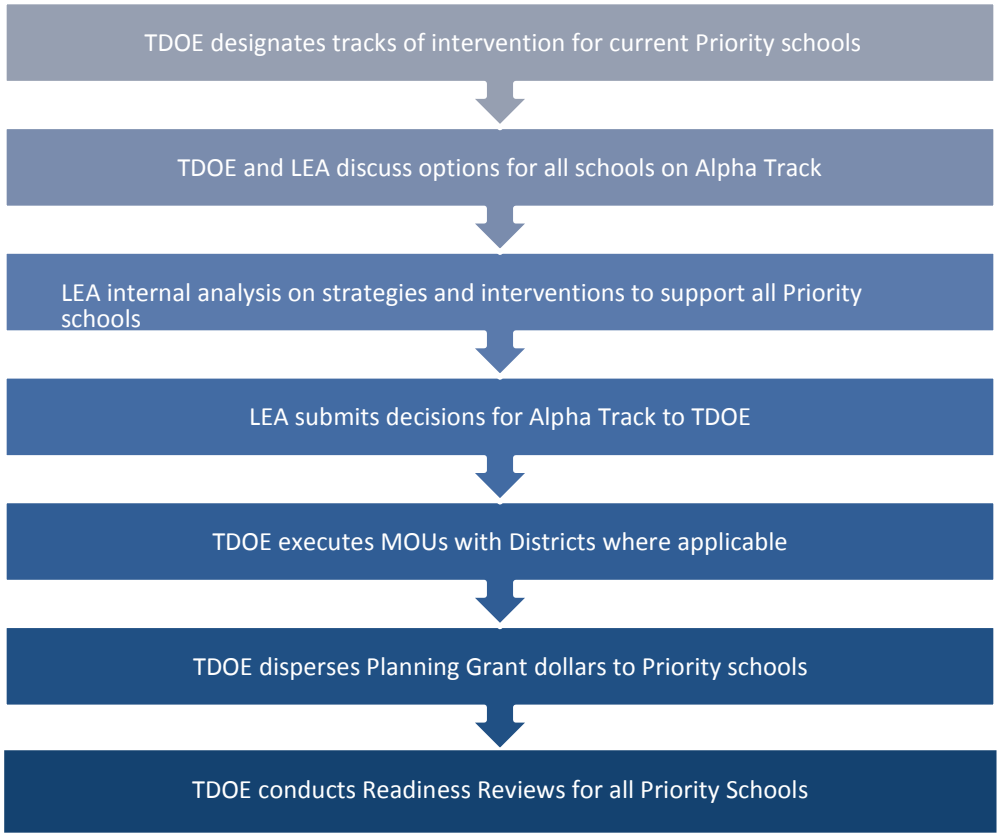
However, schools eligible for comprehensive support that enter Alpha (1 or 2), Beta, or Delta interventions will be required to fulfill the entire length of the intervention:

- **Alpha 1:** six-year minimum requirement for ASD (see ASD section for full exit criteria description).
- **Alpha 2:** one-year to continue currently successful intervention and meeting the TVAAS proof point, or other proof points associated with Alpha 2 intervention choice.
- **Beta:** district-led intervention, with an annual proof point. If a school is on the Beta track, the proof point occurs every year to determine eligibility for the ASD.
- **Delta:** district-led intervention for no more than three years. If a school on the Delta track is identified on the next Priority list, then it would be eligible for more rigorous intervention. No school can continue as a Delta school after another Priority list is run if the school continues to be identified as Priority school. A school on Delta track will either exit or move to Beta or Alpha track.

School Improvement Opportunities & Grants

Tennessee will award school improvement funds to districts both by formula and competitive processes to support its lowest performing schools. Rubrics will be developed to score competitive submissions, ensuring that evidence-based interventions are identified in the areas of leadership, effective instruction, and wrap-around supports for students.

Draft Timeline for 2017-18:



Priority Schools Planning Grants

All Priority schools will receive a year one planning grant. The grant award amount will be equal for all schools, based on total number of Priority schools identified. These planning grants will support Priority schools during the development of school improvement plans, prior to full implementation. We expect these planning funds to be used by districts and schools to place effective leaders, attract, train and support teachers, and identify necessary student supports, in order to ensure full plan implementation in the 2018-19 school year. Further, in partnership with the department and in consultation with the school district and stakeholders, a comprehensive needs assessment will be conducted to identify the resource gaps of each school and inform the comprehensive plan for school improvement.

Currently, Priority schools in Tennessee are concentrated in a small number of districts, and with limited resources, districts will be required to develop plans to serve all Priority schools. The information gleaned from the comprehensive needs assessment will assist districts in determining at which level to serve each Priority school. We expect that some schools who are beginning on a positive trajectory and just need additional time may be best served by district supports. Other schools may need more intensive support via a school-level grant. Districts will be empowered to develop plans for each of its Priority schools, and the department will provide data—both qualitative and quantitative—to inform these decisions.

Priority Schools Implementation Grants

Upon completion of one year of school-level planning, the department will initiate a competitive grant application process for funds to support identified needs in the areas cited below:

- Strong leadership
- Effective instruction
- Student supports

Districts will apply for school improvement funding on behalf of some or all of its schools to implement its school improvement plan informed by the needs assessment of each school. These needs assessments will occur during the 2017-18 school year.

Zone Grants

Districts with five or more Priority schools will be eligible to apply for annual funding for a three- year period in School Improvement funds. These funds will provide a new opportunity for districts to better serve schools at a larger-scale, as a district within a district or through a Partnership model. It is expected that Zones will have decision-making authority of federal, state, and local funds generated by the schools within the Zone. A Zone model is designed to provide greater autonomy and flexibility to schools served within the Zone and remove barriers to success and innovation. Zone grants will be awarded to districts based on the number of schools being served. Allowable uses of funds may include:

- Recruitment and retention of school leaders and educators
- Zone staffing positions
- Evidence-based strategies proposed in the plan and approved by the state

Innovation Zones: A successful district Innovation Zone (iZone) can represent a powerful mechanism to engage in meaningful turnaround of Priority schools. This grant will empower districts to prioritize Priority schools, through the following: continuation of a currently effective iZone or an updated iZone model to address specific challenges identified under previous grant(s).

Partnership Model: Partnership Models, which can include both a Network or Zone approach keep schools within a district's control but provide for heavier state intervention. This model also increases public transparency of school performance by establishing a set of performance goals that are monitored through regular community meetings, thus enhancing the accountability for persistently low-performing schools. This model requires either an independent governing board (Zone approach) or advisory board (Network approach) comprised of stakeholders appointed at the state and local communities. The Partnership Model allows for enhanced funding in a high- accountability environment with stronger state oversight than that of a traditional iZone model.

Achievement School District

Tennessee will continue to utilize the Achievement School District (ASD) as the most intensive

intervention for Priority schools. The ASD will apply on behalf of its schools for applicable school improvement funding. The ASD currently uses a blended model of direct-run and charter operated schools. The department will ensure that there are clear entry and exit criteria for the ASD. Entry into ASD will be determined by the department with a year of planning in partnership with the ASD and the district, in order to best serve the students and families at the school. Our goal is to significantly improve the performance these schools and return schools (after a period of no more than 10 years) to home districts. Schools will be better equipped to serve all students, continue what has worked well, and share best practices.

Resource Allocation Review

Tennessee will commit to the periodic review of resource allocations to ensure sufficient support for school improvement in each district serving a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement and/or those districts serving a significant number of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans, as cited in § 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) of ESSA and § 200.23(a).

To ensure that districts are prioritizing schools identified for comprehensive support, the periodic resource allocation review will be integrated into existing state processes. The department will conduct an initial review of state, local, and federal funds annually. The CPM division will embed the resource allocation review in the consolidated funding application review process. In this process, there are explicit questions with regard to Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, and Title V to address resource needs for schools identified for comprehensive support. In addition, as a requirement in the application for §1003 school improvement dollars, districts will be required to demonstrate their funding rationale, including a requirement for the annual renewal of funds.
During the planning process, the department will provide technical assistance on weighted funding models in districts serving a significant number of schools identified for comprehensive and/or targeted support.

The department will also examine district human capital resources to ensure that all students enrolled in Priority schools have access to effective teachers, specifically those performing at levels 4 or 5 as determined by TVAAS. Emphasis will be placed on Priority schools' students' access to high quality pre-school programs and advanced coursework including advanced placement and dual credit courses and programs of study that result in an industry certification.

School Improvement Support Network

Tennessee's system of performance management for district and school plans will operate through the newly created School Improvement Continuum. The state will provide support to districts with Priority schools through the processes outlined in the continuum. Tennessee commits to making the state's lowest performing schools, and the improvement of these schools, a priority.

The department will create the School Improvement Support Network (SISN) that engages the office of school improvement (OSI), Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE) and consolidated planning and monitoring (CPM) regional consultants to support all Priority schools at varying levels, as well as other supports through divisions within the TDOE. The SISN will work directly with districts and Priority schools on assessing the needs, conducting a readiness review, developing a plan for improvement, and supporting and monitoring of progress.

Additional support will be provided through other divisions of TDOE and communicated to districts and schools through the assigned School Improvement Facilitators. This support will also include potential partnerships with other state agencies and other stakeholder groups. Facilitators will provide differentiated support to include but is not limited to consultation, training, differentiated technical assistance, and professional development, which will be facilitated by the SISN to ensure alignment of need and strategies. These additional services will equip schools to improve practice and will consist of representatives from the following:

- College, Career and Technical Education
- Content and Assessment Design
- Early Childhood
- Safe and Supportive Schools
- Special Populations and Student Support
- Teachers and Leaders
- Other state and local organizations

New Office of School Improvement

The new OSI will be re-envisioned both within the larger organization and in its internal structure to support all schools eligible for Comprehensive Support or eligible for Targeted Support and Additional Targeted Support. A senior member of the department will lead the office of school improvement, which will report directly to the Commissioner, as part of the office of the commissioner. The work of OSI will include Priority school turnaround efforts across the ASD, Zone structures, district-led interventions, as well as Focus school supports. The office will also expand to include four to six school improvement facilitators, with the educational and cultural competencies to support districts and school in turnaround. Each of the facilitators will be assigned a subset of the state's Priority schools based on need, track of intervention, or other factors including demographics and geographic location. Working directly with school leaders, facilitators will be the first and consistent point of contact with the department, to provide differentiated technical assistance to schools.

Two additional positions within the OSI will be added to support Focus schools across the state, in collaboration with regional CORE offices. In addition, the CPM division will increase its capacity to support ELs by adding three regional ESL positions to support Focus schools with under- performing ELs. This structure will enable the department to address the urgency of school improvement, providing a direct line to the SISN and differentiated support that other divisions within the department can provide. In addition to the work of the School Improvement facilitators, the OSI will oversee the allocation of School Improvement funds, competitive applications and budgets. The OSI will monitor districts' and schools' progress in plan implementation and its outcomes. The OSI will provide training specific to school improvement and opportunities for collaboration and sharing of promising practices based on data through multiple convenings of district and school leaders.

Centers of Regional Excellence

Tennessee will expand technical assistance and district-level engagement to ensure successful planning and implementation, especially for large urban districts that serve the majority of Priority schools. The department will increase its support through the CORE regional offices, focusing on the development of district plans primarily in areas of data analysis, comprehensive needs assessment, goal setting, strategy and action step development, and alignment of goals with district needs and state strategic goals.

Consolidated Planning and Monitoring Regional Consultants

The CPM regional consultants will be charged with the responsibility of review and approval of district plans using a standardized process. Using information gleaned from the district plans, these same consultants, in collaboration with the School Improvement facilitators, will engage with Priority schools in the development of a comprehensive plan for improvement that is aligned with the district plan.

School Plan Development

The School Improvement Support Network—as part of the redesigned office of school improvement—will align its efforts with the department's strategic plan priorities to enable districts to develop a comprehensive plan for improvement for all Priority schools.

The school plan development process will consist of the following:

1. **SISN:** The SISN will partner with an external entity to conduct a multi-day training on a needs assessment and root cause analysis to identify and analyze major areas of deficit. Training will be provided to TDOE personnel including CORE data analysts, CPM regional consultants, as well as impacted district teams.
2. **Needs Assessment:** All Priority schools—regardless of intervention track—will complete a comprehensive needs assessment, including a root cause analysis, with the identification of major areas of deficit with the greatest potential to impact change within the three focus areas: strong leadership, effective instruction, including equitable access to effective teachers, and framework for student support. The needs assessment will inform each school's improvement plan. Plans will be developed in partnership with stakeholders with early involvement and input from school leaders, teachers, and parents.
3. **School Readiness Review:** All districts serving Priority schools will receive on-site school visits. These on-site visits will include exploratory conversations with school personnel and other stakeholders, resulting in a summative report prepared for districts with heat maps of all Priority schools identifying key deficit areas. This report will encompass schools' needs

assessments, root cause analyses, and address the levels of readiness for turnaround. We expect that with limited funding for school-level grants, districts may only apply on behalf of a subset of schools (serving remaining Priority schools with a broad, "umbrella" model). The summative reports are to provide districts with a more objective report to inform and to assist in this decision-making process.

State Grant Application Process for School Improvement

The state application process for district's serving schools eligible for Comprehensive Support will focus on the three key levers detailed below, citation of evidence-based strategies, demonstration of capacity and commitment, and clear planning for implementation by the district. Using the evidence-based framework provided below, the state will require districts to identify and implement strategies and interventions within the appropriate levels of evidence addressing the state's three key levers of strong leadership, effective instruction, and student supports. The department believes that providing districts with an evidence-based framework and then requiring districts to identify the appropriate, district-specific strategies and actions aligns with the spirit of ESSA and genuinely allows districts to turn around its schools with district-led models before more intensive interventions are enacted.

To facilitate this process the department will develop clear guidance, materials, and training pertinent to the evidence-based required under ESSA for all districts serving Priority schools. This will include an examination of the overall body of evidence relevant to the three key levers, as well as creating resources for districts and schools use in selection of evidence-based interventions.
Districts and schools will be directed to the information readily available in clearinghouse, including but not limited to the What Works Clearinghouse, Results First Clearinghouse database, and Best Evidence Encyclopedia.

Through the development of a robust needs assessment and root-cause analysis described in previous sections of this plan, districts will engage with stakeholders including school leaders, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders. This involvement will provide a valuable perspective to allow districts to weigh the evidence within the local context and its capacity to implement the intervention. Considerations for context and capacity include alignment with school setting, available funding, staff resources and skills and support available. While the evidence of a particular intervention may be well-researched, it may not be well suited to achieve the desired outcomes in the given school.

Evidence-based Interventions

Tennessee has identified three evidence-based levers that will be foundational in the comprehensive plans for improvement that districts and Priority schools will develop.

- **Strong leadership:** leadership development, training, and support
- **Effective instruction:** selecting, retaining, and supporting highly effective teachers and the development of high quality evidence-based curriculum and materials
- **Student supports:** strong family engagement, safe and secure school and learning environment, student physical and mental health, and community support.

Tennessee will require a strong evidence-base within district applications and school plans. Districts will put forward an integrated approach, with a coherent theory of action, versus a series of disconnected activities. Instead of prioritizing specific evidence-based activities, the department is building capacity through school plan development and broadening the use of evidence-based strategies that align with and apply to the needs of a given school. The department will continue to review and evaluate the best partners for the state and districts to utilize for support, technical

assistance, and best practices.

This approach allows districts to utilize different types of studies, as outlined in the ESSA evidence- use provisions, and does not require the state to create an "approved program lists" that may not align or benefit a given school. It is our belief that by empowering districts to actively engage in the decision-making process and greater autonomy in selection, development, and implementation of evidence-based practices then students, schools, and districts will see results.

As required under ESSA, interventions that are supported with Title I funds will meet one of the top three tiers of evidence: strong, moderate, or promising. Districts may propose other interventions from the fourth tier of evidence within turnaround plans, but these interventions must be funded outside Title I. In order to meet Tier 4 evidence, a rationale based on high-quality research, results of an existing evaluation, and applicability to the given school. It is the state's belief that the fourth level of evidence fosters innovation and furthers opportunity for action research at the school and district level.

TN Support for Evidence-Based § 8101 (23)	**Tier I Strong**	**Tier 2 Moderate**	**Tier 3 Promising**	**Tier 4** (not funded through § 1003 but part of school turnaround plan)
Type of research	strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well- implemented experimental study	moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study	promising evidence from at least one well designed and well- implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias	demonstrates a rationale based on high quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes

TN Support for Evidence-Based § 8101 (23)	Tier I Strong	Tier 2 Moderate	Tier 3 Promising	Tier 4 (not funded through § 1003 but part of school turnaround plan)
Source	Studies available through clearinghouse—including What Works Clearinghouse, Results First Clearinghouse database, Best Evidence Encyclopedia			Promising practice from state, within district, or other models
Research findings and relevance	District application for school-level grants must cite research, demonstrate the validity of findings from research, and explain the applicability and relevance to meet the needs of their school(s) and students.			District application must demonstrate results and evaluations from strategies without research study evidence, and articulate when/how of implementation and expected results for school(s) and student outcomes.
District implementation	Application will articulate the steps of implementation. District will examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention and determine success.			Application will articulate the steps of implementation. District will examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention through action research
State Rubric	Offices of CPM and school improvement will review and evaluate the application, school plan, and implementation, as well as the applicability based on root-cause analysis. TDOE will give competitive priority to schools demonstrating clear applicability to valid research from Tier 1, 2, or 3 for implementation.			
State Monitoring and TA	Review and evaluate outcomes for students within district and/or school implementing strategy.			Review and evaluate action research and outcomes for students within district and/or school
	TDOE will partner with Regional Education Laboratories, the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center, and Tennessee Education Research Alliance. TERA will support state efforts to build and improve research-base, especially in Tier 4.			

Tennessee is invested in working with research partners with demonstrative success and knowledge in the field. The department will partner with the Regional Education Laboratories (RELs), the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center, and Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA). These partners can provide technical support and assistance for expanding Tennessee research base and support evidence-based practices at the district level.

As part of the quarterly monitoring of school plans described in this document, the department will examine school level leading and lagging indicator data specific to the intervention. In addition, school improvement facilitators will engage in constructive dialogue with teachers and leadership to determine impressions of the impact of interventions on student outcomes and the root cause of successes and challenges. If student data does not evince positive outcomes after a reasonable time, the district will be advised to discontinue the intervention.

Timeline

Tennessee is submitting its updated list of Priority schools for implementation beginning in the 2017-18 school year and will share a timeline with districts that delineates deadlines and process for technical assistance in the fall of 2017.

Review & Approval of Plans

Tennessee will ensure that each district can demonstrate how it will prioritize its support to schools identified for Priority and how it will provide adequate resources and related support to each school.

The needs assessment, including a root cause analysis, will identify major areas of deficit with the greatest potential to impact change within the state's three areas of focus—strong leadership, effective instruction, and non-academic student support. The TDOE will develop and provide training to each district and school leadership team on identification of needs and plan development that includes appropriately-matched, evidence-based interventions.

Collection & Use of Data

Strategy	Timeline
In tested grades, 3–8, the department will review formative assessment data in reading/ELA, mathematics, and science or social studies. In grades 9–12, English I, II, II, IV, Algebra I and II, and Biology.	Baseline (Sept.); mid-year (Jan.) and June
To continually assess the school climate, leading indicator school culture data will be collected. This collection will include student attendance, chronic absenteeism, teacher attendance, student mobility, student suspensions and expulsions, and school climate survey	Baseline (Sept.); mid-year (Jan.) and June
Annual educator survey	Annual collection

Oversight & Monitoring

Approve: Using the completed needs assessment and plan as a guide, the department will conduct a readiness review of each school that will result in a report provided to districts identifying key areas of deficit. The TDOE will collaborate with the district to ensure that deficit areas are adequately addressed in the school plans and budget of federal grant dollars.

Monitor: The office of school improvement (OSI) within TDOE works within a cycle of continuous improvement; as a result, the OSI will monitor and annually review each district's implementation of the comprehensive support and improvement plan through a series of three milestone reviews. If a school is not meeting expected performance or unable to implement with fidelity, the state may take further action.

- The first milestone is a desktop review occurring early in the school year to collect baseline academic assessment data and non-academic leading indicator data pertinent to school climate. This review will also address any additional supports or resources which may be needed to implement the approved plan with fidelity.
- A second milestone will consist of on-site visits to districts and Priority schools to examine progress on academic and non-academic indicators from the previous milestone and fidelity of implementation of the school plan. In the event challenges in academic, non- academic areas or fidelity of plan implementation are identified during the on-site school visits, the department, in collaboration with the district, will more closely support and monitor the plan. In the event that the plan is not being implemented to fidelity, exploratory discussions involving the district, school, and department will occur to determine the root cause. A collaborative decision on the revision to the approved plan will be made.
- The third milestone will be conducted with the possibility of school visits as needed to those schools where challenges with lack of progress or fidelity of plan implementation were identified previously.

Each district and school will complete an annual report that details areas of challenges and success with supporting data. The purpose of this report is to help inform the grant renewal decision.

The state will make a determination of interim academic progress based on the periodic collection of formative assessment and leading indicator data. In the event, data indicate regression or lack of progress at the mid-point in the year, the office of school improvement will work with the district and school to conduct a mid-year root cause analysis to determine the reason for the lack of progress with a possible adjustment to the school's plan. The process will be repeated for all Priority schools at the beginning of each school year.

Continuous Support & Differentiated Technical Assistance

The department has developed a School Improvement Continuum of Intervention and Support. Included in the continuum is the SISN to provide differentiated technical assistance and support to districts and schools. The network will engage the OSI, CORE, and CPM regional consultants to support all schools eligible for Comprehensive Support at varying levels. The SISN will work directly with districts and Priority schools on assessing the needs, conducting a readiness review, developing a plan for improvement, and supporting and monitoring of progress.

In addition, the OSI will meet with district and school leadership teams, including iZone or other partners, twice yearly, prior to the beginning of school and at the year's mid-point, to provide support in common areas of challenge and to share promising practices.

In alignment with the department's strategic priorities of All Means All and District Empowerment, the department believes that continuing its statewide system of support that was required under NCLB is necessary to ensure the appropriate services and supports are available to the Title I districts across the state, with a focus on districts serving our lowest performing schools and those with low-performing subgroups. While ESSA cites that 95 percent of the School Improvement set-aside be awarded directly to districts, Tennessee may award a percentage less than 95 percent of the set-aside for program supports within this statewide system of support in order to better serve

all Title I districts. Tennessee's system of support provides educational tools, resources, programs, and initiatives that allow for further differentiation for districts and schools through state-level work and external partnerships. We know that with almost 100 of Tennessee's 146 districts having fewer than 5,000 students, the local capacity is limited. This structure would allow for the department to utilize economies of scale to provide support and resources that meet the tiers of evidence to districts that would otherwise be absent. ESSA was intended to give states more decision-making authority as it relates to school improvement, and this flexibility is needed to meet the needs of the state's most challenged schools and districts.

District Empowerment

The *District Empowerment* strategic priority is about providing districts the tools and autonomy they need to make the best decisions for students and to implement initiatives that drive toward meeting and exceeding state and district goals. In many ways, this strategic priority undergirds the other priorities by creating conditions and opportunities for districts to be successful.

Tennessee believes that in order to empower districts, we must first acknowledge that every district and every school within are unique. The department understands that when districts are engaged and have decision-making authority, there is a heightened level of buy-in.

Tennessee has committed to empowering districts in very specific ways:

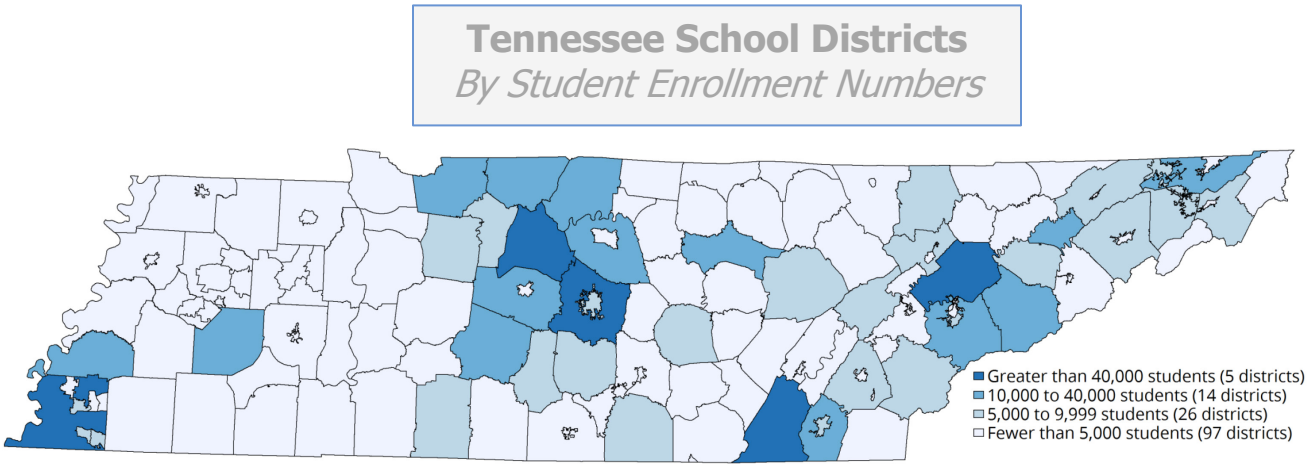
- Empowering leaders and educators with access to accurate and timely data linked to clear action steps
- Providing decision-making supports for districts—communicating and prioritizing choice points, options, and flexibility for various initiatives
- Providing coaching and support to help districts evaluate the structures, processes, and talent required to implement the goals and initiatives in their comprehensive plan
- Encouraging innovation through earned autonomy for high-performing districts
- Providing pilot opportunities and space for districts to innovate—knowing that best practices often evolve from exploration of new practices
- Creating strong networks of learning and opportunities to contribute to decision-making around statewide initiatives

Performance Management

The department is committed to supporting districts through continuous improvement practices. Our system of performance management is not viewed through individual, categorical areas but in a more comprehensive manner to align with the department's philosophy and organizational structure. The system of performance management operates under two assumptions. First, the TDOE directs supports to districts, who in turn provide support to and are responsible for serving their schools. Second, based on the unique composition of Tennessee's eight regions, the identified needs and level of assistance required vary from district to district and school to school.

As illustrated below, Tennessee's 146 districts differ greatly, ranging from five districts with over 40,000 students each to 97 districts with fewer than 5,000 students each. Within these districts, there are pockets of rural and urban poverty—reaching 100 percent in certain areas. Thus, district needs vary as much as demographic make-up. To empower districts, the department offers certain regional supports to all, more targeted support to some, and opportunities for

earned autonomy for others.

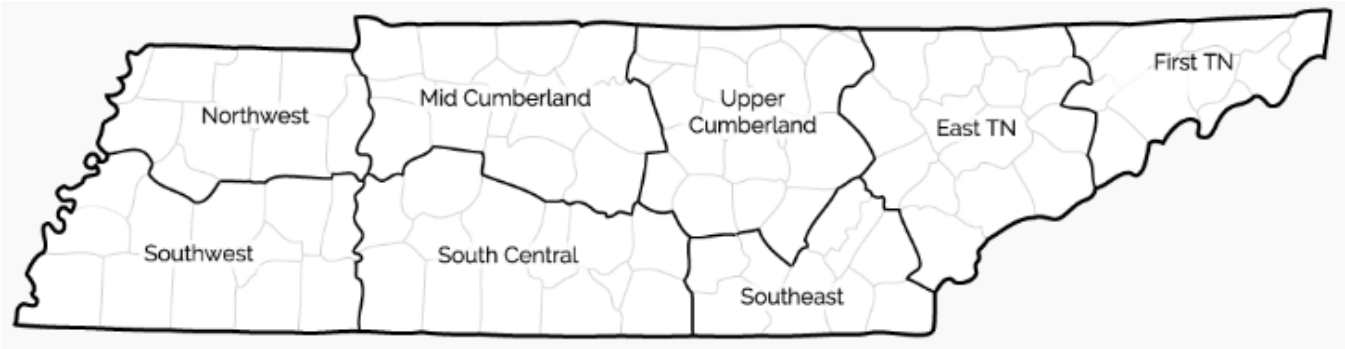


Below are key elements to Tennessee's performance management system and the activities provided by the state in supporting the continuous improvement of districts.

Elements	Performance Management
Planning	Identifying key targets and performance measures for all students; accountability and achievement data analysis
Interim reviews	Conducting mid-year reviews of progress toward achieving targets and goals
Input/feedback	Providing districts with recommendations and input to support efforts to meet expected outcomes
Rewarding	Recognizing and identifying areas of achievement and growth—offering earned autonomy where applicable

Centers of Regional Excellence

One primary mechanism of technical assistance and support to districts is provided through the department's Centers of Regional Excellence, known as CORE. Each CORE office is staffed with multiple academic consultants charged with building educator capacity through targeted, differentiated academic support resulting in improved student learning for the districts within their region. To accomplish this mission, CORE offices work closely with other department teams to support districts in implementing key department priorities aimed at improving instructional practice in schools, strengthening district-level planning, and making data-driven decisions.
The TDOE has eight CORE offices across the state: East TN, First TN, Mid Cumberland, Northwest, South Central, Southeast, Southwest, and Upper Cumberland.



Each of the 146 districts across Tennessee is assigned to a CORE office. Currently, each CORE office is staffed with the following positions:

- Math Consultant
- English Language Arts Consultant
- Data Analyst
- Interventionist
- School Nutrition Consultant
- Career and Technical Education Consultant
- TEAM Evaluation Coach[50]
- Administrative Secretary

These positions are funded in part with federal, Carl Perkins, School Nutrition; and state dollars. Through the positions listed above, districts receive support and ongoing assistance in the development and implementation of their district strategic plan as it relates to ELA, mathematics, Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI^2), CTE programs, and other activities.

This structure exemplifies the department's comprehensive support model and philosophy of working across programs to streamline efforts and reduce duplications or superfluous spending. Working collaboratively and providing a comprehensive support structure empowers districts to view their work in this manner—removing many of the silos that have existed historically.

CORE support begins with an analysis of district data, a needs assessment, and an evaluation of the district's current practices, all done in partnership with district leadership teams. CORE team members work intensely with district leaders around the following:

- Data-driven decision making
- Strategic planning
- High-quality instructional practice in core content areas and CTE
- Leader and teacher effectiveness
- Response to Instruction and Intervention
- Facilitating collaborative opportunities for districts

[50] Tennessee Department of Education. Tennessee Education Acceleration Model. Web.

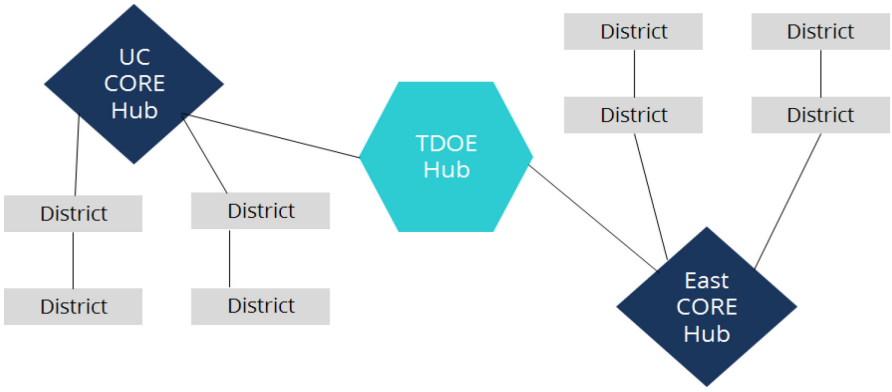
Networked Improvement Communities

Currently, our CORE offices are continuing to support innovation and empowerment by extending their reach and partnering with other regions on an identified problem of practice. Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) were initiated as part of the *District Empowerment* priority in TDOE's strategic plan to pioneer a fundamentally new way of learning and improving, and to seek a new way for the state and districts to partner in problem-solving.

This approach joins the discipline of improvement science with the capacities of networks to foster innovation and social learning in an effort to improve student outcomes. An intentional part of a NIC is that participating districts become empowered by building their own capacity to problem solve, finding better solutions to challenges they face, and improving student achievement in their own unique, local context.

In 2016, two networks were launched, working together to improve early literacy outcomes, with plans to scale statewide in the 2017-18 school year. While Tennessee has steadily increased student proficiency in mathematics, these gains have not been as fast as in reading, and only approximately 43 percent of third grade students are currently proficient. Throughout the pilot, key personnel across participating districts shared ideas and participated in sessions where root cause analyses and other methods were used to develop solutions. The findings and lessons learned will be shared across the eight CORE regions.

Seven districts from the East and Upper Cumberland CORE regions were carefully selected to join the inaugural NIC. In partnership with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the NIC will conduct a deep causal system analysis of their literacy systems and practices to understand more clearly why they are getting the results they do. The NIC will then develop a working theory of improvement that will allow them to test changes through continuous improvement cycles, measuring progress along the way. Over the course of this work, key findings and promising strategies will be identified and shared statewide in the years to come to improve practices in early literacy.



We expect to identify additional problems of practice that align with the department's strategic plan and ESSA priorities as the NIC model expands statewide. The theories of improvement developed within these networked communities will be shared statewide.

ePlan

The department also supports districts through the dissemination of relevant information. Tennessee has created and expanded an online portal, ePlan, as another key empowerment mechanism. The

ePlan online planning and grants management system provides a central location for districts and schools to develop, submit, and revise school and district plans; apply for federal and state funding to support those plans; request reimbursements and report expenditures; process budget amendments and program revisions when needed; and produce summative reports for oversight and review. TDOE's regional CORE offices provide support to districts to build their capacity to analyze data and develop strong, well-aligned plans. The department's consolidated planning and monitoring (CPM) division is responsible for reviewing these plans and providing assistance to districts in the funding and implementation of these plans, in partnership with CORE.

The transparency of ePlan provides assurance that funding aligns with district goals, and that goals are based on a comprehensive needs assessment. ePlan is now the central repository for multiple state and federal funding applications including: the consolidated funding application for ESEA and IDEA funds; Title III immigrant; Title IX homeless; CTE Perkins; 21st Century; focus schools; school improvement; coordinated school health; family resource centers; LEAPS; math and science partnership; preschool development; project AWARE; safe schools; voluntary pre-K; Tennessee's Read to be Ready; and state basic education program funds.

This resource allows district leaders to work across multiple funding sources to identify opportunities for collaboration and consolidation, remove duplications, and identify economies of scale. In essence, it provides a broader perspective and empowers leaders to make informed fiscal decisions about how best to utilize resources in alignment with district priorities.

The department is continuing to increase the capacity of ePlan through the development of additional summative reports, improved functionality and usability, linking district plans to the department's strategic plan, and the pre-population of key data. In addition to accountability and achievement data, in 2016-17, the department enhanced the needs assessment to include human capital data to identify potential equity issues, as well as chronic absenteeism data. In addition, districts must review these data elements and answer guiding questions in ePlan. Approved district plans and funding applications in the ePlan public-facing portal and can be accessed here.

In summer 2017, the department will convene stakeholders to review the current functionality, structure, and outputs of ePlan. Our goal is to align ePlan with other departmental resources for districts—streamlining functions and reporting, where feasible.

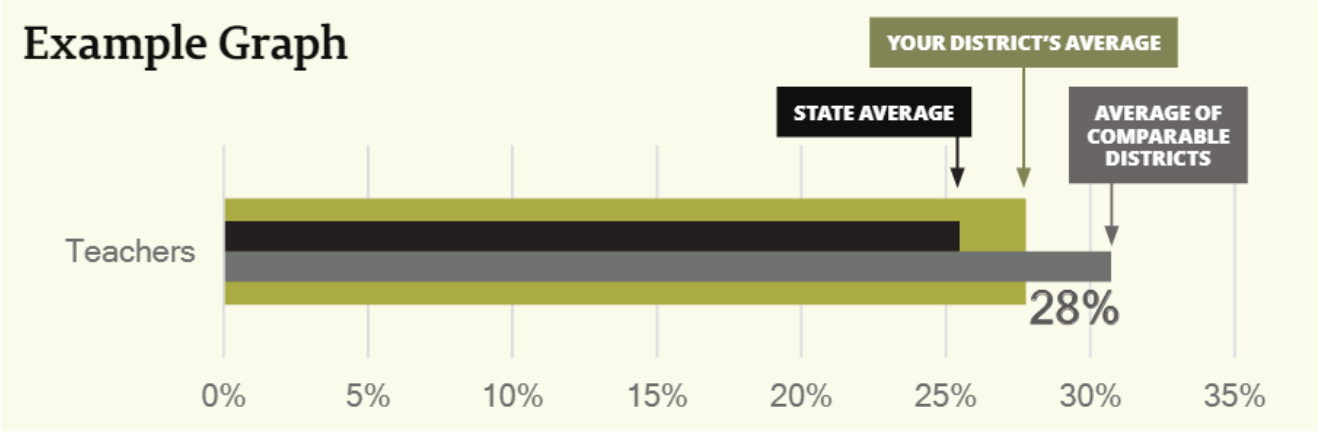
District Strategies Report

As the department began its implementation of *Tennessee Succeeds*, we acknowledged that our success is dependent on the success of districts and schools. In addition, districts have requested technical assistance from the department in identifying opportunities to build on effective practices. To address this need, the department developed the District Strategies report. This report was not designed as a checklist. Instead, it presented a series of targeted strategies that Tennessee believes will help move its schools towards greater levels of success. First released in fall 2016, directors of schools were asked to take their guide back to their teams to align and empower their work. The department believes this guidance will contribute to informing district decisions on how to invest time, energy, and resources.

Within the District Strategies report, the department has identified two district-level strategies aligned with each area of the state strategic plan that the department believes will have the biggest impact in progressing the work in those respective areas. There are additional strategies that give districts

information and ways they can "go further." None of these efforts exist in a silo, so districts may see overlapping strategies and connections that show how work in one area may benefit efforts in another. Each set of strategies is accompanied by a set of guiding questions and data to help guide district thinking. The metrics shown match the data tracked at the state level to gauge the state's progress.

In addition to strategies and other information in the report, districts were also presented individualized data to demonstrate how they are performing in key areas against the state and alongside four comparable districts as determined by the following: per pupil spending, demographics, and size. Presenting districts with multiple "looks" at data and providing opportunities to compare to other appropriate districts empowered them to take action while also increasing district collaboration.



Developed within the TDOE's data and research team, in collaboration with the Commissioner's office, the District Strategies report provides actionable data for districts to see how the work within their district contributed to the larger state strategic plan.[51] This report was well-received by directors of schools, sparking engaging conversations and suggestions for future enhancements. CORE offices facilitated conversations about the data and strategies presented in these documents during meetings with districts on strategic planning in fall 2016. They helped districts reflect on their data and plan next steps, as well as determine which of the department's initiatives and strategies make the most sense for them given their needs. Moving forward, the data and research team will continue to produce the District Strategies report annually for districts. The department is currently enhancing the planning function in ePlan to give districts data in a more user-friendly and actionable manner. Districts will have more tools and data to develop district plans that are aligned to both the needs of the district and schools, as well as to the department's strategic plan.

Tennessee Education Research Alliance

For the past several years, the department has collaborated with the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Design (TNCRED) at Vanderbilt University on several research projects, including the annual Tennessee Educator Survey. This partnership has evolved into the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (The Alliance) that will be a central actor in discussions of state policy. The

[51] See Appendix J

department and the Alliance launched the partnership in October 2016 which will focus directly on stakeholder engagement and dissemination of policy relevant research findings. The Alliance's research agenda will be built from Tennessee's strategic plan and will focus in part on improving elementary reading.[52]

This new partnership places a premium on timely and accessible findings that help policymakers and education leaders make researched-based decisions about how to address significant educational challenges. The Research Alliance's agenda is defined by a steering committee composed of Vanderbilt Peabody College of Education and Human Development faculty members and state officials and informed by a broad-based advisory committee of stakeholders from across Tennessee, including the State Board of Education, State Collaborative on Reforming Education, Tennessee Educational Equity Coalition, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, and Tennessee School Boards Association.

Based on that input, the Research Alliance has prioritized four areas of focus:

- Improving early reading
- Reimagining state support for professional learning
- Driving improvement in low-performing schools with evidence-based research
- Strengthening Tennessee's education labor market

The Alliance, a joint effort of Vanderbilt's Peabody College of Education and Human Development and the state department of education, will carry out and direct research with clear, practical implications for the state's key education strategies and, in doing so, contribute to the national conversation on education policy and practice. The expectation is for the Alliance to provide support to the state and to districts in the implementation of ESSA through its research studies and support of evidence-based practices.

ImpactTN

Educators face the challenges of data being stored in multiple systems and in cumbersome formats, requiring significant time and effort for educators to collect and analyze basic student data points. To alleviate some of these issues, Tennessee is building on earlier work to develop data dashboards. In 2016, the department began the phase-in launch of ImpactTN. ImpactTN will provide districts with simplified access to student data and analytics. It is tailored to meet the needs of teachers, leaders, and district staff, synthesizes data from multiple sources such as local student information systems and state assessment files to give educators a clear, single view—empowering them to make data-informed decisions. Data points, which are updated daily, include grades, attendance, assessments, contact information, discipline, special designations, and transcripts among others. The data is surfaced through analytic tools which allow educators to quickly see trends for individual students and classes. The department will continue to encourage districts to use ImpactTN to monitor student data throughout the school year.

[52] See Appendix K

These views provide educators with information to regularly inform instruction and to promote data-driven conversations. As with all data systems, ImpactTN relies on a data-driven culture in the classroom and school. The dashboards aim to address the initial hurdles of improving the use of data by targeting access and ease of use. Funded with state resources, ImpactTN is one mechanism used to support and empower districts through the timely dissemination of information, and we believe that the best decisions are informed by data. Currently, CORE is working with district leadership teams in 32 districts with implementation plans to roll out to all educators within their districts. CORE is training district teams and supporting training for school teams for implementation. Tennessee will continue a phased approach to roll out for the entire state.

P-20 Data System

The Measure Tennessee Longitudinal Data System (TLDS) is a P-20W data warehouse. The system includes data from the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Children's Services, and Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Department of Education uses TLDS data to produce an annual report card, including graduation rates and enrollment in career and technical education. TLDS data will be included as part of the state's transparency metrics and accountability metrics on the state report card. TLDS data is also used to produce dashboards on the EdutrendsTN website, containing graduation rates, graduate earnings, and high demand occupations.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission has released a study of post-graduation migration outlining mobility patterns and labor market outcomes of Tennessee Public College Graduates.[53] This study examines migration patterns and select labor market outcomes and identifies the main graduate pathways of Tennessee public college graduates. It addresses the following questions: How many Tennessee students stay in-state for employment or to further studies after graduation? How many out-of-state students who graduate from Tennessee institutions stay in the state after graduation? What are the main pathways of public college graduates as part of the general Student Flow Model? What are their main labor market outcomes, such as employment status, continuity, and the median wage? The study emphasizes the need for deeper integration of national and state data sources in addressing complex policy questions and responding to challenges facing American higher education. The information allows for the state and districts to make better informed decisions based on student outcomes.

Additionally, the Launch My Career Tennessee web portal, created by College Measures, can help potential students determine how much money an investment in postsecondary education could help them earn over the next 20 years.

Coordinated Spending Guide

The single-greatest need identified by Tennessee districts is for additional fiscal resources, even with the Governor's significant investment in education. The department consistently hears districts voicing concerns about funding decreases and not being able to sustain certain programs. To address this

[53] Tennessee Higher Education Commission. *Post-Graduation Migration*. (2016). Web.

need and to empower districts, the TDOE released a coordinated spending guide.[54] Twelve months of research and planning went into the development of this guide—consulting program directors and other stakeholders in the process.

The purpose of this guide is to serve as a resource to district leaders and to maximize the more than $700 million Tennessee receives each year from the U.S. Department of Education under the current ESEA, the IDEA, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. As these resources flow into districts, available funds should be leveraged to support activities that align with district goals, drive performance and improve outcomes for all students.

During fall 2015, the Deputy Commissioner and other leaders at the department shared this guide at regional Superintendent Study Council meetings statewide. The guide was well-received by district leaders; however, it became clear that this was a paradigm shift for Tennessee districts and that more engagement would be needed at multiple levels to achieve understanding of and support for funding district initiatives differently. In the months that followed, the guide was shared with district instructional leaders and federal programs directors to extend the reach of the resource.

The guide provides a framework for coordinated spending across federal, state, and local resources; definitions for braiding and blending funds; considerations when braiding or blending funds; and funding quick guides for ten initiatives with sample district and school level activities for each. The guide also contains information on supplement not supplant and the test for each individual federal program across ESEA, IDEA, and CTE. Since the guide was designed as a planning resource for district leaders, we also included program summaries that detailed the purpose, intent, and allowable activities for each of the programs contained in the guide.

The consolidated planning and monitoring team will update the coordinated spending guide to disseminate in 2017 to align with ESSA. CPM is encouraged by more districts using the guide and taking advantage of flexibility to braid and blend funds. CPM expects that through the update of the guide, expansion of the Title I school-wide consolidation pilot, and new flexibilities under ESSA, more Tennessee districts will be empowered to leverage funding across streams to better support their students and meet their achievement goals.

Differentiated Educator Pay

Tennessee understands that effective teachers are essential in making achievement gains, and having the ability to differentiate pay based on certain criteria empowers districts to recruit and retain effective teachers, as well as recognize and incentivize performance.

In June 2013, the state board passed a revised set of guidelines, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-3-306(h), which require districts to create and implement differentiated pay plans. The intent of district-driven differentiated pay plans is to give local control to districts in regard to salary schedule, and to create another lever for districts to attract and retain teachers based on a flexible set of criteria.

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[54] See Appendix L

To support the development of a cadre of teacher-leaders across the state, the department has assisted districts in creating greater differentiation of teacher roles, responsibilities, and salaries aligned to instructional priorities. Districts are required to differentiate how they pay licensed personnel; however, districts have flexibility to develop and implement pay plans that meet their specific priorities, needs, and context: rewarding teachers who teach in high-need schools or hard-to-staff subject areas; rewarding teachers for performance based on state board approved evaluation criteria; providing supplemental compensation to teachers who take on additional instructional responsibilities (e.g., teacher mentors, instructional coaches, etc.); and adopting alternative salary schedules. Districts utilize both federal and state dollars to implement differentiated pay plans, and TDOE utilizes its Title II, Part A statewide program dollars to provide training and other professional resources to teachers.

Districts are required to submit their differentiated pay plans annually for review by the TDOE. Within the submission, a district must describe how it will differentiate for a certain element (i.e., hard-to-staff, performance, additional roles, education, experience, etc.), including the eligibility criteria, amount, number of teachers estimated to be eligible, funding, and percentage of salary covered. Upon submission, each plan will be reviewed and follow-up will be provided to districts, where appropriate. Approved district differentiated pay plans are posted on the TDOE's website here.

Personalized Learning

To support the department's rigorous standards, aligned assessments, and strong accountability model, the department recognized the need for more personalization in the learning experiences for teachers and for students. Through personalized learning opportunities, we will support districts in exploring new approaches to professional learning for teachers, considering student-centered learning experiences, and leveraging technology and flexibility in how students learn and demonstrate mastery.

The U.S. Department of Education defines personalized learning as follows:

> Personalized learning refers to instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approach are optimized for the needs of each learner. Learning objectives, instructional approaches, and instructional content (and its sequencing) all may vary based on learner needs. In addition, learning activities are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated.[55]

A successful personalized learning model relies on the seamless integration of individualization, differentiation, and student interests.[56] While each of these elements is often used independently, building a cohesive strategy involving all three creates a learning experience in which each step of the learning cycle is tailored to the student. While some schools, districts, and states have emerged as pioneers in these areas, much of the implementation of this work is still in its exploratory phase, being honed through experience and best practice sharing.

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[55] U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Technology. *Engaging and Empowering Learning Through Technology*. Web.

[56] Culatta, R. (2016, October 19). *Personalizing Learning.* Retrieved from Office of Educational Technology, U.S. Department of Education. Web.

Task Force

In December 2015, the Personalized Learning Task force was launched to explore local and national strategies, inform Tennessee pilot initiatives, and provide recommendations on the overall direction for the state to support personalized learning. The task force met in Nashville for five sessions between December 2015 and September 2016, each hosted by various task force members' organizations. The Personalized Learning Task Force Report focuses on four key initiatives:

1. Blended learning
2. Predictive analytics
3. Micro-credentialing
4. Competency-based education

The task force learned about existing efforts and provided constructive feedback on the four aforementioned key initiatives aligned to *Tennessee Succeeds*. Building on presentations from researchers and practitioners, the group also discussed opportunities to expand the reach and to deepen the impact of successful personalized learning strategies. Through discussions and feedback, the task force was ultimately charged with two primary goals:

1. Define personalized learning for Tennessee
2. Develop recommendations for the state's direction to support personalized learning

By engaging key stakeholders and focusing on district-led strategies, the department aimed to ensure that its support efforts capture the needs of Tennessee educators, create a cohesive strategy across initiatives, and utilize and expand on existing resources and successful strategies, including pilot projects to explore these innovative strategies.

Stakeholders

Recognizing the wide variety of stakeholders necessary to facilitate an effective shift to personalized learning, the task force represented diverse experiences and perspectives. Members contributed to robust discussions and ensured that strategies leveraged and connected resources from across the educational landscape in Tennessee. The personalized learning task force was facilitated by the department's deputy commissioner and chief operations officer and supported by various divisions within the department.[57]

Blended Learning (Algebra I / Integrated Math I)

By integrating both classroom and online learning, blended learning models create the opportunity to provide tailored instruction at multiple levels, shifting the time, place, and pace of learning to fit student needs. As with personalized learning strategies, multiple models and systems exist for implementing blended learning. While many schools and districts have launched unique initiatives, educators across Tennessee have free access to online resources to use in blended learning settings.

One such resource is the LearningBlade system which provides a supplemental middle school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum that engages students in online activities to

[57] See Appendix A.1

solve real world STEM challenges, drawing on skills from all core content areas.[58] EverFi also provides free statewide access to multiple courses in critical life skills, including financial literacy modules aligned to state standards.[59] With these resources, educators may integrate high-quality content that meets students where they are, offering enhancement, remediation, or alternative core instruction as needed. Blended learning maximizes educators' abilities to differentiate instruction and to allow students to drive and tailor their own learning.

Through the state's Algebra I / Integrated Math I blended learning pilot, the department is launching its first statewide blended learning offering to districts.

Pilot Initiative: Algebra I / Integrated Math I Blended Learning

Overview

Launched for the 2016–17 school year, the Algebra I / Integrated Math I blended learning pilot marks the department's first pilot initiative toward personalized learning. The guiding principle of this effort builds on evidence that technology can support teachers in delivering tailored instruction by helping them leverage data and quickly diagnose student needs. Moreover, recognizing that all students learn and think differently, blended learning provides an avenue to support personalization by combining technology with strong human teaching strategies.

The goals for this pilot are to assess whether or not a blended learning environment:

1. helps move students towards proficiency in Algebra I and Integrated Math I;
2. supports teacher instructional practices; and
3. increases student buy-in and ownership of their learning process.

Scope of Activities

Through an initial cohort of 50 teachers, approximately 5,000 students' Algebra I or Integrated Math I coursework is occurring in a blended learning environment during the 2016-17 school year. Participation spans Tennessee, with 37 high schools and middle schools across 21 participating districts. Experience was not a factor in selection, as nearly two-thirds of the cohort are implementing blended learning for the first time. To assist in the transition, teachers received access to and training on how to use the following:

- Canvas, a learning management system that supports learning, collaboration, assessments, grading, messaging, and analytics
- Tennessee-aligned Algebra I and Integrated Math I content provided by NROC,[60] a community-guided non-profit focused on college and career readiness
- Ongoing professional development provided by BetterLesson,[61] an organization specializing in content-specific blended learning support

Additionally, the department will provide ongoing support to teachers and administrators through

[58] More information on the LearningBlade product is available on the company's website here.
[59] More information on EverFi offerings in Tennessee is available on the company's website here.
[60] The NROC Project. A community-guided, non-profit organization focused on college and career readiness. NROC is emblematic of an approach defined by four shared beliefs: Network; Resources; Open; College & Career. Web.
[61] More information on BetterLesson offerings in Tennessee is available on the company's website here.

Pilot Initiative: Algebra I / Integrated Math I Blended Learning

webinars and regular virtual office hours.

Scaling and Sustainability

Throughout its first year, the department will evaluate the pilot for effectiveness of practice and scalability. Applying a mixed-methods approach consisting of data collection, observation, and tracking teacher and student improvement in select areas will allow the state to assess whether or not a blended learning environment meets the goals stated above. This evaluation will also surface successful implementation strategies to guide how the department encourages additional schools to adopt the model in the future.

For the 2017-18 school year, the department will recruit a second cohort of 50 teachers, scaling the pilot to 100 participants and increasing the number of students served to approximately 10,000 annually. The summer 2017 training will introduce the new cohort to pilot resources and blended learning strategies, while also supporting the original cohort towards engaging more deeply in blended learning.

Challenges Going Forward

As the pilot expands, the department is prioritizing building district capacity to support blended learning. First, the state must engage with administrators at pilot schools to ensure that they can make informed decisions regarding their technology infrastructure and professional development strategy. Second, a new model for providing initial training must be adopted.

The state will consider a "train the trainer" model for cohorts attending their second summer professional development in future years to leverage existing experience. Finally, the state and districts will face a financial hurdle in funding full scale implementation and access with over 70,000 students taking Algebra I or Integrated Math I annually. Currently, the pilot is state-funded, but if the pilot is well-received, a cost-sharing model with districts may be necessary for sustainability after the pilot.

Micro-credentialing

While the importance of professional learning and continuous improvement are widely acknowledged, the current landscape of professional development is a reflection of a disconnect between districts and teachers regarding what topics to emphasize in professional development. Micro-credentials more closely align to coaching models than to the current, one-size-fits-all approach to professional development and rely on partnerships between educators putting skills to practice and administrators supporting them in doing so.

According to the 2016 educator survey, 72 percent of educators that participated in the survey rated the use of their own professional judgment in considering strategies to grow and improve as very important, and 55 percent noted that collaboration with other educators was essential to successful

growth.[62] Despite these findings, professional development is often prescribed without connecting to educator needs and disconnected from the peer learning. To address this disconnect, the TDOE has launched a micro-credentialing pilot initiative during the 2016-17 school year.

Pilot Initiative: Micro-Credentials

Overview

The goal of the pilot is to directly impact up to 100 teachers, 60 of whom meet face-to-face and serve as a focus group. An additional 40 teachers participate virtually by earning micro-credentials independently and providing feedback on the experience.

During this first pilot year (2016-17), Teachers in the pilot will earn up to three micro-credentials from a curated set focused around the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) rubric indicators of questioning, thinking, and problem solving. These areas were chosen after statewide evaluation data identified them among the most common areas needing refinement and growth for teachers along the TEAM rubric.

The pilot seeks to capture teacher perceptions around micro-credentials as a form of personalized learning, including details around the general quality, rigor, and relevance of the credentials. It also aims to collect teacher input on the process required to earn the micro-credentials. The department will use findings from the pilot to help inform a possible pathway to license renewal and advancement by allowing micro-credentials to count toward professional development points in subsequent years.

The pilot, running from October 2016 to June 2017, operates in partnership with three organizations—the Center for Teaching Quality, Digital Promise, and BloomBoard.[63] These partners provide the platform, initial content and scoring, and support for the pilot. The focus group will gather in Nashville three times during the year to connect and reflect, provide feedback, gain support, share insights, and express concerns as they work to earn three of fifteen possible micro-credentials.

Scope of the Pilot

The department sought recommendations for the pilot from education leaders throughout the state. From those recommendations, 30 educators with 4–9 years teaching experience were chosen to represent schools and districts from each of the eight CORE regions. These teachers have shown characteristics of leadership, willingness to learn, and working well with members of their school communities. Invited teachers were asked to choose a beginning teacher with 1–3 years teaching experience to partner with throughout the pilot. Together, these 60 teachers comprise the focus group for the pilot. Each member is working to earn three micro-credentials while providing valuable feedback that will inform the department's decision-making process

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[62] Airhart, K. (2016, July 28). The Tennessee Plan: Creating a personalized Professional Learning Pathway with Micro-Credentials. Personalized Learning Task Force Meeting. Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee Department of Education.

[63] BloomBoard. Digital Promise: Accelerating Innovation in Education. Web.

regarding micro-credentials and personalized learning.

Scaling

During year two of the pilot, the department plans to reach up to 5,000 educators by partnering with districts, using micro-credentials that will serve as a tool for licensure advancement. As with the first year, BloomBoard will continue to provide the platform through which teachers will access the micro-credentials. In year three, the state hopes to expand the pilot more broadly as a resource to all educators and to develop micro-credentials around Tennessee Academic Standards and other state specific needs.

Sustainability

Sustaining a program for micro-credentials will require a solid plan around two major elements: a system for assessing evidence and a way to monetarily maintain the technological platform. A potential solution to the question of assessors is to provide professional development points for each micro-credential that a teacher assesses, in addition to any professional development points that teacher might earn as a student of learning. The department expects that Title II statewide program dollars may be utilized in future years and will almost certainly require some district-level investment (districts using Title II and state dollars for professional development).

Ultimately, the TDOE is interested in pursuing funding for micro-credentialing that is cost-neutral. The question of monetary support required to sustain the digital platform may be answered by a system which allows each district to determine how to contribute for each micro-credential earned. The department will utilize the information gained during years one and two of the pilot to inform decision-making for subsequent years.

Other Initiatives: Predictive Analytics & Competency-based Education

Predictive Analytics

Personalized learning strategies often leverage technology to increase the efficiency of the learning cycle. A shift toward prediction and prescription utilizing machine generated suggestions to improve students' learning trajectories is possible through predictive analytics. Predictive analytics use historical data trends to develop insights into learning patterns and streamline data-informed decisions. The models rely on having robust and regularly-updated data on student profiles, performance, and instructional strategies. Looking ahead, Tennessee is exploring how to convert predictive analytics that help big businesses improve their functions to the education sector, using data to support teachers in determining successful instructional strategies and content.

An additional layer on top of predictive analytics is the science of machine-learning. Machine-learning uses ongoing data inputs to fine-tune predictions and recommendations. While great educators naturally do this refinement over time, having an automated system built on more robust data offers educators an advanced starting point in making differentiated instructional decisions.

While these technologies are used regularly across the business sector to automate many operational decisions and to inform larger scale strategies, they have not yet been successfully utilized broadly in education. Tennessee is interested in using these same concepts and solutions to benefit

personalization for educators and students. Over the course of the next two years, the state will explore developing innovative technology and partnerships with districts across the state through initial pilot testing and larger scale initiatives.

Competency-based Education

Competency-based education creates pathways for students by focusing on demonstrating mastery through application and allowing students to advance through curricula and grades as mastery is achieved. With options in the scale of implementation, these models open flexibilities in classrooms and policies for students to drive how they engage with their learning experience. The department will continue to explore options to integrate competency-based instructional models by learning from local districts piloting these efforts, other districts and states leading the field in this work, and national partners that provide support into and through competency-based educational strategies. The department expects to continue this work in future years, focusing these opportunities to high-need schools and districts.

Innovative Support to Districts

Technology has become integral to education, most notably how we supply and receive information, communication, and provide instruction. The information technology (IT) team at the department is focused on addressing critical concerns with technology. Specifically, the IT team has prioritized key projects designed to provide additional supports to districts: improving the integration, accessibility, and usability of data; and using data more proactively rather than solely for analytical purposes.

The department is interested in and uniquely positioned to take technologies that have served the business sectors well and integrate them into education. This includes using machine learning to provide information to teachers. This technology could be used to make recommendations to teachers based on student attributes that respond best to certain interventions.

The IT team is also working to offer professional services, consulting, and technology innovations to districts. The department's data dashboard and work to develop single sign-on functionality are two such examples of how the department is demonstrating its commitment to customer-focused government.

Professional Services Consulting

The IT division is also committed to providing shared, high-end expertise to address complex technology issues in instances where such expertise may not be locally available or viable. The TDOE will use its expertise and economies of scale to contract specialized technology personnel who can be assigned to districts, at no cost, to help with complex technology issues including:

- Cloud migration planning for cost reduction
- Network design, maintenance, and support
- Security and threat detection
- Technology plan development

We know that districts are staffed differently and have varying levels of capacity as it relates to technology. For example, a larger district will have a full team of high end technology staff for all their technology needs while a smaller district will not have the need or funding to employ certain technology staff on a full-time basis.

One example of this support would be the following: Security Intrusion—a district is a victim of a network attack which keeps all users from being able to log onto the network. The district contacts the TDOE and is assigned a network engineer to access the schools' networks via VPN and an unknown open port on the firewall is found. They work with the district to close the port, restore their Active Directory services from a nightly backup and help the district monitor for further malicious activity.

Technology Incubations

The IT team is also working to help districts identity useful technology solutions for their districts. Other innovative projects include the development of a natural language processor which also incorporates machine learning to score essays more effectively, predictive analytics, single sign-on, and incorporating additional online course offerings for students in Microsoft.

One such example is the Classroom Avatar. This technological advancement offers active participation solutions for students with long term class absences. The Classroom Avatar is a robot that "sits in" class for a student when he or she is absent. The Avatar includes real-time voice and video feeds and is controlled directly by the student remotely. Imagine a student suffering from a long term illness and confined to a hospital bed who can still participate actively in class.

In the world in which we live today, it is important for all students to have access to and an understanding of technology and how it has become an integral part of how we live, how we learn, and how we work in the 21st Century. We expect that this innovative work will truly empower districts and all students to thrive as we support new avenues in education and technology.

Other Pilot Opportunities

School-wide Consolidation Pilot

The TDOE's consolidated planning and monitoring division provided an opportunity for districts to participate in a Title I school-wide consolidation pilot for select schools for implementation in the 2015-16 school year. This pilot allowed participating schools to consolidate funds from federal, state, and local sources into a single "pool" of funds to implement comprehensive school-wide plans. By removing some of the administrative burden and other barriers, we believe, districts can improve the overall service to students, remove duplications between programs, and align program supports for a more cohesive education system.

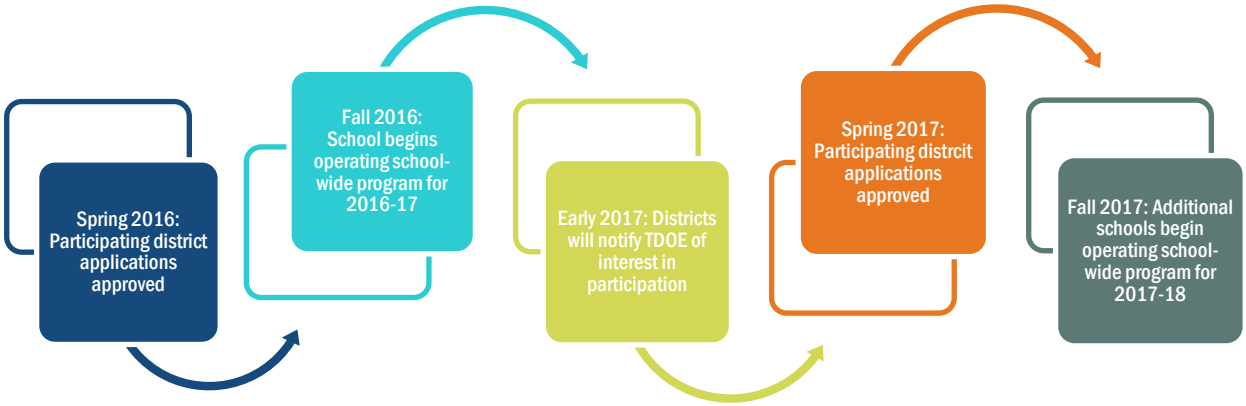
Consolidating funds allows for more flexibility in how schools use available resources to meet the specifically identified needs of students. In addition, consolidation of funds eases some individual program administrative requirements while ensuring that the intent of the federal program is satisfied. Through the flexibility provided under ESSA and the progress of this pilot, CPM is well-positioned to

support districts in adequately and appropriately spending federal funds to maximize all funding streams.

In fall 2014, Tennessee began outreach to districts—explaining consolidation and the benefits of consolidated funding. The department conducted a webinar detailing consolidating funds in school-wide programs and the upcoming pilot opportunity. While there were initially many interested districts, three districts participated in the pilot in year one. As part of the planning year, the CPM team assembled internal and external stakeholder groups to address questions and concerns of these groups. We also took a proactive approach with the state auditors from the comptroller's office. They participated in task force meetings and calls—asking key questions about how consolidation would be treated. This interaction was very positive, and they were appreciative of being engaged during the planning.

In addition, the department initiated calls with the USEd, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to address district concerns over IDEA participation in the pilot. Leadership and other OSEP staff participated in the call and have since had follow-up calls with CPM's director of planning to request participation in a call to support and expand this work further.

The 2015-16 school year served as the planning year for the school-wide pilot. The department and participating districts worked collaboratively to develop policies and procedures for implementation of the option for school-wide consolidation of funds in Tennessee schools operating a Title school-wide program. In spring 2016, applications for the consolidation were approved, and during the 2016-17 school year, participating districts began to implement school-wide consolidation in select schools. Based on initial feedback, the department expects to expand the pilot to add additional districts in the next year.



Poverty Simulation Pilot

In Tennessee one in four students under the age of 18 are living in poverty.[64] What we understand is that poverty impacts one's ability and readiness to learn. Many teachers and school leaders may not have experience in addressing the unique needs of students in poverty.

The largest federal education grant program, Title I, is designed specifically to serve economically disadvantaged students and those most at risk of not meeting state learning objectives. The services provided through Title I support the needs of our students through more than an instructional program aligned to standards. The department believes supporting districts in better understanding the unique challenges of poverty will create a more supportive learning environment for all students, especially those experiencing poverty. The department first offered poverty simulation at a statewide conference of federal programs directors in 2014. Partnering with a local entity, this three-hour simulation allowed participants to "walk in the shoes of others" and experience the issues and barriers faced by students before ever walking in the school door. The feedback from this training was unprecedented. The department received multiple requests for training of district and school staff.

In support of the *District Empowerment* strategic priority, the department will provide poverty simulation training to districts and school teams. The training will focus on helping district and school staff gain a better understanding of the backgrounds and lives of the families they serve. This initiative will be a pilot program in the 2016-17 school year, focusing on economically-distressed districts and with a goal of expanding the number of districts served in subsequent years.

Per-pupil Expenditure Reporting

ESSA requires that states report per-pupil expenditures of federal, state, and local funds, including actual personnel expenditures and actual non-personnel expenditures disaggregated by source of funds, for each local educational agency and school level.

Providing school-level reporting can:

- activate school-level engagement to leverage dollars to do the most for students;
- explore resource tradeoffs;
- foster the spread of innovations; and
- address issues of equity between schools.

To meet this requirement, the department is seeking feedback from stakeholders. In February 2017, the department convened a Fiscal Transparency Working Group comprised of fiscal officials from large urban districts, rural districts, charter schools, and state finance consultants.

The department will develop a single statewide procedure to calculate LEA expenditures per pupil and a single statewide procedure to calculate school-level expenditures and is currently seeking feedback via district survey. In addition, the department expects to conduct a pilot during the 2017-18 school year in order to meet reporting requirements in the 2018-19 school year.

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[64] Center for American Progress. 2015. Web.

Earned Autonomy

The department differentiates its support and technical assistance to districts, acknowledging that each district faces unique challenges and needs. Thus, we do not have a "one size fits all" model for serving districts.

As such, the department will begin to differentiate the levels of autonomy—empowering high-performing districts with opportunities for earned autonomy. Earned autonomy is integral to our work within the district empowerment strategic priority. While ESSA requires states to intervene in the lowest performing schools, states are also granted new flexibilities. Tennessee proposes to differentiate support for schools and districts demonstrating success and progress for all students. High-performing or *Exemplary* districts that demonstrate positive outcomes should be acknowledged and rewarded with new opportunities, planning flexibilities, mentorship for best practices, and less rigorous oversight, where appropriate.

The department expects to extend opportunities to exemplary districts to participate in state-led pilots and competitive grants. One such offering that is currently being developed is an incentive grant designed to support districts in "going further." This additional funding would allow *Exemplary* districts to extend or expand an effective initiative and demonstrate what is working. Tennessee will continue to explore ways to give high-performing districts the opportunity to innovate. Best practices often come from trying new supports and initiatives, and the department wants to provide districts the ability to explore innovative solutions. Districts will also be expected to share best practices from these grants at one of the statewide conferences. The department will seek state and philanthropic dollars to support these innovation grants.

The department will offer exemplary districts the first option to participate in pilot opportunities and other state working groups as part of this earned autonomy. Recent pilots have included Title I school-wide consolidation, blended learning, and Project AWARE. Going forward, we expect to offer additional pilots including blended learning, assessments (including ACT writing), and fiscal reporting of per pupil expenditures.

Exemplary districts will be afforded planning flexibilities where appropriate. We know that high-performing districts spend significant time reviewing both qualitative and quantitative data to inform their work. The department believes that these districts see planning as a process, and where possible, these districts will have flexibility with regard to the required needs assessment elements and other considerations. CORE offices may also reach out to *Exemplary* districts to glean best practices to share within the region.

The department is also exploring ways to utilize our high-performing districts in a mentoring capacity, pairing them with districts who experience challenges but share similarities in size, demographics, or location. Part of this strategy is directly related to our *District Strategies* report that is released to districts annually. This document not only identifies potential strategies where districts have the desire to go deeper, but also provides some key data points for districts. The document compares districts to "like" districts based on multiple data points. Capitalizing on our own successes and supporting more connections between districts are ways to reward and empower districts.

Exemplary districts will also be afforded less rigorous oversight through the department's CPM division's monitoring framework. While this framework has and will continue to have a tiered approach (self-assessment, desktop, and on-site monitoring), these districts will also be "credited" on the department's risk assessment used to identify districts for tiers of monitoring. The state will continue to

monitor and have a presence in every district, but *Exemplary* districts will receive a less rigorous monitoring protocol.

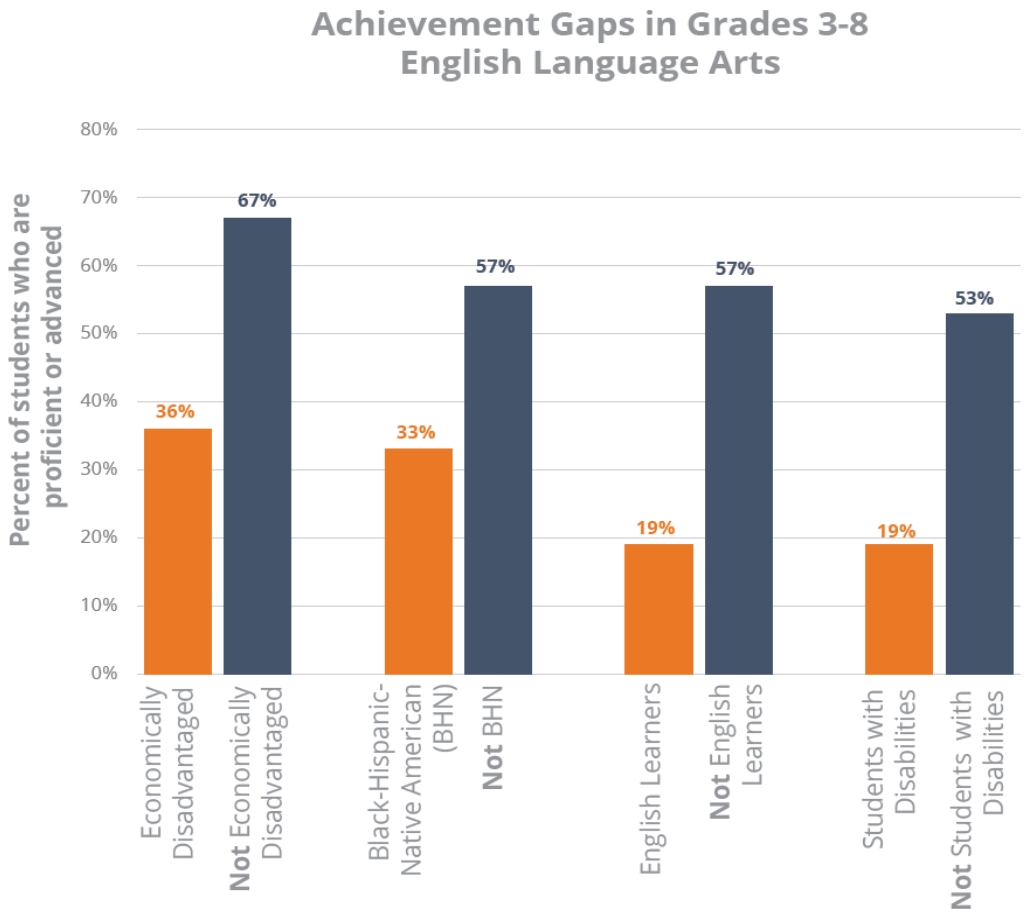
In addition, the Reward school list will be released alongside school grading after the 2018-19 school year, and we expect to recognize these schools and provide financial incentives and opportunities to share best practices to schools across the state that align with district autonomies where appropriate.

All Means All

Tennessee is committed to the success of all students. Our work in this area involves providing individualized support and opportunities for all students, with a specific focus on those who are furthest behind and historically underserved.

We cannot improve outcomes overall without improving outcomes for our racially/ethnically diverse students and those of historically underserved populations: economically disadvantaged students, English learners, students with disabilities, foster care children and youth, migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, homeless children and youths, and neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D.

While student performance has risen in past years, we continue to see substantial achievement gaps between students in historically underserved student groups and their comparison groups. We believe by continuing and expanding individualized support and opportunities for those furthest behind we can continue to close those gaps.



In grades 3–8, nearly 35,000 of the 450,000 students—eight percent—tested *below basic* in both math and English language arts. All but 2,000 of these students fall into one of the four historically underserved student groups

Tennessee tracks in its district accountability model.

In addition to the support services provided to students across Tennessee, this section also addresses students with disabilities, as well as individual ESSA programs—detailing key initiatives and funding by individual program. In addition to ESSA-funded initiatives, we intentionally included other initiatives that are funded with state and other resources to demonstrate how we are supporting and coordinating initiatives to serve all students, and ensuring that every student learns in a safe and supportive environment. We know that our students are more than a single "label" or a subgroup. The most effective interventions are those that are coordinated across multiple programs to support the whole child and the environment in which he or she learns.

The Tennessee Department of Education will comply with GEPA Section 427 for programs and supports carried out through reserved state-level funds for ESSA programs. The state will also ensure that any state-level program or initiative affords equitable access to students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

The department will provide state-level print resources in Tennessee's most frequently spoken languages other than English; conduct outreach to disadvantaged groups; provide awareness training for districts and other stakeholders; and deliver content in various forms to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders, including the utilization of technology to convey program content via audio and closed-captioning.

Any grant opportunity will include assurances that districts will also comply with GEPA Section 427 and will be monitored as part of the state's oversight and monitoring process for districts.

The department will ensure that equal access policies are carried out across the department through training and review of state-level activities. Specifically, state personnel complete annual training to ensure that the six types of barriers to equitable access are understood: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age.

Creating Safe & Healthy Learning Environments

The schools and districts across Tennessee are unique, and the flexibility and expanded uses of certain funds in ESSA should be broadly communicated with district and program leaders so that decisions are aligned with their needs and supported by data. Support for data-driven decision-making is an area where the TDOE adds value to districts.

While effective leadership and instructional practices are essential to impacting student achievement, supportive learning conditions are critical. Leading national education organizations recognize the close relationship between health and education, as well as the need to foster health and well-being within the educational environment for all students.[65]

Within the comprehensive needs assessment in the ePlan planning module, the department provides district and school-level data on chronic absenteeism, discipline, and human capital data to support

[65] J. Lawrence and E. Thorne. A Discussion Paper for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *A Systems Approach to Integrating Health in Education*. September 2016. Web.

informed decision-making. For the 2017-18 school year, the needs assessment used by all schools and districts in Tennessee will be expanded to address well-rounded components, including climate and culture, enrichment, health, physical education, and other components that align with ESSA's well-rounded emphasis.

As demonstrated in our commitment to the *All Means All* strategic priority, Tennessee has taken important steps toward establishing safe and supportive learning environments in its public schools to enhance the quality of students' school experience and to foster conditions for learning that contribute to the academic success of its students.[66] These supportive learning conditions align with the ESSA priorities of supporting a well-rounded education.

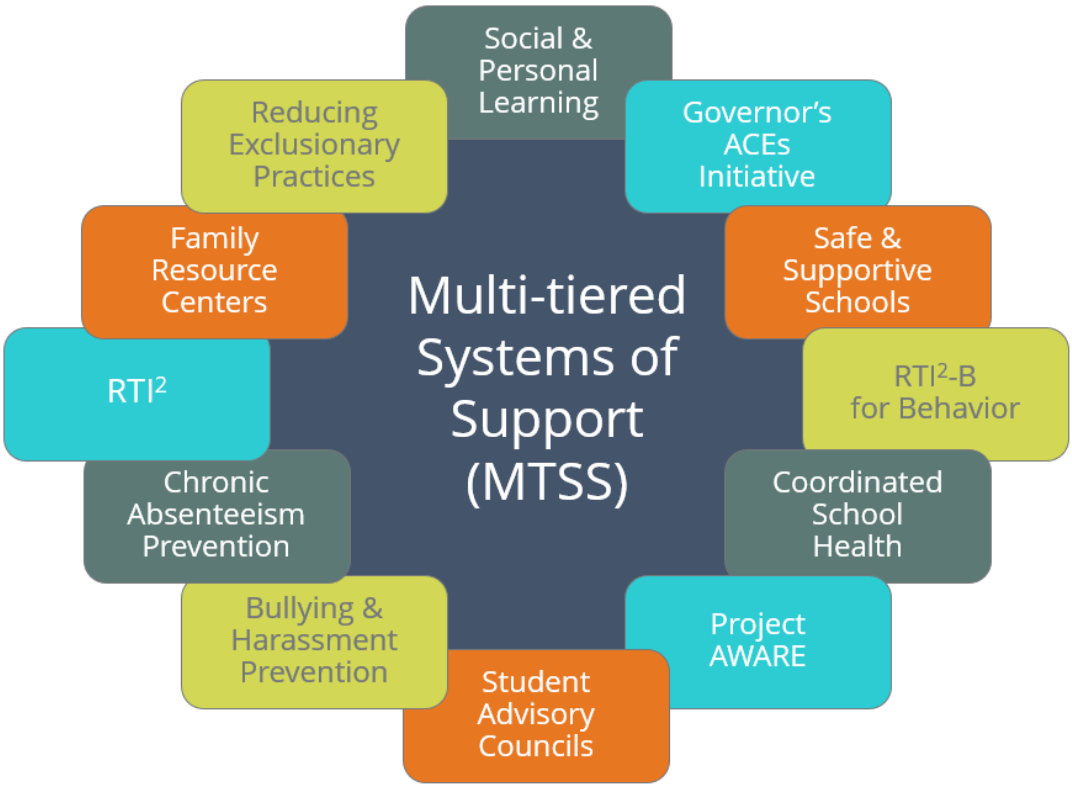
Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports

Tennessee's multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS) framework is an over-arching overview of practices, programs, and interventions that meet students' needs both within an individual classroom and across the school building. This framework provides a structure for and districts schools to make critical decisions about adding to, revising, or removing current practices within the MTSS framework to come to a coherent vision and strategy for supporting all students on their path to postsecondary success. There is a broad array of options to support students, and the MTSS framework offers an overview of these choices as well as guidance for making decisions based on the needs of individual students and a school community. This framework connects to a suite of online resources that the department will continue to expand over the next several years.

Each student brings a unique mix of strengths and challenges to school, both academic and non-academic. While there is a great deal of importance placed on academic outcomes, research shows that non-academic factors have a critical role in student success. Therefore, the state's MTSS incorporates strategies to meet students' needs in multiple areas.

The programs and initiatives described throughout this section all fall within our MTSS. Some benefit all students and are part of strong Tier I practices while others are appropriate for students with specific academic, behavior, social, or personal needs.

[66] Tennessee Department of Education. School Climate. Web.



Coordinated School Health

Scientific reviews have documented that school health programs can have positive effects on educational outcomes, as well as health-risk behaviors and health outcomes. Similarly, programs that are primarily designed to improve academic performance are increasingly recognized as important public health interventions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the academic success of America's youth is strongly linked with their health. Multiple health-related factors such as hunger, physical and emotional abuse, and chronic illness can lead to poor school performance.[67]

Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns.[68] Through coordinated school health (CSH), the department provides districts with health screening guidelines and are provided health screening data which includes Body Mass Index (BMI), vision, hearing, and blood pressure. Also, the department collects health services data which gives us information on chronic health conditions in each district. The CDC's coordinated school health approach, created in 1987, encourages healthy lifestyles, provides needed supports to at-risk students, and helps to reduce the prevalence of health problems that impair

[67] Michael SL, Merlo CL Basch CE. Wentzel KR, Wechsler H. Critical connections: health and academics. *J Sch Health*, 2015; 85: 740-758.
[68] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *A Collaborative Approach to Learning and Health*. Web.

academic success.[69] This model was piloted in Tennessee in 2001 and was expanded to every district across the state in 2007.

To ensure Tennessee students have the supports needed to be successful in school, the state board adopted standards and guidelines for Tennessee's coordinated school health program[70] in January 2000, and the department established the office of coordinated school health in February 2001. Tennessee's CSH program connects physical, emotional, and social health with education through the following interrelated components: health education, health services, school counseling, psychological and social services, nutrition, physical education/physical activity, school staff wellness, healthy school environment, and student/parent/community involvement. This coordinated approach is focused on improving the health of students and increasing their capacity to learn through families, communities, and schools working together.

While this program is primarily funded with state dollars, new flexibility in ESSA will allow districts and schools to use federal dollars for many of these supports, as well as trainings for teachers should these needs be identified in the needs assessment. In October 2016, Tennessee's State Board of Education (SBE) updated the Physical Activity Policy (4.206) [71] and Health Education and Lifetime Wellness Standards. We expect these updated guidelines will support ESSA's focus on well-rounded education, as well as impact how districts use federal and state funds to support students.

Implementation of the School Health Index

The SBE's revised October 2016 physical activity policy includes a requirement for every Tennessee public school to implement the School Health Index. The School Health Index is an internationally-recognized, researched-based instrument developed by the CDC division of school and adolescent health. This instrument provides a self-assessment and planning tool to allow schools to assess the healthy learning environment.

The policy also requires schools to:

- identify the strengths and weaknesses of school health policies and programs;
- develop an action plan for improving the healthy learning environment of the school;
- involve parents, community members, students, and others in improving policies and programs; and
- develop a local School Health Improvement Plan using the School Health Index overall score card.[72]

Schools are to use the local School Health Improvement Plan to facilitate improvement in the areas of physical activity and nutrition at the local school level; integrate school health planning into the overall school improvement process; and provide an annual report to the School Health Advisory Council.

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[69] Tennessee Department of Education. Coordinated School Health Background & History. Web.

[70] Tennessee State Board of Education. Standards and Guidelines for Tennessee's Coordinated School Health Program (4.204). Web.

[71] Tennessee State Board of Education. Physical Activity Policy (4.206). Web.

[72] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide*. Web.

School Health Advisory Councils

The state board revised physical activity policy also includes requirements for every Tennessee school district to establish a School Health Advisory Council.[73] The advisory council shall consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, including parents, students, teachers, school administrators, school board members, health professionals, school food service representatives, and members of the public. The council shall serve as a resource to school sites for implementing policies. The primary responsibilities of the council include but are not limited to:

- developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and, as necessary, revising physical activity and nutrition policies;
- ensuring that all schools within the district create and implement an action plan related to modules from the School Health Index;
- ensuring that the results of the action plan are annually reported to the School Health Advisory Council; and
- ensuring that school level results include measures of progress on each indicator of the School Health Index.

School Safety

The TDOE assists schools in their efforts to provide and maintain safe and supportive learning environments through training and technical assistance, and grants administration. The Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act, (T.C.A. § 49-6-801–814), establishes specific and consistent requirements for districts in providing a safe school environment. The act also establishes a state-level safety team to provide guidance to districts in their efforts to address, plan, and implement a comprehensive school safety planning strategy.[74]

Additionally, the Safe Schools Act of 1998 provides state funds to local school systems to improve school safety by decreasing the likelihood of violence or disruptive behavior occurring and to protect students and staff from harm when violence may occur.[75] This state funding is allocated based on the district's relative share of BEP funding and may be used for one or more of the following activities or interventions: innovative violence prevention programs, school resource officers, conflict resolution, disruptive or assaultive behavior management, improved school security, peer mediation, and training for employees on the identification of possible perpetrators of school-related violence.

School Climate

School climate refers to aspects of the school environment that make students feel valued, academically challenged, physically and emotionally safe, and connected to their school settings—all of which are part of a well-rounded education. Identified as a key component of ESSA, creating a safe

[73] Tennessee State Board of Education. Physical Activity Policy (4.206). Web.
[74] Tennessee Department of Education. Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act. Web.
[75] Tennessee Department of Education. Safe Schools Act. Web.

and supportive environment where every child can succeed depends on the contributions of all members of the school community: students, parents, school staff, and school leaders.[76]

Improving school climate involves comprehensive change in community norms, personal interactions, and institutional procedures, rather than reliance on any single intervention or dimension of behavior or performance. Research and practice have consistently demonstrated an association between positive school climate and improved student learning, teacher retention, and school performance. Thus, addressing school climate issues is necessary to support decisions for and evaluating the effectiveness of various policies and practices. School climate data enable the education community to understand the relationships between conditions for learning and academic outcomes and better utilize available time and resources.

In 2010, as a Safe and Supportive Schools grantee, Tennessee utilized these federal grant funds to create an infrastructure for measuring school climate through the construction of reliable and validated survey measurement tools that are custom designed with stakeholder input from students, parents, and educators. The Tennessee School Climate Measurement Package[77] provides to districts, at no cost, the resources necessary to utilize the system, including: student surveys for elementary (3–8), middle (5–8), and high school (9–12); surveys for the parents of students in grades K–12; and educator surveys for grades K–12. All surveys are built on the same matrix which measures school experience in three broad areas: engagement, safety, and environment. This format allows for comparison among student, parent, and teacher surveys, as well as for developing district-level reports.

The 2015 state report indicated that 109 schools across 17 districts utilized the optional survey; however, with the passage of ESSA, we expect and will encourage more districts to utilize this free resource to inform decisions and funding priorities. Further, the department is considering requiring the use of the School Climate Measurement Package in Priority and Focus schools. This survey could provide useful climate data that could be used to measure changes in school climate across Tennessee's lowest performing schools.

The 2016-17 school year survey administration window for students, parents, and educators began in October 2016, and continued through March 31, 2017. An extensive web page with resources for districts has been developed and is housed on the school climate link on the department's webpage here. This resource includes the Tennessee school climate measurement package and a toolkit for teachers and administrators to incorporate the development of social and personal competencies or soft skills into instruction.[78]

School climate must also address cultural differences and be welcoming to all students. For those coming from very different backgrounds, as many of our English learners (ELs) do, we must present what is acceptable without judgment, knowing that there are cultural expectations that are based on their native language and culture. When interpreting student behaviors consider the three classroom cultures:[79]

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[76] Tennessee Department of Education. School Climate. Web.
[77] Tennessee Department of Education. *School Climate Measurement Package*. Web.
[78] Tennessee Department of Education. *Improving Academic Outcomes through Enhanced Conditions for Learning*. Web.
[79] Gallego & Cole, 2001; Personal Communication, Articles, 2007.

1. Culture of the student (i.e., values and beliefs students bring to the classroom)
2. Culture of the school (i.e., existing values, expectations, and practices)
3. Resulting culture in the classroom (i.e., students' practices intersecting with school practices)

Developing and measuring school climate is needed to support good decisions and the effectiveness of various policies and practices. School climate data allows the education community to understand the relationships between conditions for learning and academic outcomes and better utilize available time and resources.[80]

Bullying & Harassment

Every child must learn how to interact with others and deal with challenging situations, and addressing bullying is important to the well-being and safety of all students.[81] Students who avoid school because of bullying will suffer academically as well as socially. Every student deserves to be treated with respect and have a safe and civil learning environment. Furthermore, T.C.A. § 49-6-4503 requires that every district have a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment as well as procedures for investigating reports of bullying and harassment.

The department requires all districts to submit the Civil Rights and Bullying Compliance Reporting form annually. This reporting includes information relevant to demonstrate compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and bullying and harassment compliance information.

The TDOE safe and supportive schools division provides state-funded training, guidance, and technical assistance to districts and schools, including Title I schools, on bullying and harassment. The training includes an overview of these and other related requirements with a particular focus upon ensuring that policy is reflected in effective practice.

Family Resource Centers

In 1993, the Tennessee General Assembly recognized the increasing number of children experiencing a combination of high risk environments as a result of poverty, families with substance abuse, domestic violence, and dysfunctional families. In order to establish a network of prevention and early intervention programs, the General Assembly passed legislation granting districts the authority to establish Family Resource Centers (FRCs).[82] Across Tennessee, FRCs share a unified mission: to assist families through information and training, and to help families learn to resolve problems through the collaborative efforts of many disciplines within the community—including educational, medical, psychological, business, and social services.

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[80] R. Berkowitz, H. Moore, R. A. Astor, R. Benbenishty. (2016). A Research Synthesis of the Associations Between Socioeconomic Background, Inequality, School Climate, and Academic Achievement. *Review of Educational Research*. Web.
[81] Tennessee Department of Education. Bullying & Harassment. Web.
[82] Tennessee Department of Education. Family Resource Centers. Web.

There are 103 FRCs serving students in 78 school districts in 65 counties, and each serving the unique individual needs of the 103 communities. The FRC structure is funded with state and local dollars and is formed by the community, for the community, through the guidance of the FRC advisory council. The greatest needs, the target populations, and the available local resources vary from community to community. Therefore, each of the centers varies in goals and implementation strategies while remaining connected by the shared mission.

In collaboration with state agencies and community stakeholders, the department will continue its work to strengthen Family Resource Centers to enhance families' abilities to support academic and life success for their children. In 2017, the centers will have an intentional focus on improving attendance by reducing chronic absenteeism by leveraging community supports. This work is valuable, and critical to districts with the inclusion of chronic absenteeism as a measure in the state's accountability model.

21st Century Community Learning Centers

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program provides federal funding to establish or expand community learning centers. These centers provide students with opportunities for academic enrichment, youth development, and family support during non- school hours or during periods when school is not in session. The overarching goal of the 21st CCLC program is to provide students—particularly students who attend low performing schools—with academic enrichment opportunities and support services to help them meet state and local standards in the core content areas.

Principles of Effectiveness

Tennessee's 21st CCLC program is operated in a manner that is in compliance with the Principles of Effectiveness – *Section 4204(b)(2)(I)* developed by the U.S. Department of Education. These principles include the expectation that programs:

(A) be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for before and after school programs (including during summer recess periods) and activities in the schools and communities;
(B) be based upon an established set of performance measures aimed at ensuring the availability of high quality academic enrichment opportunities; and
(C) if appropriate, be based upon scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program or activity will help students meet the State and local student academic achievement standards[83].

Approved Activities

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers provide a broad array of services, programs, and activities that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students. Such activities/programs may include the following.[84]

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[83] USDOE http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html
[84] U.S. Department of Education. 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Web.

21st Century Community Learning Centers Approved Activities	
Remedial education	Recreational activities
Academic enrichment	Technology programs/telecommunication
Math & science activities	Expanded library hours
Arts & music activities	Parent involvement/family literacy
English development classes	Drug & violence prevention
Tutoring & mentoring programs	Counseling programs
Assistance to truant, suspended, or expelled students	Character education
	Entrepreneurial education

In addition, community learning centers may offer opportunities for literacy and related educational development to family members of participating students including school readiness activities for younger siblings of students being served.

Eligible Applicants

School districts, community-based and faith-based organizations, and other public or private organizations are eligible to apply for funding. Applicants other than school districts must collaborate with the school(s) of the students to be served. Grant funds may *not* be used to support religious practices.[85]

Absolute Priority

Grants can only be awarded to programs that primarily serve students who attend schools with a high concentration of low-income students, defined as schools eligible for designation as a Title I school-wide program.

Application Peer Review

For the FY18 grant competition, a request for peer reviewers was submitted to the 21st CCLC listserv and was sent to individuals who had previously served as reviewers for extended learning grants. The executive director for the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) was also contacted for recommendations for peer reviewers. Three TCCY members served as peer reviewers. No Tennessee department of education staff members served as reviewers. No current extended learning project directors or staff members served as reviewers.

[85] U.S. Department of Education. Faith-based and Other Neighborhood Organizations. Web.

Reviewers completed an online application, submitted a résumé and signed a conflict of interest statement. Thirty (30) reviewers were selected. Approximately half of the reviewers were from out of state, and a summary of their credentials is listed below.

- 80 percent of peer reviewers had obtained a master's degree or higher
- 88 percent had experience reviewing federal, state or local grants
- 70 percent had experience writing federal, state or local grants
- 79 percent had experience working in youth development and grants management

Reviewers participated in a one and a half hour webinar that covered the application and scoring procedures. Each application was read and scored by two reviewers (one out of state reviewer and one in-state reviewer). Reviewers were given view only access to ePlan so that they could see the application as submitted by the LEA or agency. Reviewers were required to provide written comments in each section of the application identifying both the strengths and weaknesses.

The peer review team provided each application with a technical merit score based upon the review criteria and rubric. The extended learning staff held conference calls with each review team to discuss scoring. Reviewers worked together to align scores to within a 5 - 6 point difference. A rating anchor was used to guide this process and to support inter-reader reliability. After the conference calls, reviewers were asked to revise and edit comments to make sure they accurately reflected the score for each section of the application.

Appeals Process

Applicants that wish to appeal a grant award decision must submit a letter of appeal to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), extended learning programs. Appeals are limited to the grounds that the TDOE failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified by the request for applications. Appeals based on a disagreement with the professional judgment of the grant readers will not be considered. Grant reviewers represent a diverse range of professions and are recruited based on background and experience related to education, youth development, and extended learning programming. Funding decisions are determined by the grant review committee. The department's role is to facilitate the process in accordance with state and federal policies and regulations.

The appellant must file a full and complete written appeal, including the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought. The letter must have an original signature of the authorized agent who signed the application. An original and two copies of the appeal should be mailed to:

Director, Extended Learning Programs
Tennessee Department of Education
710 James Robertson Parkway, 11th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243

The department must receive the letter of appeal within 30 business days of the written notification of grant award announcement. Upon review of the appeal, a response will be provided to the complainant within 30 business days.

Program

In an effort to ensure projects have a stronger connection to regular school-day programming and Tennessee Academic Standards, programs are structured to address the following focus areas through evidence-based activities:

- Increasing reading and math proficiency
- Strategies that will improve high school graduation rates and increase postsecondary access/success

Program Quality – Performance Indicators & Self-Assessment

The TDOE will begin implementation of a statewide evaluation plan for the 21st CCLC project in fall 2017. Beginning with the 2017-18 project year, newly-funded 21st CCLC programs will be evaluated on the basis of an established set of performance indicators used to demonstrate progress towards goals. The goals were established on the basis of prior data collected.[86]

The TDOE extended learning programs has established a set of performance goals and indicators as a part of the statewide evaluation of 21st CCLC programs. Performance targets were based on statewide data collected during prior program years and/or national targets. Indicators are the tools that will be used to measure progress towards goals. The indicators are pre-established and in some cases include TDOE developed instruments such as teacher and parent surveys that will be provided to the grantee.

Performance Goal 1 requires applicants to address how they will meet the academic needs of students in the proposed project.

Performance Goal 1: All students will reach high academic standards at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and mathematics.	
Alignment: ALIGNS with Tennessee Strategic Plan Priority Area: All Means All –Providing individualized support & opportunities for all students with a focus on those furthest behind.	
Indicator (unit of measure for progress towards goals): Student grades from fall to spring; state assessments	
Performance Target	Description
1.1	At least 50 percent of all students who participate in the program for 30 days or more will have improved math grades from fall to spring [national target 48.5 percent]
1.2	At least 50 percent of all students who participate in the program for 30 days or more will have improved reading/language arts grades from fall to spring [national target 48.5 percent]
1.3	At least 40 percent of all students who participate in the program for 30 days or more will be proficient or above in math on state assessment
1.4	At least 40 percent of all students in the who participate in the program for 30 days or more will be proficient or above in reading/language arts on state assessment

Applicants must describe the following:

[86] See Appendix T

1. Specific program activities that will be implemented to address the performance goal and target;
2. Relevant professional development activities pertaining to the goal
3. How progress towards performance goals will be shared with stakeholders such as parents, students and school/community partners.

Statewide Activities

The department utilizes its 21st CCLC statewide activity funds to:

- monitor and evaluate programs
- support capacity building
- provide training and technical assistance to applicants and grantees
- support the statewide evaluation of the program

Monitoring and evaluation of programs. It is essential that agencies have the capacity to access and collect appropriate progress report and evaluation data. All funded 21st CCLC sites will be expected to participate in a rigorous evaluation process that will include the collection of attendance, academic achievement and disciplinary information for the students served. In addition, all sites will be expected to submit the Annual Progress Report for 21st Century Community Learning Centers developed by the U.S. Department of Education.

The department uses a risk-based protocol to determine the number of 21st CCLC projects to be monitored each year. Extended learning program staff conduct on-site monitoring of programs each year. Additionally, four grantees per month are selected for desktop fiscal monitoring.

As a part of the evaluation process, local CCLC staff will enter program information in the state-sponsored data collection system and participate in the 21st CCLC statewide evaluation activities. In order to track student enrollment and academic and discipline information via the Student Information System package (SIS), grant staff should work with assigned school/district staff to "flag" program participants in the SIS package for 21st CCLC under student classification. The memorandum of agreement between the agency and the school district articulates the need for cooperation in identifying and flagging these students.

The University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) is the current contracted external evaluator providing both data collection and evaluation services. UT SWORPs supports an external data collection system that tracks daily student participation in program activities at the site/center level. UT provides annual reports to the department on student participation data. This data is shared also shared with grantees. The university, in partnership with the department, develops the parent and teacher survey and collects and analyzes the data. Beginning with the 2017-18 program year, grantees will be able to access aggregate center/site level parent and teacher survey results. The department will provide technical assistance to grantees on how this data can be used to inform program improvement.

Capacity building. Funds are used to support the work of 13 best practice mentors across the state. Mentors are veteran project directors with at least three years of experience managing a 21st CCLC project. Each mentor is assigned a group of project directors within their respective regions. They contact mentees on a monthly basis (virtual and in-person) and provide general guidance on program management, reporting, and daily operations. The departments meet biannually with the mentors to establish technical assistance and professional development priorities for a program year.

Training and technical assistance. The department hosts two in-person statewide meetings with grant project directors and their staff members each year. These meetings focus on a variety of topics including but not limited to fiscal management, family engagement, and evaluation activities and provide an opportunity to grantees to share best practices. Regional check-ins are held in the fall and spring with project directors.

Four regional technical assistance workshops are held during grant competitions years. These workshops provide information on 21st CCLC grant guidelines as well as how to apply using the department's online grant management system. Periodic webinars are also conducted for individuals who may not be able to attend in-person trainings.

Statewide evaluation. As the external evaluator the University of Tennessee SWORPS worked with the department in establishing performance goals and indicators to be implemented during the 2017-18 program year. The indicators are a component of the statewide evaluation of program effectiveness. UT will provide an annual report will work with the department in establishing annual targets for program improvement. UT and the department will work together to provide technical assistance to grantees on how to use the data for program improvement.

Family & Community Engagement

The department is committed to supporting and promoting authentic partnerships between schools, families, and communities.[87] Since 2001, the definition of parental involvement has broadened, now including any adult in a child's life, and calls for families to be full partners with school staff and other members of the community in the work of creating and sustaining high-performing schools. ESSA calls on states and districts to engage, on an ongoing basis, with families and other community partners in the implementation of programs to support students.

Over 40 years of research is clear: when schools, families, and communities work together to support learning, students do better in school, are more likely to persist, and enjoy school more. Regardless of income or background, research has shown that students from families who are engaged in their education earn better grades and test scores; enroll in higher-level courses and programs; are more likely to be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits; have better school attendance; show improved behavior and have better social skills; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

We also know, however, that children from economically disadvantaged families face additional challenges. Students living in impoverished neighborhoods often attend schools that lack the resources needed to foster student success. They tend to have much lower rates of parent involvement in their education than their middle-class peers. Schools must take deliberate action to forge strong partnerships and to make parents feel welcome in every instance, especially if a parent did not have a positive, supportive educational experience. Economically disadvantaged students need a network of support to counteract the negative effects of poverty.[88]

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[87] Tennessee Department of Education. Family & Community Engagement. Web.

[88] Okilwa, Nathern S. A. (2016). Exploring School- and Home-Related Protective Factors for Economically Disadvantaged Middle School Students. Web.

With the addition of the Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant in ESSA, the TDOE plans to administer family and community engagement and Title IV collaboratively. Tennessee's family and community engagement coordinator will assume the responsibilities of state director for Title IV to provide trainings and more comprehensive supports to districts, schools, families, and other stakeholders.

Through this coordinated approach, the department will coordinate Title I family engagement dollars with Title IV to maximize these federal resources while partnering with the department's safe and supportive schools division and office of the Commissioner—providing training opportunities and ongoing technical assistance across the state.

Strategy	Timeline	Funding
Technical Assistance: The TDOE will provide technical assistance to districts around ESSA requirements for family engagement.	Ongoing	Title I (including Consolidated Administration funds) Title IV
Professional Learning: The TDOE will provide districts with opportunities for professional learning and training around family and community engagement including but not limited to the following: • ESSA/Title I family engagement • Best practices in family engagement • The Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships • The National PTA's Standards for Family-School Partnerships • Engaging hard to reach families • Cultural competency • Strengthening community partnerships • English Language Development (ELD) for parents of English learners Trainings will be delivered by the Title IV state director in various formats including webinars, newsletters, in person training sessions, as well as a statewide family engagement forum or conference. The effectiveness of these trainings and other technical assistance opportunities will be evaluated via participant survey following each section. Each survey will also ask for recommendations for future training topics to inform technical assistance going forward.	Ongoing	Title I (including Consolidated Administration funds) Statewide family engagement conference: Title I, Extended Learning, and Safe and Supportive School funds Title IV Title III funding EL related activities
Needs Assessment: The TDOE will develop a tool to be used in the school improvement planning process which contains elements to help schools identify and address the non-academic barriers that may impede many students' academic achievement. This process is led by the consolidated planning and monitoring division at TDOE. The needs assessment will help districts and schools look at community-based resources and supports already in place, measure successes and outcomes associated with these strategies, determine gaps in	Implementation would begin in the 2017-18 school year	Title I (including Consolidated Administration and school improvement funds)

Strategy	Timeline	Funding
necessary programs and services, and develop strategies to address gaps through efficient and focused collaboration with community partners.		
Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT): The TDOE will explore the scope and cost of implementing APTT in Comprehensive Improvement and Support and/or Targeted Support and Improvement schools, based on the availability of credible evidence of effectiveness. APTT is a systematic and integrated approach to parent-teacher collaboration. In this model, classroom teachers invite families to participate in three 75-minute team meetings in which all families are present and one, 30-minute individual session. During APTT meetings, teachers share student performance data, review grade-level foundational skills, and demonstrate concrete activities that families can do at home to help students master those skills. Families have the opportunity to practice the activities, and each family sets 60-day academic goals for their student. APTT is grounded in research that confirms that high expectations and communication in the home are a powerful and essential ingredient in students' academic success.[89] Evidence from schools and districts implementing APTT show increased student achievement, higher attendance at APTT meetings as compared to traditional parent teacher conferences, and an increase in parents' feelings of self-efficacy for engagement.[90] The cost and possible scope of an APTT initiative are currently being explored.	Expected implementation in the 2017-18 school year	Title I (including Consolidated Administration and school improvement funds)
Community School Model: The TDOE will explore the scope and cost of partnering with an external entity or develop its own model for the development and expansion of community schools across the state, particularly in Priority schools who often have a greater need for additional student support and wraparound services.	Implementation timeline to be determined	Title I (including Consolidated Administration and school improvement funds) State dollars if expanded to Focus schools
Engaging Migrant Parents: To ensure consultation with parents, Conexión Américas will begin the implementation of our Parents as Partners program in select locations across the state. The focus will begin with the more populated areas and move into areas of the state where there are fewer migratory families. The nine-week program is currently offered in Spanish for the parents of most migratory students and in English for those migratory students from other language	Implementation beginning in the 2016-17 school year	Title I, Part C

[89] Redd, Z., Guzman, L., Lippman, L., Scott, L., and Matthews, G. (2004). Parental expectations for children's educational attainment: A review of the literature. Prepared by Child Trends for the National Center for Education Statistics.
[90] Harvard Family Research Project. Web.

Strategy	Timeline	Funding
groups. The training provides the parents opportunities to share concerns and hopes for the program as it relates to their students. This is powerful due to the training being built with parents trained as facilitators leading the group meeting.		
Engaging Parents of English Learners: Under ESSA, Title III requires the following activities: providing and implementing other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement LIEPs which include parent, family, and community engagement. Title III funds will also support family literacy services and outreach to ELs and their families. This will be included in the department's implementation guide.	Implementation beginning in the 2017-18 school year	Title III, Part A

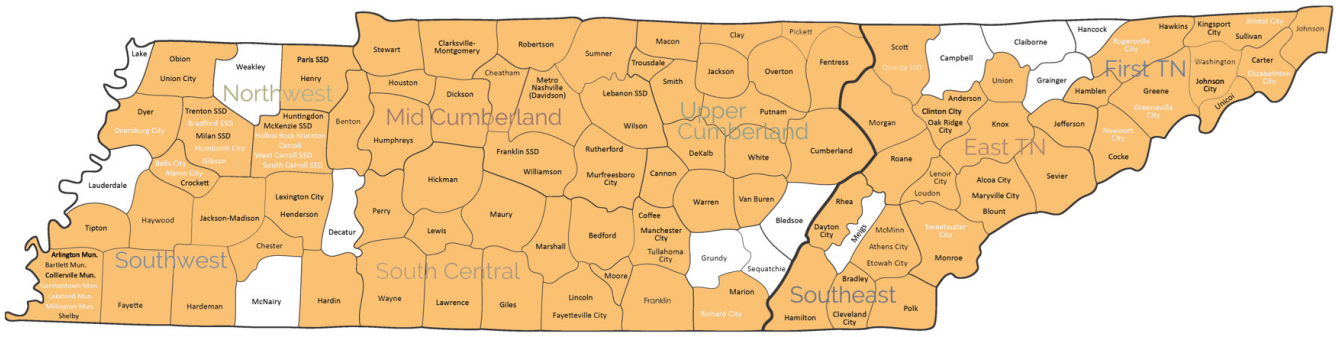
Student Engagement

Student advisory councils engage students whose voices frequently go unheard in the identification of challenges and opportunities relative to five key areas:

1. Academic challenge/engagement/expectations
2. Opportunity and access
3. Student voice
4. Adequacy of support
5. Relationships

While the department began hosting a series of student advisory council focus groups in each of the eight CORE regions in fall 2015, the ESSA state plan development has precipitated the solicitation of student voices regarding their educational experiences, areas where their schools could be improved (safety, course offerings, etc.), and how the department can improve those experiences. Feedback from the advisory councils has been incorporated in the TDOE's strategic planning and in the ESSA plan.

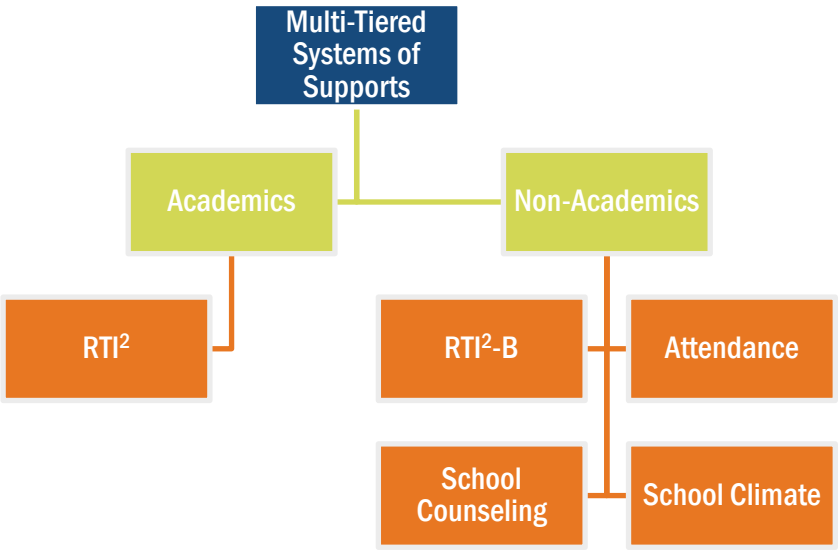
In February 2015, Commissioner McQueen kicked off her Classroom Chronicles Tour to connect with 10,000 teachers, a goal she met by May 2016. Of the many lessons learned on this tour, one prominent message was the need to incorporate the voices of students. During the 2016-17 school year, the Commissioner conducted a dozen student round tables at high schools across the state and heard about the needs of students and schools, goals for after high school graduation, and the importance of rigorous coursework to prepare for the future. In total, she has visited over 100 districts since kicking off the tour.



The department is focused on listening to student voices and truly engaging students through other initiatives. During spring 2016, every member of the department's senior leadership team shadowed a student for a day to get a sense for the range of experiences high school students have across the state and the different opportunities that are available in different schools.

Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs

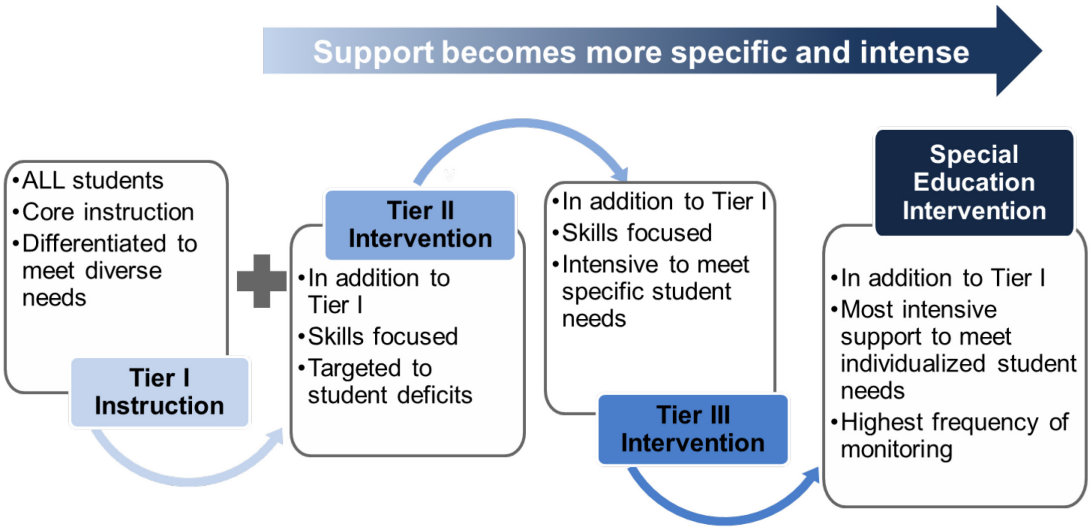
Tennessee utilizes a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework to address students' needs across the academic and non-academic domains. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI^2) and Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI^2-B) comprise two key components of the MTSS framework. In addition, the state recognizes that the MTSS framework is a valuable tool for considering programming and intervention in areas including Project AWARE, ACEs, chronic absenteeism, restorative practices, social and personal learning, school counseling, and mental health programming. The department began alignment of its overarching MTSS framework in August 2016 to be released in September 2017. This framework links several key department initiatives that have been implemented over the past several years with additional upcoming trainings and supports.



Response to Instruction & Intervention

Across the country, states are focused on providing early intervention—often called a Response to Intervention (RTI) method—to address deficits in student learning. RTI has emerged as the way to think about both disability identification and early intervention assistance for the most academically vulnerable students. In Tennessee, we have taken a unique RTI approach called RTI^2—Response to Instruction and Intervention.

In 2013, the state board adopted a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI^2) framework for use in identifying students with specific learning disabilities. Elementary schools began using this framework in summer 2014; middle schools began implementation in 2015; and high schools in 2016. Implementation of Tennessee's RTI^2 Framework is now required for all K–12 public schools, in all grade levels beginning in the 2016-17 school year.



Tennessee first developed its RTI^2 manual in the 2013-14 school year and continues to refine the manual based on educator feedback and an examination of current research and best practice. As schools have begun implementing RTI^2, the department has captured best practices and has identified districts implementing RTI^2 with fidelity. The department's data and research division has published a brief on *Supporting Early Grades Student Achievement: An Exploration of RTI^2 Practices* which can be accessed here.

In response to this report, the department organized a Tier I Working Group, which sought to refine the guidance in the Tier I section of the manual. The draft manual was released for public feedback in fall 2016. An updated RTI^2 manual was released in February 2017 and can be accessed here. The goal of the manual is to support educators and empower districts in their continued implementation of RTI^2 and to ensure that educators have the structure and resources necessary to provide all students with access to and support for reaching high standards and expectations.

The following refinements are reflected in Tennessee's RTI^2 framework:

- use of multiple sources of data for the universal screening process;
- provide more detailed description of Tier I instructional practices;
- expand definition of ongoing assessment and data-based decision making;
- strengthened explanation of professional development;
- connect fidelity monitoring in Tier I more closely to the educator evaluation model; and
- refine manual to provide a stronger conceptualization of the "ready" student, consistency of language, and more autonomy for districts.

Many Title I school-wide schools across the state utilize federal dollars to provide additional supports to students in Tier II and Tier III interventions, while other districts utilize Title II, Part A dollars to provide training to teachers on differentiating instruction for students, scaffolding, as well as the new state standards in reading/English language arts and mathematics. Additionally, the department uses state funds to develop trainings and tools for districts. As demonstrated with RTI^2, the department will continue to provide support and technical assistance to districts utilizing multiple grant programs, as well as state funds to maximize resources and ultimately services to students.

An RTI^2 oversight committee continues to meet regularly to review statewide needs and address ways to support districts. State regional interventionists continue to provide trainings to coach leaders and

educators on best practices on data-based decision making and instructional methodology focused on prevention and intervention prior to making referrals for specific learning disabilities.

Response to Instruction & Intervention for Behavior

During implementation of RTI^2 in 2014, it became evident that for many students, behavior supports were identified as an underlying need, directly impacting academic success.

The RTI^2-B Framework is aligned with Tennessee's RTI^2 Framework. Together, these frameworks complement each other—one academic and the other behavioral and fall within the states' broader guidance around multi-tiered systems of support. Both RTI^2 and RTI^2-B are multi-tiered, problem-solving frameworks for providing high-quality, explicit instruction for all with increasingly intensive interventions based on student need. Academics and behavior are both components of the same support system and address the ESSA priority of a well-rounded education. A student's behavior affects and is affected by their academics. One should not be considered without the other. Districts are in different phases of RTI^2-B implementation. The state plans to provide detailed guidance and resources around multi-tiered systems of supports in fall 2017, including additional supports for RTI^2-B.

To support this framework, three universities will provide training and support to schools and districts through the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (TBSP). The TBSP offices are located at the Lambuth Campus of University of Memphis, Vanderbilt University, and University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Twenty-six districts currently participate in the trainings provided through the TBSP. This training focuses on school-wide implementation with the following components:

- determining school strengths, needs, areas of concern;
- school-wide expectations, policies and actions for acknowledging appropriate behavior and redirecting inappropriate behavior; and
- universal screening procedures and identifying students who will need additional support through Tier II or III; and beginning to explore and determine what Tier II and III supports will entail.

The state budget allocated funds for the TBSP, supporting district and school implementation of the RTI^2-B Framework. In addition to these state dollars, the department will be providing technical assistance and resources to districts on the use of federal grant dollars to supplement, particularly in school-wide Title I schools, with ESSA's emphasis on well-rounded education and with the additional school quality and student success accountability indicator.

Project AWARE

In October 2014 the TDOE received a SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Agency) grant to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan of activities, services, and strategies to decrease youth violence and promote the healthy development of children and youth. The overarching goal is to expand youth access to mental health resources and promote resilience and positive behavioral functioning among school-age youth. The initiative defines three specific goals:

- Build state capacity to increase mental health awareness and access in schools and communities through the development of state and local policy as well as resource integration;
- Promote competency among child-serving adults to detect and respond to youth mental health concerns;

- Expand the continuum of school- and community-based behavioral health supports and interventions to more effectively respond to youth mental health needs and to keep youth in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

Tennessee's Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education) grant provides funding to three pilot districts to design and implement a framework to address the mental health needs of children, youth, families, and communities through prevention, early intervention, and intensive school-based mental health services.

Tennessee AWARE established a state management team to support the integration of state and local policies and resources, expand and enhance the continuum of school-based mental health training, mental health services, and behavioral supports.

Specific school and district prevention and intervention strategies include:

- implementing evidence-based prevention programs
- developing mental health awareness and outreach campaigns
- promoting youth and family engagement strategies
- establishing early identification and referral processes to connect youth to appropriate services
- placing mental health clinicians in schools to deliver effective, targeted, and intensive interventions and referrals
- refining school discipline policies to reduce loss of student instructional time and removals from school due to suspension and expulsion

Implementation of a comprehensive model for the delivery of behavioral health services for districts will be made available in fall 2018. As with other support services, the Title IV grant funds and expanded uses of Title I can be utilized to support these initiatives should this need be identified by the district, and the department will provide ongoing technical assistance and resources to support the expanded allowable uses of Title funds.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study[91] tells us that many children's futures are undermined when stress damages the early-brain architecture. These adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, such as witnessing violence and abuse, affect how well children progress in school and in life. Children who have experienced several ACEs need high-quality programs with strong, nurturing supports to ameliorate the impact of ACEs when they cannot be prevented.

ACEs are particularly challenging for newly-arrived or immigrant students. Refugees and asylum seekers who come to our country often have experienced war, famine, and other atrocities that have caused a major impact on their childhood. Some have been without food, water, and safe shelter for extended periods of time, and fear that this move will not offer them the protection that they seek. In

[91] *Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adult*s, published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 1998, Volume 14, pages 245–258.

fact, most, if not all, immigrants work through the stages of culture shock when they move to a new environment.[92]

To improve outcomes for children who have experienced ACEs, the department is part of a statewide effort being led by Tennessee's Governor to raise awareness of the impact of ACEs on youth development. Funding from the Tennessee General Assembly and the ACEs Foundation will enable the department to provide training for administrators and teachers in summer 2017. The training, *Building Strong Brains: Strategies for Educators*, will focus on how ACEs impact learning and behavior at both the school and classroom level for grades pre-K–12 and how educators can mitigate harm.

Chronic Absenteeism

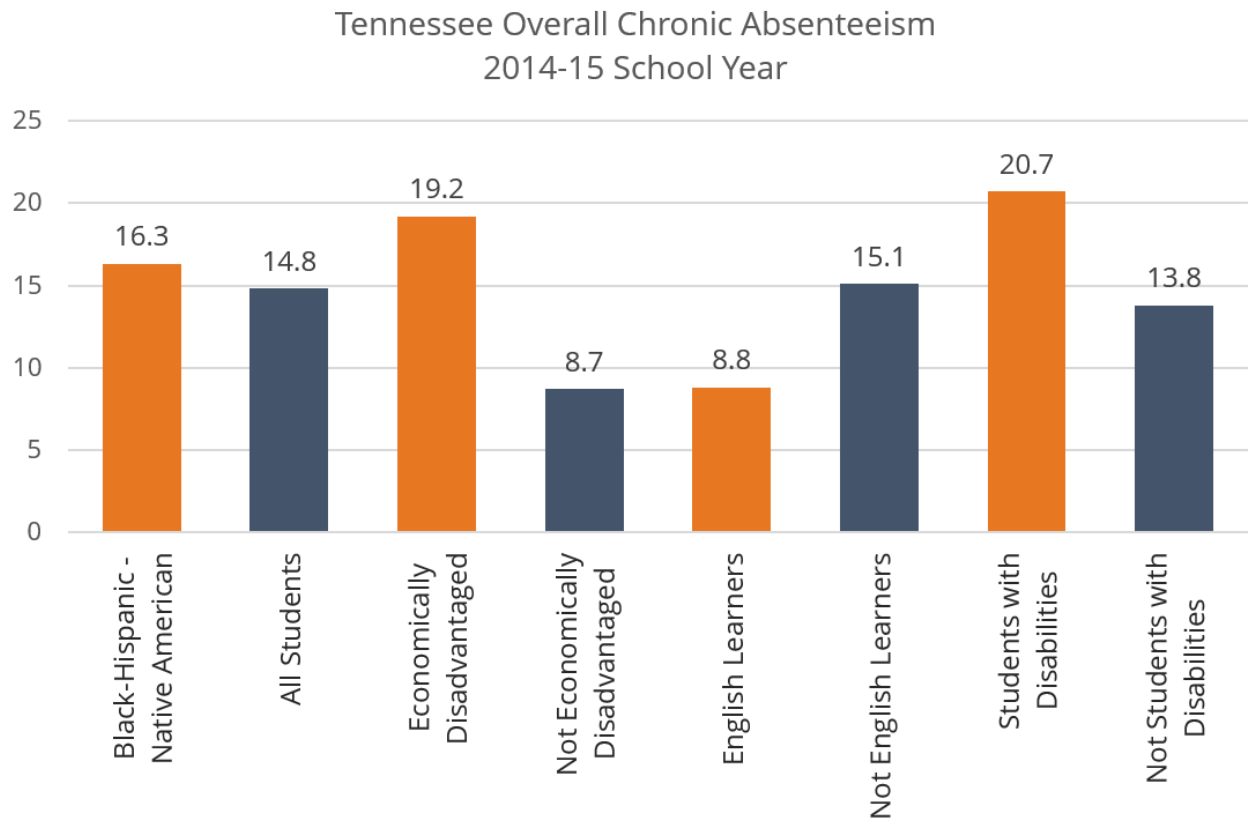
The accountability indicator, Chronically Out of School, is based on chronic absenteeism; defined as missing 10 percent or more of the days a student is enrolled, which is a commonly accepted definition in research literature. In using this definition, the department recognizes chronic absenteeism as a lost instructional opportunity and a "real time" data point that is actionable throughout the school year.

Students who are suspended out of school or expelled for disciplinary infractions are considered absent, and these absences will be included in a school's chronic absenteeism calculation. However, students who are assigned to in-school suspension for disciplinary infractions will not be considered absent for chronic absenteeism purposes; therefore are not included in the Chronically Out of School indicator.

Tennessee will follow state policy for determining whether or not a student is present. Per current policy, a student should be marked absent if he or she misses at least half of the state minimum day. Additional business rules will be part of the school accountability protocol as determined during the ESSA implementation period. As mentioned previously, a guiding principle of our state accountability framework is that all schools should have the opportunity to demonstrate success and earn an "A". Including two pathways reflects this guiding principle as we believe all schools can work to reduce chronic absenteeism, even though higher rates of chronic absenteeism are associated with high poverty schools.

Multiple research studies link poor attendance with reduced academic outcomes. Harmful effects of poor attendance are cumulative and only looking at overall average daily attendance rates tend to mask attendance problems, particularly for historically underserved student groups. In fact, economically disadvantaged students are over twice as likely to be chronically absent than non-economically disadvantaged students. Similar trends exist with other student groups including students with disabilities.

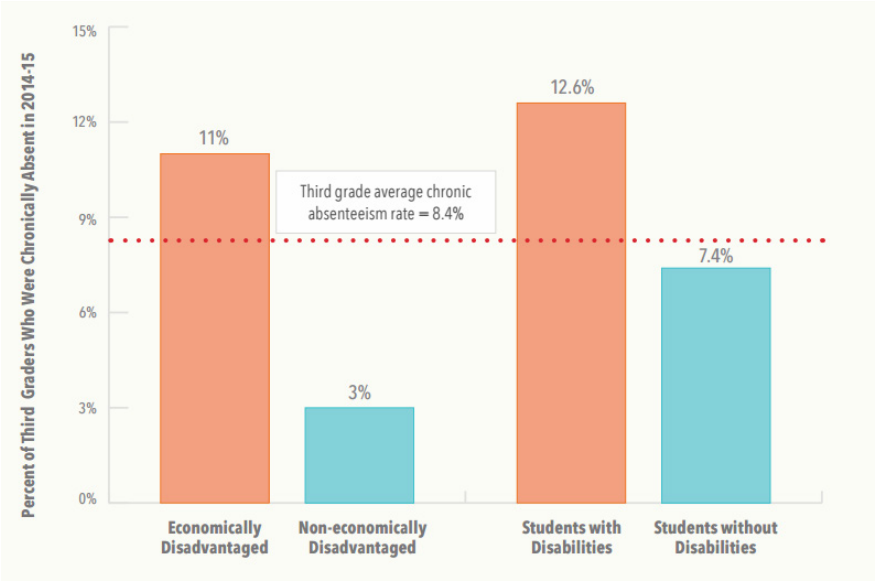
[92] University of California, San Francisco. Web.



Tennessee attendance data for 2014-15 showed that 23.6 percent of P–4 students are chronically absent, and 25.4 percent of seniors are chronically absent. In addition, as absences increase in freshman year, the likelihood that a student will graduate on time decreases. Sixty-two percent of ninth grade students were chronically absent. The data also showed that some student groups are overrepresented in the chronically-absent student population that includes students with disabilities 16.5 percent, economically disadvantaged 17.5 percent, and African American 17 percent.[93]

As illustrated in the chart below, during the 2014-15 school year, economically disadvantaged students in the third grade were chronically absent at a rate three-times higher than their non-economically disadvantaged peers. While around three percent of non-economically disadvantaged students are chronically absent in third grade, around 11 percent of economically disadvantaged students are chronically absent. Students with disabilities are also more likely to be chronically absent; over 12 percent of students who are classified as having a disability are chronically absent relative to seven percent of non-SWD students.

[93] Tennessee Department of Education. *Chronic Absenteeism in Tennessee's Early Grades*. (Feb. 2016). Web.



While most districts and schools have access to rich attendance data that can be accessed throughout the school year, successfully addressing chronic absenteeism will require a paradigm shift from a punitive to restorative approach. We believe that students who are chronically absent are missing more than a school day; students are missing the opportunity to learn. Focusing on lost opportunities rather than attendance requirements opens the door for better relationships between school, family, and student. Tennessee began this important work in 2015 by integrating chronic absenteeism into its strategic plan and beginning to raise awareness across the state of how each district and school is impacted.

To underscore the importance the department places on the opportunity to learn, Tennessee will be using *Chronically Out of School* as one of its accountability measures for school quality and student success. To this end, we will be dedicating both state and federal Title IV statewide dollars to providing support and technical assistance to districts with a focus on understanding and addressing the factors which may be impacting attendance. The department will provide training and guidance on best practices that address the reduction of chronic absenteeism as well as support districts and schools with restorative practices, especially with historically underserved student groups. Additionally, the office of safe and supportive schools will be launching a comprehensive resource no later than September 1, 2017. More information can be found in the plan's *District Empowerment* section.

Reduction of Exclusionary Practices & Promotion of Restorative Practices

Closely related to chronic absenteeism, the reduction of exclusionary discipline practices can impact school culture and reduce absenteeism. According to 2014-15 discipline data, 44,498 African American students were suspended from Tennessee K–12 schools.[94] Across the state, African American students make up 23 percent of the student population, but comprised 58 percent of suspensions and 71 percent of expulsions. Economically disadvantaged students make up over 80 percent of all

[94] Tennessee Department of Education. State Report Card. Web.

exclusionary disciplinary incidents; one in five ninth graders received some disciplinary action; and, 1,794 kindergarten students were either suspended or expelled. Eighty-four percent of these disciplinary infractions were not for violence but for willful and persistent violation of school rules.[95] Addressing these disparities must be an intentional part of a restorative disciplinary model.

The office of safe and supportive schools will expand and enhance training and support to districts and schools, including Title I schools, to reduce the use of exclusionary practices and implement effective alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Several strategies have been identified to address this critical priority. Restorative practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building, and problem-solving, through restorative methods including circles for teaching and conflict resolution. Other effective methods include conferences that bring victims, offenders, and their supporters together to address wrongdoing. Instead of punishment, students are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and come up with plans to repair harm.

Restorative practices training utilizing state dollars is provided to district and school administrators responsible for school discipline policies and practices, including how to effectively use the technique of classroom circles as well as conferencing. During the 2018-19 school year, restorative practices training will be expanded across the state with the addition of certified trainers funded with state dollars, including for Title I schools.

Restorative practices for chronic absenteeism should include cultural awareness and training to parents and students that emphasize expectations for students in Tennessee. For example, we do not readily accept tardiness, nor is it appropriate for a parent to come late to a meeting that the school has arranged. A comprehensive school discipline website will be developed to house available resources on restorative practices in fall 2017. The Tennessee state report card will reflect the percent of students not in class due to exclusionary disciplinary practices for all districts and schools beginning with the 2018-19 school year. We expect this transparency metric to incentivize systemic change while providing stakeholders important information on school and district practices.

Social & Personal Learning

Social and personal learning is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.[96] Education must address the social and personal needs of students to improve student capacity to engage in academic learning and prepare students to meet college and career readiness standards.

In 2017, the department, through the work of an interdepartmental workgroup and stakeholder advisory group, will develop social and personal competencies and guidelines that are aligned and integrated with Tennessee learning standards. To support and enhance educator effectiveness around social and personal competences, the department, in collaboration with Great Teachers & Leaders and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, will use state funding to develop a series of online

[95] *Voices from the Classroom*. 2016 Tennessee Educator Survey. Web.
[96] Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2016.

modules. The modules introduce social and personal learning and teaching practices that support the academic, social, and personal skills development of all students. The ten optional, online modules will be released in September 2017 and housed on the TDOE webpage under school climate.

Continuous Improvement & Technical Assistance

The department plans to continue its efforts to ensure that Tennessee schools are safe learning environments for all students by maintaining the current statewide infrastructure for school safety planning and response. The Tennessee School Safety Center was established in 1998 with state funding to assist *all* districts in the development and implementation of high-quality school emergency operations plans. The center will provide training and technical assistance to districts on developing and implementing school and district level multi-hazard emergency operations plans. The center is partially funded by state safe schools funding.

The Conditions for Learning Forum provides an opportunity for districts to learn about and share best practices that enhance conditions for learning for *all* students. Forum content includes the challenge of chronic absenteeism and its impact on learning, adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed care and its impact on learning, the use of exclusionary discipline practices, school-based behavioral health services, and social and personal learning. The department will continue its support of the annual forum and its emphasis on improving conditions for learning for *all* students.

Ensuring that all students have a safe and supportive environment in which to learn is also an issue of equity, one of the key priorities of ESSA. The department will continue to support districts statewide, through the office of safe and supportive schools, the office of consolidated planning and monitoring, and regional CORE offices. Trainings on school climate and culture are offered both statewide and regionally, and integrating these supports will provide districts the supports necessary for building positive, inclusive learning environments.

Ensuring Equity: Student Access to Highly Effective Teachers

To improve student achievement for all students, we must work toward ensuring that all students have access to effective teachers and that our lowest-performing students are not systemically assigned to lower-performing teachers. With this goal in mind the department released a report, *Equitable Access to Highly Effective Teachers for Tennessee Students*, which examines which Tennessee students have access to the highest performing teachers and whether this access is equitable across the state, districts, and schools.[97]

The report describes the current landscape of Tennessee students' access to highly effective teachers by examining both the supply and distribution of highly effective teachers at the state, district, and school levels. We anticipate that this report will support districts and schools in examining their teaching data and their teacher-student matching practices to ensure equitable access to highly effective teachers for Tennessee students. More information is available in the *Educator Support* section of the plan.

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[97] Tennessee Department of Education. *Equitable Access to Highly Effective Teachers for Tennessee Students*. Web.

Performance Management: ESSA Programs

District & School Planning

In support of and in alignment with ESSA, the T.C.A.[98] requires the annual development and completion of a district plan developed in coordination with a variety of stakeholders. Per ESSA § 1111(a)(1)(A), these stakeholders include, at a minimum, administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and other appropriate district personnel. The plan must be based on a comprehensive needs assessment informed by feedback from internal and external stakeholders, achievement and accountability data, and other data to address learning cultures and supports. To facilitate this planning process with districts and meet the requirements of ESSA, the department utilizes an online grants management system (ePlan) that includes a planning module that connects the plan to both the state strategic plan goals and federal and state applications for funding.

While ESSA provides more state and local decision-making, districts must provide general planning assurances, as well as assurances addressing the district's responsibility for the state's identified Priority and Focus schools and their inclusion in district and school improvement activities.

With the implementation of ESSA, the department's consolidated planning and monitoring division (CPM) and centers of regional excellence (CORE) will initiate a new process for district planning in fall 2017. The process begins in the fall of each year with the release of state assessment results from the prior school year and the published state report card in November/December. Available data in the following categories are loaded into each district's planning template: assessment results, accountability results, teacher evaluation, teacher qualifications, per pupil expenditures, school climate and culture, graduation rate, college placement tests, student attendance and discipline, and early postsecondary opportunities.[99] Data are presented by content area, grade level, and eligible subgroup as required by the state accountability system. Achievement gap data in each content area as required by the state accountability system is also provided. Districts must analyze and respond to all data presented within the planning module to identify successes, challenges, and root causes, with emphasis and focus on those accountability targets that have not been met.

As part of the comprehensive needs assessment, districts must also consider the implementation of district-wide instructional initiatives such as RTI^2, prior year professional development activities, the effectiveness of parent and family engagement opportunities, subgroups such as EL, immigrant, and migrant as a priority need where applicable, and the level of access to and integration of technology into the curriculum. CORE data analysts will assist districts in reviewing and interpreting data to inform the needs assessment and ultimately the district's plan.

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[98] Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-1-613 requires the development of district and school plans to address school performance on value added assessment and other benchmarks for student proficiency, graduation rates, ACT scores where applicable, and student attendance. Plans must also identify areas of strength and weakness, strategies to improve, and how funds will be used to address areas of weakness. Plans must also include strategies for measuring the improvement supported by the funds.

[99] State-level data is collected through the state's longitudinal data system, the Educational Information System (EIS). All data is validated and verified by the office of data quality and integrity prior to integration into ePlan.

Upon completion of a comprehensive needs assessment, districts must outline the needs that have been identified. These needs must be prioritized and districts must select those needs to be addressed within the next school year. Districts must identify at least three priority areas to be addressed, but typically no more than five areas so that resources and actions can be more focused, rather than spread out or watered down. Based on the priority needs identified, districts must create goals, strategies, and action steps to respond to the identified priority needs and demonstrate an alignment between district goals, state and district accountability targets, and the state's strategic plan goals.

The department supports each district in the development of plans, through the eight CORE offices.[100] From November through March, CORE staff will provide technical assistance and support to each district in creating data notebooks, facilitating planning team meetings, analyzing data, identifying root causes, prioritizing needs, and developing goals, strategies, and action steps. Each CORE office has the capacity to provide districts with individualized professional assistance as needed throughout the planning process to ensure the completion of aligned, standards-focused, actionable, needs-driven plans in March of each year.

Review & Approval of District & School Plans

The grant programs in ESSA are managed in the department's CPM division which was formed from the departmental reorganization in 2013. CPM provides direct technical assistance to the state's 146 school districts and special schools and 1229 Title I schools for implementation of title programs within ESSA and IDEA. Assistance is provided by individual ESSA project directors as well as additional staff and six regional consultants assigned to support an average of 24 school districts each.

The rubrics which will be used to review and approve district plans will be developed for the 2017-18 school year through a collaboration of CPM and CORE offices. The rubrics were informed by federal and state plan requirements and district feedback. The rubric and plan timeline was presented to the Title I Committee of Practitioners (CPM Advisory Committee) comprised of multiple stakeholder groups. For additional feedback, CPM will conduct annual surveys of district personnel to continue to update processes and protocols.

The work of the CPM division with regard to ESSA is focused on district and school planning and monitoring of ESSA and IDEA programs including Title I (Part A, C, and D), Title II, Title III, Title IV, Title V, and Title VIII. The CPM team, in collaboration with special populations and student supports, CORE, and other divisions work across these two focus areas in their service to districts.

In 2015, CPM regional consultants conducted 188 on-site, technical assistance visits; participated in 41 professional development offerings; attended 26 study council meetings; and conducted eight distinguished school visits. In addition to these on-site visits and activities, regional consultants provide

[100] Center of Regional Excellence (CORE) offices are located within their designated region, serve as regional service and technical assistance centers and are an arm of the Tennessee Department of Education. Each CORE office is staffed by an executive director, academic specialists, planning consultants and fiscal specialists and is responsible for supporting 20–25 districts within the region.

consistent technical assistance through emails, telephone communications, and webinars throughout the year.

Planning: Ongoing Support & Continuous Improvement

In April, after the submission of district plans, each district begins the development of a consolidated funding application (CFA) for all formula grants under ESSA and IDEA. The CFA resides in the state's online grants managements system, ePlan, and must be aligned to the goals, strategies, and action steps within a district's plan. Support for the development of a compliant, effective, and district-plan-aligned CFA is provided through CPM's six regional program consultants. Regional program consultants offer workshops to review federal requirements, timelines, and expectations and provide one-on-one technical assistance for CFA development. All CFAs undergo a multi-level review process for alignment with needs and district plan goals and compliance with federal laws, regulations and guidelines; and applications are approved by July 1 of each year.

Throughout the remainder of the year, prior to the beginning of the next planning cycle in November, CORE office staff and regional program consultants monitor district progress toward meeting plan goals and work collaboratively with district leadership to adjust district plans and CFAs as necessary. As the new planning cycle begins, performance against prior year goals is considered in order to inform the development of the district plan for the next school year.

Planning: Schools

State statute (T.C.A. § 49-1-613) requires annual school improvement plans, and effective for the school year 2016-17, all schools in Tennessee must submit school improvement plans in ePlan. This allows for more transparency to parents and other stakeholders, as well as to districts who can ensure that school goals and strategies align with district efforts.

The CPM division provides technical assistance and support to ensure Title I school plans meet requirements of ESSA. Specifically, CPM provides support to ensure plans are:

- based on a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school, particularly the achievement and needs of students most at risk;
- providing for opportunities for all students, increasing the amount and quality of learning time, and addressing the needs of all students, particularly those most at risk;
- developed with the involvement of parents and members of the community to be served and individuals who will carry out the plan, including teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals present in the school, administrators, the local educational agency, tribes and tribal organizations present in the community, specialized instructional support personnel, technical assistance providers, school staff, and students (secondary);
- available to the district, parents, and the public, in an understandable format, in a language the parents can understand;
- coordinated and integrated with other federal, state, and local services, resources, and programs; and
- regularly monitored and revised (plan and implementation) as necessary based on student needs to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to meet the challenging state academic standards.

In addition, there are other optional provisions plans may include for which the department will continue to provide support to districts/schools through the planning season. These optional provisions may include:

- strategies for assisting preschool children in the transition from early childhood education programs to local elementary school programs;
- use funds to establish or enhance preschool programs for children who are under six years of age;
- preparation for and awareness of opportunities for postsecondary education and the workforce—careers and technical education, AP, IB, concurrent enrollment, or early college high schools;
- implementation of a school-wide tiered model to prevent and address problem behavior, and early intervening services, coordinated with similar activities and services carried out under IDEA;
- counseling, school-based mental health programs, specialized instructional support services, mentoring, and other strategies to improve students' skills outside academic subject areas; and
- professional development and other activities for teachers, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel to improve instruction and to recruit and retain effective teachers, particularly in high-need subjects.

As noted, the CPM division is responsible for providing support to districts to ensure Title I school plans are appropriate and contain required elements. These plans undergo multiple steps of review at the district and state level. First, the building leaders/principal must review the school plan prior to it being sent to the district. Then, district-level personnel review to ensure goals are appropriate and aligned with needs, strategies are appropriate and evidence-based, and that resources are allocated to carry out these plans.

At the state level school plans are part of the results-based monitoring protocol for districts identified for on-site monitoring. The monitoring teams review plans for selected schools (based on size of district), as well as conduct on-site visits to see the "on the ground" implementation of the plans.

The needs assessment is foundational to the school plan development. The department is committed to providing accurate, timely data to inform planning, both at the district and school level. Below are key components addressed in the needs assessment:

- **Elementary & Middle School Academic Data**
  - Subjects analyzed to discover what is working/what needs improvement
- **High School Academic Data**
  - Courses analyzed to discover what is working/what needs improvement
- **College/Career Readiness**
  - PLAN/EXPLORE, ACT, Graduation Rate
- **School Climate & Culture**
  - Attendance
  - Discipline issues
- **Human Capital**
  - How is the school placing their teachers?
  - How are they recruiting and retaining teachers?
- **Additional Areas**
  - RTI^2
  - Technology access and use
  - Professional development
  - Parent involvement
- **Summary**
  - Overall, what is working?
  - Where is focus of improvement?

ESSA Program Monitoring

Tennessee is continuing its work with districts to streamline the plan requirements across multiple grants, with the ultimate goal of districts developing a single plan for all students which also meets individual program requirements (ESSA, IDEA, CTE, etc.). The divisions across the department are continuing to meet to discuss how districts can address plan requirements within a more comprehensive plan and how we engage with districts in these functions.

The department will also be developing rubrics for use in reviewing and approving district plans that will identify discrepancies in per-pupil expenditures, teacher quality and qualifications, and access to early postsecondary opportunities and preschool programs. Those districts identified as having resource equity issues will be required to modify the plan to address the identified areas.
Districts will be required to take one or more actions:

- Adjust funding methodologies to ensure equity of expenditures
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to address the equitable distribution of highly effective, qualified teachers and, if necessary, direct resources to support them
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to make early postsecondary options available to students in the next school year and direct resources to support them
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to address the early learning needs of students prior to entering kindergarten (i.e., offering a preschool program, developing partnerships with existing preschools to ensure alignment of curriculum and seamless transition) and direct resources to support them

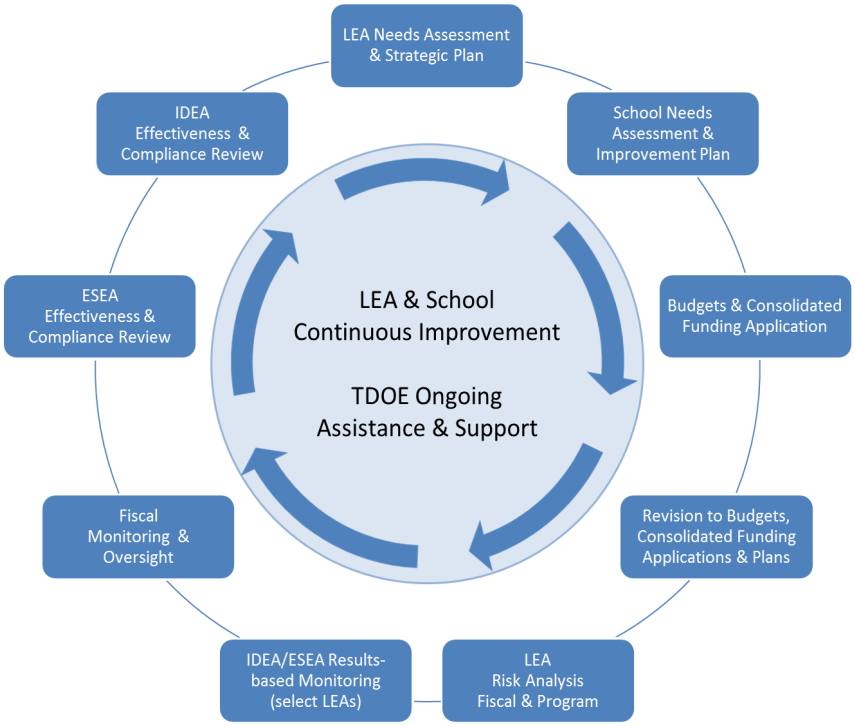
Risk Analysis

Over the past several years, the CPM division has utilized a risk analysis tool to identify districts for targeted technical assistance and monitoring. This instrument currently contains more than 60 indicators across multiple areas: federal funding, student achievement, human capital, number of federal discretionary grants received, audit findings, predictive performance indicators, and other points of data that could inform need. These indicators are weighted to inform both fiscal and program monitoring.
Each year, CPM's director of monitoring engages with stakeholders from multiple divisions across the department to review the indicators used, the reliability of the data, and any new indicators which should be considered. In addition, the director engages with various external stakeholders (such as the Title I Committee of Practitioners and members of the Metropolitan Area School System organization) to solicit their input on the risk analysis. Based on a district's summative score, cut scores are established to identify districts for the appropriate monitoring protocol (on-site, desktop, and self-assessment) based on the level of risk demonstrated (significant, elevated, or low to no risk). This risk analysis allows the department to deploy its resources where they are needed most, while also applying desktop and self-monitoring protocols where appropriate.

Results-based, Comprehensive Monitoring Framework

Since the TDOE's reorganization in 2013, the CPM division has transformed its philosophy of monitoring and the related processes. Our belief and our work are framed around a continuous cycle of improvement. We believe monitoring is not a one-time event, but rather an opportunity to have multiple "snapshots" throughout the school year. These snapshots may be when a district submits a

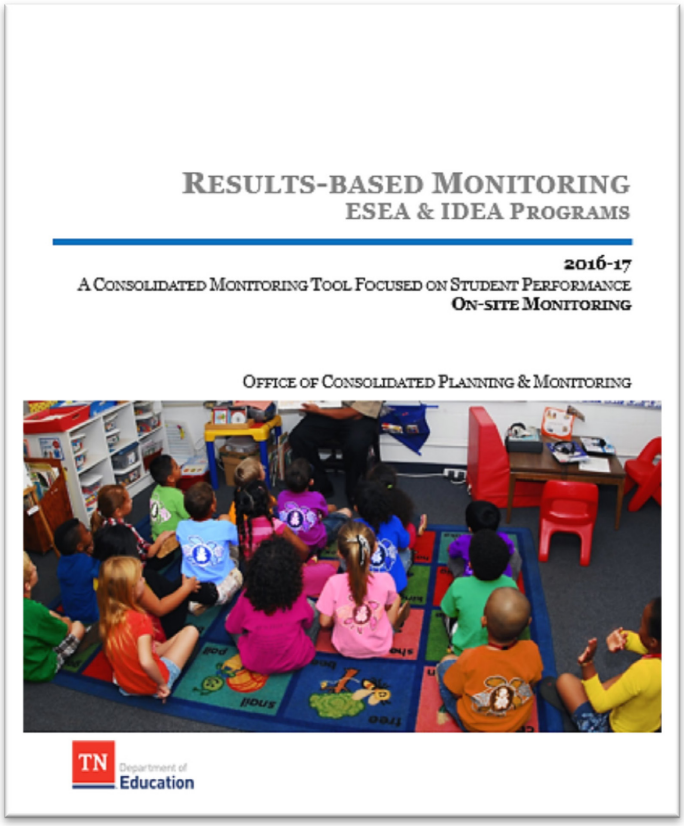
revision to its budget, comparability, or its consolidated funding application. Now beginning its fourth year of results-based monitoring, our process continues to focus on student outcomes and program effectiveness while ensuring compliance with federal regulations and laws. The monitoring framework is a collaborative process characterized by purposeful dialogue between the department and districts during which district and school leaders have the opportunity to discuss their programs and evidence—rather than simply checking a box.



Another unique feature in Tennessee's framework is that it exemplifies consolidated monitoring; ESSA and IDEA programs are monitored together. Rather than the instrument being organized by individual programs in isolation, our results-based monitoring reviews ESSA and IDEA programs, and embedded throughout these sections are compliance requirements for those individual programs. The instrument is organized around levers that we believe impact student achievement across both ESSA and IDEA programs:

- Quality Leadership (district & school levels)
- Effective Educators
- Instructional Practices
- Climate & Culture
- Family & Community Engagement
- Additional Areas (migrant, N&D, ELs, SWDs, incarcerated youth, equitable services, etc.)

The 2016-17 on-site results-based monitoring document and framework can be accessed on ePlan.


RESULTS-BASED MONITORING
ESEA & IDEA PROGRAMS

2016-17
A CONSOLIDATED MONITORING TOOL FOCUSED ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE
ON-SITE MONITORING

OFFICE OF CONSOLIDATED PLANNING & MONITORING

TN Department of Education

Federal requirements mandate that each state educational agency oversee and monitor the implementation of compliant federal programs at least annually and provide performance reports.[101] States are also required to provide technical assistance (which can be informed by monitoring).

With the passage of ESSA, Tennessee has revised its monitoring framework to ensure new ESSA requirements are met and often inform technical assistance on how the department supports districts.

These updates were based on feedback from stakeholders: survey results, focus groups, and other feedback from district and school personnel who participated in the 2015-16 monitoring process. In addition, CPM solicited input from other divisions within the department, the Title I Committee of Practitioners, and Metropolitan Area School System committee members.

For the 2016-17 school year, CPM staff will continue to perform on-site, results-based monitoring in districts identified as demonstrating significant risk via CPM's risk analysis. We have added two additional tiers such that every district has some level of review each year, regardless of the level of risk. Below are the additional tiers which have been added to the 2016-17 CPM monitoring framework. With these updates, we expect to ensure oversight of and tailored assistance to more districts, provide an increased level of support to districts demonstrating low to no risk, utilize limited resources more effectively and efficiently, streamline and improve processes, provide targeted support to decrease the number of findings of non-compliance, align more closely with *Tennessee Succeeds*, and identify promising practices in districts.

Self-assessment – *New*

- Eighty percent of districts will use a self-assessment protocol to assess their ESSA and IDEA programs
- CPM monitoring coordinator will review all district submissions and report on patterns
- Informs technical assistance (TA) for upcoming year
- Will not result in corrective actions

[101] EDGAR, 200.328

Desktop – *New*

- Twenty percent of districts demonstrating elevated risk on the risk analysis will use a desktop monitoring protocol to assess their ESSA and IDEA programs
- Two CPM consultants will review the submissions of required paperwork for monitoring
- Regional consultants who provide TA will support but not participate in monitoring of the districts to which they are assigned
- May result in findings of non-compliance

On-site

- Teams will visit 10 percent of districts on site to conduct monitoring
  - Large urbans will rotate (on site every other year)
- Increased standardization
- Visit approximately 10 percent of Title I schools in the district
- Regional consultants who support monitored districts will provide TA, but not participate in monitoring
- May result in findings of non-compliance

Strategies & Timeline

Strategy	Timeline
When the final state assessment results are available, all of the risk analysis factors are updated for the upcoming year.	June–late August
CPM staff members use a risk analysis comprised of more than 60 factors to determine which districts will be monitored as part of the multi-tiered framework.	June–August
After analyzing the risk analysis results, CPM staff members communicate with district personnel whose ESSA programs will be monitored either on site or via a desktop process.	Late August–September
CPM staff members collaborate with state program directors and review a wide variety of data (such as accountability results, district and school plans, consolidated funding application, and more) prior to conducting the monitoring; staff review required documentation while conducting on-site monitoring visits and engaging in desktop monitoring of approximately 20 percent of districts.	Mid-September–March
CPM staff collaborate with other divisions (accountability, teachers & leaders, finance, and special populations) at the department to update the factors of the risk analysis for the following year.	November–April
CPM staff collaborate with other TDOE divisions and with other stakeholders (Title I Committee of Practitioners, districts, and more) to update the monitoring documents for the next year.	November–July
CPM staff members review all findings of non-compliance for patterns.	April–July
CPM staff members provide technical assistance to districts based on monitoring findings. They also track and monitor the completion of compliance action plans for those items of non-compliance.	On-going

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs

Providing districts with the tools and autonomy they need to make the best decisions for all students means serving a diverse group of 146 districts. We cannot achieve our collective goals without building flexibility and district ownership into all that we do. There is no one-size-fits-all model. Ideas worth replicating have typically originated in our schools and classrooms—not at the state. We are committed to providing districts with the autonomy they need to best serve their students.

Waiving the 40 percent threshold allows districts to serve schools that could not previously have been served under Title I. We anticipate that this option will increase the number of middle and high schools being served in districts across the state. Tennessee will review and approve district requests to waive the minimum threshold for implementing school-wide programs as part of the consolidated funding application review process each spring.

Based on input from stakeholders both within the Student Support Working Group, CPM Advisory Committee (Title I Committee of Practitioners), and district federal programs directors; Tennessee has elected not to use the flexibility within Title I for a three percent Direct Services set aside. We believe that these funds would be utilized most effectively by having them distributed as part of the formula, rather than the state using this set aside option.

In the 2016-17 school year, 1,229 of Tennessee's 1,811 schools were Title I. Of these 1,229 schools, only 133 are currently serving traditional high school grades (9–12). With three of Tennessee's four goals addressing college and career readiness, we anticipate more districts will elect to serve eligible middle and high schools under ESSA. As such, the department will develop tools and supports to address this expected change in landscape of Title I schools. Such supports may include literacy strategies for struggling middle grade readers, best practices for transition between middle school and high school, advanced coursework offerings in 8th grade, and school counselor supports for middle and high school to keep students on track for graduation.

To serve all Title I schools, included below are examples of Title I, Part A, school-wide program strategies, as well as potential advantages and considerations for each strategy. During the needs assessment process, these strategies are considered as well as others for the development of the Title I, Part A program plan for schools.

Program Strategies

Districts and schools can use their Title I, Part A, ESSA dollars to implement key initiatives, based on the needs assessment. Below is a chart categorizing key strategies for activities and uses, as well as advantages and other considerations which may be relevant in the decision-making process.

School-wide Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**

School-wide Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Enhance the comprehensive school-wide needs assessment and annual evaluation of plan and needs	• Builds opportunity for staff to reflect on strengths and gaps • Provides a comprehensive picture of school and priority areas • Considers additional data beyond standardized tests • Can become a catalyst for dialogue among all staff about future directions • Aids in serving all students including students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students	• May recognize the need to build systematic formative data collection strategies • Ensure that the results are discussed and acted on by staff by having principal ownership and leadership • May need release time for staff to build relationships • Importance of establishing a trusting environment in which to discuss areas of improvement • Necessary to engage parents and other stakeholders
2. Restructure instructional delivery model to literacy and/or math blocks or RTI	• Focused and extended opportunity for student learning • More opportunity to build in differentiation • May result in new collaborative teaching teams with shared planning time	• Requires on-going, job-embedded professional development to ensure effective use of intervention time • Provide outreach to parents and families to understand the benefits of this strategy
3. Develop a balanced assessment system that incorporates formative, benchmark, and summative assessments	• Provides a more complete picture of student learning needs • Can help teachers design instruction • Brings teachers together to collaborate and allows consistency to instructional program	• May require professional development to how data informs instruction • Need to provide time for teachers to work together to develop assessments
4. Fund more Title I eligible schools or expand funding in current Title I schools	• Provides opportunity to serve more students requiring additional assistance	• Remember that per pupil allocations must be equal or higher in high poverty schools • Consider sustainability
5. Design a school-wide tutoring / mentoring program across all grades	• Connects tutor with specific needs of student through classroom teacher • Builds positive relationships with community members • Builds positive relationships with students	• Design tutoring opportunity that meets the specific needs of students • May require coordinator to implement effectively

Classroom Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**

Classroom Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Employ highly effective teachers who will work collaboratively across grade levels e.g., coaches, instructional resource teachers	• Impacts directly the quality of the teaching and learning of students • Provides more consistency and communication across classrooms serving students who require additional assistance • Models best practice and feedback to teacher	• Requires on-going professional development in the content areas, as well as effective coaching strategies • Depends upon the availability of experienced staff to become coaches
2. Provide additional interventions and strategies to students who require additional assistance, prioritizing students in most need of assistance	• Greater support to learners • Increases opportunities for early intervention • Stronger teaching for diverse populations	• Must be aligned to the instructional program • Design strategies and interventions and secure materials that provide support • Need to provide professional development to staff to effectively use teaching strategies • Research evidence-based strategies that positively impact student achievement

Staffing Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Reduce the pupil/teacher ratio to improve instruction where research has evidence of effectiveness	• Create a learning environment that supports individual students consistently • Ability to ensure that students have the skills they need to be successful	• Must examine sustainability • Must determine what kind of support teachers need to provide instruction that takes advantage of the pupil/teacher ratio • Must identify through current needs assessment this is an appropriate strategy for improving achievement
2. Employ additional highly-effective educational assistants	• Can provide supplemental instructional reading assistance for students to have skills to be successful • Focused support can yield accelerated results	• Depends upon availability of highly effective staff • May need on-going professional development • Must work under supervision of a highly-effective classroom teacher
3. Employ additional teachers to provide supplemental support for RTI^2 initiatives	• Increases opportunities for learning • Improves quality of instruction for students needing additional supports and interventions	• Must ensure that teachers deliver educational supplemental services over and above the core instruction • Access to core academic instruction for students should never be limited by any RTI^2 initiatives • Build on programming that may already be in place
4. Use funds to equitably distribute	• Ensures that the neediest schools have access to high-performing	• Number of highly-effective teachers

Staffing Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
highly effective teachers across schools (recruitment, retention, training)	teachers • Provides opportunities for high-performing teachers to mentor novice teachers within buildings	may limit ability to reassign current staff members • Ensure that leadership has identified the appropriate incentives for teachers to have "will" to be reassigned.

Professional Development Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Establish a shared vision for professional development, focused on identified areas of need and individualized	• Communicates a focused vision that addresses identified gaps • Allows staff to design different strategies that fit the context of the school and students • Builds on practices that sustain the initiatives • Involves all stakeholders	• Need staff to oversee and coordinate initiatives • Must evaluate effectiveness of professional development initiatives • Funds may be used for consultants, released time for collaboration, whole staff learning time and study groups.
2. Create opportunities for staff collaboration that focus on improving the quality of the teaching and learning in all classrooms	• Examine ways to creatively look at how to use resources, (rotating subs, extended day, late start, etc.) to create time for teachers to work together • Builds consistency across all classrooms with focus on student achievement • Fosters greater alignment within and across grade levels and subjects	• Coordinate resources to ensure that all staff are involved • Important for families and community to understand why teachers are doing this work, especially if outside the classroom

Beyond the School Day / Year Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Design or expand a school program for a four-year old kindergarten experience	• Provides students with the skills they need to be successful in an instructional setting • Supports high needs students • Increases school readiness	• Align preschool experience with elementary school program • Examine sustainability possibilities • Consider developing a community-based approach with collaborative partners

Beyond the School Day / Year Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
2. Design or build upon after school or extended day programming	• Assists students with academics and/or homework • Connects students with school in a different setting and with different educators • Design of program can meet individual needs of students	• Requires highly effective teacher(s) • May need to hire different staff from those who interact with students throughout the day • Requires transportation arrangements and costs • Ensure connection to classroom instruction • Coordinate resources with 21st CCLC and other programs
3. Design and implement a summer school program	• Provides on-going learning opportunities and academic support to struggling students • Addresses summer learning loss and transition between grade bands • Aligns well to academic program in school • Provides transportation • Offers diverse learners unique opportunities related to presentation and leadership skill building	• Depends upon availability of highly effective teachers • Examine cost and sustainability • Design a quality program that addresses specific academic needs • Design a district-wide plan and determine criteria for participation • Use high quality instructional practices

Family & Community Engagement Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
1. Provide on-going opportunities (including resources) to all parents that focus on reading and math support	• Helps families interact with their students in these areas • Provides ways for families to get to know each other over time	• Design plan to get diverse group of families attending • Translation and interpretation necessary for positive impact of diverse groups • Provide additional support to get parents/caregivers there, i.e., transportation, childcare, food, time of day, translators
2. Create a parent liaison and/or parent coordinators	• Can focus on working with parents to support students' academic achievement • Learning from parents about how to support students • Builds positive relationships between school and family	• Need to define parent liaison role clearly • Examine sustainability • Work closely with whole staff to communicate learning activities, parent activities, and shared responsibilities, e.g. translations, communications • Consider appropriate methods to reach homeless families

Family & Community Engagement Strategies		
Strategy	**Advantages**	**Considerations**
3. Increase community involvement in activities that increase student learning	• Determine academic service learning opportunities in the community • Look for ways the community spotlights reading/math e.g. occupations, technology	• Recruit collaborative partnerships in the community • May need coordinator • Look for ways students can see themselves achieving and volunteering in the community that require academics

Students in Foster Care

The TDOE has developed joint guidance through ongoing communication and collaboration with the Department of Children's Services (DCS) to ensure the Title I Educational Stability Provisions for children and youth in foster care are implemented with fidelity. Additionally, the department and each district have appointed a foster care point of contact to create policies and to provide oversight at the local level. The department is providing assistance and encouraging districts to review and revise polices that create barriers to the enrollment and attendance of children and youth in foster care.

Best Interest: When determining whether it is in a child's best interest to remain in his or her school of origin, the educational stability team meets to review best interest factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, the appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of placement. Transportation costs are not considered when determining a child's best interest. DCS has the flexibility to determine additional factors to consider when making best interest determinations. Additionally, districts are encouraged to develop and align protocols to guide the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of staying in the school of origin or moving to a new school.

Immediate Enrollment: When a determination is made that remaining in the school of origin is not in the child's best interest, districts ensure that a child or youth in foster care is immediately enrolled in their new school even if the student does not have the required documentation. The enrolling school then contacts the student's prior school to obtain relevant records.

Transportation: Districts work collaboratively with DCS regional points of contact to develop memoranda of understanding between each district and the child welfare agency. They have developed clear written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for children in foster care to attend their schools of origin, when it is in their best interest. These procedures include assurances that:

- children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin promptly receive transportation in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with the Social Security Act; and
- if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin the district will provide transportation in accordance to their respective developed memorandums of understanding.

Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children

The goal of the Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to ensure that migratory children benefit fully from the same free public education provided to other children and to help them overcome issues such as educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems,

and other factors that inhibit their ability to be successful in school. To this end, the MEP in Tennessee seeks to accurately identify all migrant students, including preschool, in-school and out-of-school youth, in the state through a thorough understanding of the agricultural activities of Tennessee, strategic networking with community stakeholders, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of the youth this program serves.

Tennessee's Migrant Education Program is a member of the Identification and Recruitment Rapid Response Consortium (IRRC) which develops products and supports migrant education programs for member states by sharing information and techniques. Families with pre-K students and children birth to 3 are offered services in the home. The menu includes in-home tutoring for all children and parents, parenting advice, nutritional advice, and every-day living support. Further, Tennessee is a member of the Graduation and Outcomes for Success for Out of School Youth (GOSOSY) consortium which deals with out-of-school youth (OSY). This consortium works with the OSY to assist in planning for success with educational and career goals and has produced materials that address sensitive issues such substance abuse and mental health issues that are made available to districts and schools.

During the transition to a new partner for the MEP work during summer and fall 2016, the MEP director for the state conducted a needs assessment that included input in three locations and included eight districts that currently have or have the potential of having migratory students.

Tennessee has implemented a system to identify, verify, and recruit eligible migratory children statewide. The current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Tennessee's MEP include four key objectives as determined by the last comprehensive needs assessment conducted in Tennessee. The Tennessee MEP will use the following strategies to build a strong identification and recruitment system across the state.

Program Objectives & Strategies

The objectives and strategies will be updated during the 2016-17 school year:

- **Objective 1:** Increase academic progress for migratory children.
  Strategies:
  - The Tennessee migrant summer programs will focus on math, language arts, and science.
  - All participating students will complete a pre- and post-assessment where possible at the beginning and at the end of the summer camp. A minimum of 50 percent gain from pre- to post-assessment in all focus areas is expected for every student participating in the summer program.
- **Objective 2:** Reduce the gap between the number of priority for service students eligible for services and the number actually being served by five percent each year.
  Strategies:
  - Obtain list of all appropriate programs and organizations available in low-density migrant districts, including but not be limited to LEAPS program, 21st CCLC grants, community agencies, supplemental educational support providers, school homeless liaisons, and local universities.
  - Approve grant application funding for summer programs whose program dates coincide with the time priority for service students are in the area and can participate.
  - Create or determine one new outreach strategy each year to enable students in low-density areas to receive MEP services.

- **Objective 3:** Increase the number of Out of School Youth (OSY) who receive services through the MEP by five percent each year in areas such as English language learning, basic computer skills, community or educational advocacy, and health services.
  Strategies:
  - Search for community partners and literacy advocates to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in which OSY may participate in addition to classes offered by the MEP.
  - Develop incentives for OSY to attend ESL classes.
  - Offer via MEP, classes combined with cultural ESL classes combined with cultural competency training so OSY have confidence to seek out or take advantage of community services.
- **Objective 4:** Increase by at least five percent each year the number of migrant parents (with children in school grades K–12) who report that they are familiar the U.S. education system and their role within it.
  Strategies:
  - Seek bilingual informational materials (state/district/school levels) that provide essential information to parents of elementary, middle, and high school students.
  - Provide, through service of recruiter/advocate, the necessary assistance for school registration and evaluation of credit accrual.
  - Offer parent ESL classes so that parents will feel more comfortable with school communications.

MEP Recruiters

Recruiters are a key component of the MEP identification and recruitment process. All MEP recruiters must complete a certification process before going into the field. In an effort to provide services across Tennessee, the state is divided into three geographic regions (west, middle, and east). Recruiters work year round and travel to different locations within their region, including homes, farms, packing houses, schools, and other locations throughout the community to identify and recruit students. All recruiters receive ongoing support, training, technical assistance, and resources to help them reach their goals and ensure they understand and adhere to eligibility criteria for the program.

As a follow up, MEP recruiters are competency tested before being sent into the field for migrant identification and recruitment. This statewide recruiting system allows MEP staff in all three regions to work together and maintain accurate and effective recruitment information of all migrant families in Tennessee.

Strong Communication & Recruitment Network with Districts

The TN-MEP will design a professional development system that provides ongoing support in both virtual and in person formats to district and school personnel to ensure migrant supports are coordinated with other educational services. The trainings are designed to enhance identification and recruitment efforts, train teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to make proper eligibility decisions and complete necessary documentation in a timely and accurate manner. We will create an MEP online platform that contains information and documents from local, state, and national sources on best practices in migrant education programs and services, access to key documents such as the Occupational Survey, Certificate of Eligibility (COE), and the Individual Needs Assessment. This platform will be accessible to all MEP staff and school personnel at any time and will be updated regularly.

Enrollment: Hotline & Flyers

A strong communication network between districts, families, and the MEP will help to ensure that all migratory students and families receive full and appropriate services. Tennessee has its own migrant hotline number that qualifying and potentially qualifying families can call for support or to have questions answered. Flyers have been created to advertise the hotline and program and are posted in areas that are frequented by migrant workers, (i.e., Hispanic stores, restaurants, gas stations in farming areas, laundromats, etc.). When interested parties call in, MEP staff conduct a phone interview to determine eligibility, and a recruiter visits the student/family or a COE is mailed to their address, depending on the family's proximity to the nearest TN-MEP recruiter.

A completed COE contains information for all eligible students in the family between the ages of 0 and 21 and includes students currently enrolled in school, preschool students under the age of four, and any students of school age who have left school or are not enrolled. Once identified, migratory students are served in schools with all local, state and federal programs that meet their needs.

Enrollment: Current Families

Currently enrolled families within a county are a valuable resource as they are often both trusted and in touch with the migrant community and are likely to know of any new workers in the area. Recruiters visit the current families in each county while working in order to provide them with educational materials and see if there is any other assistance they may need. Recruiters also work with current families to identify other qualifying students.

Enrollment: Needs Assessment

To assess the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool and students, TN-MEP will use a variety of assessment tools such as one-on-one conversations, focus groups, and individual needs assessment surveys to assess the unique needs for services of all students and their families. MEP staff will conduct a baseline screening and an evaluation of the academic record of all eligible students grades K–12 within 30 days of qualifying for services. The Individual Needs Assessment will include: demographic information, academic information (if available), and the need for additional social and academic services.

Teachers, principals, counselors, and others who have a direct relationship with the students, will be asked to complete a needs assessment or participate in a focus group. Parent focus groups will also be conducted to get parents' feedback on their thoughts, concerns, and attitudes about their children's education.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Needs Assessment Committee identified five key priority areas for targeting programs and services:

1. Academic progress for migrant children
2. Priority for service students
3. Out of school youth
4. Parent engagement
5. Needs assessment for migrant services

The state director of migrant services, in collaboration with Conexión Américas, document "priority for services" determinations for all migratory children and OSY who are being served by the MEP. The determinations are made at the time the Certificate of Eligibility is made available to the TN-MEP or upon enrollment via the MEP database.

Services to Migrant Students

The department is committed to ensuring that the needs of all migratory children are identified and addressed with every child receiving MEP Tier 1 services, which will provide consistent and regular check-in and communication with the student, family, and school, as well as whole group summer programs and parent trainings that are open to all families. Tier 2 services will provide specialized supports for groups of students with similar needs, including small group programs for academic remediation, EL supports, or group counseling. Tier 3 services will require more intensive supports for individual students who may require an IEP, a special placement, or more intensive short-term tutoring or mental or physical health supports.

All three tiers of services will contain a blend of existing services that are currently offered by schools or county health or social services, or through programs that we create and offer. These may include, but are not limited to counseling, social work services, health screenings or physical exams, extended day programs (before/after school), preschool programs, summer or intersession programs, alternative educational programs, options for OSY, adult basic education programs, GED programs, and postsecondary opportunities.

The TDOE ensures migratory children who meet the definition of "priority for services" are given priority for Title I, Part C services by using the following measures to identify students:

- Failing or most at risk of failing to meet the state academic content and achievement standards
- Education has been interrupted during the regular school year; and one of the following:
  - Scores *below* proficient on any high stakes assessment from any state
  - Classified as an English learner
  - Behind with credit accrual for graduation requirements
  - Retained in a grade

Many of Tennessee's migratory students are also English learners (ELs) and receive ESL instruction in the schools. Their instruction and progress is monitored as is any other EL in the state. Districts are held accountable for both growth and progress for ELs through monitoring. Tennessee funds English as a Second Language (ESL) programs through the basic education plan and, therefore, holds all districts accountable. This accountability ensures that all ELs, including migratory students, receive their civil rights to a free and public education that includes ESL services as required in the Lau remedy. Achievement and proficiency data are disaggregated on the state's annual report card.

In addition to the ESL services, the TN-MEP program conducts summer programs for migratory students that focus on basic skills, STEM and leadership. These are available for students ages K to 12. Pre-K services may be coordinated with the Telemon Head Start programs that serve migratory children.

Tennessee's MEP also provides opportunities to attend summer leadership academies for high school aged migratory students offered by other programs. K–12 migratory students also have the opportunity to attend summer camps that work on English and academic skills. Pre-K students are also invited to attend, where appropriate.

Preschool migratory services begins with the identification of the children for services. The recruiter who identifies these children will work with the MEP to determine the needs of the families and the young children and provide for these needs. Over the years, the services provided include: books and materials that can be presented in both English and the native language, nutritional advice for parents, immigration requirement and protection for families, washing hands to prevent spread of disease, information related to mental health and substance abuse, materials that can be used within the family to play with younger children, etc. Every effort is made to see that these children are served in a meaningful way.

The Tennessee Migrant Education Program (TN-MEP)[102] has undergone a major change in service providers in the past 12 months by partnering with Conexión Américas to better serve students and families from migrant backgrounds. During the next year (2017-18), Tennessee's MEP partner will develop and begin implementation of an early childhood education program to increase the number of migrant children prepared to enter kindergarten by age five. This initiative will provide services both during the school year and the summer for children ages 3 through 5 across the state. The program will be focused on the development of a child's cognitive skills, as well as social and personal competencies. Additionally, parenting classes will provide support for children (birth to 3) by working with parents to develop early pre-literacy and literacy skills.

Each year the number of migratory pre-K and kindergarten served will increase by a minimum of 5% until at least 50% of these children are served. Tennessee's partner will participate in the MEP Consortium Incentive Grant (CIG) that focuses on the success and readiness of migrant preschool students.

Conexión Américas will deploy tutors and staff to support the following program strategies and services:

1. Assess each migratory student to determine their level of readiness in language (both first language and English) for pre-K and kindergarten using an effective screening tool.
2. Utilize assessment data for each migratory child assessed to determine service needed to move him/her toward proficiency needed at this age level. Rubrics will be developed for this determination.
3. Provide training to parents of migratory students to support their children's language and literacy development through either a course delivered in the community or modules delivered in the home setting.
4. Refer parents of migratory children to the local preschool program and facilitate the enrollment process.
5. Support and promote development of cognitive, social-emotional, and cultural competency skills in the family home setting.
6. Create and distribute materials that promote vocabulary and language in the first language and English, when applicable.
7. Design a summer camp pre-k curriculum to help students better prepare students for entering kindergarten.

[102] The bolded red text was added and submitted to ED on August 14, 2017.

8. Provide teachers of migrant pre-k and kindergarten students trainings on meeting the needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Out-of-school youth (OSY) are served in the most meaningful way that is possible within the MEP guidelines. The recruiter works with them to determine their current living situation and to ascertain whether they are safe in that situation. Materials that are focused on building a healthy lifestyle, including mental health, are provided. OSY are also offered opportunities to work with an educator to determine self-paced goal setting that is realistic for their success.

Conexión Américas MEP staff will develop a detailed logic model for each of the five priority areas, identify appropriate program inputs, outcomes, and performance targets, and collect evidence of success. These logic models will also incorporate Tennessee's RTI^2 framework. TN-MEP will develop an RTI^2 matrix with programs or intervention strategies for each area.

The department will use funds it receives through Title I, Part C to provide effective records and information exchange with other states. We work to provide move notifications to sending and receiving states through MSIX effectively. We encourage students as they move to call the national hotline number to be enrolled in the next state as quickly as possible. We also work to ensure that student data is entered accurately and in a timely manner to allow for the records to be available to other MEP programs as students move.

Engaging with Parents & Families

Conexión Américas was Tennessee's leading partner in the engagement of stakeholders for English learners in the drafting of Tennessee's ESSA plan. In addition to the multiple convening's they organized, several Conexión Américas' staff members participated on multiple ESSA working groups. In undertaking objective four, Conexión Américas will start the implementation of our parent engagement program, Parents as Partners (PaP). The main goal of our PaP program is to forge a working partnership between Latino parents and schools, and to improve children's academic achievement. The program is a national curriculum developed by the National Council for La Raza (NCLR) and is a nine-week series of workshops: seven workshops, a "Dialogue with the Principal" event, culminating in a graduation ceremony. Materials and opportunities will be developed for non-Hispanic migratory families as well. The curriculum covers an array of different topics including: how the school system functions, state standards and assessments, parent rights, transition to high school, graduation requirements, the basics of GPA, and effective parent-teacher conferences.

Conexión Américas will conduct a new comprehensive needs assessment to update information needed for the meaningful service to migratory children, parents of migratory children, and OSY.

To ensure consultation with parents, Conexión Américas will begin the implementation of our Parents as Partners program in select locations across the state. The focus will begin with the larger populations and move into areas where there are fewer migratory families. The 9-week program is currently offered in Spanish and English and is led by parents trained as facilitators. The curriculum is designed to engage parents with students in pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school. The TN-MEP will tailor the curriculum to ensure that parents have a voice in the program including specific information about MEP and allowing parents to help with planning, reviewing, and improving the Migrant Education Program.

All TN-MEP programs and activities, including the PaP program will be organized and structured in a way that allows parents to be meaningful participants. To accomplish these goals, we will conduct all activities in the parent's native language, offer childcare and a flexible schedule to accommodate parents' work schedules, including evenings and weekends. PaP can be scaled and brought to multiple communities where migratory children and their families live.

Parents in all regions will also be invited to participate in our MEP Parent Advisory Council and our MEP focus groups. The Parent Advisory Council will meet at least three times a year, at a time and date that is convenient for families. Parents will have an opportunity to voice their concerns, identify goals, and give recommendations to improve the program. Tennessee's migratory program also includes personal and family support. The program works directly with families to determine and ensure that basic needs are met for shelter, clothing, food and health issues.

Use of Data

Tennessee uses the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) for many purposes. The notification feature is a key recruiting tool that allows us to send and receive notifications if a child has moved to or from our area. These referrals are followed up on by the recruiter assigned to the areas students move into and conduct interviews to determine if the student qualifies under our interpretation of the guidance.

Changes to a student's migratory status is provided through a secure database server between Conexión Américas and districts who then provide this information to their schools. Districts are responsible for monitoring services to migratory students within their district, and the department is responsible for monitoring districts processes and handing any grievance that might occur.

Program Coordination and Evaluation

Tennessee works to coordinate and integrate all available educational services in its Migrant Education Program (MEP) including the ESL program, special education services, pre-K, RTI^2, and other programs. We believe that every student has a right to services that will lead to student success. Through the provision of a personal needs survey for educational services, TDOE determines and prioritizes the services to enhance the ability of the migratory child to succeed in Tennessee schools. TDOE also provides districts with a program coordination resource, the Coordinated Spending Guide, to assist with the coordination of programs and services.

The TDOE evaluates the effectiveness and fidelity of implementation of its MEP program by reaching out to a sample of representative districts that serve migratory students. TDOE ensures that the sample includes an appropriate cross-section of districts in this protocol. This process is conducted via desktop monitoring that includes the level of satisfaction of the services Conexión Américas is providing, as well as suggestions for enhancements to program services.

The TDOE Committee of Practitioners/CPM Advisory Committee has representatives from MEP districts and the MEP provider. In addition, the state's Title III stakeholder group also includes the largest migratory district as well as others who serve migratory student needs. Having multiple feedback loops allows the department to collect information of individual program services, as well as how the ESL program and the MEP program work in tandem to create the best learning environments for all students.

Tennessee's Identification and Recruitment Manual[103] is another resource for the MEP that includes a detailed Q and A that assures students, parents, community agencies, employers, and educators that the services are provided willingly.

Title I, Part D: Prevention & Intervention Program for Children & Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

Tennessee's Title I, D program provides supplemental educational services and other supports to children and youth in correctional facilities to provide services to assist students in making successful transitions once released. Tennessee's DCS and Department of Corrections (DOC) operate the Title I, Part D, Subpart one program. This program services children and youth in youth development centers and correctional institutions. The Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families (TACF) has been primarily responsible for managing and ensuring the delivery of services on behalf of districts for the past twenty years. This grant contract ends July 2017 and is not being renewed.

One of the five key tenets of the TDOE's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*, is *All Means All*. The department is aligning programs and services to students in neglected or delinquent facilities with its strategic plan. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the provision of these services to students in neglected or delinquent facilities will be a district responsibility. This will require districts to align and integrate services to students in neglected and delinquent facilities with other students in the district. The department has developed an extensive professional development plan for the 2016-17 school year such that all districts will be equipped with the program information and resources for a successful transition between correctional facilities and local programs.

The department aims to provide a high-quality education to neglected, delinquent, or at-risk students in juvenile justice and correctional facilities. Program objectives and outcomes are aligned to joint guidance released from the Departments of Justice and Education and required in ESSA. Program effectiveness is assessed in accordance to the guiding principles for providing high-quality education in juvenile justice secure settings. The principles are:

1. A safe, healthy, facility-wide climate that prioritizes education, provides the conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youth, including those with disabilities and English learners
2. Necessary funding to support educational opportunities for youth within long-term secure care facilities, including students with disabilities and English learners, comparable to opportunities for peers who are not system-involved
3. Recruitment, employment, and retention of qualified education staff with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings who can positively impact long-term student outcomes through demonstrated abilities to create and sustain effective teaching and learning environments
4. Rigorous and relevant curricula aligned with state academic and career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, tools, materials, and practices that promote college and career readiness

[103] Tennessee Department of Education. *Identification and Recruitment Manual*. Web.

These guiding principles serve as the program objectives and outcomes to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, D program. The department will monitor Title I, D programs using an instrument that incorporates the guiding principles for a high quality correctional education and components of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services' Self-assessment. Additionally, the department will utilize data from the Consolidated State Performance Report, Consolidated Funding Application, and other relevant information to ensure there is a clear alignment between planning, funding, and effective implementation. Finally, the department will collaborate with districts and facilities to:

- develop policies, practices, and procedures that ensure prompt follow-up on compliance action items identified within the monitoring and
- develop protocols for collaborating with the office of career and technical education and office of safe and supportive schools to ensure students have equitable access to early post-secondary outcome opportunities and expanded career and technical curricular options.

State agencies and districts have developed formal processes and procedures through statutes, memoranda of understanding, and practices that ensure successful navigation across child-serving systems and transition between correctional facilities and back into communities. The department is continuing to review and update its policies to ensure all students receive appropriate educational services in detention centers and other facilities where students are incarcerated.

When a child or youth transitions from a locally operated program to the correctional facility, the district will ensure that all relevant records are transferred in a timely manner. The department collaborates with the district and correctional facility to develop procedures for:

- notifying the school district that a student has been remanded to a correctional facility,
- facilitating transition team meetings with all relevant stakeholders to ensure children and youth transition to the appropriate placement upon exit from the facility, and
- describing how districts will coordinate programs with existing social, health, and other services to meet the needs of students returning from correctional facilities.

Another key tenet of the department's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*, is *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary*. Children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk have access to the same state academic and career and technical educations standards to ensure their ability to be successful in higher education, work, and life. The department will provide support and technical assistance to agencies, districts, facilities, and institutions to assist them in matching students with opportunities and programs that promote access and remove barriers to postsecondary transition.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction

The state believes that our systems and programs have created a robust data system used to inform technical assistance and support districts in addressing professional development and teacher equity issues. More information is available in the *Educator Support* section of the plan.

The state has also heavily invested in data systems and prioritized district reporting of evaluation data. Beginning with the first year of evaluation implementation, the state has provided all districts with the optional, no-cost use of a data system. The system which has evolved over time includes an option for observation entry and scoring, and also serves as the location for achievement and growth measure selections. The system provides teachers with access to view observation feedback and summative evaluation scores. Districts are also able to access a variety of data reports about system level progress and scoring.

The human capital data reports incorporate information previously reported in disparate district reports. Evaluation reports on distribution of teacher effectiveness by observation, individual growth, and overall level of effectiveness are integrated with other data reports on teacher retention and working conditions.

Over the past three years, the teachers and leaders division has worked to train and encourage educators to review this data to guide their human capital decisions, ranging from recruiting, hiring, and placement, to professional development to compensation and advancement. These data also help inform technical assistance through the CORE offices which are often the key touch point for districts.

In addition to the equitable access data that Tennessee currently collects and shares with districts through the human capital/equity reports, the Tennessee state report card will also begin to include several transparency metrics on the percent of teachers retained and those continuing to teach in the district. The department will begin collecting data and creating business rules on teacher chronic absenteeism—specifically what should be included in the metric and how it will be shared.

The department's CPM division also uses data to inform technical assistance through district responses on the consolidated funding applications. On the CFAs, districts identify and discuss their plans for Title II dollars, and these responses and supporting data often inform district training topics throughout the year.

Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners & Immigrant Students

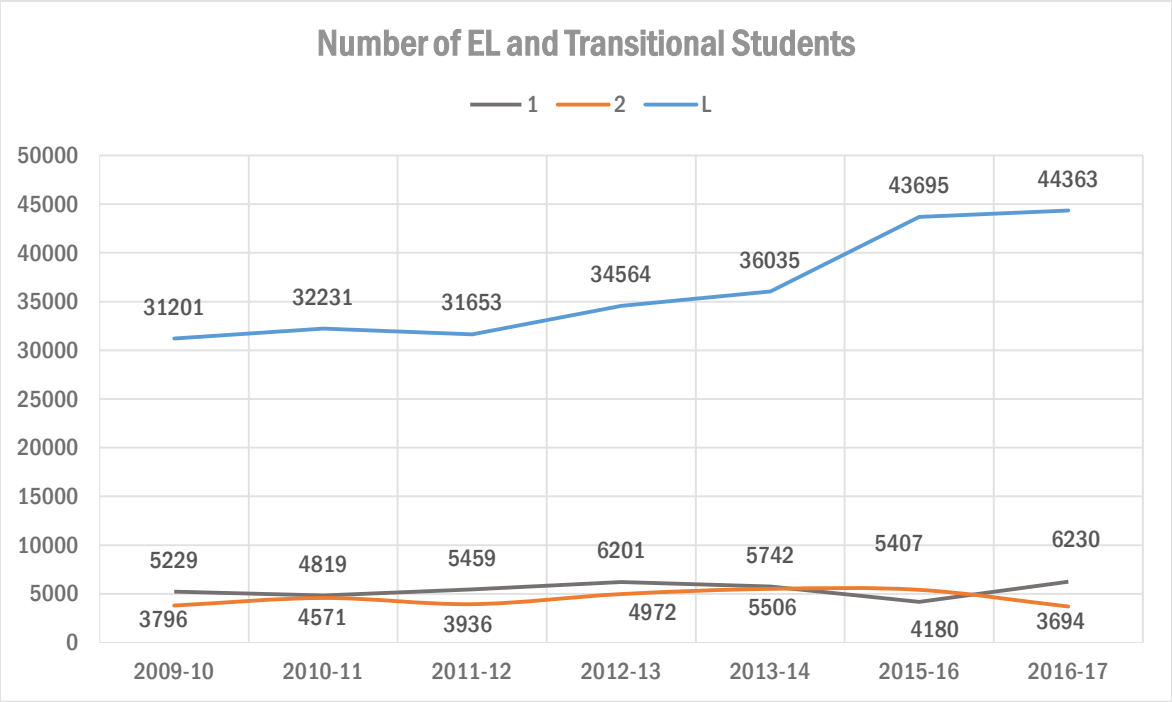
Title III in Tennessee serves students from many languages and many countries. We have more than 150 languages and more than 100 countries represented in our English learner population year after year. The department has developed policies that set minimum standards for Tennessee school districts and works to help ELs achieve success in and full access to all curriculum provided. Teachers are trained in an on-going manner to provide accommodations and modifications to ensure success for English learners. The goal is that all ELs will be able to participate fully in both educational and community-based settings. While Title III funds are generated to districts with identified English learners, some districts elect not to participate in Title III; however, they are held to the same academic standards for ELs—regardless of whether they accept federal Title III dollars.

Our state, districts, and schools are required to provide specialized programs for ELs to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and T.C.A. § 4-21-90. Tennessee's English as a Second Language policy has two purposes. First, it establishes the minimum required compliance components for ESL programs in Tennessee. Second, it provides a framework for implementing effective educational programs for ELs. The policy includes anti-discriminatory policies and practices, identification of ELs, parental notification and rights, service delivery models, and staffing ratios. Tennessee continues to support all students including ELs, immigrants, and national origin minority students in reaching higher personal and educational goals. The department will be working over the 2017-18 school year to develop broader programming resources and guidance to districts and schools to better support EL students.

Most districts serving EL students have experienced growth over the past six years. In Tennessee, five districts serve the greatest number of EL students and collectively serve around two thirds of the EL population. In fact, two districts serve roughly half of all EL students in Tennessee.

All districts are responsible for ensuring that ELs are afforded the same opportunities as they would be with that funding. Districts may not exclude ELs from any program or extra-curricular activity based on national origin, minority status, or English proficiency.

To develop district capacity further and meet the needs of a growing EL student population in Tennessee, the department has deployed eight ESL supervisors across our state's CORE regions. These supervisors are charged with working with other educators across the region to build capacity, provide targeted technical assistance, and create effective PLCs to support teachers of ELs. These supervisors are district personnel who receive a stipend to convene in-person at least bi-annually and participate in calls as needed to disseminate program guidance and evidence-based practices to educators within the region. We anticipate that this regional strategy will offer support both to ESL and general education teachers. The supervisors are trained and supervised by the department's Title III director to ensure consistency of message and to offer training and other support as needed.



Entrance and Exit Procedures

State Board Policy 3.207 outlines the standardized entry and exit procedure for English Learners. This policy was finalized based on input from directors across the state – from all regions – and followed the standards process for all state board policy, which includes first reading, public comment window, and final reading. The members of the state board are representative of the geographic regions of the state.

The Home Language Survey (HLS) is the first step districts take to meet the federal requirement to identify languages spoken by minority students. The department requires every student to be administered the HLS one time in their educational career upon their initial enrollment. If the HLS indicates a language other than English in the child's background, the student is a potential English

learner, and there should be documentation of the student's prior English language proficiency assessment(s) in the cumulative folder. During the initial meeting, the district should explore additional information from the parents related to language, milestones, former education, etc. The student's instructional program should follow accordingly.

The three required questions for the HLS are:

1. What is the first language this child learned to speak?
2. What language does this child speak most often outside of school?
3. What language do people usually speak in this child's home?

For potential EL students, Tennessee currently uses the WIDA ELP screener, WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), for incoming students in grades K–12. The screener assists educators with programmatic placement decisions such as identification and placement of ELs for ESL services. Beginning in July 2017, the department will begin using the new WIDA Screener for intake into the program for grades 1–12. Beginning in 2017, districts will be trained late spring and early summer. The department will continue to use the W-APT as the screener for kindergarten.

Students enrolled prior to the beginning of a school year must be screened within 30 days of the start of the school year. Students enrolled during the school year must be screened with 30 calendar days of enrollment. Upon determining that a student is an EL, the student must be scheduled for appropriate ESL services and those services must begin immediately.

As an EL reaches high levels of English proficiency, determining when they are ready to exit from ESL services becomes an important discussion and decision to be made. It is imperative to ensure that these students have attained a degree of English proficiency that will allow them to achieve academic success—without direct ESL support—at levels comparable to their native English-speaking peers.

All students beginning a seventh year of ESL instruction will be highlighted as long-term English learners (LTELs). ELs who remain in EL status for extended periods of time often face significant barriers to attaining English language proficiency. The department is focused on decreasing the number of long-term ELs in schools and providing additional supports to these students. Technical assistance for working with this group of ELs will be offered through PD beginning in summer 2017 to regional PLCs. The department will develop additional resources and guidance during the 2017-18 school year to share with schools and districts in how best to support LTELs and increase the likelihood of exit. This will also be a part of the work with Focus school identified for English learner achievement.

The TDOE defines recently arrived ELs (RAELs) as those ELs who have not completed a full calendar year of ESL instruction. This group contains refugees, students with limited and interrupted formal education (SLIFEs), immigrants who have recently moved to the U.S., and others who are new to the program. This will not include the preschool and kindergarten students who were born in the U.S. or who have lived here for most of their lives. Technical assistance will also be offered for working with this group of students to regional PLCs beginning in summer 2017.

Students scoring fluent English proficient are exited from ESL services but continue to be monitored academically for a four-year period and are considered transitional former ELs. As with any student, all ELs and former ELs should receive services to be successful in academic classes. For instruction to be responsive to student needs, content must be appropriately scaffolded for ELs. Goals and expectations need to be differentiated as does the instruction and the materials used for instruction. During those four years, transitional ELs may continue to receive necessary accommodations on state assessments. It is imperative to understand English proficiency in relation to academic achievement proficiency.

Students who may be fully English proficient may encounter content subject areas, in which the academic demand and rigor may require differentiation of instruction to make content accessible. Content experts must have the knowledge and skills to make subject matter accessible for current ELs, transitional ELs, and/or fluent English proficient students.

Exiting from ESL service is based on a student's proficiency in the four areas of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. WIDA scores must support the decision to exit a student. English proficiency is based on attaining fluent English proficient on the summative, spring WIDA ACCESS for ELs assessment. At a minimum, ELs must obtain both a composite and a literacy score of 5.0 on the WIDA ACCESS for ELs to exit ESL services. Additional exit criteria are being researched including final course grades and/or results on district or local assessments. Performance on an academic content assessment is not used in the exit criteria for EL students.

Students currently receiving ESL services, and transitional former ELs, are included in the English learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes. After the four-year monitoring period, a student is considered a former EL and is no longer included in the subgroup.

Progress Toward ELP Goals and Assistance

One of the significant changes with ESSA includes the shift of the accountability and the English language proficiency assessment for ELs into Title I. ESSA, Title III § 3115(d)(4) includes preschool when discussing the development and implementation of language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) for elementary and secondary schools coordinated with other relevant programs and services. ESSA specifically mentions ELs with disabilities being included in the activity of improving the instruction of ELs.

Under ESSA, Title III § 3115(c)(3), three required activities are listed:

1. Programs to increase English proficiency and academic achievement of ELs
2. Professional development
3. Activities that include parent, family, and community engagement, and coordination and alignment of related programs

Districts make the determination as to what type of LIEP they will use. The department provides a list of accepted models (e.g., push-in, pull-out, content-based, etc.). If a district would like to use a different model, that district will need to show that the proposed model is based on solid English language acquisition theory. Curriculum and materials are also district decisions. We issue guidance that materials should be aligned to Tennessee and WIDA standards. Materials that our counter to these two criteria are not acceptable.

The department is committed to strengthening its supports to districts to improve achievement of English learners. Some of the key supports for ELs include embedding ESL strategies into state trainings for mathematics and ELA, as well as science and social studies in the following years. Rather than ESL strategies existing in a separate strand, this approach will support general education teachers—thus improving instruction to ELs in the regular classroom.

In addition, the department has deployed eight ESL advisors aligned with the eight CORE regions to build capacity within the regions across the state. These individuals currently serve as Title III Directors in LEAs, each with multiple years of experience working with ELs. These advisors provide technical assistance and assist with issues related to assessment, accommodations, legal requirements, ePlan,

planning, and other issues related to ESL needs. Each ESL advisor has also established an ESL PLC or has provided support to existing PLCs in their CORE regions. These regional PLCs meet 3-4 times annually at the CORE office, and districts within each PLC uses their district needs assessments to set the work agenda for that PLC.

Other additional supports include identifying best practices from state and national partners and sharing these statewide through the ESL regional consultants: Conexión Américas, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), WIDA, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (W-CER), Regional Educational Laboratory (REL), Chief Counsel of State School Officers (CCSSO), EL State Collaborative on Assessment Student Standards (SCASS), Title I National Organization, and National Association of State Title III Directors. In addition, support includes developing cross-divisional supports to share resources and information for English learners: school improvement, parental involvement, licensing, special populations, and higher education.

English Learners with Disabilities

English language should be ruled out as the reason a child performs poorly on an assessment for special education services or for performance on an observation instrument. The English learner should not be assessed during the initial "silent period" (generally up to six months, but may be longer for beginners) when the student is working on receptive skills (listening and reading) rather than more productive skills (speaking and writing). It is encouraged that the child not be assessed during this time for special education services for issues (e.g., specific learning disability related to language, speech impairment, etc.) that could be clouded by the lack of English language acquisition. Retention is not acceptable for ELs in general, particularly not for EL students with disabilities unless language can be ruled out as having any part in the consideration for retention.

In addition, ensuring that the ESL teacher or expert is part of the IEP team and decision making will be beneficial in the collection of data when considering multiple sources of information as the basis of the assessment process when an EL is suspected of having a disability.

ELs should not be retained due to language ability. Language must be ruled out as any part of the reason for retention or for inclusion into special education programs.

Within the department, there is a shared responsibility between the CPM division and the division of special populations and student support services to improve instructional practices and improve outcomes for students. The TDOE has staffed and will maintain ESL professionals in both of these divisions. Together they provide support and technical assistance to all ELs and ensure that districts provide appropriate program-required services and interventions.

Title IV: Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant – Supporting a Well-rounded Education

Tennessee believes that all students should receive a high-quality education that also provides well-rounded experiences and prepares all students for life after high school. By supporting the whole child and a supportive learning environment, we will promote equity and excellence for all of our students. It is imperative that students have access to coursework and activities that interest them. We heard from

hundreds of parents and educators how critical arts and music, health and wellness, mental health services, counseling, sports, and clubs are in a student's development, as well as supporting students' academic interests and lifelong learning.

The TDOE will use the flexibility under Title IV, Part A, the new Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program, to allow districts and schools the flexibility they need to invest these new federal resources wisely in meeting the needs of all students to attain a holistic, well-rounded education. We believe these funds and the areas of allowable expenditure will be most directly related to our priority goal areas of *All Means All* and *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary*.

The new block grant authorized under ESSA provides an opportunity for statewide activity and support for district initiatives for well-rounded learning. Tennessee expects to use its statewide activity dollars (pending appropriate funding levels) to fund training, resources, and data analysis to address chronic absenteeism, improving and increasing restorative discipline practices, and increasing rigor in dual enrollment. Tennessee will also increase funding for EPSOs—including Advanced Placement examination fee waivers—so that more students can participate.

The department understands that much like students, schools are unique. As such we encourage districts to acknowledge these differences and align its supports and funding to provide differentiation between its schools. We believe that there must be space for innovation, and states must support innovation through funding, autonomy, and flexibility where allowable.

Awarding Subgrants

Of its total allocation, Tennessee will award 95 percent of the grant to districts by formula based on their relative shares of Title I, Part A funds. Tennessee will ensure that every district will receive a minimum award of $10,000 by utilizing proportional adjustment, where appropriate. Districts would be required to complete an application that details the identified need and which of the three SSAE priorities they are proposing including deliverables and timeline. This application would be accompanied by a detailed budget of proposed initiatives. These grant dollars will provide a resource to districts to prioritize and determine how best to serve their students and ensure a well-rounded education in a safe and healthy environment.

With the remaining 5 percent, the department also expects to offer *Go Further* competitive grant opportunities to districts for initiatives that meet the purposes of the three SSAE program content areas as funding allows. These grants would allow districts to apply for funding to take something they are doing well and extend its reach or scope. Districts that are implementing innovative instructional methods, differentiating support to its schools, and engaging stakeholders in new ways can apply for funds to further this work and build on successes. These competitive grants allow districts to continue to develop and evolve the successful work already underway in their districts, and share best practices with other districts. Districts earning the Exemplary designation will be given competitive priority in the application process through points on the scoring rubric.

The activities detailed below align with the state strategic plan, with Tennessee's additional measures of school quality and student support, and with the recommendations of the Student Support ESSA Working Group. This working group, comprised of teachers, guidance counselors, principals, district CTE personnel, parents, community partners, and superintendents; met in-person twice in June and July 2016, as well as via webinar in November 2016 to consider all implications of the various uses of funds within the broad federal program. Ultimately their key takeaways were that these funds could be

best used to support students in a myriad of ways. Their recommendations included various support services for students that impact one's ability to learn.

The renewed focus on the whole child under ESSA will provide districts and schools with the flexible funding needed to create a well-rounded education by supporting activities in up to three broad areas: Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities, Safe and Healthy Students, and Effective Use of Technology. In order to support districts and schools in meeting the requirement that this new program area serve students and schools most in need, the department will assist districts in identifying and collecting data needed to conduct a needs assessment. Such information within the Safe and Healthy Students area will include attendance and discipline data as well as district and building-level health data such as relative student Body Mass Index, prevalence of chronic health issues known to impact school performance, and self-assessment data provided via the Center for Disease Control's School Health Index.

Additionally, the department will assist districts and schools in developing collaborative models that build upon existing internal supports such as IDEA, coordinated school health, and family resource centers while establishing effective community partnerships in areas such as primary and behavioral health. Each district will also have flexibility to utilize its grant funds to support these well-rounded opportunities based on its specific needs. These additional formula dollars provide opportunities for states and districts to address issues that impact student achievement and can support students around choices after graduation.

Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESSA § 4107)	Safe & Healthy Students (ESSA § 4108)	Effective Use of Technology (ESSA § 4109)
• Improving access to foreign language instruction, arts, and music education • Providing programming to improve instruction and student engagement in STEM, including computer science, and increasing access to these subjects for underrepresented groups[104] • Promoting access to accelerated learning opportunities: Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, dual enrollment programs and early college high schools • Supporting college and career counseling, including providing information on opportunities for financial aid through the early FAFSA • Strengthening instruction in	• Promoting community and parent involvement in schools • Providing school-based mental health services and counseling (social workers, psychologists, counselors) • Promoting supportive school climates to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and promoting supportive school discipline • Establishing or improving dropout prevention • Supporting re-entry programs and transition services for justice involved youth • Implementing programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle, nutritional and physical education • Implementing systems and	• Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders, and administrators to personalize learning and improve academic achievement • Building technological capacity and infrastructure • Carrying out innovative blended learning projects • Providing students in rural, remote, and underserved areas with the resources to benefit from high-quality, digital learning opportunities • Delivering specialized or rigorous academic courses and curricula using technology, including digital learning technologies and

[104] See Appendix N

Well-Rounded Educational Opportunities (ESSA § 4107)	Safe & Healthy Students (ESSA § 4108)	Effective Use of Technology (ESSA § 4109)
American history, civics, economics, geography, government education, and environmental education • Additional resources for libraries and librarians, arts and music education, and other specialized instructional supports	practices to prevent bullying and harassment • Developing relationship-building skills to help improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse • Establishing community partnerships	assistive technology

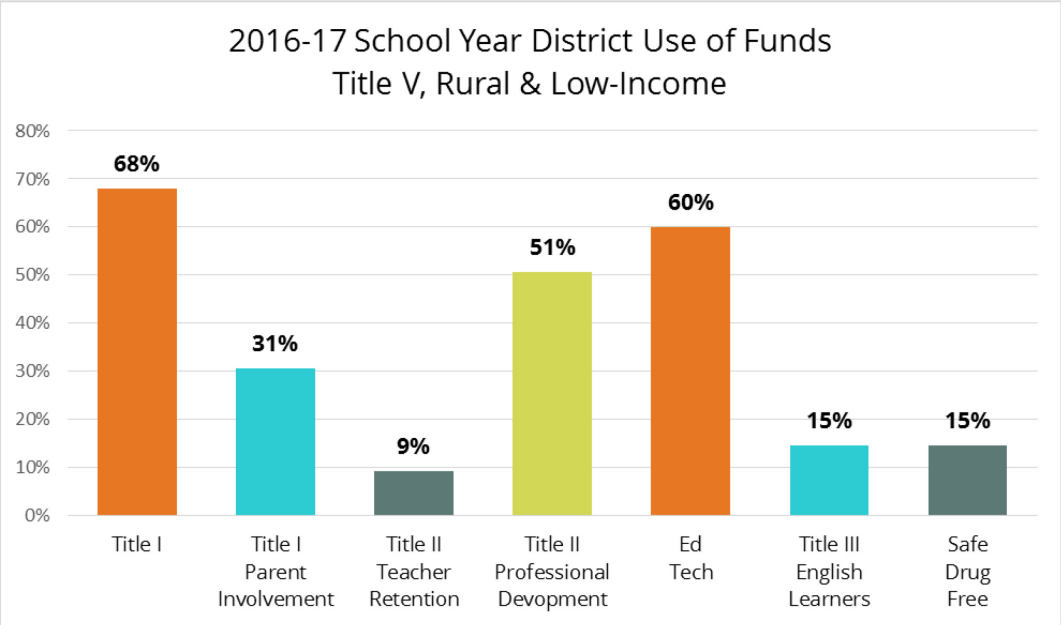
Title V, Part B: Rural Education Initiative

The Small, Rural School Achievement Program (Title V, Part B, Subpart 1) is an initiative designed to address the unique needs of rural school districts. These districts frequently lack personnel and resources needed to compete for federal competitive grants and often receive formula allocations that are too small to be used effectively for their intended purposes. This program provides additional formula funds and flexibility in the use of certain funds to small rural districts.

In March 2015, Tennessee received approval on the following definition of rural:

> *Any school or school district that has a U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics urban-centric locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42 or 43 is considered rural.*

Currently 75 districts receive Rural and Low-income Program funds (Title V, Part B, Subpart 2). The graphic below represents the use of funds of Tennessee's subgrantees.



With the addition of two new accountability measures for ESSA, we expect that beginning in the 2017-18 school year districts will utilize their funding differently to reach district goals. The department will

provide districts with the flexibility to utilize rural, low-income school program (RLIS) funds to support allowable activities under Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, or Title IV, Part A in order to address one or more of the state's five priority areas: *Early Foundations & Literacy, High School & Bridge to Postsecondary, All Means All, Educator Support,* and *District Empowerment*.

The desired objectives and outcomes for districts and schools operating under this program are to provide access and opportunity for all students. Tennessee promotes district-level decision-making to meet the needs of their students. Districts are empowered to design plans under Title V that support Tennessee vision for all students, such that all are able to embark on their chosen path in life.

Districts will be supported and guided through an annual planning process that requires the completion of a comprehensive needs assessment, the identification of priority needs and root causes, and the development goals, strategies and action steps to address priority needs and align with and support the state's priorities. Upon completion of this planning process, districts will determine which priority needs will be supported with RLIS funds.

The department will provide program guidance and technical assistance in the planned use of RLIS funds to ensure alignment with existing needs and prioritization of historically underserved student groups. Specifically, the department will continue to support its districts and schools in utilizing federal dollars to implement evidence-based interventions, providing resources through Tennessee's use of the following evidence at the state level:

- internal research team,
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) partnership and program evaluation grants, and
- Tennessee Education Research Alliance.

Additionally, the department is developing rubrics for use in reviewing and approving district plans that will identify discrepancies in per-pupil expenditures, teacher quality and qualifications, and access to early postsecondary opportunities and preschool programs. Those districts identified as having resource equity issues will be required to modify the plan to address the identified areas.

Districts will be required to take one or more actions:

- Adjust funding methodologies to ensure equity of expenditures
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to address the equitable distribution of highly effective, qualified teachers and, if necessary, direct resources to support them
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to make early postsecondary options available to students in the next school year and direct resources to support them
- Develop goals, strategies, and action steps to address the early learning needs of students prior to entering kindergarten (i.e., offering a preschool program, developing partnerships with existing preschools to ensure alignment of curriculum and seamless transition) and direct resources to support them

The department will provide focused and individualized technical assistance to districts for both the planning process and the strategic use of RLIS funds through the CPM monitoring team. A team of eight regional consultants will work directly with districts to develop RLIS budgets, identify evidence-based solutions, coordinate the use of federal, state and local funds, and align the use of funds to identified needs. Regional consultants will provide districts with written RLIS statutes, non-regulatory guidance, budget and planning guidance, templates, rubrics, training, and other supports as necessary to assist in understanding the allowable use of funds, RLIS eligibility, program requirements, and effective use of funds.

TDOE staff will also share other evidence-based research resources with districts including resources from the What Works Clearinghouse by the National Center on Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children & Youth Program

Equitable Access for Students Experiencing Homelessness

In order to ensure all school-aged children have equal access to relevant secondary education and support services, the state coordinator will liaise with other state agency stakeholders and issue joint guidance to districts regarding credit accrual and other areas important to ensuring the success of students experiencing homelessness, those separated from public schools, and runaway students. As stated in the non-regulatory guidance for the implementation of the McKinney-Vento act, the state coordinator shares practices, policies, and procedures that support districts in:

- working to keep students in their schools of origin so they can avoid the challenges associated with school change;
- providing support to help students attend school consistently and progress academically;
- awarding homeless, runaway, and students separated from public schools partial credit for work completed;
- complementing regular classes with independent study programs, including learning labs, on-line learning, and computerized models;
- connecting with after school networks;
- using multi-tiered systems of support, Positive Behavioral Interventions, and Supports or Response to Intervention teams to identify if students are struggling due to issues related to mobility and homelessness or if there are other needs that must be addressed in order for the students to demonstrate progress academically; and
- working with family courts and district personnel to create or improve diversion programs or alternative education programs.

State Coordinator

The department's McKinney-Vento state coordinator provides support and technical assistance in accordance with the McKinney-Vento non-regulatory guidance by ensuring all districts utilize the following activities, strategies, and tools to help ensure that all students experiencing homelessness are identified, have access to educational programming and supports, and have needs specific to homeless children and youths met. The following are additional responsibilities of the state coordinator:

- provide local district homeless liaisons with a student residency questionnaire and encourages districts to support the universal implementation of the questionnaire to prevent the stigmatization of students and reduce defensiveness of adult caregivers by preventing students and families from feeling singled out;
- provide local district homeless liaisons and other stakeholders with professional development and training at least once annually to heighten awareness with training that focuses on the definition of homelessness; signs of homelessness; the impact of homelessness on students; and the steps that should be taken once a potentially homeless student is identified including how to connect the student with appropriate housing and service providers;

- advise districts on ways to ensure that there are no barriers or enrollment delays for entry for students experiencing homelessness due to health or residency requirements; guardianship issues; or dress code requirements;
- the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students; and potential barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including summer school, EPSOs, and other opportunities; and
- liaise with other state coordinators, state agencies, and other pertinent stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to serving homeless families and youth is implemented.

Student Identification

One of the primary objectives as the state coordinator is to inform students experiencing homelessness of their rights granted by the McKinney-Vento Act. Promoting awareness and properly identifying students are significant factors that ensure students experiencing homeless have the opportunity to obtain the same educational opportunities as those who are not experiencing homelessness. The state coordinator provides several opportunities throughout the school year for the LEA homeless liaisons to learn about the pertinence of student identification and how to ensure the LEA is in compliance of the McKinney-Vento Act focus on student identification:

- Back to school checklist to ensure all policies, procedures, enrollment forms, and publications are up-to-date with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- New LEA Liaison webinar to educate new homeless liaisons about the roles and expectations of the homeless liaison as warranted by the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Back to School webinar to inform local homeless liaisons the expectations of the McKinney-Vento Act and discuss the goals for the upcoming year.

In addition, the McKinney-Vento state coordinator established the first Tennessee Advisory Council on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in April of 2016. The advisory council is comprised of homeless liaisons from regions across the state. The liaisons represent districts in both urban and rural settings. The key duties of the council include:

- advocating for polices, practices, and procedures that impact the education of homeless children and youth;
- facilitating local and interagency collaboration;
- shaping service delivery and supports throughout the state; and
- participating in quarterly conference calls.

Removal of Barriers. The state coordinator is responsible for training local liaisons on potential barriers that may impact students experiencing homelessness. The department hold local liaisons accountable for ensuring that local policies and procedures do not create barriers that will prohibit or impede homeless students from obtaining their education due to outstanding fees, fines, or absences. To this end, the state coordinator requires each local liaison to provide evidence of their policies through the office of consolidated, planning, & monitoring instrument and protocol, the back to school checklist, and the McKinney-Vento Subgrant Annual Self-assessment. Upon retrieval of the policies, the state coordinator reviews the policies and provides technical assistance so the local policies and procedures comply with the McKinney-Vento Act.

Districts must also ensure that students experiencing homelessness must also have equitable access to other academic programs (i.e. online learning, computer models), as well as access to extracurricular, summer, advanced coursework, EPSOs, charter schools, magnet schools, and other opportunities. The

state coordinator provides both training and oversight of local policies and procedures to ensure that students experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied homeless youth, have access to the core academic and enrichment opportunities afforded to other students.

District Local Liaisons

The district local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. Every district, whether or not it receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant, is required to designate a local liaison. The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically. In addition, local liaisons shall utilize existing resources including counseling and other supports, as well as partner with other agencies to ensure the needs of runaway students are met.

Support for School Personnel

On an ongoing basis, the department's McKinney-Vento state coordinator provides specific technical assistance and provides opportunities for homeless liaisons to be trained on the ESSA provisions to the McKinney-Vento Act. Training sessions are offered through web based content, regional homeless liaison meetings, and conference calls. The information provided in these the training opportunities are also readily available in ePlan in the LEA document library so they may be used in subsequent local trainings for other district and school personnel.

A training catalog is provided for district homeless liaisons to assist with identifying areas in which additional technical assistance may be needed. Training opportunities will be available on topics including, but not limited to, providing equal access to support and academic services; reducing barriers to academic and extracurricular activities; access to public preschool programs; and barriers to enrollment (e.g. school records, uniform requirements, residency requirements). The trainings will provide examples of barriers and ensure the local liaisons have examples of polices that adhere to the McKinney-Vento. The state coordinator is responsible for reviewing the policies and procedures of each district to ensure they are in compliance of the McKinney-Vento Act.

In addition, resources are developed and disseminated to local liaisons to provide additional technical assistance. The "McKinney-Vento FAQ" document is designed to build local capacity by the sharing of key questions and answers. The "Stay Connected" document provides local liaisons with links to web content from NCHE, NAEHCY, and other websites that will assist with being a proficient homeless liaison.

Assistance from Counselors

Local liaisons will receive dedicated training from the state coordinator on the rights of unaccompanied and homeless youth and their opportunities to access and obtain post-secondary education. This training includes how to identify unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) and the rights granted to the population under the McKinney-Vento Act. Local liaisons are also trained on the Unaccompanied Youth Toolkit for High School Counselors and McKinney-Vento Liaisons created by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY). The department also encourages local districts to host a McKinney-Vento FAFSA Week or similar college readiness program to motivate students eligible for McKinney-Vento services to pursue post-secondary education. The state coordinator tracks the level of implementation of these trainings and progress through documentation from LEAs, including data to provide the percentage of UHY scholars that have applied for FAFSA using their independent student status.

The state coordinator will work to foster positive relationships with school counselors, school based therapists, and school social workers professional organizations to provide professional development about the rights of UHY in order to advocate and ensure the students they serve obtain equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including credit recovery, EPSOs, FAFSA independent student status, and other opportunities.

Collaboration

The state homeless coordinator collaborates with the early childhood education state coordinator to guide districts as they identify eligible preschool-age children to ensure access to preschool programs and school nutrition programs. These procedures should include, at a minimum, best interest protocols to encourage districts to consider:

- the child's attachment to preschool teachers and staff;
- the impact of school climate on the child, including the school's safety;
- the availability and quality of services to meet the child's comprehensive needs, including academic, nutritional, health, developmental, and social-emotional needs (e.g., access to early childhood mental health consultants and other specialists, trauma-informed preschool for a child who has experienced trauma, etc.); and
- travel time to and from the school.

The state coordinator works directly with other state agency stakeholders (e.g., safe and supportive schools, conditions for learning, special populations, etc.) to ensure access to academic and extracurricular activities for students experiencing homelessness. The state coordinator provides support and technical assistance to district liaisons regarding the development of policies, practices, and procedures for improving outcomes for students experiencing homelessness. Districts must establish enrollment and retention protocols that align to the Tennessee Code Annotated and state board rules and regulations.[105]

Districts must ensure students experiencing homelessness are identified and provided the appropriate access to free and reduced meals, other available nutritional programs, as well as assistance from school counselors. Districts are also encouraged to collaborate with local food banks and community support providers to connect families experiencing homelessness to additional services.

Coordination with Title I, Part A

Districts set aside Title I, Part A funds to provide a wide variety of services to homeless students in Title I and non-Title I schools. These services may include providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and locations where students are experiencing homelessness. Additionally, districts utilize these funds to support the enrollment, attendance, and success of these children and youths. Districts review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth.

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[105] Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-5001(c)(3). Tennessee State Board of Education. Guidelines for Promotion and Retention. (Policy 3.300).

Dispute Resolution

Prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths is critical. When a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, educational placement or enrollment, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the district homeless liaison shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The designated district homeless liaison is assigned to carry out the dispute resolution process[106] in an expeditious manner.

Students with Disabilities

As part of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), the division of special populations determined a State-identified Measureable Result (SiMR) for students with disabilities. For the SiMR, the department will focus on assessment data aligned with achievement results of students with disabilities (Indicator 3 of the Annual Performance Report (APR)). Rather than addressing all assessment results for students with disabilities as a whole, the focus was placed on ELA assessment data and students with a specific learning disability (SLD). The department and its stakeholders determined the SiMR would be to annually increase the percentage of students with an SLD that score *on track* or *approaching* on the ELA state achievement test for grades 3–8 by three percent each year.

To achieve this SiMR, three coherent improvement strategies were identified. These strategies were aligned with current initiatives underway in multiple divisions across the department, particularly within the divisions of special populations and curriculum and instruction.

Three coherent improvement strategies identified were:

1. Increasing access for students with disabilities to high-quality core instruction
2. Addressing special education as the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model
3. Addressing students' skill deficits as they relate to academic content standards so they can succeed in the general education setting.

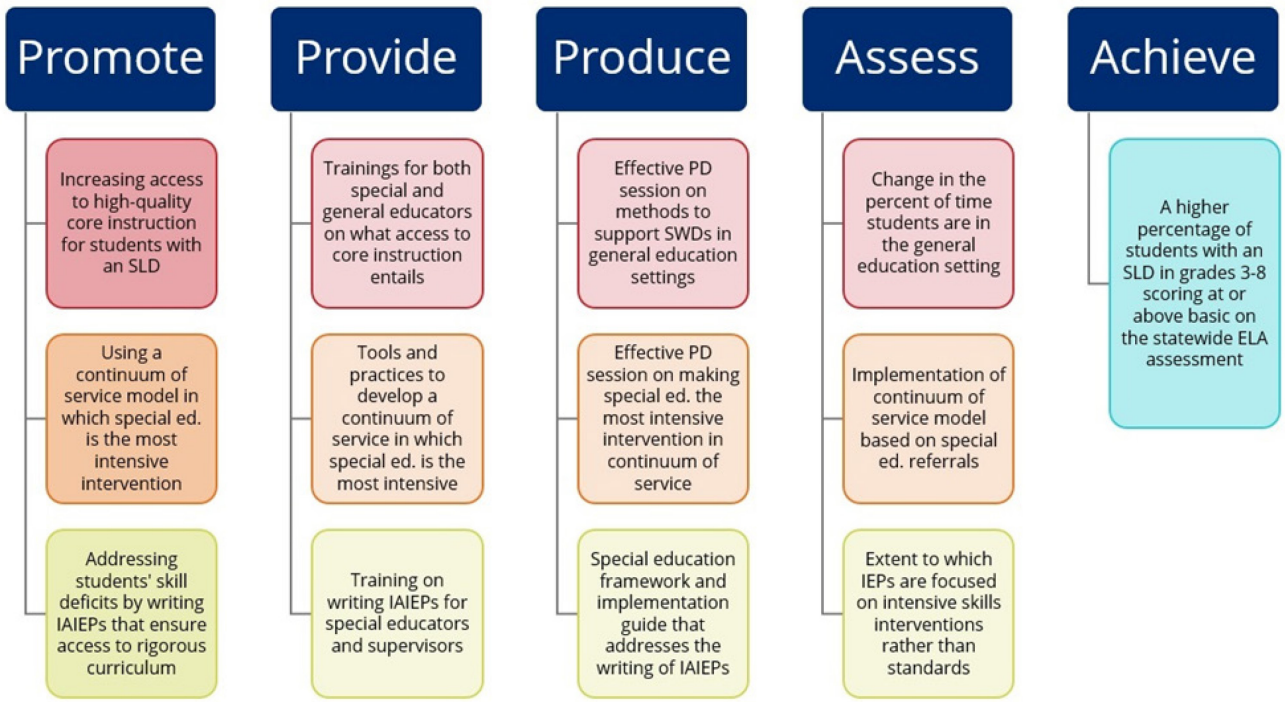
All three strategies are focused on providing students with disabilities access to core instruction from content experts while providing differentiated instruction and intensive interventions to meet their area of need. The department is confident that effective implementation of these three initiatives can help all students with disabilities succeed and improve on assessments, including those students with an SLD.

In practice, these three strategies are inextricably intertwined. Indeed, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to core instruction to the maximum extent possible while still having their needs met in the general education and special education settings encompasses all three strategies. There are numerous evidence-based practices (EBPs) undergirding each of the coherent improvement

[106] See Appendix Q

strategies, and they are entrenched in research and best-practices that have been espoused for decades.

After internal conversations about the coherent improvement strategies and how to effectively provide supports to districts relative to associated EBPs, some adjustments were made. The chart below disaggregates the inputs, strategies, activities, and short-term and long-term outputs for the three coherent improvement strategies and how they will work in concert to achieve the SiMR.



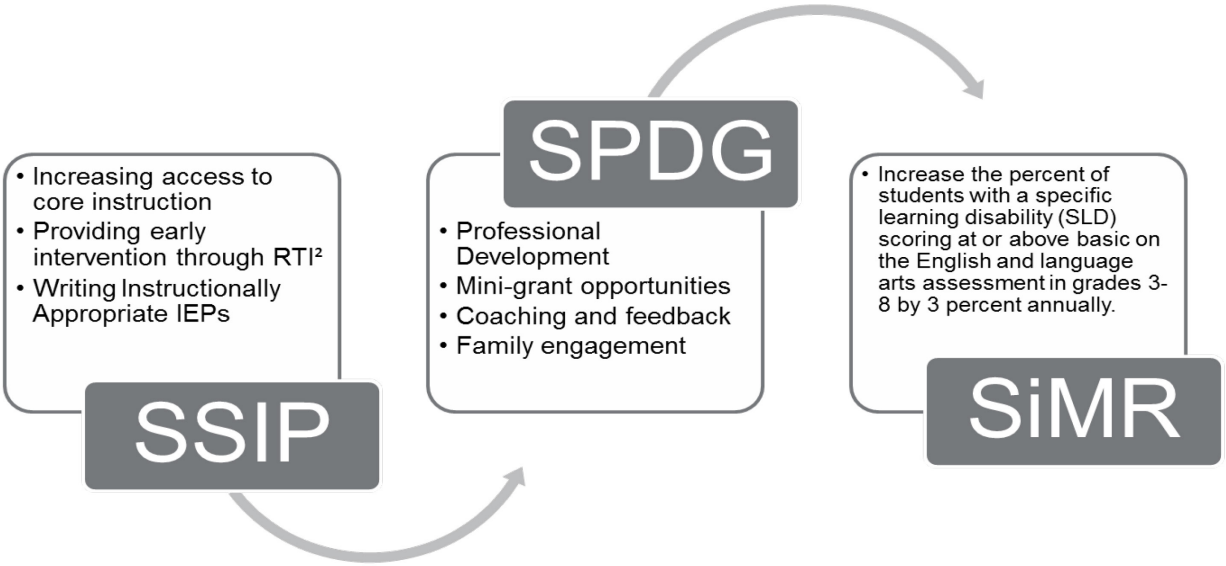
Most of these EBPs have already been selected and implemented throughout the state in some capacity. Selection of these EBPs was informed by research and supported by the knowledge and expertise of the task force members who each brought their unique perspectives to the table. For the coming school year, further supports for implementation of these EBPs in districts will continue to be provided to address the goals of the SSIP and achievement of the SiMR.

While Tennessee has implemented the three coherent improvement strategies across the state, continued support for districts as they implement these strategies is essential to ensure continued student sustainable success and sustain and spread these EBPs throughout the state. To provide this support to districts, the state will utilize the State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG).
When writing the application for the SPDG, much of the scope of work proposed was aligned to the work being done for the SSIP. The department made a conscious decision to direct the activities in both programs and to unite resources toward a common goal (the SiMR). To be sure, the department has made great strides to ensure the SSIP does not exist in isolation, and instead that all the work being done, particularly in the division of special populations and student support, is cohesive and uniform.

While the SPDG offers a monetary way in which the department can provide support to districts, this alone does not provide sufficient supports to ensure that districts have the capacity to implement EBPs effectively. To identify how to most effectively provide this support, the department utilized implementation science methodology when writing the application for the SPDG in conjunction with the

SSIP. In many ways the SPDG is a crucial component of the SSIP, and the work done as a result of the SPDG will help achieve the SiMR.

The graphic below underscores the connection Tennessee has made between the SSIP, SPDG, and SiMR. The SSIP is the plan with coherent improvement strategies, the SPDG provides the resources to implement these strategies and their related EBPs, and both work in concert to achieve the end goal, which is the SiMR.



State Systemic Improvement Plan

The State Systemic Improvement Plan's focus area is an increase in reading proficiency among students with specific learning disabilities. This is supported by the State Personnel Development Grant which funds content development for facilitated trainings and three regional support positions to work with target districts. Trainings and follow-up support will include differentiation and scaffolding, access to core instruction, and provision of the most intensive level of intervention in the special education setting. Fidelity monitoring and data collection will take place in the form of observations and outcome comparisons on state assessments between districts and schools involved in the grant and non-participating districts and schools.

Strategy	Timeline	Funding Sources
RTI^2 Guidance	Continuous	Title I (Tiers II and III), state
State Systemic Improvement Plan	Continuous	IDEA, State Personnel Development Grant
Targeted District Support	Continuous	State/IDEA

State Personnel Development Grant

The State Personnel Development Grant was awarded to Tennessee in 2015. This grant offers a meaningful opportunity to increase state capacity in supporting districts in the implementation of the coherent improvement strategies. The SPDG is completely aligned to the SSIP, with both working in tandem to achieve the SiMR. Allocation of resources to a common goal will prove extremely beneficial throughout the coming phases of the SSIP. As well, the SPDG will be a crucial resource to improve and augment human capital within the department. The infrastructure of the division of special populations and student support was strengthened with the addition of three new full-time staff members to serve as interventionists in the three grand divisions of Tennessee (east, middle, and west). The addition of these three staff members has greatly buoyed the work being led by division staff.

The interventionists will be responsible for providing the training support to district-identified coaches in addition to other necessary trainings for district administrators and teachers. Additionally, the interventionists will provide continuing support through regional monthly communities of practice. Communities of practice allow for professionals to meet regularly to review the strategies learned through trainings, report on successes, and work through problems of practice. This forum was found to be successful within the state's prior SPDG grant. Communities of practice will focus on improving participants' skills to implement the interventions taught during trainings through the use of aggregated implementation fidelity data and discussions of successes and challenges.

Differentiated Technical Assistance for IDEA

The department provides differentiated technical assistance and intensive support to districts identified as "needs intervention" as per the special education Annual Performance Report. The APR is conducted annually, and determinations from the APR data are completed each spring. Districts receiving a "needs intervention" designation for their IDEA programs receive site visits which are conducted in fall and early winter. This support will be provided by the division of special populations and student support, with focal areas aligned to TDOE strategies and priorities. Follow-up support is provided to the districts throughout winter and spring, as needed.

The department has acknowledged that the students with disabilities subgroup is one of the most historically underserved student groups across our state. To this end, the CPM division has increased its results-based monitoring of ESSA and IDEA programs, and added two additional levels of review for IDEA: self-monitoring and desktop. With this new framework, 100 percent of districts will have some level of monitoring each year—based on CPM's risk analysis tool.

In addition to results-based monitoring, the department conducts an online review of randomly-selected IEPs and related records from each district and state school. This annual IEP self-monitoring includes several levels of review, the first of which includes IDEA personnel from each district or state school reviewing and monitoring the randomly-chosen IEPs against a protocol composed of required IDEA components (such as prior written notice, eligibility, and more).

TDOE staff examine the percentage of students with disabilities in each disability category to randomly select the same percentage for each district or state school; the selected IEPs also include students who are English learners. After submitting their self-monitoring results, TDOE staff in the divisions of CPM and special populations review the IEPs and related documentation for items of non-compliance. Now in its second year of statewide implementation, the department has improved the IEP self-

monitoring protocol to also include specific quality components in addition to strict IDEA compliance items.

We believe strongly that districts conducting reviews of IEPs to ensure they are instructionally appropriate and being implemented with fidelity will result in improved achievement for students with disabilities. Post-monitoring surveys from district IDEA directors in 2015-16 revealed that 86 percent felt this review of IEPs led to improved district practices. A significant majority also noted that this process was helpful in assisting them to identify issues. This monitoring thus allows the department to identify needs and tailor individualized technical assistance to districts based on any identified areas of non-compliance.

Finally, the department has committed IDEA resources to bring more regional support to districts. The TDOE will be hiring four consultants positioned across the state to assist districts with targeted technical assistance needs and compliance issues. These positions were posted during fall 2016, and we expect these consultants will be on the ground in early 2017.

Use of Data

Within IDEA, local determinations are made using district-specific data for almost all indicators and each indicator selected is weighted based on the department's priorities. Each district is provided a detailed table listing their actual data for each indicator included in the determinations process, how they compare against the state, and whether they met the state-established target.

For districts assigned a determination on the IDEA Annual Performance Report of "needs intervention," a site visit to conduct a needs assessment is required. Staff from the division of special populations and student support visit districts to address those indicators flagged in the determinations process. Areas to be addressed will include the following:

- Disproportionate identification
- Identification procedures
- Instructional planning
- Least restrictive environments

For those districts assigned an APR determination of "needs assistance" or "needs intervention," the district is required to address the indicators flagged on their determination rubric as part of their comprehensive needs assessment in ePlan. The APR includes 14 indicators centered on graduation rate, achievement, discipline, LRE, early childhood outcomes, parent involvement surveys, disproportionate representation in special education, eligibility and transition timeline compliance, IEP transition goals for students age 16 and above, and postsecondary outcomes.

Using a uniform needs assessment protocol,[107] relevant district staff are asked about district-wide practices and procedures that might impact each of the flagged indicators. Data from the APR fiscal year and current data are used to inform the discussion. The intent of the visits are for districts to be held accountable to data from a previous year but not to fixate on this old data that cannot not be

[107] See Appendix M

altered. Instead, the focus is on discussing districts' current data, where they would like their future data to be, and how the department can be a thought partner in helping them attain their goals.

School-specific visits are also completed in conjunction with the visits with central office staff and administrators to better flesh out the district as a whole and get input from other parties. Improvement plans are developed based on these visits with both recommended and required tasks that address each of the flagged indicators.

Students in Charter Schools

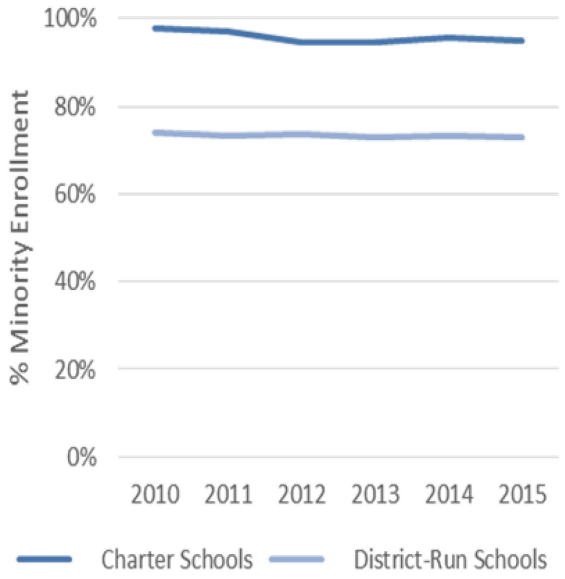
Tennessee's *All Means All* priority area calls for increased intentionality around providing individualized supports and opportunities for all students with a focus on those who are furthest behind. The department recognizes and values the important role that high-quality charter schools play in helping Tennessee achieve this strategic priority.

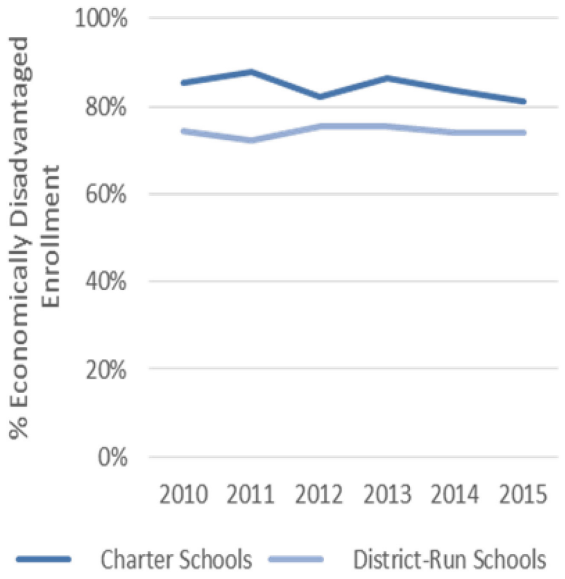
Since Tennessee's first charter schools opened in 2003, more and more families have pursued charter schools as the best public school option to provide a high-quality education for their children. Over the past decade, Tennessee has seen public charter schools become one of the successful approaches to transforming educational opportunities and outcomes. In the last five years, the number of students enrolled in Tennessee charter schools has increased by more than 300 percent.

Today, Tennessee's charter schools continue to grow—in number, quality, diversity of academic offerings, and in student enrollment and impact. Currently, 98 charter schools serve more than 29,000 students, or about 2.9 percent of all public school students in the state. And because charter schools are open-enrollment schools, Tennessee's charter schools are providing learning opportunities for students of all backgrounds and abilities and are achieving strong results with their student populations.

Historically, charter schools in Tennessee were restricted to only serving economically disadvantaged students. Tennessee's original charter school law limited student eligibility to attend charter schools based on the students' academic performance or the academic standing of their schools. In 2009, the law was amended to allow students in the largest districts to qualify to attend charter schools based on the low income status of the students' families. In 2011, the General Assembly removed these student eligibility limitations. Even though these restrictions have been lifted, Tennessee's charter school laws incentivize charter applicants that have a mission focused on economically disadvantaged students by requiring authorizers to give preference to applications that seek to serve these students. T.C.A. § 49-13-106(b)(1)(C) identifies "applications that demonstrate the capability to meet the needs of students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch" as one area a district must give preference in reviewing applications for newly created charter schools.

Tennessee charter schools continue to serve a high numbers of economically disadvantaged students. Charter schools have been able to leverage their flexibility to implement innovative strategies and develop curricula and learning environments that allow economically disadvantaged students to demonstrate success. Over the past five years, charter schools have served, on average, a greater population (about 10 percent) of economically disadvantaged students as compared to district schools in the state. The charter student population is over 80 percent economically disadvantaged and over 90 percent minority. The figure below depicts the percentages of economically disadvantaged and minority student enrollment in charter schools compared to district-run schools since 2010.





The Achievement School District (ASD) is also contributing to the expanding charter school landscape in Tennessee. The ASD was created to turnaround the state's Priority schools, those schools performing in the bottom five percent statewide. The ASD recruits high-performing charter management organizations (CMOs) to Tennessee to operate within a portfolio model run by the ASD. The portfolio model draws upon the skills, experience, and resources of successful charter operators from around the country to infuse the ASD schools with the tailored turnaround efforts they require.

Along with increased autonomy and flexibility, Tennessee's charter statute places increased accountability on charter school operators. T.C.A. § 49-13-122(a)(1) mandates that "charter agreement(s) shall be revoked or denied renewal by the final chartering authority if the department of education identifies the charter school as a Priority school." In addition, a Tennessee charter school's agreement may also be revoked for violation of the charter agreement or failure to meet accepted standards of fiscal management. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108(f), the state board has adopted national authorizing standards which include the provision that the board will maintain high standards by closing "all charter schools in its portfolio that fail to meet the standards and targets set forth in law and under their charter agreements."

Tennessee is committed to continuing the progress of high-quality charter school growth in Tennessee with a particular focus on meeting the needs of economically disadvantaged students. Specifically, we have identified three objectives in order to support the overall goals of the charter school program:

1. Increase the number of high-quality charter schools through new start-up, expansion, and replication of successful models
2. Decrease the number of academically poor-performing charter schools by strengthening charter school accountability and oversight of authorizers
3. Support improvement in all schools with emphasis on closing achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students

Students in Non-public Schools

The passage of ESSA requires numerous changes to procedures and administrative requirements for providing equitable services to non-public school students; specifically, the changes in oversight,

consultation, and equitable share. The department is committed to serving all students, and support in these key areas has been underway since August 2016. This service includes providing technical assistance to districts with eligible, participating non-public schools within their geographic boundaries.

Oversight

As required under § 1117(a)(3)(B) of ESSA, Tennessee added the ombudsman position to the CPM staff in fall 2016 to provide support and assistance to districts in the transition to ESSA. The equitable services and non-traditional schools coordinator will be responsible for ensuring equitable services in the following programs outlined in § 8501 of ESSA:

- Title I, Part C (Migrant Education)
- Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction)
- Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition)
- Title IV, Part A (Student Support & Academic Enrichment)
- Title IV, Part B (21st CCLC)

Non-public schools are guaranteed the right to file a complaint if they believe that:

- timely and meaningful consultation did not occur;
- the district did not give due consideration to the views of the non-public school officials; or
- the funds generated or services to be provided are not equitable.

In most instances, the department has 45 days to respond to complaints.

In instances where the non-public school officials have requested and the district has demonstrated that it has not met the Title I equitable services requirements of either Title I or Title VIII, the state must provide Title I equitable services directly or through contract. However, the department believes that districts should be responsible for all of its students; therefore, in instances where the state must intervene to ensure that eligible students in participating non-public schools are receiving appropriate services, the state will incorporate fiscal repercussions for districts through its policies and procedures. Penalty may include the state withholding a percentage of the district's Title I administrative dollars for these services.

Consultation Requirements

The equitable services and non-traditional schools coordinator, with support from CPM regional consultants will provide training and ongoing assistance on the updated consultation requirements. The department has already begun providing technical assistance to districts in preparation for the new ESSA requirements indicated below:

- Under §§ 1117(a)(4)(C) and 8501(a)(4)(C), states must provide timely notice to appropriate non-public school officials in the state of the allocation of funds for equitable services that districts have determined are available for eligible non-public school children.
- Updated consultation requirements in §§ 1117(b)(1) and 8501(c)(1):
  - Title I § 1117(a)(4)(A)(ii): The proportionate share of funds for equitable services must be determined based on the total amount of Title I funds received by a district prior to any allowable expenditure or transfers by the district.
  - For all programs, specific consultation topics or issues which will be part of the department's technical assistance:
    - Whether services will be provided directly or through a separate government agency, consortium, entity, or third-party contractor

    - When, including the approximate time of day, services will be provided
    - Whether to consolidate and coordinate equitable funds from Title I with other funds for equitable services
- All programs: §§ 1117(b)(2) and 8501(c)(2): If a district disagrees with the view of the non-public school officials regarding any of the issues subject to consultation, the district must provide non-public school officials written reasons why it disagrees.
- All programs: §§ 1117(b)(4) and 8501(c)(5): Districts must maintain a written affirmation of meaningful consultation, signed by non-public school officials which includes an option for non-public school officials to indicate their belief that timely and meaningful consultation has not occurred or that the program design is not equitable.

Equitable Share

ESSA includes significant changes in the calculation of equitable share. Title I § 1117(a)(4)(A)(ii) requires that the proportionate share of funds for equitable services be determined based on the total amount of Title I funds received by a district prior to any allowable expenditure or transfers by the district. For all programs, §§ 1117(a)(4)(B) and 8501(a)(4)(B) require that funds allocated to districts for educational services and other benefits to eligible non-public school children be obligated in the fiscal year for which the funds are received by the district. Additionally, §§ 1117(a)(4)(C) and 8501(a)(4)(C), require states to provide timely notice to appropriate non-public school officials in the state of the allocation of funds for equitable services that districts have determined are available for eligible non-public school children.

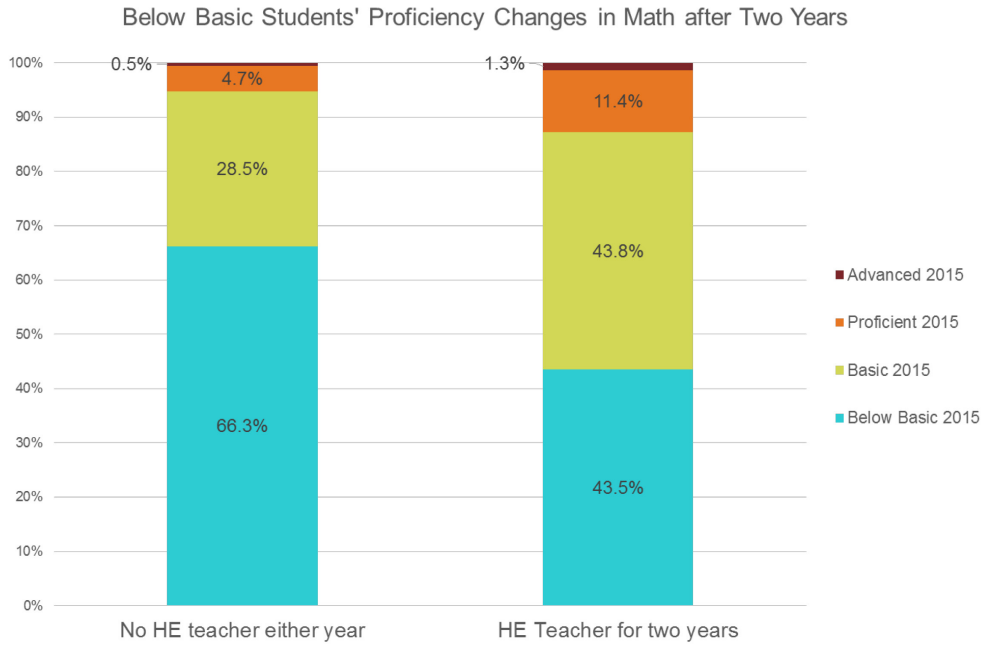
To communicate and address these new requirements, CPM regional consultants will provide support and technical assistance during late fall and during the application review process to ensure that the proportionate share is calculated correctly. This calculation will also be checked during monitoring visits—including on-site visits to at least one non-public school.

Educator Support

Educator Support

Ensuring all students are successful means ensuring that the more than 65,000 teachers and almost 5,000 leaders across the state receive the support they need to continuously improve their practice, from preparation to developing teacher and leader pipelines. We believe that all students, regardless of zip code, background, or life circumstance; should be afforded access to highly effective teachers.

Highly Effective Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement



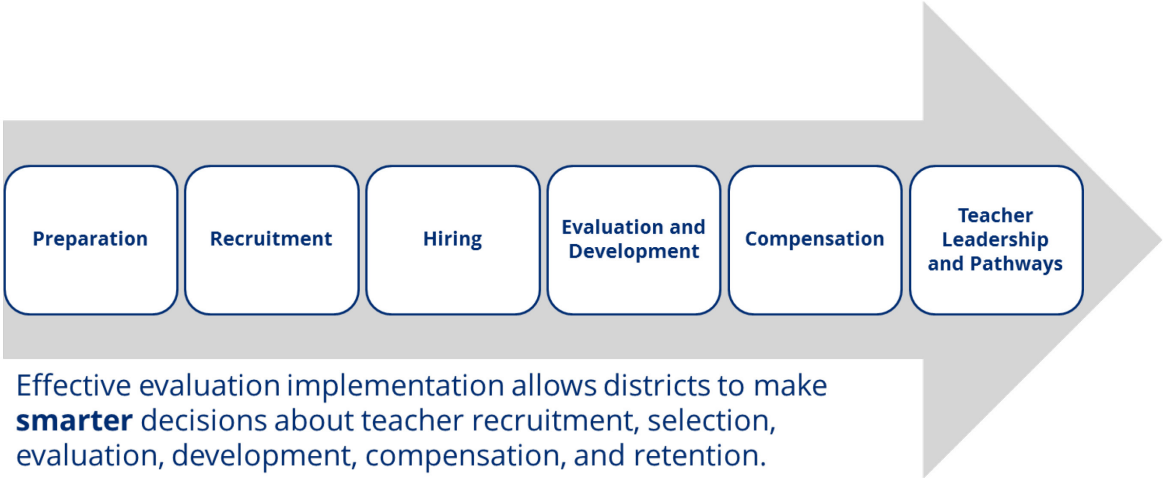
Students scoring *below basic* in math in 2013 were more likely to score at a higher achievement level in 2015 if they were placed with a highly effective teacher in both 2014 and 2015.

In alignment with our state's vision and to meet our goals, the *Educator Support* strategic priority includes five key strategies:

1. **Educator Preparation:** Focus educator preparation providers on outcome measures via provider approval, the annual report, and the report card
2. **Educator Evaluation:** Improve the accuracy of educator evaluation and the quality of the feedback educators receive
3. **Professional Learning:** Support district development of more effective personalized professional learning components through tools that allow better tracking and evaluation of results
4. **Differentiation:** Support districts in creating greater differentiation of teacher roles, responsibilities, and salaries

5. **Educator Pipeline:** Create statewide and regional leadership pipelines that produce transformational school leaders

The impact of a highly effective teacher cannot be understated. In fact, research by the Rand Corporation[108] indicated that teachers are the most impactful, within-school factor on student performance. The department recognizes the importance of its teachers and is committed to supporting the preparation and development of an exceptional educator workforce. Similarly, a meta-analysis conducted of research studies over 30 years revealed a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement.[109] It takes a commitment by both teachers and leaders to impact achievement in a sustainable manner.



Funding for Educator Support

Tennessee utilizes state and federal funds to promote the work of educator support and effectiveness. As we develop our plan for the implementation of ESSA, we plan to capitalize on the flexibility provided within § 2101(c)(3), Title II, Part A for the principal and school leader optional set aside of three percent. This set aside, along with Title II, Part A statewide program dollars will be used to continue to support programs to advance Tennessee educators.

The department engages with its stakeholders included in ESEA section 2101(d)(3) at least annually to collect feedback on the provision of state-level services. This feedback group includes the state's Committee of Practitioners/CPM Advisory Committee which includes all required stakeholder groups, as well as other standing state committees comprised of relevant stakeholders including teachers, leaders, community partners, and higher education. Data, including human capital data, are shared with stakeholders to provide additional context for the state initiatives. This feedback informs both state-level program offerings, as well as other teacher and leader development opportunities to support the development of highly effective educators.

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[108] *Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement*. RAND Corporation. 2012. Web.

[109] Waters, Tim; Marzano, Robert J.; McNulty, Brian. Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement. A Working Paper. Mid-Continent Regional Educational Lab., Aurora, CO. Web.

Activity Description	ESSA Funding	Initial Implementation
TTLA	Title II three percent leadership set aside	2016
Teachers-Teachers	Title II statewide	2013
NIET Best Practices[110]	Title II statewide	2011
Micro-credentialing	State/philanthropic/potentially Title II-A in future years	2016
Teacher Leader Network	Title II-A	2013

Tennessee will continue to empower districts to make smarter spending decisions with federal dollars through comprehensive spending plans that address the needs of all students (see the *District Empowerment* section for additional information).

Ensuring Equity

To improve achievement for all students, we must work toward ensuring that all students have access to effective teachers and that our lowest-performing students are not systematically assigned to less-effective teachers. With this goal in mind, the department released a report, *Equitable Access to Highly Effective Teachers for Tennessee Students*, which examines which Tennessee students have access to the highest-performing teachers and whether this access is equitable across the state, districts, and schools.[111]

The report describes the current landscape of Tennessee students' access to highly effective teachers by examining the supply and distribution of highly effective teachers at the state, district, and school levels. Highly effective (HE) teachers are defined as teachers with individual growth TVAAS scores of level 4 or 5. The department will continue to support districts and schools in examining their teaching data and their teacher-student matching practices to ensure equitable access to highly effective teachers for Tennessee students. The report is organized around five questions:

1. Do Tennessee students have equitable access to highly effective teachers?
2. What factors affect students' access to highly effective teachers?
3. What is the current supply of highly effective teachers in Tennessee?
4. How are highly effective teachers distributed within districts and schools in Tennessee?
5. What are we doing and what can we do to improve students' access to highly effective teachers?

In 2015, states were required to update and submit equity plans to the U.S. Department of Education. Historically, Tennessee's 2006 and 2010 equity plan submissions focused primarily on highly qualified and novice teacher data in predominantly large, urban districts. Tennessee's 2015 *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators* plan provided an opportunity through evaluation data to consider the issue of access through the lens of effectiveness and continuous improvement. We have used these data to calculate equity gaps for our districts and schools. The department continues to refine the ways we examine equity issues, identify the state's key levers in addressing these issues, and develop a set of

[110] National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. Best Practices Center Portal. Web.
[111] Tennessee Department of Education. *Equitable Access to Highly Effective Teachers for Tennessee Students*. Web.

new data metrics to review and share. Much of this work has been underway in Tennessee over the last several years, and with the implementation of ESSA, we expect to continue and expand our focus on equitable access to effective teachers. The department believes this work has laid a solid foundation for addressing equitable distribution as we begin implementation of our state plan under ESSA.

Our theory of action for addressing issues of equity centers on the following principles and key beliefs:

- As stated earlier, research shows that teachers have a greatest impact on student achievement than any other in-school factor. Yet, systematically, the students who need high-quality instruction the most do not have the same access to effective teaching as their peers.
- We believe this gap develops as a result of two key issues: 1) an inadequate supply of effective teachers and 2) the within- or between-school factors limiting access to effective teachers for particular groups of students. We carefully examine data metrics for each of these issues.
- Districts vary considerably in the human capital challenges and issues they face, and improving access to meaningful data will lead to improved district-level decision-making in human capital.
- There are a number of factors that impact a district's supply of effective teachers and students' access to those teachers. To address these issues we need to continue working with districts to improve human capital management: preparation, recruitment, hiring, staffing, evaluation, development, retention, and compensation.

Tennessee defines "effective teaching gap" as the difference in the percent of students identified in a historically underserved student group who are taught by highly effective teachers compared to the percent of students in a comparison group taught by highly effective teachers. These gaps can occur between schools and within schools.

- A positive gap means that a greater percentage of *advanced* students had a HE teacher.
- A negative gap means that a greater percentage of *below basic* students had a HE teacher.

Below are definitions (consistent with ESSA § 2101) Tennessee will use, as well as a brief synopsis of the state's ability to collect, analyze, and report on the measures:

1. Ineffective: Tennessee has a robust educator evaluation system which combines qualitative data, student growth data, and student achievement data to determine levels of overall effectiveness in a five-point rating system. Levels of overall effectiveness (LOE) are defined as:

- Significantly Above Expectations
- Above Expectations
- At Expectations
- Below Expectations
- Significantly Below Expectations

In the 2014-15 school year, approximately 11.4 percent of educators were rated *below expectations* or *significantly below expectations*.

a. Definition: For purposes of determining equity and disproportionality, an *ineffective* educator has an LOE of *below expectations* or *significantly below expectations*. Ineffective educators are shown to produce limited or no student growth.

b. Data collection: Tennessee collects educator evaluation data in the TNCompass data system and is able to complete the required analysis at district and school levels annually.

2. Out-of-Field: Over the last three years, Tennessee has worked to ensure that tested grades and subjects are taught by licensed educators who hold the proper endorsement required to teach the course. Even so, in order to address teacher shortage issues and allow for locally-determined course scheduling decisions, Tennessee statute currently allows any licensed educator to teach one course outside of his/her area of endorsement. If an educator teaches more than one course or more than two sections of one course outside of his/her area of endorsement, the district must apply for a waiver. Multiple teams in the TDOE are working to better understand the teacher supply and demand in Tennessee and identify where gaps exists, specifically for its neediest students. In January 2017, findings were presented to the Tennessee State Board of Education.

a. Definition: For purposes of determining equity and disproportionality, an *out-of-field* educator is teaching any course or grade for which he/she does not hold a valid license or the endorsement required to teach the course or grade.
b. Data collection: Tennessee currently has information on the number of approved waivers and permits issued to districts. Recently, a cross-divisional data governance team was assembled to determine the best way to collect information on out-of-field teaching. It is estimated that Tennessee will be able to begin reporting on out-of-field teaching in 2017-18.

3. Novice: Tennessee will use the term "novice" to fulfill the requirements to define "inexperienced" under ESSA for consistency with existing terminology.

a. Definition: For purposes of determining equity and disproportionality, a *novice* educator has fewer than three years of teaching experience in Tennessee public schools.
b. Data collection: Tennessee currently collects information on teaching experience in Tennessee public schools and does not include out-of-state experience or non-public school experience.

4. Minority student:

a. Definition: *Minority* students include black, Hispanic, and Native American students, as defined within our state accountability system. These racial/ethnic student groups are historically underserved as defined within our state accountability system.
b. We define student performance levels based on proficiency levels on the annual state assessments.
c. Data collection: All districts have a student information system that feeds into the department's Education Information System (EIS). The student information systems used by districts are required to elicit the information needed for state and federal purposes. Upon enrollment, this information is collected from parents during the intake interview or from the enrollment form. This is monitored during the CPM monitoring of federal funds.

5. Low-income student:

a. Definition: For accountability, funding, and determining equity and disproportionality, *a low-income,* or *economically disadvantaged* student is one who is directly certified as participating in state or federal assistance programs, such as: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Head Start. Students who are identified as homeless, migrant, and runaway are also included in the direct certification calculation (low income/economically disadvantaged).
b. Data Collection: The office of school nutrition provides direct certification data for Tennessee students. In addition, districts code and enter student information to identify the state's status for homeless, migrant, and runaway for EIS.

6. Students with Disabilities:

a. Definition: Students with disabilities are children with specific disabilities, as defined by IDEA, who need special education and related services.
b. Data collection: The department is identifying and developing ways to better collect and share data to measure equity gaps for students with disabilities and support our work under *All Means All*.

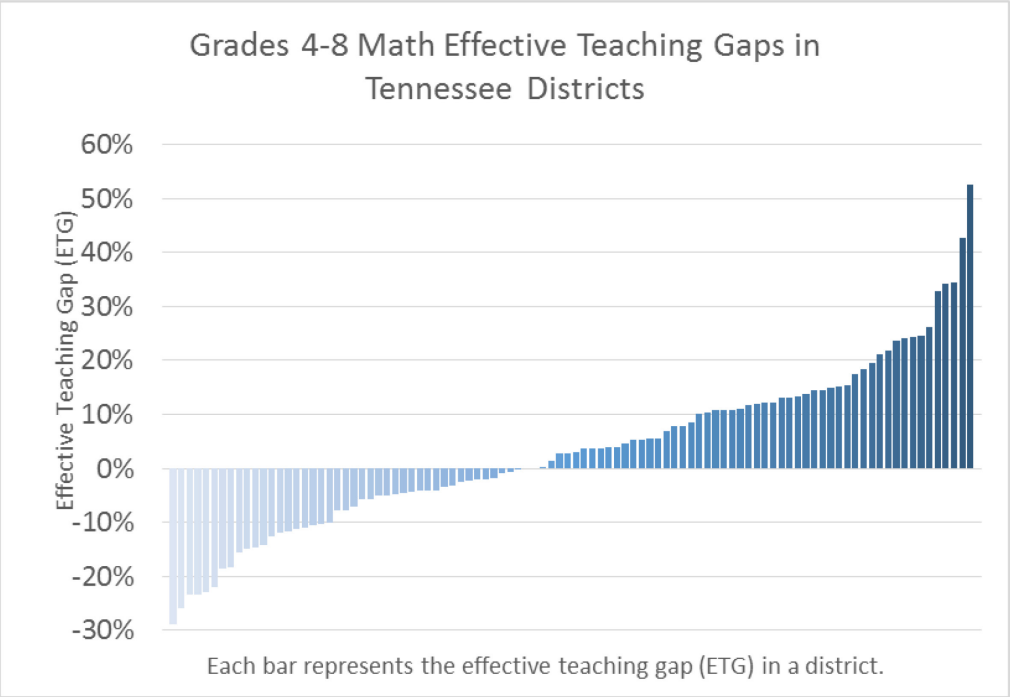
In examining differences we reviewed the following:

- Low-income vs. non-low-income students in Title I and non-Title I schools
- Minority vs. non-minority students, in Title I and non-Title I schools

STUDENT GROUPS	Rate at which students are taught by an **ineffective** teacher	Differences between rates	Rate at which students are taught by an **out-of-field** teacher	Differences between rates	Rate at which students are taught by an **inexperienced** teacher	Differences between rates
Low-income students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, A	4.38%	3.13%	6.23%	1.34%	24.56%	6.65%
Not low-income students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, A	1.25%		4.89%		17.91%	
Minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, A	5.54%	4.25%	8.45%	3.63%	27.77%	10.11%
Not minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, A	1.29%		4.82%		17.66%	

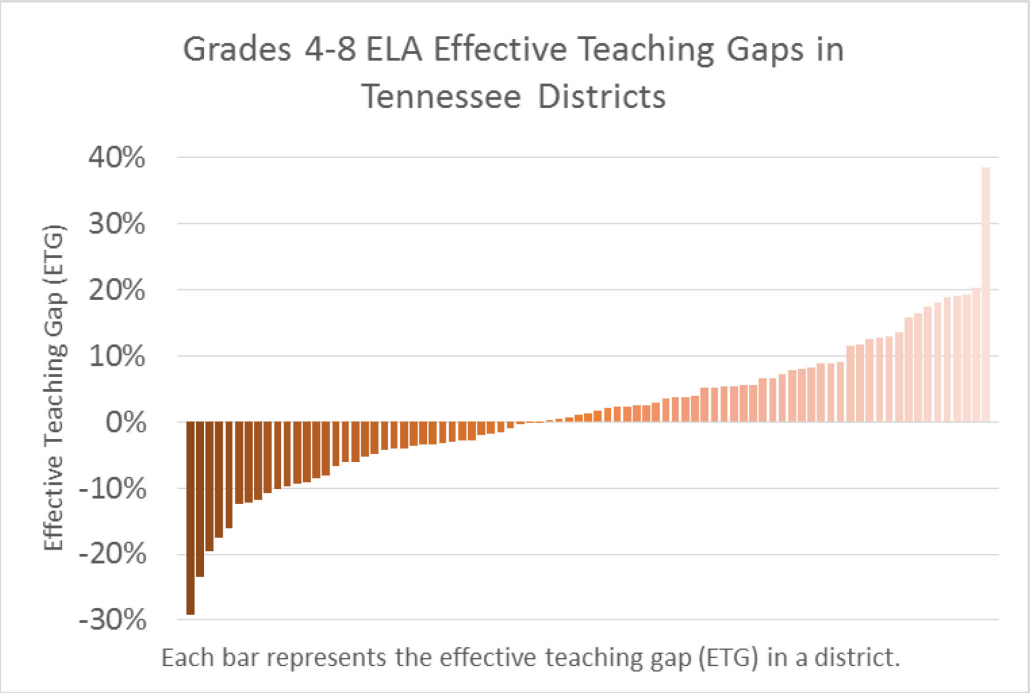
Mathematics Equity Gaps

Math Equity Gaps							
Comparison group	**Subgroup**	**2016**			**2015**		
		Percent of **comparison group** with access to HE teacher	Percent of **subgroup** with access to HE teacher	Equity gap	Percent of **comparison group** with access to HE teacher	Percent of **subgroup** with access to HE teacher	Equity gap
All Students *Advanced*	All Students *Below Basic*	44.11%	38.28%	5.83%	54.10%	44.46%	9.64%
Not low-income	Low-income	42.69%	38.81%	3.88%	52.28%	46.98%	5.30%
Not minority	Minority	40.55%	40.20%	0.35%	50.84%	45.56%	5.28%
Not low-income *Advanced*	Low-income *Advanced*	45.75%	41.25%	4.50%	56.36%	49.77%	6.59%
Not minority *Advanced*	Minority *Advanced*	44.22%	43.54%	0.68%	55.10%	48.39%	6.71%
Not low-income *Below Basic*	Low-income *Below Basic*	39.97%	37.85%	2.12%	45.71%	44.11%	1.60%
Not minority *Below Basic*	Minority *Below Basic*	37.43%	39.21%	-1.78%	45.53%	43.22%	2.31%



Reading/English Language Arts Equity Gaps

Reading/Language Arts Equity Gaps							
Comparison group	**Subgroup**	**2016**			**2015**		
		Percent of **comparison group** with access to HE teacher	Percent of **subgroup** with access to HE teacher	Equity gap	Percent of **comparison group** with access to HE teacher	Percent of **subgroup** with access to HE teacher	Equity gap
All Students *Advanced*	All Students *Below Basic*	29.52%	23.23%	6.29%	32.71%	29.33%	3.38%
Not low-income	Low-income	28.73%	26.30%	2.43%	31.97%	30.12%	1.85%
Not minority	Minority	27.01%	28.24%	-1.23%	29.73%	33.97%	-4.24%
Not low-income *Advanced*	Low-income *Advanced*	30.16%	27.73%	2.43%	33.24%	31.22%	2.02%
Not minority *Advanced*	Minority *Advanced*	29.44%	30.14%	-0.70%	32.49%	34.34%	-1.85%
Not low-income *Below Basic*	Low-income *Below Basic*	24.75%	22.90%	1.85%	30.35%	29.11%	1.24%
Not minority *Below Basic*	Minority *Below Basic*	22.88%	23.60%	-0.72%	27.32%	31.42%	-4.10%



Root Cause Analysis

The varied root causes of inequity as well as the heterogeneous nature of the size and type of equity gaps across the state and within districts prompted an important dialogue around the state agency's role in addressing issues of equitable access. As we examine why equity gaps exist within and between schools, we acknowledge that a number of factors influence a district's supply of effective teachers and the extent to which certain students receive access to these teachers.

While we know that some of the root causes lie in systemic issues outside of education or are issues best addressed through district solutions, we also recognize several key levers that the state can utilize to call attention to and address inequitable access. Providing the right policy context to empower districts to make human capital decisions is invaluable, along with the critical role that the state can play in providing data transparency around key issues.

In 2015, under the leadership of Commissioner Candice McQueen, an engagement plan was developed to gather external feedback on Tennessee's equity plan from teachers, district leadership, and external policy and community organizations. The team met with the following groups to get feedback on the research methodology, the root causes, and the strategies described to address equity and access.

- Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents Board of Directors
- Commissioners Teacher Advisory Council
- TN TEAM Coaches
- External organizations and Community groups
- Principal Study Council
- Professional Educators of Tennessee
- State Board of Education
- State Collaborative on Reforming Education
- Superintendent Study Council
- Teach for America
- Tennessee Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- Tennessee Association of School Personnel Administrators
- Tennessee Business Roundtable
- Tennessee Education Association
- Tennessee Parent Teacher Association
- Tennessee School Boards Association
- Urban League of Middle Tennessee

The first feedback opportunities were with the aforementioned groups, and the department continued to work closely with CORE and CPM in 2016 to provide regional trainings around human capital data reports which contain district and school level information on effective teaching gaps, and seek feedback from teachers, summer training facilitators, and school administrators.

The department is continuing its ongoing stakeholder engagement about issues around human capital. Going forward, the department will examine the impact of the suspension of grades 3–8 testing in 2015-16 and our ability to provide quality human capital data reports to district. The regional meetings and convenings allow us to collect feedback on the district human capital data reports and on the existing strategies with stakeholder input and new ideas proposed by district level leaders. We will seek additional feedback on the district level data reports and the strategies for human capital and equity throughout the next school year.

After careful examination of data, a thorough root cause analysis was critical in determining underlying causes of the equity issues as it relates to accessibility to effective teachers. The department views this root cause analysis as an integral part of our stakeholder engagement plan and key to successful implementation of strategies. Without this step in the process, we risk investing time and resources into strategies ill-equipped to address the specific causes of inequity. Furthermore, we believe most of this root-cause analysis must be conducted at the district level. Because our districts vary widely in terms of their size, geographic location, local challenges, leadership, and many other factors; we know that a one-size fits all root-cause analysis is not sufficient.

Based on the feedback from the internal and external stakeholder groups, a state-level picture of the supply and distribution challenges were identified. Some common root causes for supply and access challenges across districts are detailed below:

- **Lack of quality prep programs in certain regions/for certain subjects:** Access to the state's most effective educator preparation providers is not equal across the state. Currently, Tennessee's largest producers of new teachers are not always the most effective preparation providers. Districts also tend to hire educators from the nearest providers which may limit the pool of quality educators. This perpetuates the need to continue raising preparation standards and elevates the need to strengthen partnerships between districts and educator preparation providers.
- **Insufficient professional learning opportunities:** High-quality, targeted professional learning is key to improving teacher effectiveness within our existing workforce and ensuring a high quality supply of educators for all students. Research indicates that providing on-going, job-embedded professional learning is more effective than other delivery models of professional development. The work of the department must support districts in establishing more personalized and job-embedded opportunities, including PLCs, personalized learning, and more frequent coaching/feedback for educators.
- **Variance in leadership skills and capacity:** Principals and district leaders must be excellent talent and human capital managers, adept in evaluating teachers, and skilled at providing feedback and coaching. These leaders are also often responsible for recruitment and selection of teachers, which represents a significant shift from previous responsibilities primarily focused on building management. The variance in these skills and capacities and the shifting role of leaders are likely contributing factors to the supply challenges faced in some schools and districts. The department is committed to developing leaders to ensure all school leaders have the skills to effectively recruit, assign, and develop their teachers.
- **Rural challenges:** The Tennessee Rural Education Association[112] reports that 49 percent of school districts in Tennessee are located in rural communities. While recruiting and retaining effective teachers is challenging across urban, suburban, and rural schools; this challenge is heightened for rural communities. Isolation—both geographic and professional—as well as lower wages, make recruiting and retaining effective teachers more difficult for rural areas. This is particularly a challenge in certain subject areas where the state already has a lower supply of highly effective teachers. Within this context, the state must support rural districts in creating innovative recruitment programs, positive working conditions and compensation systems, while also developing strong professional learning plans that help districts grow their own talent.

[112] Tennessee Rural Education Association. Web.

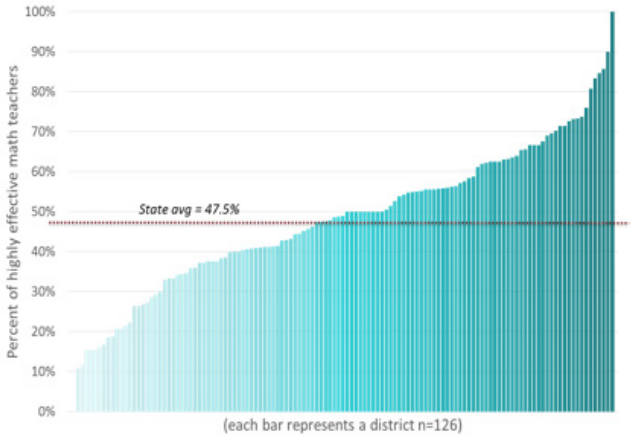
While the root causes outlined above resonate throughout the state, a more thorough analysis through engagement and conversation with individual districts is needed to address Tennessee's changing demographic. For example, our state has seen a recent influx in students who are English learners and the current teacher pipeline does not adequately address this need. Another area of need is to widen the teacher pipeline to diversify the teaching force across the state, especially in urban districts.

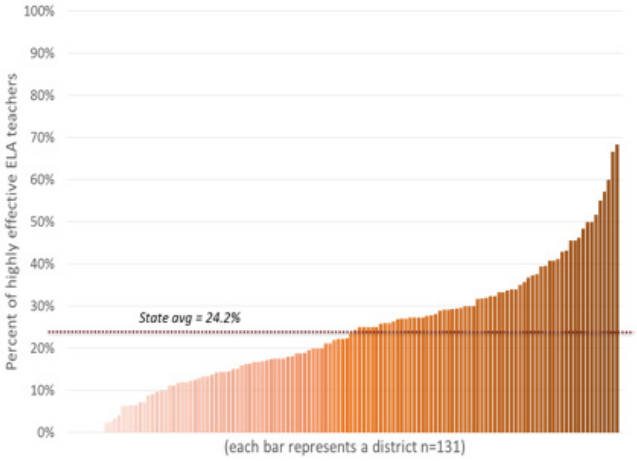
Tennessee began providing districts with human capital data on the distribution of effectiveness scores, averages of observations, and growth scores in 2014-15. Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the human capital data reports were updated to include data on equity and effective teaching gaps. Additionally, the CORE offices and the CPM team worked closely with the teachers and leaders team to incorporate human capital data in the district planning tool in ePlan. The departments expects and encourages district to utilize Title I and other dollars to address instances of disproportionality across school.

As we disaggregate the supply and distribution metrics to the district level, we see great variation across our districts. For example, when we analyze supply data, we know that some districts struggle to maintain a high-quality supply of teachers, while in other districts this is not a current challenge. Similarly, there is the same variation in the equity metric—access to effective teachers.

Ensuring a high-quality supply of teachers is twofold: it is focused on ensuring that incoming teachers are prepared and highly effective, and also that we continue to develop and improve existing educators.

As demonstrated in the charts below, the supply of highly effective teachers across Tennessee districts in 2014 varies in grades 4–8 for both mathematics and ELA. As evidenced below, there is also a significant difference in the state average in the supply of mathematics (47.5 percent) teachers and ELA teachers (24.2 percent).





Supply-side factors include the quality of and proximity to teacher preparation programs, recruitment and teacher hiring practices, geographic labor markets, teacher evaluation and professional development, teacher retention, and compensation strategies. Having an adequate supply of highly effective educators is only one component of addressing teacher equity gaps. The department supports strategies that address the distribution of educators across and within schools that apply the right incentives and support structures to encourage our best teachers to serve in the areas of greatest need, and should not focus on forced placements or transfers.

Factors affecting access include the quality of school leadership, teacher preferences about schools and courses, district assignment of teachers to schools (where applicable), principal assignment of teachers to courses, and school assignment of students to teachers. Thus, both the supply of and access to highly effective teachers must be considered to ensure all students are taught by highly effective teachers, regardless of school. The report, *Teacher Retention in Tennessee: Are We Keeping Our Best Teachers?*, examines the extent to which teacher retention rates in Tennessee schools differ according to teachers' effectiveness and the ways this information might inform strategic retention efforts.[113]

The five *Educator Support* strategies are essential to Tennessee meeting its ambitious state goals. While equity is often initially associated with funding, ensuring equity is also about ensuring that all students have the opportunity to take rigorous courses and to be taught by highly effective teachers. These strategies are essential in achieving equity for all Tennessee students. The sections below detail how Tennessee will address and continue to support educators from preparation through expanded educator pathways for growth and advancement.

[113] See Appendix O

Educator Preparation

In the past twenty-four months, Tennessee has refocused in-state educator preparation providers on outcome measures to increase the number of classroom-ready teaching candidates. This approach ultimately addresses supply challenges by increasing emphasis on the beginning of the teacher pipeline. In partnership with the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), the department's work to raise the standards of educator preparation providers will ensure the production of teachers who are more prepared to teach on day one, which we expect will positively impact retention.

Ultimately, the department would like to increase the supply of effective teachers for Tennessee schools: strengthening the pipeline by raising standards of admission, requiring rigorous coursework, offering high-quality clinical experiences, and developing more informative candidate assessment systems. In addition, Tennessee is supporting high quality, mutually-beneficial partnerships between providers and the districts they serve.

The Tennessee Educator Preparation policy was adopted by the state board in October 2014 and revised in January 2017.[114] The policy seeks to ensure that all approved Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) meet rigorous standards established by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), as well as Tennessee-specific criteria. As detailed in the Tennessee Educator Preparation policy and T.C.A. § 49-7-210, the process of program approval and review utilizes the following: EPP annual reports, the Teacher Preparation Report Card, interim/focused reviews, and comprehensive reviews.

Transparency, Accountability & Continuous Improvement

To support efforts to improve educator preparation, Tennessee has revised and extended reporting practices for educator preparation providers. In 2007, the General Assembly mandated the production of report cards on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. These reports serve as a tool for public consumption and support for continuous improvement. As we shift to the new policy governing the approval of educator preparation programs, Tennessee refined the purposes and intended audience of the report card to develop a new report aimed at educator preparation providers for the purpose of continuous improvement.

Annual Reports

Annual reports will provide detailed, candidate-level data for each EPP each year. These reports will offer evidence of the effectiveness of EPPs for the purpose of ongoing approval and to drive continuous improvement at the program level. The annual reports contain similar metrics as the Teacher Preparation Report Card but are disaggregated by program area and clusters of programs.

Non-negotiables	Annual Report

[114] Tennessee State Board of Education. Tennessee Educator Preparation Policy (5.504). Web.

Non-negotiables	Annual Report
Prioritizes Outcomes and Impact	**Outcomes** • Candidate recruitment and selection • Completer placement and retention • Candidate assessment **Impact** • Completer, employer, and partner satisfaction • Completer effectiveness
Actionable	• Provides data at EPP, SAP (specialty area program) cluster and SAP levels • Provides data at domain and indicator levels
Incentivizes Continuous Improvement	• Annual data that are disaggregated to support analysis and understanding to support program changes • Results that fall below required expectations result in an interim review • Formal component of the comprehensive review

The TDOE generated the first annual reports with improved data visualization and metrics in February 2017. In addition, Tennessee will hold an EPP event in April 2017. The event will convene key stakeholders, including educator preparation providers, K–12 educators, and other relevant groups, including the Governor's office, State Board of Education, and external partnerships. The department will highlight a report on strengthening new teacher pipelines and the new annual reports on educator preparation. Both reports will provide Tennessee educator preparation providers with an unprecedented amount of data about their program completers. This data will be used to support continuous improvement and serve as a source of evidence for the ongoing approval to recommend candidates for licensure.

Annual Report Metrics		*Reporting Levels*
Domain 1: Candidate Recruitment & Selection		
Recruitment Goals	*Progress in meeting EPP/district-primary partner-defined recruitment goals*	*EPP*
Candidate Profile	*Distribution of ACT/SAT/GRE/Praxis I results*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
	Undergraduate/Major GPA	
	Distribution of Race/Ethnicity	
	Percentage of completers in high-needs subject areas	
Domain 2: Completer Placement & Retention		
Placement	*Percentage of completers placed within first three years after obtaining a license*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Retention	*Percentage of completers placed in a teaching position who stay in a teaching position for at least three years in the first five years after obtaining a license*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*

Annual Report Metrics		*Reporting Levels*
Domain 3: Candidate Assessment		
Pedagogical	*Percentage of completers passing required pedagogical assessment on first attempt*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Content	*Percentage of completers passing required content assessment(s) on first attempt*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Domain 4: Completer, Employer, & Partner Satisfaction		
District Primary Partner Satisfaction	*Level of district primary partner satisfaction*	*EPP*
Program Completer Satisfaction	*Level of program completer satisfaction*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Employer Satisfaction	*Level of employer (principal) satisfaction*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Domain 5: Completer Effectiveness		
Overall Evaluation Rating	*Distribution of overall evaluation ratings*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
TVAAS Rating	*Distribution of TVAAS ratings*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Evaluation Observation Rating	*Distribution of observation ratings*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*
Evaluation Domain and Indicator Ratings	*Distribution of observation domain and indicator ratings*	*EPP, SAP Cluster, SAP*

Teacher Preparation Report Card

In 2007, the Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation requiring the publication of a report on the effectiveness of educator preparation programs throughout the state. State law requires reporting on three indicators: placement and retention rates, Praxis II scores, and teacher effect data based on TVAAS scores. Every year since 2007, the SBE and the THEC have jointly published a report card evaluating the effectiveness of the educator preparation programs across the state.

In 2016, the State Board of Education, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission, launched a newly redesigned Teacher Preparation Report Card showing how Tennessee colleges and universities that offer education programs and other teacher preparation providers are training new teachers for success in Tennessee's classrooms. This change represents a unique opportunity to redesign the report card to be more transparent and stakeholder-friendly and to articulate EPP strengths and challenges clearly. In spring 2016, the state board began working to refine the report card production process from the initial data collection

through its official launch, collecting stakeholder feedback throughout the process. The feedback collected thus far covers content and formatting of the current report card as well as ideas for future iterations. In addition, a survey was released to school districts, EPPs, and prospective candidates.

A series of focus groups were also held throughout the state in April and May 2016. In total, feedback was received from 468 different stakeholders, which was posted to the state board's website. Based on the feedback, the state board convened an advisory council, comprised of various stakeholders, to focus on the comprehensive redesign of the Teacher Preparation Report Card.

The new *Teacher Preparation Report Card* includes four domains. The report card will phase in the use of three cohorts of completer data. Currently, the report card only has program completer data from two cohorts: 2013-14 and 2014-15. All information will be reported at the provider level, with program-level information on annual report publications. This report card is available both in online and PDF formats. Information will be organized within four domains and will contain the following metrics:

- **Domain 1: Candidate Profile**
  - Percentage of completers with an ACT score at or above 21 or the equivalent SAT score of 1020
  - Percentage of completers with an admissions GPA above 2.75 (data not available Dec. 2016)
  - Percentage of endorsements received in high-demand areas
  - Percentage of racially or ethnically-diverse completers
- **Domain 2: Employment**
  - First year placement rate
  - Three-year placement rate (data not available Dec. 2016)
  - Beyond year one retention rate
- **Domain 3: Satisfaction** (domain not available Dec. 2016)
  - Completer satisfaction
  - Employer satisfaction
- **Domain 4: Provider Impact**
  - Percentage of completers whose:
    - Observation scores are Level 3 or above
    - Percentage of completers whose observation scores are Levels 4–5
    - Percentage of completers whose TVAAS scores are Level 3 or above
    - Percentage of completers whose TVAAS scores are Levels 4–5

Program Approval

In most recent years, the process used to approve EPPs and their specialty area programs placed too much emphasis on inputs and not enough focus on outcomes and impact. The revised approval process will enable the department to make recommendations based on outcomes and impact associated with effective teaching. Beginning fall 2017, the department will begin a more rigorous program approval process of outcome-based reviews.

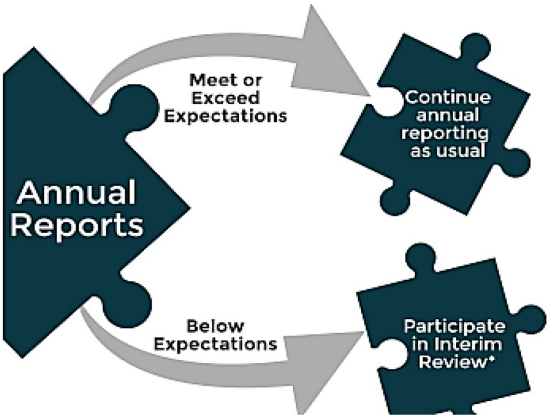
Comprehensive Review

CAEP has published a set of five standards that focus on inputs, outputs, and outcomes: content and pedagogical knowledge; clinical partnerships and practice; candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity; program impact; provider quality assurance; and continuous improvement. This process will lead to a more robust comprehensive review and, ultimately, to a statewide landscape of highly effective EPPs.

All Tennessee EPPs must present evidence for each CAEP standard during the comprehensive review process. The TDOE implementation working group has finalized metrics for the annual reports, and released the initial publication of these metrics in February 2017. For existing EPPs, this review occurs every seven years and engages a trained team to examine evidence related to CAEP, professional education, and specialty area standards.

Interim & Focused Reviews

Interim reviews occur when an individual or series of annual report(s) indicate a provider or program is below standards. Focused reviews occur when a provider does not meet a standard during the comprehensive review process.



Licensure

In July 2015, the Tennessee State Board of Education approved a new policy regarding educator licensure. This policy was designed to streamline both the structure and types of licenses offered. To advance licensure, educators must earn professional development points (PDPs). Qualifying activities must be related to improving educator effectiveness by:

- developing content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge; and
- enhancing educator effectiveness (e.g., engaging in world language courses for those working with English learners, coursework that supports or enhances understanding of content and use of data)

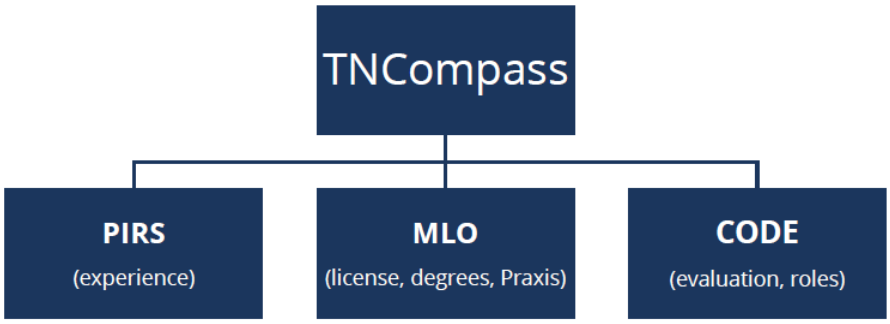
The PDPs required to advance or renew licensure are detailed below. Activities not related to improving educator effectiveness do not qualify for PDPs.

Type of License	Requirements for initial licensure	Structure	Advancement
Practitioner	• Hold a BA/BS • Demonstrate content knowledge (Praxis or Major) • Be enrolled in or have completed an approved preparation program • Recommendation for initial licensure comes from EPP • Submitted qualifying scores on required assessments	• 3-year validity period • Renewable (once) – Submit application – Achieve qualifying score(s) on Praxis Only available if criteria for advancement are not met	• Completed preparation • Submit application and passing scores on all required PRAXIS exams • 3 years of experience • Director of Schools recommendation **OR** 30 PDPs
Professional	Advance from the Practitioner license	• 6-year validity period • Renewable – Submit application and accrue 60 PDPs	

In addition, the endorsements that may be issued were also streamlined in 2015. Below are the areas for which a licensed educator is prepared to provide instruction, leadership, or services in schools and districts in Tennessee.

Grade Spans	Endorsement Areas
Early	Pre-K–K Pre-K–3
Elementary	K–5 K–6
Middle	Math 6–8 Science 6–8 English Language Arts 6–8 Social Studies 6–8 Middle Grades 4–8
Secondary	Core Academic 6–12 Core Academic 7–12 World Languages 6–12 Career and Technical 6–12
Pre-K–12	Fine Arts PE/Health English as a Second Language World Languages
Special Education	Preschool/Early Childhood Pre-K–3 Interventionist K–8 Interventionist 6–12 Comprehensive K–12

Tennessee has developed and is implementing a new online educator data management system, TNCompass. The system is the repository for information related to educator licensure, evaluation, and eventually, personalized learning opportunities. Information sources include the: Personnel Information Reporting System (PIRS); My Licensing Office (MLO); and CODE Performance Data Management System. Beginning in late 2015, EPPs were able to recommend candidates for initial licensure using TNCompass.



The department will capture more data related to educator preparation as a part of the licensure process, and these data will be connected to evaluation data to allow the department to generate more information regarding placement, retention, satisfaction, and evaluation data related to completers from Tennessee-approved preparation providers.

edTPA

The edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. The edTPA was developed by Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), and informed by educators as well as through the experience gained from over 25 years of developing performance-based assessments of teaching (including the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards portfolio, and the Performance Assessment for California Teachers). The edTPA emphasizes, measures, and supports the skills and knowledge that all teachers need on the first day in the classroom. It is a subject-specific assessment and features a common architecture focused on three tasks: planning, instruction, and assessment.

Aspiring teachers must prepare a portfolio of materials during their student teaching clinical experience. The portfolio allows aspiring teachers to demonstrate readiness to teach through lesson plans designed to support their students' strengths and needs; engage real students in ambitious learning; analyze whether their students are learning; and adjust their instruction to become more effective.

Immediate priorities of the edTPA Implementation Plan include:

- Establishing coordinators for each EPP
- Developing a voucher distribution process (300 vouchers)
- Finalizing materials demonstrating alignment of TEAM, InTASC, and edTPA
- Conducting edTPA training for EPPs

The edTPA implementation timeline is as follows:

- October–December 2016

  - Identify coordinator at each EPP
  - Establish schedule for coordinated virtual meetings
  - Provide overview of results analyzer
  - Finalize edTPA handbook
  - Build state website on eTPA.com
  - Identify small statewide advisory group
  - Confirm alignment with Tennessee Professional Teaching Standards
- January–April 2017
  - Finalize plan to distribute edTPA information
  - Conduct meeting with statewide advisory group
  - Deliver orientations with individual EPPs
- April–June 2017
  - Review pilot and implementation plan with each coordinator
  - Revisit and review project plan
- July–September 2017
  - Determine annual reports content
- Regular routines to drive implementation
  - Conduct quarterly virtual meetings with statewide advisory group
  - Conduct monthly edTPA coordinator virtual meetings
  - SCALE and edTPA national academy consultants deliver two training workshops

Educator Evaluation & Support

In July 2011, Tennessee became one of the first states in the country to implement a comprehensive, student outcomes-based, statewide educator evaluation system: the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). The implementation of TEAM was a key tenet of Tennessee's First to the Top Act, adopted by the General Assembly with bipartisan support during the 2010 session. This landmark legislation established the parameters of a new teacher and principal evaluation system for initial implementation during the 2011-12 school year.

TEAM

The educator evaluation model in Tennessee is based upon a three-pronged approach: promote educator effectiveness, support implementation while encouraging increased local ownership and flexibility, and foster continuous improvement and innovation. Within the model, there are five performance levels, one being the lowest and five being the highest. An educator's performance level is determined by multiple measures of effectiveness.

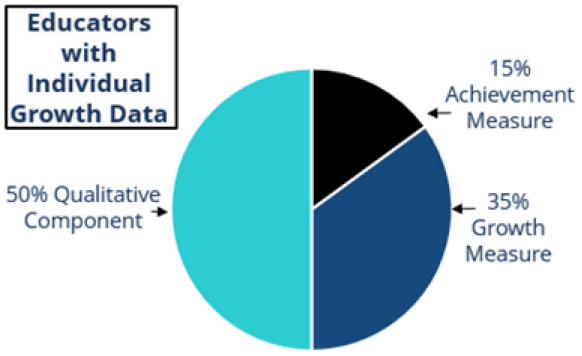
Since its inception, educator feedback on TEAM reflects the value of the model on improving both teaching and student learning as noted in the excerpt from Tennessee Educator Survey below. In addition, the department's Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Report Policy Brief from May 2016 reported 81 percent of teachers felt the evaluation helped them identify areas for improvement. In fact, 95 percent of teachers responding reported that their performance had improved over the past year.

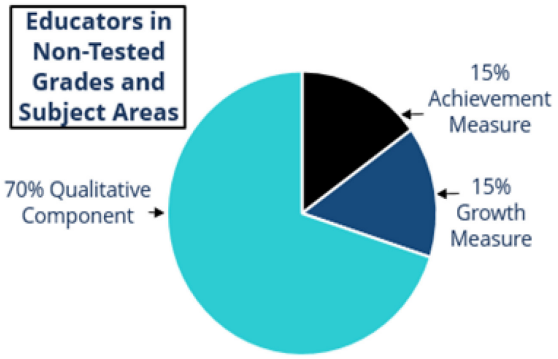
Tennessee Educator Survey Questions 2015	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree
The processes used to conduct my teacher evaluation are **fair** to me.	68%
In general, the teacher evaluation process used in my school has led to improvements in **my teaching**.	68%
In general, the teacher evaluation process used in my school has led to improvements in **student learning**.	62%

The effectiveness of TEAM is supported by principals and teachers working together to ensure the best possible instruction every day. Through frequent observation, constructive feedback, student data, and professional development; TEAM is designed to support all educators in doing their best work to help every student learn and grow. This educator evaluation strategy seeks to improve the accuracy and quality of the feedback educators receive to support continuous improvement around the state's teacher evaluation system. Tennessee is committed to the teacher evaluation system which has provided targeted support for teachers as well as an identified area of refinement as part of its actionable feedback, and TEAM encompasses these priorities.

Teacher Evaluation

When a teacher has individual growth data, the evaluation components are 50 percent qualitative data, 15 percent achievement measure, and 35 percent growth measure as illustrated in the charts below. Historically, only teachers in tested grades and subject areas have had individual growth scores.





- **Growth Measure:** Individual TVAAS score
- **Achievement Measure:** State assessments, school-wide TVAAS, ACT/SAT, "off the shelf" assessments, AP/IB exams, or graduation rate
- **Qualitative Component:** Observation and student survey scores (tested); portfolios (non-tested)

Student growth portfolio models, however, give teachers in traditionally non-tested grades and subject areas the opportunity to demonstrate student growth and generate an individual growth score. In general, portfolio growth models produce authentic student growth measures unique to an individual teacher's students, making the evaluation itself more personalized.

State legislation was passed in 2016 detailing the use of portfolio models in non-tested grades. Starting in the 2017-18 school year, every district that has a voluntary pre-K program will use a student growth portfolio model to evaluate its pre-K and kindergarten teachers which will significantly expand the use and overall impact of portfolio growth models.

Principal Evaluation

Administrator evaluation combines self-reflection, observation, input of school staff, and student data to create a complete picture of the administrator's performance. Revised summer 2013, the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) establish the structural framework of the Administrator Evaluation Rubric by defining a set of indicators and detailed descriptors that provide a clear set of expectations to schools and districts. Within the rubric, the following four standards are articulated:

1. Instructional Leadership for Continuous Improvement
2. Culture for Teaching and Learning
3. Professional Learning and Growth
4. Resource Management

The effectiveness rating is calculated using a formula that is 50 percent qualitative and 50 percent quantitative. The 50 percent qualitative portion includes an assessment of the administrator's implementation of the teacher evaluation process. The remaining 50 percent is comprised of school-based, value-added growth scores (35 percent) and an achievement measure selected from a menu of options (15 percent).

The administrator evaluation rubric is a tool intended to guide a fair and transparent administrator evaluation, and is approved by the state board. It was developed to establish a culture of support for instructional leaders and intended to help engage educators in reflective dialogue among and between peers and evaluators to improve practice. The expectation is that the rubric is used to support school leaders and those who support school leaders in acknowledging effective practices and results. Finally the use of the rubric supports opportunities for improvement, offering guidance on professional growth and learning for oneself and for other educators.

The drafting process for the administrator evaluation rubric was largely informed by administrators throughout the state and collaborating with the principal, supervisor, and superintendent study councils whose suggestions, questions, and concerns regarding rubric language were strongly considered during the development of all iterations of the draft. In addition, the following research supports the content of the rubric:

- American Institutes for Research's The Ripple Effect, 2012
- Georgia Department of Education's Leader Keys Effectiveness System, 2012
- Indiana Department of Education's Principal Effectiveness Rubric, 2013
- ISLLC's Educational Leadership Policy Standards, 2008
- James Stronge's Principal Evaluation, 2012
- Kim Marshall's Principal Evaluation Rubrics, 2012
- Tennessee's Standards for Professional Learning, 2012
- McREL's Principal Evaluation System, 2009
- New Leaders' Urban Excellence Framework, 2011
- Stronge, Richard, and Catano's Qualities of Effective Principals, 2008
- Tennessee's Teacher Leader Standards, 2011

- Waters, Marzano, and McNulty's Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us about the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement, 2003

The *Teacher and Administrator Evaluation in Tennessee: A Report on Year 4 Implementation*, released in May 2016, reported 86 percent of administrators feel the current evaluation process helped them to improve as professionals, and 88 percent reported that the feedback they received was useful. Administrators who responded to the Tennessee Educator Survey in 2015 reported the current feedback process provided useful information and facilitated changes to leadership practice within their schools. This opportunity for improved leadership could yield more opportunities to support teacher growth. Eighty-five percent of administrators reported that they felt the evaluation process will lead to better school leadership. Just under 90 percent of administrators reported that they changed their leadership practice due to the evaluation and feedback process. According to 81 percent of respondents, development of school leaders will positively impact teachers and student learning.

TEAM Coach Support

Increasing the reliability of observation data improves the quality and accuracy of decisions made based upon these data. Along with site administrators and district personnel, eight TEAM coaches support the development of the administrators' capacity in this crucial work. Through the triangulation and continual analysis of the multiple data points coupled with aligned coaching, TEAM coaches support and advance the comprehensive development of administrators as instructional leaders in teacher evaluation and development. TEAM coaches provide opportunities for co-observations and scoring, administrative team norming, student work analysis, and data analysis for decision making.

Educator Development & Support

The department is committed to supporting districts in the development of more effective, personalized professional learning through tools that allow better tracking and evaluation of professional development. ESSA's emphasis on evidence-based practices and interventions, as well as the focus on continuous improvement, will inform our support to districts and to educators in the 2017-18 school year and beyond. In addition to providing direct training, the department will be developing a repository for professional resources, and other supports including:

- components for high-quality induction and support programs for new teachers, including an emphasis on differentiated mentoring and professional learning opportunities;
- effective, evidence-based components for rigorous and differentiated professional learning models; and
- professional learning rubrics for schools and districts.

Tennessee supports effective professional learning and believes educators can increase effectiveness through the following:

Professional Learning that Increases Educator Effectiveness	
Learning Communities	Professional learning that occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment
Leadership	Professional learning that requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning

Professional Learning that Increases Educator Effectiveness	
Resources	Professional learning that requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning
Data	Professional learning that uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning
Learning Designs	Professional learning that integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes
Implementation	Professional learning that applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change
Outcomes	Professional learning that aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards

Summer 2016 CORE Training

Regional Summits

The department offered two new professional development options in summer 2016. Regional Educator Summits allowed teachers to come together with others in similar grades and content areas to network and learn together. The summer 2016 CORE training offerings provided districts with connections to highly-trained professional learning facilitators for assistance with specific development needs in literacy, numeracy, differentiation and intervention, and preparing students for ACT, postsecondary, and career success.

Supporting English Learners in Language Acquisition

Additionally, the department offered a training designed to better prepare participants in understanding the needs of EL students and the process of second language acquisition. *Supporting English Learners in Language Acquisition* is designed for teachers in grades K–2 and also offered to K–12 teachers and instructional coaches. The training is intended to build knowledge of the WIDA standards and assessment to support instruction and use classroom-ready strategies to scaffold and differentiate Tier I instruction. This training also focused on the role of instruction and intervention in supporting a continuum of services for English learners, as well as how to approach language development within the RTI² framework.

The 2016-17 standards rollout trainings also include EL strategies folded into general education sessions, to support teachers in reaching all students, including English learners.

Career & Technical Education Administrator Professional Development

The department schedules quarterly meetings for CTE administrators across the state to provide professional development and support around the department's goals and strategic priorities specific to CTE. These meetings include sessions on the following:

- Ensuring vertical alignment of secondary course offerings with postsecondary and career paths

- Utilizing labor, economic and community development, postsecondary, and regional chamber data to drive the selection of CTE programs
- Providing early postsecondary opportunities for all students
- Understanding and unpacking state and district-level data for students identified as CTE-concentrators
- Connecting districts to promising practices of others who support the department's goals and strategic priorities
- Promoting quality work-based learning experiences for all students
- Recruiting and retaining quality CTE teachers
- Promoting Capstone Industry Certifications
- Training new CTE administrators on programmatic and compliance factors

Additionally, CTE administrators have monthly study councils in all eight regions of the state. These study councils focus on training CTE administrators on coaching and developing teachers on the vision of excellent CTE instruction. Districts partner with CTE consultants from the department to train district teams on implementing a coaching model and are working with CTE administrators on district specific implementation strategies.

Career & Technical Education Teacher Professional Development

The department provides ongoing training, through state and other federal funds, for CTE teachers across the state to provide professional development and support around the department's goals and strategic priorities specific to CTE. This also provides content specific professional development in each of the 16 career clusters. These professional development sessions include:

- **Institute for CTE educators:** an annual conference provided free of charge to CTE teachers with content specific professional development sessions
- **New occupational licensed teacher training:** a week long professional development boot camp to provide CTE teachers entering the classroom directly from industry with an overview of lesson planning, classroom management, curriculum mapping, writing strong objectives, and creating classroom culture, norms, and procedures
- **Fall leadership camps:** sessions offered in the fall for teachers who oversee Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) to connect the employability skills developed within the CTSOs to the standards taught in the CTE classroom
- **Career cluster collaboratives:** professional development sessions offered in all eight regions of the state centered around connecting industry, postsecondary, and CTE content within the classroom
  - Sessions include focus on ACT, early postsecondary opportunities, industry certifications, teaching all aspects of industry, and progressing students through seamless secondary to postsecondary pathways.
- **Spring standards training:** spring training offered in each grand division to assist teachers who may have new standards in CTE courses
  - Sessions focus on unpacking standards and writing strong objectives as they build lesson plans.

Work-based Learning Coordinator Certification Training

Work-based learning (WBL) coordinators are responsible for ensuring that students are appropriately placed, are successful in their WBL setting, and keeping up-to-date with WBL policy changes as

released by the department. All coordinators must be in compliance with updated policies, paperwork, and curriculum in accordance with state board rule and policy.

WBL trainings are for new and experienced WBL coordinators who need to earn or renew a WBL certificate. These trainings provide an in-depth look at policies, paperwork, and course curriculum required for any given school year. Tennessee utilizes state and other federal dollars to support these trainings.

Professional Learning Communities

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, regional WBL Professional Learning Community meetings are held five to six times per year within each CORE region. PLCs enable instructors to learn about successful practices from across the state and discuss topics essential to WBL program success. Attending four or more PLC meetings within a single school year will renew an instructor's WBL certificate automatically.[115]

Training on Revised Tennessee Academic Standards in ELA & Math

The success of Tennessee's new state academic standards is nonetheless heavily contingent upon the success of their implementation. As such, the department will be working throughout the 2016-17 school year to help ensure that districts, school leaders, and teachers all feel supported and confident in their ability to implement these new math and English language arts standards in their classrooms successfully.

Tennessee's current implementation strategy will utilize a multi-phased roll out of the new standards that is intended to emphasize local control and autonomy. Accordingly, the department began presenting the new standards and resources to district superintendents in fall 2016. In winter 2016, the department began working with school and instructional leaders (principals, deans of instruction, math or literacy coaches, etc.) through district teams to conduct a series of in-depth and content-specific workshops.

[115] Tennessee Department of Education. Career & Technical Education. 2016-17 Work-based Learning Professional Development Calendar. Web.

Fall 2016

- The department shares initial training plans with superintendents (September – Superintendent's Study Conference) and school leaders (October – LEAD Conference).
- The department contracts with expert educators to develop training content.

January, March, and May 2017

- Series of three standards rollout trainings for **district teams**. This series is designed to equip districts with necessary information to assess current systems and structures and to train educators on revised TN Academic Standards.
- **Targeted "go-live" date for online modules is March 1.**

April 2017

- Training for **school leaders** on curriculum and standard alignment.

June 2017

- Two-day trainings for **teachers** to deepen understanding of instructional shifts and changes in academic expectations to evaluate instructional materials for alignment.

This collaboration will continue through spring 2017 when this group will reconvene to share ideas for district-level implementation and professional development. Districts may lead development efforts for teachers throughout spring and summer 2017, in anticipation of the first full year of implementation in the 2017-18 school year. Standards training will continue in the following two years as the state implements revised science and social studies standards. All content will be available through online modules in an online learning management system, in order for districts to have flexibility to train on the content. For example, districts can train on several modules during a scheduled in-service day or focus on one module at a time during an afternoon professional learning community meeting. The online platform will also ensure continued accessibility of the resources over time.

Pre-K & Kindergarten Portfolio Trainings

In 2016, Tennessee's General Assembly passed the Pre-K Quality Act, requiring that all districts participating in the Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program utilize the pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models for evaluating pre-K and kindergarten teachers. As a result, the department is providing extensive training and support throughout 2016-17 aimed at building capacity at the district and school level to support portfolio implementation. The first training session, which occurred across the state in early fall 2016, included 860 educators. The second training was completed in late fall with representation from 133 districts. The last training for 2016-17 will begin in April of 2017. TEAM coaches are deployed to assist districts in day-to-day support of portfolio implementation.

Read to be Ready Coaching Network

One of Tennessee's four goals is to reach 75 percent of Tennessee third graders will be proficient in reading by 2025. The Read to be Ready Coaching Network is a new state-district partnership supported by federal, state, and private funds and focuses on improving K–3 reading instruction. Beginning in 2016, each region will have at least one TDOE reading coach consultant who will provide training to district-chosen literacy coaches. These coaches are trained so that they are equipped with deep knowledge of reading instruction so they can more effectively lead reading professional learning opportunities for teachers in their district. The Read to be Ready Coaching Network is made up of 83

districts and just over 200 coaches. The coaches engaged in rigorous training to develop their literacy content knowledge and coaching skills. The on-going support coaches are providing to educators by being a part of the network are already yielding positive changes in instructional practices. By working together, we will create a continuous learning network to support literacy across Tennessee schools. See the *Early Foundations & Literacy* section for more extensive information on the Read to be Ready initiative.

Instructional Partnership Initiative

The Instructional Partnership Initiative (IPI) is a personalized professional learning approach that leverages existing expertise within schools to help teachers improve their craft. Teachers in the same school are strategically paired based on complementary strengths and areas for growth on specific instructional practice areas. In 2013–14, Tennessee piloted IPI with 16 schools within one district. In 2014–15, an expanded pilot welcomed 93 schools across the state. Schools were randomly assigned to the program in pilot years, providing rigorous research evidence that differences between participating and non-participating schools following the pilot are the result of IPI.

One of the strengths of these partnerships is the flexibility. Participants can choose when to meet, as well as the activities to address. Some suggested activities include:

- Setting goals for the year
- Observing each other's classrooms or observing another classroom together to watch practices in action and refine strategies
- Meeting after observations to debrief
- Developing individualized strategies for improvement focused on feedback
- Planning lessons together
- Following up on each other's commitments and goals

In the pilot year, IPI schools increased TCAP scores school wide by 6 points in reading and 7 points in math relative to non-IPI schools. For teachers with evaluation scores below level 3, participating in a partnership increased their students' TCAP scores by 12 points relative to those of similar teachers in non-IPI schools. All of these effects are statistically significant.

The Instructional Partnership Initiative was expanded for the 2016-17 school year, increasing the number of teachers who will benefit from data-based opportunities for personalized professional learning as well as in-school expertise. Over 100 schools in 50 districts created IPI partners this fall, an increase from 65 schools in 2015-16. In addition, TEAM coaches are supporting principals and teachers in developing high functioning partnership.

Reading Across the Curriculum

The department also offered multi-part courses focused on the science and practice of reading instruction and reading intervention in grades K–12. There are four strands of the reading course: grades K–3 instruction, and grades K–3, 4–5, and 6–12 intervention. These courses, built on the findings of the National Reading Panel and designed in partnership with Sopris Learning, specifically for the state of Tennessee, are not based on a specific curriculum or particular subject area. Instead, these courses focus on building the knowledge and capacity of our teachers in reading instruction across subject areas. These courses began in the 2013-14 school year. Through summer 2016, a total of over 9,400 educators received training through the reading courses. The department's CORE offices continue to facilitate these courses based on requests from districts.

RTI^2 – Addressing Specific Learning Needs

Response to Instruction and Intervention is designed to empower educators to give every student the opportunity to meet high expectations and the support to reach them. RTI^2 is a three-tier framework that promotes recommended practices for an integrated system connecting general and special education by the use of high-quality, evidence-based instruction and intervention (for more information see the *All Means All* section).

In our efforts to support schools and districts in implementing RTI^2, the department has dedicated staff members in each CORE office (interventionists) and is continually responding to the most frequently asked questions. CORE interventionists have been trained to support all grade levels in utilizing the planning tools and resources and are available to assist districts directly in their RTI^2 implementation, evaluation, and improvement. Key planning tools and resources are available (here) to assist districts with reflecting on current RTI^2 implementation progress and focusing in on the needs of a specific student group or grade level, including differentiation for gifted and talented students, students that are behind grade level, and students with disabilities.

Additionally, guidance, recommendations, and resources for RTI^2 implementation at all grade levels can be found within the implementation guide (here). Presentations, worksheets, and additional support materials to train staff are also available on the department's website (here).

Micro-credentialing Pilot

Micro-credentials—online modules designed to develop and to assess specific skills—are a way for teachers to demonstrate competencies aligned to their individual needs and interests, and to provide evidence of outcomes from professional learning. The department is conducting a micro-credentialing pilot, funded with state dollars, to gather feedback and explore avenues to more personalized learning for educators across the state.

The goal of the pilot is to directly impact up to 100 teachers, 60 of whom will meet face-to-face and serve as a focus group. An additional 40 teachers will participate virtually by earning micro-credentials independently and providing feedback on the experience.

The pilot will run from October 2016 to June 2017, in partnership with three organizations—the Center for Teaching Quality, Digital Promise, and BloomBoard. These partners will provide the platform, initial content and scoring, and support for the pilot. More information on this pilot can be found in the *District Empowerment* section of the plan.

Tennessee Teacher Leader Network

The department created the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network in fall 2013 to develop individualized teacher leadership models for implementation in districts across the state. The network is comprised of highly effective, vertical leadership teams from districts representing the geographic, socioeconomic, and demographic diversity of the state, and is funded through the state's Title II, Part A dollars.

Using the Tennessee Teacher Leader Standards as the foundation, districts in the network collaborate with one another, and in partnership with the state, to build out and implement individualized teacher-leader models. As of the third year of implementation in 2016, the network of 28 districts has reached over 320,000 students in 579 schools across Tennessee, creating unique innovative teacher leader

models and resources aligned to district goals and professional learning needs, including the Tennessee Teacher Leader Network 2015-16 Guidebook.

Social & Personal Competencies

To support and enhance educator effectiveness around social and personal competences, the department, in collaboration with Great Teachers and Leaders and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center, will develop a series of online modules that introduces social and personal learning and teaching practices that support the academic, social, and personal skills development of all students. These ten, optional online modules will be released in September 2017 and housed on the TDOE school climate webpage.

Principal Peer Partnerships

To support improved leadership practices, the department developed the Principal Peer Partnership (P3) to provide a system of collaboration and support for instructional leaders and to engage administrators in reflective peer dialogue to improve leadership. The guiding principles of these partnerships include visible and reciprocal building level practices, actionable ideas to develop shared leadership capacity, and measurable outcomes aligned with the TEAM evaluation rubric. Examples of activities include collaboration around individual action plans for evaluation refinement and observation of school leaders engaged in some component of teacher evaluation. Initial reactions to P3 are encouraging, and a more robust implementation is planned for the 2017-18 school year.

Tennessee Academy for School Leaders

The Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL) provides high-quality professional learning opportunities for principals, assistant principals, and instructional supervisors that are aligned with the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS).

Tennessee is transforming what it means to be an effective leader at all phases of a leader's career by setting high standards for effective leadership based on research and best practice, supporting leaders to reach those standards, and empowering districts to build a network of exceptional instructional leaders who get results. This program includes induction academies for new leaders, multiple learning opportunities throughout the year, and university partnership opportunities to advance licensure.

Traditionally, school leaders meet in cohorts eight times over a two-year period in order to learn and network. The final traditional cohort, scheduled for completion in spring 2017, includes three principal cohorts with 60 participants, four assistant principal cohorts with 122 participants, and one supervisor cohort with 24 participants. The department launched a virtual hybrid academy pilot for 2016-17 that includes personalized online learning with three face-to-face meetings over a two year period. Forty-seven assistant principals from across the state are currently part of this cohort. Initial survey data indicates that the virtual academy allows administrators to be on campus and to engage in learning experiences with more depth and less distraction. The virtual TASL option became available to all cohorts beginning January 2017.

Governor's Academy for School Leadership

In partnership with Tennessee's Governor's office, Vanderbilt University's Peabody College, and districts; the Governor's Academy for School Leadership (GASL) is a unique opportunity for assistant principals to participate in a one-year leadership development experience aimed at increasing school leadership capacity and supporting individual growth.

The state-funded program is anchored in practice-based mentorship, in-depth feedback cycles, and tailored training sessions. The mission of the program is to prepare a cohort of transformational school leaders who will improve school effectiveness/performance and unlock educational opportunities for all students. This program is funded by the state of Tennessee and includes a stipend for each fellow.

The first GASL cohort of 23 academy fellows was selected in November 2015 and completed the program in December 2016. A second cohort of 25 academy fellows was selected in November 2016, and began the year-long academy in January 2017. The academy meets one weekend per month from January through December. Fellows also complete an ongoing internship during this time which includes three days per month working alongside a mentor principal.

Integrated Leadership Courses

The Integrated Leadership Courses for the 2016-17 school year are state-funded, professional learning opportunities for school and district leaders. Across the four courses, early grades literacy, as well as other elementary and secondary topics will be addressed. The first course, which took place in September 2016, focused on early grades literacy, specifically the following: identifying best practices in early learning classrooms; identifying ways to give actionable feedback in early learning classrooms; developing post conference skills to support early learning through coaching practices through Tennessee's TEAM evaluation process; and identifying connections to TEAM administrator evaluation model. Over 600 school and district leaders across the state attended the first course; 96 percent of survey respondents reported a better understanding of best practices in early learning classrooms as a result of attending the course.

Transformational Teacher Leadership Alliance

In 2016, the Tennessee Transformational Leadership Council developed the Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance (TTLA) designed to serve as an incubator for leader development programs in all CORE regions. The TTLA will begin its work during the 2016-17 school year and will continue its expansion through state and federal funding. Tennessee will be utilizing ESSA's flexibility in Title II, Part A to set aside funds specifically for leader development. The goal is to create statewide and regional leadership pipeline programs, aligned with research-based, effective program components that produce transformational school leaders to increase the supply of high-quality school leaders across the state. We know that effective school leaders play an integral role in improving student achievement. Developing key leadership competencies empowers school leaders to lead learning in schools and create positive learning environments for all students and teachers. A copy of the Transformational Leadership report can be accessed here.

The department will provide support for four-year leader development models that **develop** or **continuously improve** innovative and high-impact pipeline programs. These principal pipeline partnership programs, operated by area partnerships, will identify and develop more effective leaders to improve outcomes for all Tennessee students. For selected applicants, the department will fund

development and continuous improvement programs up to 90 percent of the per-fellow cost with a maximum per-fellow grant of $9,000. Grants may total a maximum of $125,000 per year. Additionally, programs will receive ongoing support and assistance from a select group of leadership experts.

A partnership must include a Tennessee school district and represent two or more entities of the following types:

- Tennessee school districts and/or charter management organizations
- Tennessee-based institutions of higher education
- Foundations
- Businesses and/or non-profit organizations that work to advance K–12 academic achievement in Tennessee

Partnerships must articulate a four-year plan for either a new model, or an existing model to improve, and apply for funding. The four-year plan requires three program elements: **principal residency training content**, **bridge support** for candidates between program completion and placement, and an **induction program** for these newly placed leaders. Additionally, partnership models must align with *Tennessee Succeeds*, the eight components of effective programs, and ESSA's Title II(A).

2017-18 Timeline:

Strategies for Sustainability: Pipeline

Teacher & Principal Residency Programs

To address chronic shortage areas and current lack of diversity of educators in Tennessee's urban districts, the department expects to implement teacher residency programs in high-need districts across the state. These residency programs will allow prospective teachers—for a period not less than one academic year—to teach alongside an effective teacher in a mentor/mentee capacity.

This training offers candidates an opportunity to demonstrate specific subject and pedagogical content knowledge through a classroom-based performance assessment. We believe residency programs will help address issues with attracting and retaining strong candidates. Additionally, current residency programs have resulted in higher retention rates for novice teachers.

Residencies offer novice teachers valuable opportunities to learn by engaging with students daily, as well as from their mentor teachers over a longer period of time. This additional classroom or "on the job training" gives rising educators the experience of learning for an extended term, with opportunities beginning on day one versus mid-semester.

Tennessee will utilize its Title II, Part A statewide program resources and optional set asides to support teacher and leader residency programs in high-need districts. We anticipate offering competitive opportunities to eligible districts for implementation of teacher and/or principal residency programs. In addition, Tennessee will pursue and support districts with an interest in applying for additional grant

dollars through the Title II, Part B Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund Grant to establish such residency programs for both teachers and leaders in high-need schools.

Differentiated Pay

In June 2013, the state board passed a revised set of guidelines pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-3-306(h), which requires districts to create and implement differentiated pay plans.[116] The intent of the differentiated pay plans is to give local control to districts with regard to salary schedule, and to create another lever for districts to attract and retain teachers based on a flexible set of potential criteria.

The department has provided support to districts in the creation of greater differentiation of teacher roles, responsibilities, and salaries aligned to instructional priorities to widen the pipeline of teacher-leaders across the state. Districts are required to differentiate how they pay licensed personnel; however, districts have flexibility to develop and implement pay plans that meet their specific priorities, needs, and context:

- Rewarding teachers who teach in high needs schools or high needs subject areas
- Rewarding teachers for performance based on state board approved evaluation criteria
- Providing supplemental compensation to teachers who take on additional instructional responsibilities (i.e., teacher mentors, instructional coaches)
- Adopting alternative salary schedules

Please reference the *District Empowerment* section for more information on differentiated pay.

Human Capital Data Reports

In summer 2014, the teachers and leaders division at the department convened an internal working group to create a coordinated human capital report using the various, existing state level educator data. The internal working group consisted of representatives from the internal office of research and policy, the evaluation team, and the educator talent team. Concurrently, an internal equity working group was formed as the office of research and policy team began working to understand teaching gaps and supply and demand issues across the state.

In November 2014, the educator talent team also convened approximately 25 district teams that are currently implementing strategic compensation plans. The participants in this day-long meeting received a draft of the new human capital data report and previewed the equitable teaching gap state-level research. The participants were able to provide valuable feedback on the types of additional information they would like to see and how this report could be used at the district and school levels.

In early 2015, an engagement plan was developed to gather feedback on the draft equity plan from teachers, district leadership, and external policy and community organizations. In spring 2015, the team met to get feedback on the research methodology, the root causes, and the strategies described within *Educator Support*. Participants in these meetings also received a draft of the human capital data report and a draft of a district equity gap report.

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[116] Tennessee Department of Education. Differentiated Pay. Web.

The human capital data reports are designed to support district staff in examining a variety of human capital data metrics and practices. They also provide lists of effective strategies across areas like evaluation, professional learning, retention, and hiring. Initial district reports were shared with directors of schools in March 2016. With several years of evaluation data available, we are now able to analyze trends in teacher effectiveness data and examine within the context of other important initiatives across the human capital continuum, like hiring and retention.

Part one of the human capital reports utilize district's 2014-15 evaluation data and are focused on evaluation, distribution, growth, recruitment, and retention—imported into TNCompass. Part two of the human capital reports utilize district's 2014-15 student-teacher assignment data and 2013-14 TVAAS and student performance data to show supply and effective teaching gaps within and between schools.

In the 2015-16 school year, sections were added in the district planning tool in ePlan to include human capital data and narrative questions for districts to address during their planning processes. This allows for analysis and summary of teacher data, teacher experience, attendance rates, teacher evaluation, growth and performance, and recruitment and retention. These enhancements are new to Tennessee, and will greatly benefit schools and districts through plan development. We have utilized ESSA Title II, Part A dollars, as well as state-level administrative dollars to support this initiative. Making human capital data more actionable allows district and school leaders to be more strategic in addressing recruitment, retention, scheduling, and professional development demands—all of which can ultimately result in better instruction for students.

Building District Capacity

In addition to reviewing and approving district plans, the department also provides additional supports to districts to improve teacher quality. The department also recognizes that in order to build sustainable models within districts, sufficient capacity must be developed; otherwise, the initiative will not fully develop. Thus the role of the department is one that facilitates collaborative opportunities between districts—providing resources to match "like" districts to glean best practices and replicate successful models. The following initiatives are funded through Tennessee's Title II, Part A statewide program dollars:

- **Teachers-Teachers:** Since 2013, the state has contracted with Teachers-Teachers.com, one of the largest educator databases available in the country, in order to provide Tennessee school districts with access to job seekers. This resource expands support to districts by automating the application, outreach, and screening processes and to develop proactive recruitment strategies. Teachers-Teachers.com also provides a dedicated recruitment coordinator who assists districts with registration, postings, and campaigns based on the districts' level of need. The functionality of the site continues to improve each year. Based on feedback from districts, Tennessee has elected to continue to offer this service in the 2017-18 school year.

- **Teacher Pipeline/Diversity Project:** Districts share in the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining educators who reflect the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of their student population. The educator talent team at the department has begun preliminary analysis to identify the districts with the largest gaps in their teacher demographics and their student demographics. Pending adequate levels of funding, the state plans to invest $100,000 in innovation grants for targeted districts to develop plans to increase diversity of the teaching force. Our initial plans include inviting districts with the largest gaps to apply for a planning grant to develop a comprehensive with the primary goal of increasing the representation of

minority teachers in their local schools. The department expects proposals to analyze teacher and school demographic data to prioritize areas of greatest need and to identify key partners, IHEs, and other nonprofit organizations to explore immediate, near-term, and long-term opportunities.

The educator talent team will focus on cultivating the educator pipeline to address diversity, equity, and teacher shortages in multiple ways in 2017.

1. First, working closely with the department's college, career and technical education team, districts will be supported in developing more "Grow Your Own" programs via increased course offerings in "Teaching as a Profession" and expanding student interest groups such as Educators Rising. The team will prioritize expansion in districts with significant shortages in key academic areas and significant gaps in teacher and student demographics.
2. In addition, the department's teachers and leaders division is working collaboratively to ensure alignment between teacher residency grants and other innovation grants to address diversity, equity, and shortage areas. As noted earlier, the initial analysis of 2014 data shows that there are 122 districts without a single Hispanic teacher and 27 districts without a single African-American teacher.
3. Tennessee is partnering with seven other states to learn from each other on key state-level talent management challenges and solutions that directly impact districts' and states' abilities to find and keep great talent in their schools. The result of this alliance will be a state-specific toolkit with practical materials and best practices to share with districts and schools.

- **NIET Best Practices Portal:** The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) portal has been available to educators since 2011 and is used primarily for the TEAM educator evaluator annual certification process. However, the portal also provided access to numerous training modules and an extensive video library of classrooms that highlight connections to the TEAM rubric. This is a resource for training and professional learning available to all teachers and evaluators and was accessed 41,212 times in 2016.

Ongoing Monitoring & Differentiated Technical Assistance

Tennessee has heavily invested in support structures for districts throughout the last few years. These support structures will play a valuable role in supporting districts in addressing supply or access challenges. Our regional support offices, CORE, will play a large role in assisting districts in planning and implementing equity strategies.

In support of its gifted and talented teachers and students, the department has also added capacity to support teachers in the appropriate differentiation, flexible pacing, acceleration, and grouping for gifted students in academic subjects. The Gifted and Talented Specialist provides districts with instructional supports, as well as current information on eligibility, reevaluation, and guidance resources.

In addition, with human capital data being added to the needs assessments for districts, the teachers and leaders division will monitor equity data as well as provide regular updates to external stakeholders. The consolidated planning and monitoring division will be reviewing and approving plans—using these plans to ensure that ESSA resources align with district needs and, where applicable, disproportionality is addressed.

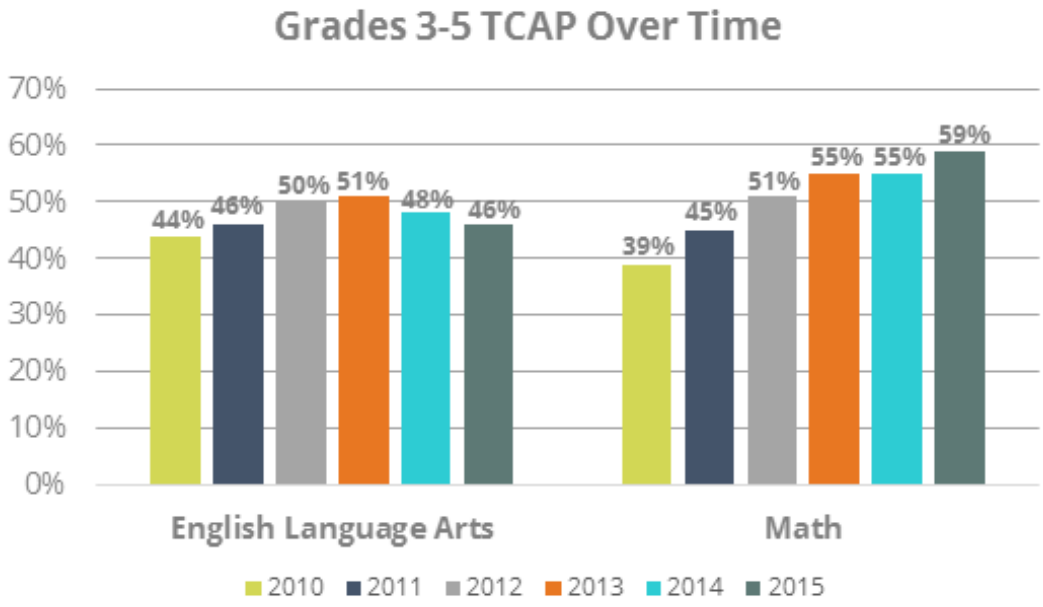
The teachers and leaders division will also monitor equity data through a yearly release of new human capital data reports as well as providing regular updates to external stakeholders. More information on this can be found under *Human Capital Data Reports* in this section.

Early Foundations & Literacy

Research has demonstrated that reading and vocabulary skills in kindergarten are predictive of reading outcomes in the early grades and reading comprehension in middle and high school. The TDOE is dedicated to developing lifelong thinkers and learners. We want all students to continue to engage in what they are learning, to become interested in discovering more about the world around them, and to be equipped to pursue a variety of passions in a range of fields.

Failing to build a foundation for Tennessee students to be skilled, critical thinkers limits their ability to continue to learn and grow throughout their lives. Thus, it is imperative that Tennessee begins laying those early foundations to set the trajectory for success in reading and in life.

Patterns of student performance in elementary school demonstrate clear areas for improvement and underscore the need to prioritize core instruction and effective early intervention to ensure all 600,000 Tennessee students enrolled in grades K–5 are on a path to success. Over the past several years, the state has seen steady gains in math performance in grades 3–5; however, English language arts performance has remained stagnant or declined.



National research shows that children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school by age 19, a circumstance that severely limits earnings and job market appeal, and has a long-term impact on the chances of leading a healthy and productive life.[117] In addition, this increases the odds of incarceration, poverty, and single parenting. In fact, much of the research on early literacy was incited by the concern for the lack of high school graduates, ultimately resulting in shortages for the workforce, the armed services, and postsecondary education. One study found that "every student who does not complete high school costs our society an estimated $260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity."[118]

Of the almost 6,000 Tennessee students rated *below basic* in third grade English language arts, less than three percent reach proficiency by fifth grade.[119] To learn more about the scope of the problem in early grades literacy, the department conducted a series of studies designed to understand student and teacher experiences in the elementary grades, including surveys of teachers, administrators, and district central offices, as well as analyses of student and teacher data, and interviews with school RTI^2 teams. TDOE also partnered with researchers from The New Teacher Project (TNTP), sending literacy experts into more than 100 elementary classrooms across the state during the fall of 2015 to learn more about patterns in classroom instruction. In 2016, the department commissioned TNTP to conduct a second round of observations in 163 classrooms across 18 school participating in the Read to Be Reading Coaching Network. The findings are detailed in the Building the Framework report released in February 2017.

We know that children's circumstances and experiences in the first years of life follow them into the classroom. Language-rich practices around very young children are critical and can help pave the way for future success in school; however, children in poverty and other challenging circumstances typically lack exposure to these practices. In fact, numerous research studies on the effect of poverty on a child's education support what has become known as the 30 million word gap.[120] By age three, a child in a higher socioeconomic household had experiences with 30 million more words than a child living in poverty.

Currently, one in four children are living in poverty in Tennessee;[121] therefore, we must acknowledge and address the need to support our traditionally-underserved student groups, including students with disabilities. The resources and flexibilities in ESSA will supplement the state's commitment to preschool and early education for all students, especially for students who need it most.

As one of the five priorities in Tennessee's strategic plan, success in *Early Foundations & Literacy* is essential for the state to reach its overarching goals.

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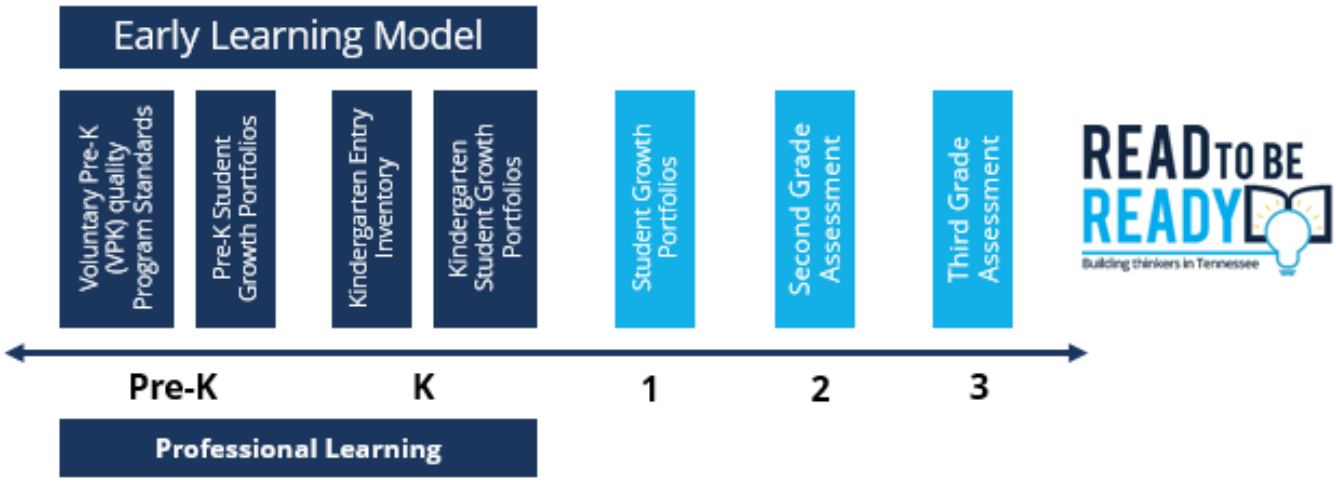
[117] Hernandez, D. J. (2011). Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation.
[118] Feister, L. (2010). Early warning! Why reading by the end of third grade matters. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
[119] Supporting Early Grades Student Achievement: An Exploration of RTI^2 Practices (Sept. 2016). Web.
[120] Hart, K and Risley, TR. *The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3*. An excerpt from: *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children*, Copyright 1995, Brookes. Web.
[121] Talk Poverty. Tennessee 2016 Report. Web.

Tennessee's Early Learning Model

Pre-K and kindergarten play critical roles in reaching Tennessee's goal to have 75 percent of third grade students reading on grade level by 2025. That is why the department has developed a clear focus on these early grades through the Early Learning Model (ELM). Tennessee's Early Learning Model is a comprehensive plan to improve teaching and learning in pre-K and kindergarten. The goal of the ELM is to ensure all students grow and thrive academically, socially, and emotionally during the pre-K and kindergarten years so that we create a continuum of learning that will ensure students' success from pre-K through third grade. This model is comprised of four key components: (1) improving voluntary pre-K (VPK) program quality; (2) pre-K student growth portfolio model; (3) kindergarten entry inventory (KEI) assessment; and (4) kindergarten student growth portfolio model, as shown in the graphic below. These initiatives are aligned to state goals and are components of a broader statewide effort to improve early grades instruction and ensure all students are prepared to excel in first grade and beyond.



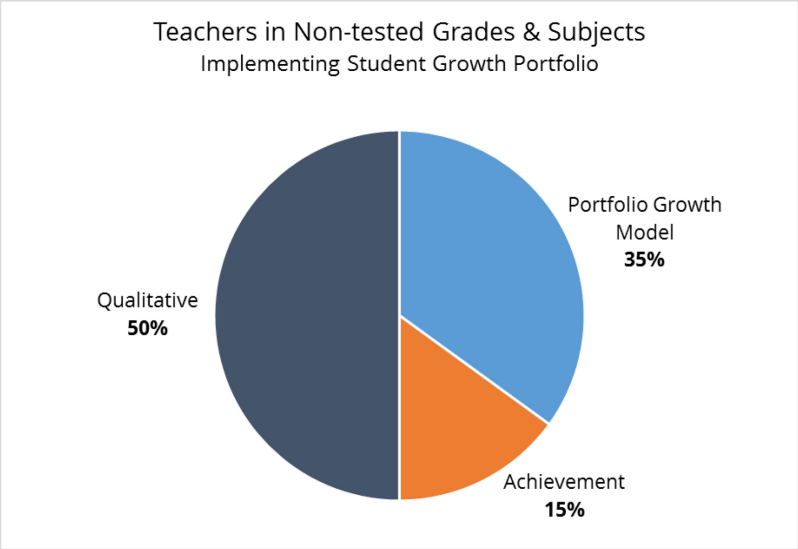
While many of Tennessee's pre-K programs are state and locally funded, some districts and schools utilize Title I dollars to support their youngest learners. The expanded flexibility in the uses of ESSA program dollars aligns with Tennessee's reading focus, especially as it relates to early learning activities:

- Implement rigorous program and instructional standards for pre-K
- Support and evaluate teachers through new portfolio model
- Develop a new portfolio model that measures student growth over the course of the instructional year in pre-K and kindergarten
- Design a new KEI tool that will assess student's skills, knowledge, and developmental progress at beginning of kindergarten year
- Rollout of KEI statewide in 2017-18

Pre-K & Kindergarten Student Growth Portfolio Models

Over the last several years, Tennessee has rapidly expanded the use of student growth portfolio models for the purpose of teacher evaluation. Participation, both in the number of districts and number of teachers, has increased steadily since portfolios were first introduced during the 2011–12 school year. We expect participation will continue to grow. The Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation in the spring of 2016 requiring that districts receiving state funding for voluntary pre-

kindergarten (VPK) use the state board-approved student growth portfolio model to evaluate their pre-K and kindergarten teachers.[122] In the 2015-16 school year, almost all Tennessee districts had state-funded VPK, meaning the new legislation will significantly expand the use and overall impact of portfolios.



Portfolios provide teachers in non-tested grades and subject areas with the opportunity to receive an individual growth score that is based on their specific contributions to their own students' learning. Student growth portfolio models are intended to serve as both a measure of teacher effectiveness and a professional learning tool, and the findings from the department's research confirm that they are indeed supporting teachers in each of these areas. Educators collect and organize student work from different points throughout the school year to demonstrate student growth aligned with state standards. Scoring guides can identify performance levels for students (emerging, proficient, advanced), and each collection of work is peer-reviewed in order to determine an educator's annual effectiveness score.

In addition to the measurement of student learning, the use of portfolios can help students to develop and understand criteria for proficient work. Students should be able to apply these criteria to their own work efforts and increase critical thinking and self-reflection, as well as set goals for their future work. No longer is the learning just about the final product, evaluation or grade, but becomes more focused on students developing metacognitive skills that will enable them to reflect upon and make adjustments in their learning in school and beyond.

We believe it is important to develop the essential skills of self-reflection in the earliest years of a child's life, while also guiding teachers' instructional practice to focus on high-level questioning to deepen students' cognitive development. When teachers practice rigorous questioning and facilitate goal setting with their pre-K and kindergarten students, children become increasingly aware of their own thinking and are able to improve their skills and knowledge.

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[122] T.C.A § 49-6-105

Current Status

- In 2016, Tennessee's General Assembly passed the Pre-K Quality Act, requiring that all districts participating in the Voluntary Pre-K program utilize the pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models for evaluating pre-K and kindergarten teachers.
- The TDOE hosted trainings for district teams comprised of pre-K and kindergarten supervisors and teacher leaders, instructional coaches, school-level administrators, and others in technical support positions regarding the expectations for implementation of this legislation.
- The TDOE developed and disseminated guidebooks, planning tools, and other resources for educators which are available online.
- The Pre-K Quality Act requires the current funding model for VPK programs to change from a formula-based allocation to a competitive grant model based on quality benchmarks.
- The Pre-K Quality Act also requires a year of district training to prepare for the portfolio student growth model implementation.

Activities

1. Pre-K and kindergarten teachers will participate in mandatory training requirements during the 2016-17 school year to prepare for implementation of the pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models in the 2017-18 school year. These trainings are currently underway across the state.
2. Pre-K and kindergarten teachers will implement pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models in the 2017-18 school year.
3. The office of educator effectiveness and the newly-formed division of early learning and literacy will collect feedback from teachers to revise and improve the student growth portfolio model, rubrics, and process for all students (general education and special education) for 2018-19.
4. The current model for VPK programs will change from a formula-based allocation to a competitive grant model based on quality benchmarks.

Targeted Outcomes

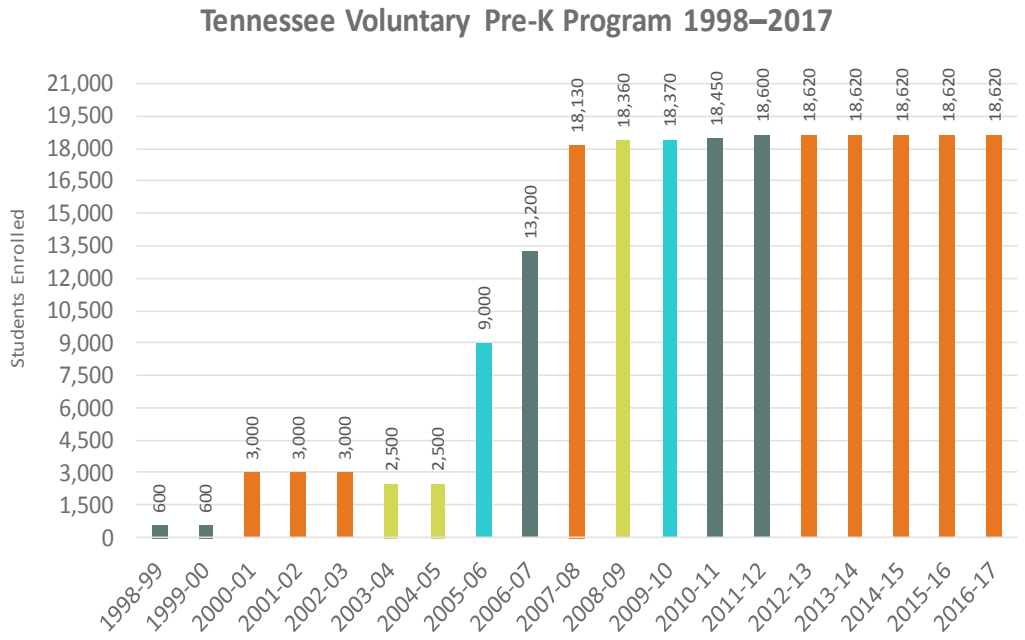
- One hundred percent of districts receiving VPK funds implement the student growth portfolio model in all pre-K and kindergarten classrooms in 2017-18
- In 2017-18, pre-K and kindergarten teachers' evaluations, in all VPK-funded districts, include a 35 percent measure based on their student growth scores from the new portfolio model

Improving Voluntary Pre-K Quality

The department is working to ensure that all districts receiving state funds for VPK programs improve the quality of their VPK programs. The TDOE office of early learning is leading this work by developing a shared vision for the definition of quality in pre-K programs, with a focus on best practices in instruction, as well as a shared definition for what it means for students, schools, communities, and families to be ready for kindergarten.

The office of early learning is focused on transforming the allocation process for VPK funding from a formula-based model to a competitive grant process based on quality benchmarks. Benchmarks for quality VPK programs include the use of a standards-aligned, high-quality curriculum, job-embedded professional development for teachers, effective community and family partnerships, and a strong alignment between pre-K programs and K–3 curriculum and instruction. Changes in VPK funding are

being phased in over a three-year period with professional training and technical assistance for districts making the transition.



Current Status

- As of 2016-17, Tennessee serves over 18,000 children in 935 VPK classrooms in 146 districts statewide.
- The Tennessee VPK program was scaled up significantly between 2005 and 2009 as a result of years of coordinated and organized advocacy efforts to demonstrate the importance of pre-K, particularly for underserved children.
- Tennessee's VPK program has remained at current funding levels, serving similar numbers of children, for the last several years.
- The Tennessee Revised Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) were updated in 2012 and the approved VPK curriculum list was last revised in 2014-15.

Targeted Outcomes

- Definition of pre-K and kindergarten readiness created, communicated, and used for program improvements and KEI implementation in 2017-18
- Revised state-approved VPK curriculum list in 2017-18
- Strategic partnerships to provide assessment and evaluation support for pre-K improvement strategies and resources for program improvement efforts
- Successful training and aligned resources provided to at least 200 public and private programs across Tennessee
- Coherent alignment of pre-K curriculum and instruction to K–3

Additionally, the office of early learning is leveraging the state's $70 million Preschool Development Grant – Expansion (PDG-E) to develop a definition of quality supported by an evidence base of teaching practices tied to child outcomes that are leading indicators of third grade proficiency. The data

collected from an evaluation of PDG-E classrooms inform the state's professional development efforts and ensure professional learning is informed by, and aligned to, the state's shared definition of pre-K quality.

The office of early learning is supporting district program improvement efforts by providing quality training for teacher and instructional leaders in schools and preschool programs. The state has developed partnerships with local research institutions such as the Peabody Research Institute at Vanderbilt University and national entities including: the Ounce of Prevention Fund, the Alliance for Early Success, the Gates Foundation, the Center for Excellence in Early Learning Outcomes, and the Council for Chief State School Officers' College and Career Readiness Standards' programs to develop professional development modules for teachers, coaches, and leaders and to build a shared knowledge base of best practices in instruction. Best practices in instruction include a balanced focus on facilitating children's cognitive development and executive function skills, utilizing developmentally appropriate practices.

The VPK is funded through a combination of state funds and local matches. PDG-E is funded by a federal grant and local matches through 2018-19. Tennessee will continue to seek federal funds through competitive grants to support and expand the work of quality, voluntary pre-K.

Vision of Proficient Reading

As part of Tennessee's emphasis on *Early Foundations & Literacy*, the state convened an Early Literacy Council[123] during the 2015-16 school year, charged with developing a state vision for elementary reading proficiency. The council fulfilled this goal, and developed the definition below.

Proficient reading is all about making meaning from text. To accomplish this, readers must:

- accurately, fluently, and independently read a wide range of complex texts;
- strategically employ comprehension strategies to analyze key ideas and information;
- construct interpretations and arguments through speaking and writing;
- develop vocabulary; and
- build knowledge about the world.

The council continues to work throughout 2016-17 school year providing input and feedback to the department on literacy training, policy, and communications.

Tennessee's Literacy Initiatives

Read to be Ready

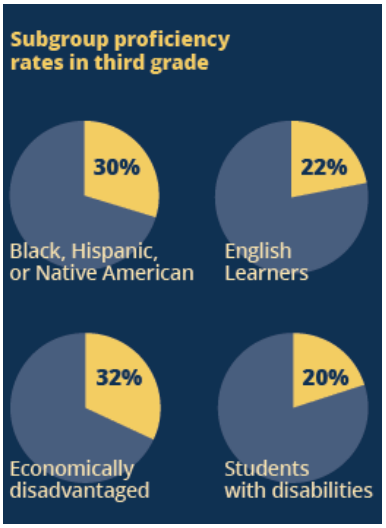
One of Tennessee's academic achievement goals is to have 75 percent of third grade students reading on grade level by 2025. This goal is ambitious, with only 43 percent of third graders currently at this benchmark. To reach this goal, Tennessee must begin developing proficient readers, writers, and thinkers who have a love of reading long before a child begins third grade.

As indicated earlier, Tennessee has made tremendous gains in student performance over the past several years—except in reading.[124] Despite educators' best efforts, rates of proficiency in elementary

[123] Classroom Chronicles. *Meet the Members of the Early Literacy Council.* Web.
[124] Tennessee Department of Education. Why Read to be Ready? Web.

grades remain stagnant, and in some cases have even declined. Reading skills are some of the most important ones students need and are foundational to their future success.

Achievement gaps are also striking: only one-third of economically disadvantaged students and just one in every five of Tennessee's students with disabilities achieve proficiency by the end of third grade. In addition, English learners are not advancing as quickly as their native-speaking peers. In most instances, students who start behind stay behind; state data indicate that less than three percent of students at the lowest reading performance level in third grade catch up by fifth grade.



With the Read to be Ready initiative, we will not only teach all children to read, but also strive to develop our students as thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners.

Launch of Read to be Ready

In February 2016, Tennessee Education Commissioner Candice McQueen joined Governor Bill Haslam and First Lady Crissy Haslam to kick off the statewide *Read to be Ready* campaign focused on the critical value of reading. Attended by teachers, district leaders, community partners, legislators, and other stakeholders; the Governor and Commissioner shared their goals for literacy in Tennessee.

Governor Haslam proposed a $9 million, one-year investment to the General Assembly to create a network of district and regional coaches who would focus on supporting literacy efforts all across the state. Additionally, the Department of Human Services has partnered with the Department of Education to support a 3 year expansion of the summer grant program with $30 million. This support is in addition to the department's commitment to partnering with institutions of higher education to refine and strengthen literacy standards for new teachers, as well as providing support to existing teachers on intervening and strengthening literacy skills in students that are already behind.

During the initial planning process, the TDOE partnered with TNTP to conduct an observational study that sent literacy experts into more than 100 elementary classrooms across the state to learn more about patterns in classroom instruction. The schools and classrooms selected represented a wide range of school sizes, student demographics, and regions. Several positive observations were noted as part of that study.

- Of Tennessee's 146 districts and state agencies, 106 districts identified reading as one of its top priorities.
- Over 90 percent of districts have a district-wide literacy block, averaging around 120 minutes in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade.

More information can be found in, *Setting the Foundation, A Report on Elementary Grades Reading in Tennessee.*[125] Recommendations from this report guide the Read to be Ready initiative and are as follows:

[125] See Appendix P

- Support deeper literacy instruction to ensure that students learn decoding within the context of broader comprehension
- Increase schools' and teachers' ability to differentiate instruction in the early grades and to target students' academic and non-academic needs as early as possible
- Improve RTI[2] implementation for students who need greater support in specific skill areas
- Get better at getting better

After year one, the department re-engaged TNTP to observe 163 classrooms in 50 districts and developed three case studies detailed in the *Building the Framework, A Report on Elementary Grades Reading in Tennessee*[126] report. The report highlights the progress after the first year of Read to be Ready and the opportunities for continued development and improvement. We have seen an increase in activities, but there is still a need for improved depth and breadth of teaching reflective of the rigor of Tennessee academic standards.

Key findings:

1. Structural features of classrooms are changing. High-quality texts that meet grade-level expectations are increasingly making their way into classrooms and lessons. Students are spending more time reading and more time listening to texts that have the potential to build both knowledge and foundational skills.
2. However, this progress is not yet accompanied by deeper instructional shifts. In particular, we find that students rarely engage in lesson sequences or classroom activities that intentionally build knowledge-based competencies. As a result, students who are meeting the expectations of classroom assignments are still not attaining the level of rigor demanded by Tennessee's academic standards. We understand that these types of deep and meaningful instructional shifts take time.

As we move forward, it is critically important that we coordinate support from all levels of the education system and focus attention on building knowledge and infrastructure in this area. While the work to improve statewide reading proficiency will take time, meaningful outcomes have already been observed in response to the focus brought through Read to be Ready for both the classroom and district level.

Suggested next steps for classroom instructional practices:

- Authentic reading and writing opportunities for students
- Intentionally selected and sequenced texts
- Depth of standards in instruction and student tasks
- Strong question sequences by teachers

Based on case studies of districts experiencing initial success, there are four key takeaways for districts to consider implementing as they continue to improve literacy in their schools –

1. System-level change is most likely to occur when there is a district-wide commitment to the work**.**
2. Instructional improvement benefits from a specific focus and a commitment to iterative learning.

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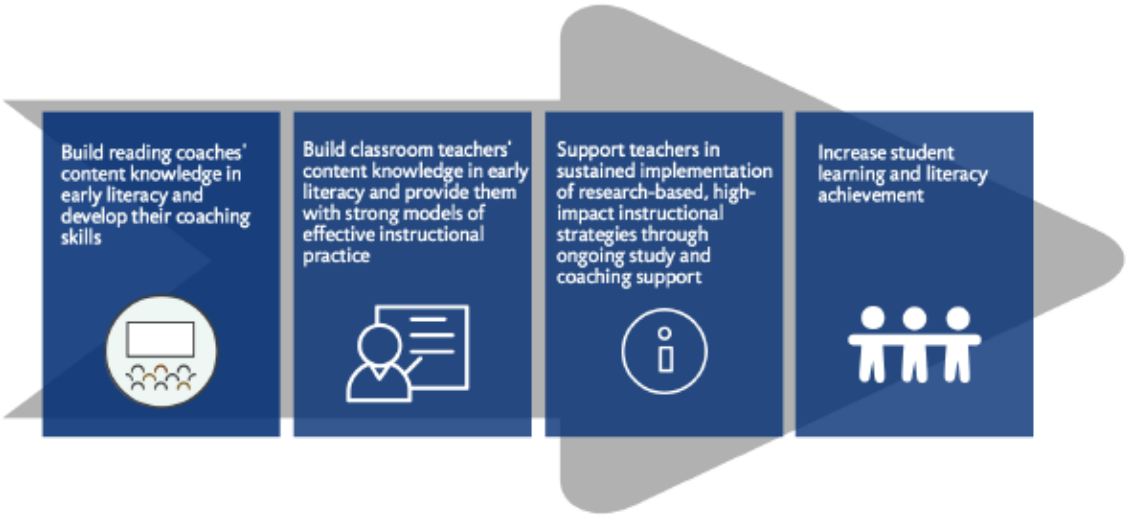
[126] https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/rpt_bldg_the_framework.pdf

3. District ownership and external expertise are not mutually exclusive**.**
4. Individual pr0ograms should be aligned in support of the broader district improvement efforts.

With the launch of Read to be Ready in February 2016, the department planned for a multi-year, multi-strategy approach to improving reading outcomes for our students. Through Read to be Ready, the state is and will continue focusing educators on the integration of skills and knowledge-building as reflected in the state's standards.

Coaching Network

One strategy is the Read to be Ready Coaching Network. The Coaching Network is a statewide network to support elementary literacy instruction and improve literacy results for students.[127] Districts will employ reading coaches who will receive training, resources, and a stipend from the TDOE. The literacy coaching model focuses on a set of instructional outcomes that are aligned to our state's academic standards and is based on collaborative coaching practices. This is a three-year initiative, aimed at training up to 450 coaches, with $5 million for training in the first year.



The number of districts that have confirmed participation in the Read to be Ready coaching initiative has grown to 83 districts supported by over 200 coaches. Reading coach consultants have been hired across Tennessee's eight regions to support district coaches in their assigned region. The reading coach consultants have begun supporting coaches in participating districts with on-going coaching support on the interactive read-aloud topic.

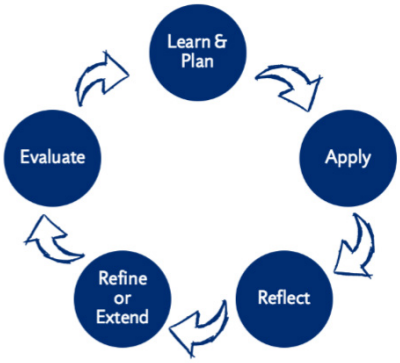
Following the successful launch of the program and fall coach convening in September 2016, the department has begun preparing the shared reading content for second semester, which is the second of six instructional outcomes of focus over the next three years. Following Winter Convening, 95 percent of coaches stated that the training increased their effectiveness as a R2BR coach. A recent

[127] Tennessee Department of Education. Read to be Ready Coaching Network. Web.

survey of teachers indicated that 94 percent of R2BR teachers believe that participating in R2BR will improve their teaching practice. These perceptions are supported by observational data that shows increases in student engagement in complex text. Over 20 additional districts have indicated interest in joining the network in year 2, based on progress of districts currently participating.

Year 1	Semester 1	Accessing complex texts through interactive read-alouds
	Semester 2	Accessing on-grade level texts through shared reading
Year 2	Semester 1	Responding to texts through interactive speaking and writing activities
	Semester 2	Teaching foundational skills through reading and writing
Year 3	Semester 1	Small group reading and instructional-level texts
	Semester 2	Independent reading and reading conferences

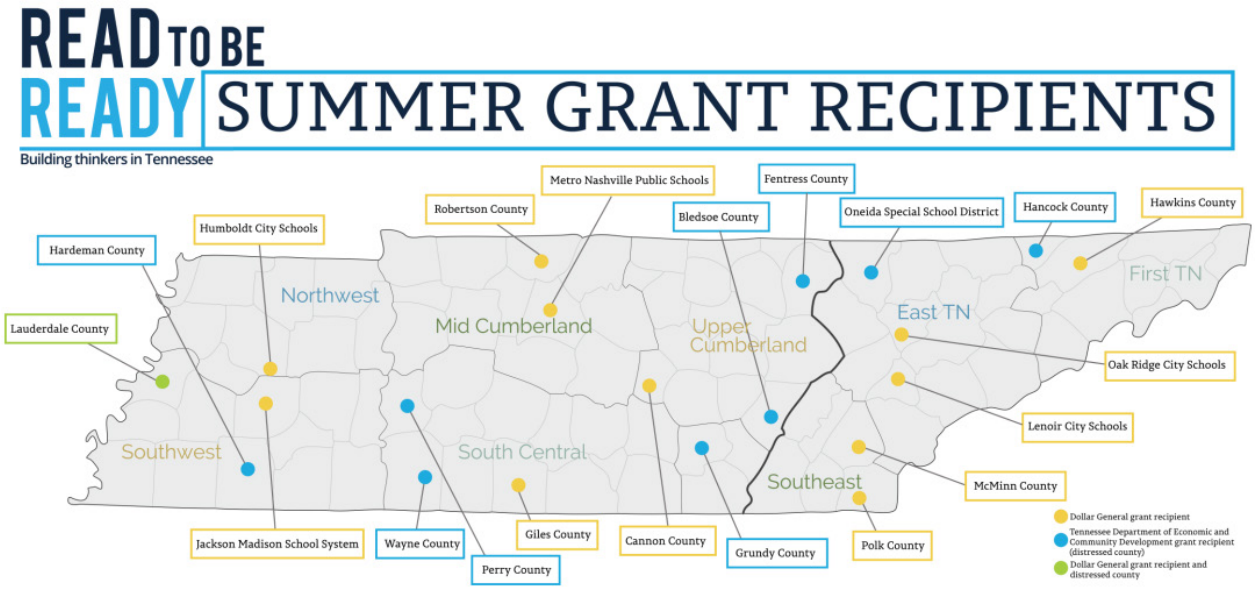
The Coaching Cycle Includes:



- **Learn & Plan:** Provides professional learning opportunities that align to the Tennessee standards for professional learning.
- **Apply:** Ensures transfer to the classroom through on-going, job-embedded support.
- **Reflect:** Provides reflective coaching conversations following the application in the classroom to prompt teacher reflection and promote sustained transfer.
- **Refine or extend:** Supports refinement in connection to the goals set for the coaching cycle, or prompts the teacher to make connections and extend the new learning to other areas of the teacher's practice.
- **Evaluate:** Engages all stakeholders in evaluating professional learning and results using a variety of sources and types of coach, teacher, student, and system data.

Summer Grants

In 2016, the TDOE with support from both the business community and other state agencies developed a grant competition to support summer reading programs serving students not reading on grade level and likely to experience summer learning loss. This summer grant program was designed to promote and support the reading and writing development for rising first, second, and third grade students. The addition of this grant program was important because economically-disadvantaged students and students that are already behind are more likely to experience summer learning loss than their more affluent peers. Preventing this loss will better prepare students to attain the knowledge and skills they need to read proficiently by the end of third grade. Over the next three years, the department will expand the summer grant program through a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Human Services.



The Dollar General Literacy Foundation's gave a $1 million gift to be used over three years to fund summer programming in Tennessee. For summer 2016, the department received 224 proposals and funded 20 sites across the state. These 20 sites trained 140 educators, served over 500 students, and sent home about 20 books for every child.[128]

Based on the data collected from the summer programs, the results demonstrated the following[129]:

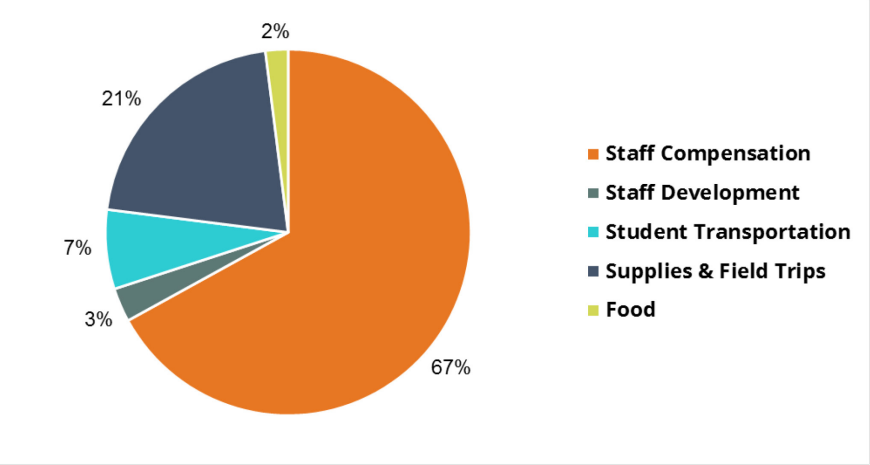
- Fluency increased by an average of 23 percent
- Decoding ability increased by an average of 44 percent
- Phonemic awareness increased by an average of 66 percent
- 95 percent of camps reported an increase in student confidence and interest in reading and writing

[128] Tennessee Department of Education. 2016 Read to be Ready Summer Grant. Web.

[129] Because of differing data collection methods, the data analysis above is based on those students across all program sites that were assessed on a particular skill at the beginning and end of camp.

2016 Summer Grants by the Numbers

The total investment in the 2016 grants was $530,549 with a range of grants awarded from $18,617 to $30,000; the average cost was about $925 per student.



The camps lasted a minimum of four weeks and the required teacher to student ratio was 1:5. Attending the camp was of no cost to students or families. The cost calculation above covered all food served to students, including breakfast, snacks, and lunch at most camps; transportation to and from the site at most camps; high-quality instruction; and all field trips that were taken over the summer. It also included all on-site materials, communications with families, and events that were held with and for families. Finally, the cost figure incorporated all books, about 20 per student, that were given to students to add to their at-home libraries. More information can be found in the Read to be Ready Summer 2016 report released September 2016.

From the 2016 grant experiences, the following recommendations were made to enhance future grants:

- improve training to further enrich student and educator experience
- refine the grant administration process
- communicate the process and opportunity directly to educators

Based on the feedback received, Tennessee intends to continue to refine its 2017 summer grant opportunities. In support of literacy and the department's summer programs, Tennessee's Department of Human Services has committed $30 million to support this effort over the next three years. This investment in literacy represents true collaboration around a need that, if met, has the ability to change the trajectory in the lives of 30,000 students.

Improve Literacy Instruction in Educator Preparation Programs

Another prong to Tennessee literacy work is how we will support deeper literacy instruction through improved educator preparation programs (EPP) and licensure. Through more rigorous reading standards for EPPs, improving certification, and providing more transparent reporting, Tennessee will have better-prepared teachers on day one. The existing reading standards are outdated and must be updated to align to Tennessee's high expectations for student learning.

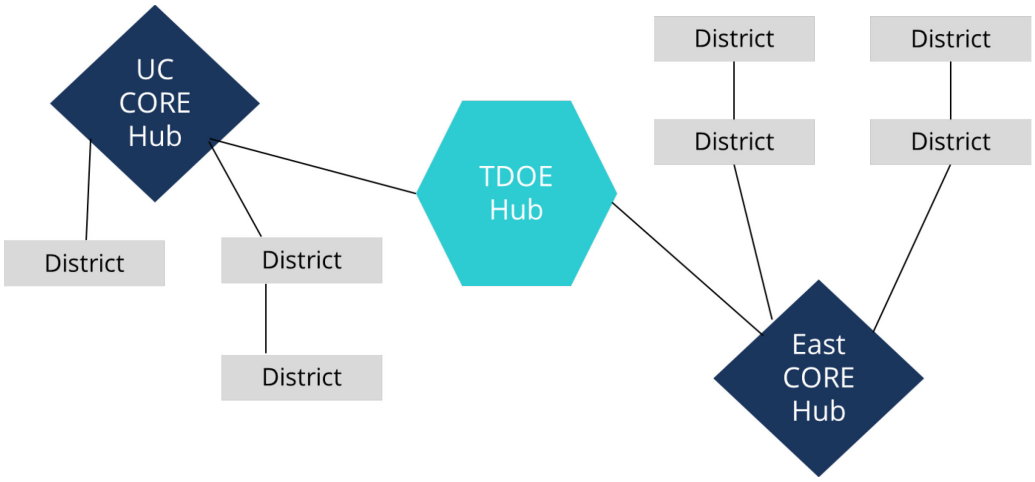
Reading Standards	Certification	Reporting	Research, Data & Training
• Rewriting the K–12 reading standards for EPPs to align with Tennessee's expectations for students • Differentiate standards by educator role • Standards identified for most educator endorsement areas: secondary, special education, specialized roles, and instructional leaders	• Review state's reading certification exam (PRAXIS) to ensure alignment • Tennessee will implement a rigorous, statewide performance assessment for reading teachers to demonstrate proficiency	• Highlight teacher preparation outcomes in ELA on the Teacher Preparation Report Card • New annual reports will include disaggregated data	• Provide statewide reading research and data to EPP faculty to improve practice • Invite EPP faculty to training opportunities to better prepare first year teachers for day 1

Additionally, the *Teacher Preparation Report Card* captures the abilities of Tennessee preparation providers to train new teachers for success in Tennessee's classrooms. The report card presents data on a variety of metrics to provide an overall picture of how well each provider is able to prepare effective teachers and meet state goals. Tennessee has produced a Teacher Preparation Report Card since 2009, although the 2016 Report Card marks a significant redesign.

The 2016 Report Card contains three scored domains: Candidate Profile, Employment, and Provider Impact. Each domain is comprised of two to four metrics, and the report includes two years of provider data. The goal of the redesigned Teacher Preparation Report Card is to create a user-friendly tool that provides focused information about providers, the effectiveness of graduates, and promotes stakeholder conversations about continuous improvement.

Networked Improvement Communities

Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) were initiated as part of the *District Empowerment* priority in the TDOE's strategic plan to pioneer a fundamentally new way of learning and improving, and to develop state and district partnerships to better solve problems of practice. In 2016, two networks were launched, working together to improve early literacy outcomes, and plans to scale statewide in the 2017-18 school year. This approach joins the discipline of improvement science with the capacities of networks to foster innovation and social learning in an effort to improve student outcomes. An intentional focus of NICs is for participating districts to build their own capacity to problem solve, find better solutions to challenges they face, and improve student achievement in their own unique, local context.



Tennessee Education Research Alliance

For the past several years, the TDOE has collaborated on several research projects with the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Design at Vanderbilt, including the annual Tennessee Educator Survey. This partnership has evolved into a research alliance that will be a central actor in discussions of state policy. Launched in October 2016, the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (the Alliance) builds on the previous partnership. With a full-time executive director, and as a part of the Peabody Research Institute at Vanderbilt, the Alliance has developed a coherent research agenda aimed at building a body of knowledge that helps the state to better meet its school improvement objectives. With this goal of building the state's capacity for continuous improvement, the Alliance conducts its own studies and directs external research to provide timely information to state policymakers. The Alliance's research agenda will be built from our state's strategic plan and will focus in part on improving elementary reading. More information on the Alliance can be accessed in the *District Empowerment* section of the plan.

Other Supports

CORE offices provide regional support for districts through regional consultants that specialize in areas of need, including English language arts. The department is partnering with TNTP to train all CORE ELA consultants in conducting a robust instructional review process with districts to build their understanding of the instructional practices that are influencing current reading achievement and support them in targeting improvements. The instructional review process includes classroom observations, focus groups with teachers, interviews with instructional leaders, the collection and review of student work samples, and development of support plans to take action on the findings. The training will take place through December 2017, at which point CORE ELA consultants will be able to offer instructional reviews as an option to all districts annually.

Other Reading Training

Prior to implementing the Read to be Ready Coach Network, the department developed and delivered literacy training including reading courses and leadership training in literacy. At regional educator summits during summer 2016, over 1,800 teachers received early literacy training and more than 1,200 teachers participated in secondary literacy training. This is in addition to 600 leaders who attended the spring 2016 literacy leadership course. The department is currently offering reading courses during the

2016-17 school year with interested districts to continue to build district and school capacity around literacy.

High-Quality, Early Grades Assessments

The department believes in and is committed to providing high-quality assessments and usable data in early grades. This strategy acknowledges the current lack of actionable data to monitor progress in the early grades. Through the kindergarten entry inventory and optional second grade assessment, the department continues to offer robust resources to districts, supporting the need for intervening early to develop strong literacy skills.

Kindergarten Entry Inventory

The Kindergarten Entry Inventory is a new initiative from the department that enables kindergarten teachers to assess where their students are along important developmental milestones at the beginning of the students' kindergarten year. The KEI tool creates a developmental profile identifying students' knowledge, skills, and competencies in essential school readiness domains included in the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS). As part of Tennessee's was awarded a Preschool Development Grant – Expansion (PDG-E) in 2015-16, the KEI was field tested in five districts during the 2016-17 school year, and will be rolled out to additional districts in fall 2017.

The KEI is comprised of items including the following and teachers scoring according to rubric. Items include:

- Selected response
  - Example: Teacher reads a short story to a child and the child selects responses to questions related to the story
- Performance tasks
  - Example: Teacher engages student(s) in an activity and notes responses
- Observations
  - Example: Teacher observes and records child's interactions with materials, other children, etc.

This is meant to be a part of the teacher's natural repertoire, as opposed to an addition to teacher's time. Teachers are in control of when and how the entry inventory is conducted. It is important to note the KEI is not a test or assessment that requires students to produce written or verbal responses in one sitting. It is a process and method by which teachers gather important information through the KEI tool about students during the course of regular school days, rituals, and routines during the first eight weeks of school.

Kindergarten teachers will implement a new KEI in the 2017-18 school year at the beginning of the kindergarten year. The KEI will assess students' skills, knowledge, and abilities across multiple developmental domains. The data will also be important to assess the quality of students' learning experiences before kindergarten and to plan for targeted professional development in preschool programs. In aggregate, KEI data can inform preschool program improvement efforts and policy decisions related to targeted investments, and to help students succeed. Additionally, the KEI provides a statewide, shared definition for kindergarten readiness, ensuring alignment between pre-K and kindergarten, and all preschool efforts to prepare students to thrive and succeed in school.

The KEI measures knowledge, skills, and competencies in five essential developmental domains, including the following:

- **Language and literacy:** This domain includes skills related to foundational reading, such as attending to stories, recalling important information, recognizing concepts of print, and acquiring vocabulary in context. It also includes skills related to emergent writing, speaking, listening, and language acquisition and development.
- **Mathematics:** This includes early numeracy skills related to counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry.
- **Social and personal competencies:** This includes skills and competencies related to children's social development and ability to self-regulate. Examples of these skills and competencies include the ability to develop positive relationships with adults, initiate and interact positively with peers, demonstrate empathy for others, regulate one's own response to needs, feelings, and events, and understand and follow rules and routines.
- **Physical development:** This includes gross motor skills, fine motor abilities, and an understanding of basic health habits.
- **Approaches to learning:** This includes problems-solving skills, such as persistence and resourcefulness, and critical work habits such as motivation and engagement.

There are multiple benefits to a KEI. As mentioned, the KEI provides a comprehensive profile for every kindergarten student, to better inform kindergarten instruction. Because it is aligned to standards, it creates a useful baseline benchmark for teachers so they can meet the needs of students where they are as they enter school. Teachers can then use the student growth portfolio model to measure student growth from this early benchmark. The KEI will also generate valuable reports not only for teachers but to inform parents and other adults who care for and provide services to the child. Parent reports can be customized and designed to meet the specific needs of schools and districts, and results are communicated by kindergarten teachers with parents through district-designed methods, such as a parent-teacher conference or goal-setting session.

Second Grade Assessment

Tennessee's assessment system begins with the assessment of students in grade three in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. To provide teachers, parents, and administrators more information on how to address the academic needs of students upon entry to the third grade, the department launched a new, optional second grade assessment in 2016-17. This assessment will provide invaluable data to both second and third grade teachers to help ensure that Tennessee students are strengthening foundational literacy and math skills early in their academic careers.

The optional second grade assessment is designed to take the place of the SAT-10 which has been used in Tennessee; however, it will differ in that it is criterion-referenced as opposed to norm-referenced. Thus, it will only assess Tennessee Academic Standards and provide information to teachers, leaders, parents, and community members on how our students are performing at the end of their second grade year on those standards. Because it assesses the full breadth of the standards, the data will be highly beneficial in determining how students are progressing toward mastering the standards. Most importantly, the second grade assessment measures the standards in a way that reflects classroom instruction. The department will deliver a second grade assessment in spring 2017, which will help schools and districts measure their progress toward the state's goal of having 75 percent of third graders reading on grade level by 2025.

Additionally, the department will provide guidance on the use of the second grade assessment, as well as the use of the third and fourth grade assessments, as part of the RTI^2 universal screening process. As stated in the guiding principles, RTI^2 is a process focused on prevention and early intervention that uses multiple sources of data for instruction, differentiation, intervention, and transitions between tiers. Ongoing assessment is a major component of the RTI^2 framework. Data derived from ongoing assessment, including the universal screening process, informs data-based decision making. More guidance and information on how these might be used as part of the universal screening process will be released in Fall 2017 after the first administration of these assessments in Spring 2017. By using data collected from these assessments, districts will have more flexibility and autonomy when deciding how and when to administer the universal screener.

Current Status

- Tennessee teachers participated in item review in July 2016.
- Tennessee teachers participated in field testing of second grade items in fall 2016.
- An item sampler was released in November 2016 for use in instruction.

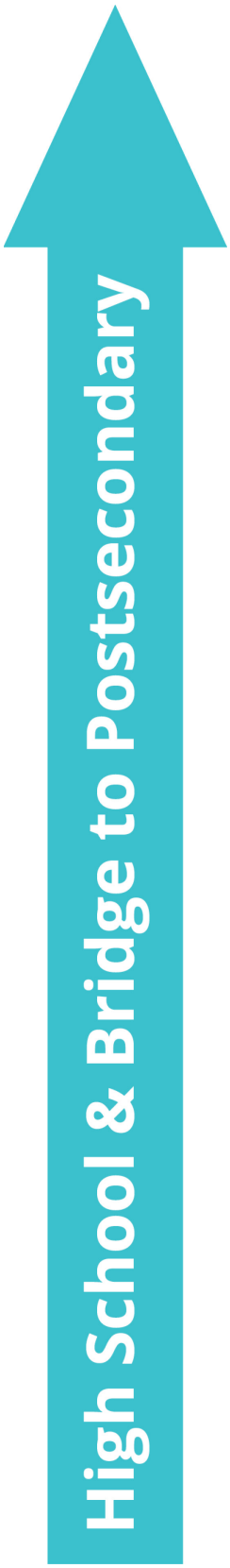
Below is information from the second grade assessment blueprints which were released summer 2016.

Mathematics
The mathematics assessment is designed to focus approximately 70 percent of the assessment items on major work of the grade and approximately 30 percent of the items on supporting and additional work. Student mastery of fluency, ability to problem solve, and understanding of the grade-level standards will be assessed. Further, students will be assessed on their ability to connect topics across the grade-level domains. Operational assessment items include the following: • Computation with whole numbers • Number relationships and patterns • Measurement concepts • Data and geometric concepts

English Language Arts
The format of the ELA test is designed to assess in an integrated manner. Students' foundational literacy skills will also be assessed using words taken directly from the given passages to determine their mastery of the standards in the following areas: • Comprehension: Students' comprehension will be assessed through multiple-choice items based upon both literature passages and informational text. • Foundational literacy skills: Students' phonics and word recognition skills will be assessed using words taken directly from the given passages. • Conventions/grammar/spelling: Students' command of the conventions of standard English and vocabulary acquisition will be assessed through words, phrases, and sentences found within the given passages. • Writing: Students will be asked to write 3–4 sentences per prompt based upon evidence from the text. • Listening: Students will be assessed on their listening comprehension skills through a series of pictures, sentences, and short passages. • Foundational literacy fluency: Students' reading fluency and comprehension will be assessed

English Language Arts
through the use of yes or no responses to independently read sentences containing second-grade vocabulary.

High School & Bridge to Postsecondary



Tennessee is committed to preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion through our *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary* priority. If current trends were to continue, only 24 percent of high school graduates would earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree within six years of their high school graduation. We expect to change this trajectory by reaching our goals on the ACT and on postsecondary completion. Our focus on preparing ready graduates for choice after high school directly supports two of Tennessee's overarching strategic goals:

- The average ACT composite will be a 21 by 2020.
- The majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

Tennessee primarily utilizes state resources and other federal funds to promote the work under *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary*. Under ESSA, we plan to increase access and opportunity for postsecondary readiness for all students, especially those served in Title I schools, by utilizing Title I and Title IV dollars. Tennessee also plans to support additional early postsecondary opportunities for students. This support may include additional CTE courses, ACT prep classes, and AP exam fee waivers through its Title IV block grant statewide programs set-aside, contingent upon adequate levels of federal funding.

Tennessee will continue to empower districts to make strategic spending decisions through comprehensive spending plans that address the needs of all students. Districts and schools may use the new flexibility under ESSA for expanded uses under Title I, Title II, and Title IV to improve postsecondary outcomes for all students. The department will continue to create resources like the coordinated spending guide to support districts on how to braid and blend funds effectively, in order to maximize all funding sources.

Within this priority area, Tennessee aims to improve preparation and increase access and pass rates for all students. We will expand the number of students who utilize college/career planning tools during middle school, in order to be more prepared for high school and continue on to postsecondary. We will demonstrate an annual increase in the percentage of students who score a 21 or above on the ACT and a decrease in the number of students scoring below a 19 on the ACT (or the equivalent on SAT). Ultimately, this will support the state's efforts to reduce students' need for remediation and increase readiness for postsecondary.

Tennessee will ensure high school graduation requirements are fully, vertically aligned with entrance to all three postsecondary system levels: technical, two-year, and four-year institutions. We are committed to increasing the annual percentage of high school students who earn postsecondary course credits, as well as increasing the number earning industry certifications, which are transferable for postsecondary hours. This commitment is demonstrated by the school quality and student success measure added to the state's accountability model (see *Accountability* section). Tennessee developed the *Ready Graduate* indicator to

reflect the need for students to be prepared for life after high school, whether that is completing postsecondary education, entering the workforce, or beginning a military career. It also emphasizes Tennessee's focus on early postsecondary opportunities for all students. The *Ready Graduate* indicator is a part of both the district and school accountability frameworks to demonstrate our commitment to our vision that all students will graduate and be prepared to embark on their chosen path.

Student Postsecondary Planning

Governor Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 goal is to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or credential to 55 percent by the year 2025.[130] Tennessee currently ranks 43rd in the nation in the share of residents who have attained a college degree. The Drive to 55 alliance, which includes Tennessee Promise, is focused on ensuring that more Tennesseans are equipped with the skills and credentials that will be needed to support the state's economy now and in the future. That will not be possible, unless we prepare all students for choice after high school graduation.

Tennessee will focus on improving postsecondary and career planning for all students, and begin this process earlier in a student's career. Tennessee's state board updated policy to require career interest inventories in 7th and 10th grade and annual student course planning activities. Additionally, the department has revised the school counseling model to include more deliberate language and expectations around student planning throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

The department continues to support new ideas and creative ways to engage students and parents, including the launch of an annual "Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week" and "FAFSA Frenzy," in partnership with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and other partners. In 2015, more than 70 percent of Tennessee's high school seniors completed the FAFSA, which is the highest rate of any other state in the nation and a slight increase from the previous 69.5 percent. The FAFSA Frenzy initiative includes tools and resources for school counselors and college access professionals, regional school counselor meetings to provide directed professional development and training on FAFSA advising, and a statewide high school FAFSA completion monitoring campaign and website. In addition, districts across the state also promote local EPSO awareness events to students and families.
By expanding access and use of promoted postsecondary and career information, students, parents, and district and school personnel will have access to personalized information to track progress along the postsecondary trajectory. This strategy will provide multiple stakeholders with necessary data regarding whether students are successfully moving along learning pathways leading to postsecondary, which includes information about academic and career opportunities that are available.

ACT

The ACT serves as a gateway to postsecondary and workforce readiness in Tennessee, as well as determining student eligibility for the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, identification for postsecondary remedial or developmental coursework, and potential employment. Due to the importance and

[130] Tennessee Drive to 55. Web.

relevance of the ACT for all of our students, Tennessee articulated the goal of reaching a 21 composite average by 2020.

The average ACT composite score in Tennessee will be a 21 by 2020.

To receive a regular high school diploma, Tennessee statute requires that all public high school students participate in a postsecondary readiness assessment—either the ACT or SAT—during the 11th grade year.[131] Districts may choose to administer either the ACT or the SAT, or offer both assessments and allow their students to choose the assessment that is right for them.

Between 2011 and 2016, we have seen the average Tennessee ACT score for public school students increase from 19.0 to 19.7. The department is now able to calculate the average based on a student's best score versus a student's last score. By 2020, we will raise this number to 21, signaling that the average student in Tennessee is prepared for postsecondary coursework. Earning a 21 composite score on the ACT and meeting individual benchmark scores mean that a student has a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing, first-year college courses. In 2015, 27 percent of Tennessee students met the college ready benchmark in math and 35 percent met the benchmark in reading, with only 17 percent meeting the benchmark in all four subject areas.

ACT Senior Retake Opportunity

In August 2016, the department announced the launch of the statewide ACT Senior Retake Opportunity. Any public high school student, who took the ACT as a junior, was eligible to retake the ACT free of charge on the October national test date as a senior, regardless of socioeconomic status. Tennessee is the first state to offer the retake opportunity on a statewide scale.

By expanding the opportunity for all students to retake the ACT, through state dollars, we expect Tennessee's composite score to increase, as well as individual student composite and benchmark scores. National data indicate that retaking the ACT typically leads to a composite score improvement of one to two points. In Tennessee, our state data indicate that students who retake the ACT typically increase their score by one to three points. Based on the typical growth of students in Tennessee who took the ACT a second time, we anticipate that many more of our students will be able to increase their eligibility for scholarships and financial aid (such as the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship), avoid remedial courses during high school or once they enter postsecondary, and demonstrate to employers that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful.

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[131] Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-6001(b).

Last fall, 25,977 students in the state's high school class of 2017 participated in the department's first ACT Senior Retake Day. Of those, nearly 40 percent increased their overall score, and 1,331 seniors raised their composite above a 21—opening access to Tennessee HOPE Scholarship funds that provide up to $16,000 to help students pay for college. The ACT Retake also resulted in more students hitting the ACT college-readiness benchmarks in all four subjects. In one district, 25 percent of students who participated in the retake opportunity hit all four ACT benchmarks during their junior year. Statewide, the percentage of retake students in the class of 2017 who met all four benchmarks increased from 21.5 percent to 26.8 percent. Additionally, over a third of school districts increased their district-wide ACT average, with one district experiencing an increase in its composite average of one full point.

ACT Preparation Course

The state board approved an ACT preparation course on October 14, 2016 to ensure that ACT preparation activities throughout the state were consistent in content and quality. The course was created by the TDOE as a supplement to other existing preparatory resources being used by school districts. The course standards were developed through consultation with educators across the state, ACT, Inc., and through consulting widely-used test preparation resources. Multiple stakeholders from across the department and practitioners across the state have participated in review of the standards. The stakeholders asked to review include a mix of content experts including current and former classroom teachers, principals who have implemented ACT preparation courses and school-wide strategies, regional coaches who support a wide range of high school personnel, and departmental experts on Tennessee state standards.

During the 2016-17 school year, the office of student readiness and early postsecondary conducted a pilot of the ACT Preparation Course. Forty-nine districts representing 95 high schools and over 250 teachers participated in the pilot. All teachers were solicited for feedback on the standards and have had opportunities to submit feedback on the standards and the pilot overall through required surveys included in mandatory professional development for the pilot. Currently, two additional districts have submitted special course applications to offer the course in the spring semester.

Additionally, the department conducted large-scale teacher training, benefiting hundreds of general education and CTE teachers in grades 7–12 during summer 2016, to share instructional strategies on raising ACT and SAT scores and connecting ACT and SAT standards with Tennessee Academic Standards.

SAT

The SAT is a test provided by the College Board and is accepted by all U.S. colleges. The SAT allows students to demonstrate skills and knowledge necessary for success in college. According to College Board,[132] the SAT measures the essential ingredients for college and career readiness and success, as shown by research. Additionally, the SATs have a stronger connection to classroom learning and inspire productive practice.

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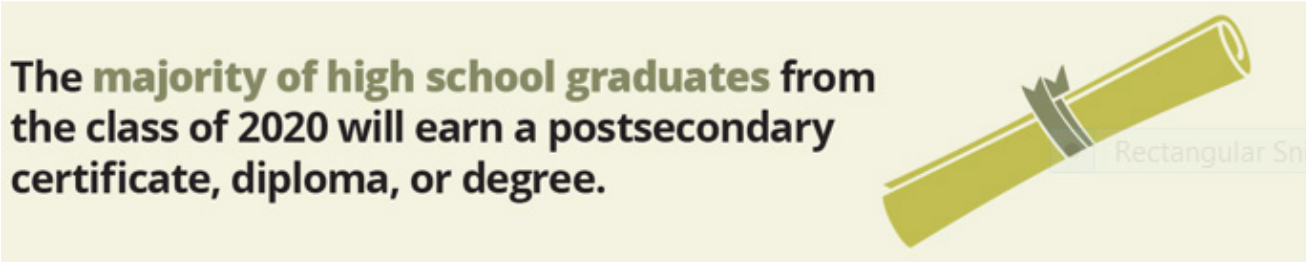
[132] College Board. ACT. Web.

Tennessee requires all students to take the ACT or SAT. Students must earn at least a 1060 to be eligible for the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship and deemed a *Ready Graduate* under the new accountability framework.

Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness

One of Tennessee's four goals is to have the majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree. By clearly defining postsecondary and workforce readiness, Tennessee can create a statewide consensus around knowledge, skills, and actions necessary to demonstrate readiness for success following high school graduation.



In March 2016, the Commissioner launched the Career Forward Task Force composed of business, education (K–12 and postsecondary), and community leaders to examine and explore ways to better engage students in their academic preparation, personal and social development, and workplace readiness. The group met monthly throughout the spring and summer to learn, listen, discuss, and craft recommendations to strengthen the connection between K–12 education, postsecondary, and the workforce.

The task force was also charged with defining career readiness and the milestones necessary to prepare a student, as well as developing recommendations to align current workforce needs across the education spectrum. In September 2016, the task force concluded its work, producing the following definition of career-ready students and corresponding milestones:

> *Career-ready students are those who graduate K–12 education with the knowledge, abilities, and habits to enter and complete postsecondary education without remediation and to seamlessly move into a career that affords them the opportunity to sustain or exceed a living wage.*
>
> *To achieve these outcomes, students must have a clear understanding of learning pathways from as early as middle school and possess academic and technical knowledge that can be exhibited successfully and consistently across settings and experiences. They must also possess employability skills exhibited through critical thinking, written and oral communications, collaboration, problem solving, work ethic, and persistence. With such knowledge and skills, students can pursue career opportunities with confidence and be engaged citizens, positively contributing to their communities.*

Per Tennessee's definition of college and career readiness (CCR), many of our students are not "ready." Based on 2015 ACT benchmarks, 73 percent of students would require remediation in math

and 46 percent would require remediation in English. Tennessee utilizes the standards review process (see *Standards* section) to incorporate multiple readiness indicators and assessments to measure CCR.

The task force also developed immediate and long-term recommendations for the TDOE, the SBE, and districts to continue to support and develop college and career readiness in Tennessee students including student learning pathways, graduation requirements, early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs), career exposure, student course counseling, and other CCR measures. The task force summative report can be referenced here.

Move on When Ready

The Tennessee state board high school policy[133] states that a public high school student may complete an early high school graduation program and be eligible for unconditional entry into a public two-year institution of higher education or conditional entry into a public four-year institution of higher education, if the student meets the requirements of the Move on When Ready Act.[134] Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, students who choose to graduate early under this law have attained specific benchmark scores that demonstrate exemplary high school performance, which are indicative of the ability to perform college-level work.

Tennessee Promise

Tennessee Promise is both a "last-dollar" scholarship and a mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students who attend college in our state.[135] Launched in February 2014 by Governor Haslam, Tennessee Promise creates a new opportunity for students who may have never considered college as an option due to the financial burden. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship,[136] meaning the scholarship will cover tuition and fees not covered by the federal Pell grant, the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship, or other state student financial assistance funds. Students may use the Tennessee Promise scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate's degree program.

A critical component of Tennessee Promise is the individual guidance each participant receives from a mentor, who assists the student as she or he navigates the college admissions process. This is accomplished primarily via mandatory meetings that students must attend to remain eligible in the

[133] Tennessee State Board of Education. High School Policy (2.103). Web.
[134] Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-6-8303. Move on When Ready Act.
[135] Tennessee Promise. Web.
[136] Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation. Web.

program. In addition, Tennessee Promise participants must complete eight hours of community service prior to each term the award is received, as well as maintain satisfactory academic progress (2.0 GPA) at their institutions.

The Tennessee Promise scholarships are funded through $110 million from the state's lottery reserves, along with a $47 million endowment created by the Tennessee General Assembly. Students can expect to receive an average scholarship of $971, in addition to existing aid from the state's HOPE Scholarship program.

In order for all students to have quality options after high school and the ability to take advantage of opportunities like Tennessee Promise, we need to better prepare students for postsecondary success in both postsecondary and the workforce. The following sections provide a comprehensive overview of the work Tennessee is doing in connecting high school to postsecondary and workforce success.

Early Postsecondary Opportunities

Tennessee students have an unprecedented opportunity for education and training beyond high school through the Tennessee Promise. Tennessee is committed to expand the number of high school students earning early postsecondary course credits and industry certifications, broadening the reach of these opportunities to include students who lacked access in the past.

During the 2014-15 school year, 92 percent of high schools offered at least one early postsecondary opportunity (EPSO) course. Only 41 percent of students in the 2011 cohort, however, participated in at least one ESPO. Approximately 36,000 students earned postsecondary credit and 2,793 students earned an industry credential in 2014.[137] To ensure students are ready to take full advantage of the Tennessee Promise and to successfully complete a credentialed program, all students must have access to rigorous and relevant EPSOs.[138] Research has shown that students who participate in early postsecondary courses and exams are more likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary.

Early postsecondary opportunities allow students to:

- earn postsecondary credits while in high school;
- become familiar with postsecondary expectations;
- develop confidence and skills for success in postsecondary;
- make informed postsecondary and career decisions; and
- decrease the time and cost of completing a postsecondary certificate or degree.

We believe all students should have equitable access to high-quality opportunities in high school that bridge the gap between K–12 and postsecondary. Tennessee's development of the *Ready Graduate* indicator, as explained in the *Accountability* section, emphasizes the importance of the work within this area. Districts and high schools are expected to prepare students for education and career options after high school, and by including this indicator in the accountability framework, we will measure how many students are ready for those options and what best practices can be learned from exemplary schools.

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[137] Seamless Pathways: Bridging Tennessee's Gap Between High School and Postsecondary. Web.
[138] Tennessee Department of Education. Early Postsecondary. Web.

The department challenges all districts in Tennessee to determine how to incorporate and expand their portfolios of EPSOs; specifically, addressing how high schools can offer a portfolio of options that does not limit itself to certain groups of students within or across schools in a district but is available to all students, as well as encouraging all students to take advantage of these programs.

Early postsecondary opportunities available in Tennessee include:

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Dual Enrollment (DE)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Local Dual Credit (LDC)
- Statewide Dual Credit (SDC)
- Industry Certification (IC)

TN Department of Education	AP Advanced Placement	CIE Cambridge	CLEP College Level Exam Program	DE Dual Enrollment	IB International Baccalaureate	LDC Local Dual Credit	SDC Statewide Dual Credit	IC Industry Certification
Description	• College-level high school courses offered in multiple subjects • Nationally recognized exams	• High school academic programs • Internationally recognized exams	• Nationally recognized exams used to assess college-level knowledge • Exams offered in multiple subjects	• Postsecondary (PS) course taught at the PS institution, high school, or online • Student enrolled in the PS institution	• Academically challenging course of study offered at the high school level • Internationally recognized exams	• High school course aligned to standards at local postsecond-ary (PS) institution • Optional exam for credit at local PS institution	• High school course aligned to statewide postsecondary (PS) standards • Required challenge exam for PS credit at TN institutions	• Assessment by an independent certifying entity based on standards for knowledge, skills, and competencies
Structure	Course and Exam	Course and Exam	Exam	Course	Course and Exam	Course and Exam	Course and Exam	Exam
Provider	The College Board	Cambridge International Examinations	The College Board	Individual TN PS Institutions	International Baccalaureate Organization	Individual TN PS Institutions	Tennessee Department of Education	Industry
Student Fees and Assistance	• Exam fees • College Board and state assistance for low-income students	• Exam fees • State assistance for low-income students	• Exam fees	• Course tuition, fees, books • Dual Enrollment Grant (a lottery scholarship)	• Exam fees • State assistance for low-income students	• Exam fees	• No cost to students	• Exam fees
High School Credit and Graduation Requirements	• AP courses meet graduation requirements and/or elective	• Cambridge courses meet graduation requirements and/or elective credit	• CLEP is not a course and does not meet high school graduation requirements	• District sets policy on awarding high school credit and graduation requirements	• IB courses meet graduation requirements and/or elective	• LDC course fulfills the same requirements as aligned high school course	• SDC course fulfills the same requirements as aligned high school course	• IC is a program of study and does not meet graduation requirements
High School Recognition State Policies	• Qualifies for graduation with state distinction • Qualifies for GPA weighting	• Qualifies for graduation with state distinction • Qualifies for GPA weighting	• CLEP is not a course and does not meet high school graduation requirements	• Qualifies for graduation with state distinction	• Qualifies for graduation with state distinction • Qualifies for GPA weighting		• Qualifies for GPA weighting	• Qualifies for graduation with state distinction
Postsecondary Credit Determinant	• Score on AP exam	• Grade in Cambridge AS or A level subject	• Score on CLEP exam	• Dual enrollment course completion • Passing grade as assigned by PS instructor	• Score on IB SL or HL exam	• Score on challenge exam at or above the established cut score	• Score on challenge exam at or above the established cut score	• Score on industry certification exam
Postsecondary Credit Awarded	• Determined by postsecondary institutions • Awarded upon matriculation	• Determined by postsecondary institutions • Awarded upon matriculation	• Determined by postsecondary institutions • Awarded upon matriculation	• Credit awarded on PS transcript upon course completion • Credit can be transferred to other PS institutions	• Determined by postsecondary institutions • Awarded upon matriculation	• Credit accepted at the partnering PS institution • Students should notify registrar upon matriculation	• Credit accepted at all TN PS institutions • Students should notify registrar upon matriculation	• Determined by postsecondary institutions

EARLY POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN TENNESSEE

The department is committed not only to expanding student access to, enrollment in, and success in these early postsecondary opportunities, but to do so in an equitable way for all public students in Tennessee. The *Ready Graduate* indicator was created in part to drive behavior of schools to ensure all students who are on track for a regular high school diploma are given an opportunity to earn postsecondary credit while in high school.

To improve access to high-quality EPSOs, the department will provide technical assistance and resources to districts, including resources on how EPSOs can be funded, which is a common challenge faced by districts. Additionally, all EPSO participation and credit attainment will be included as transparency metrics for schools and districts. For example, we will report the percent of students participating in AP courses and the percentage scoring a three or above.

EPSO Funding Opportunities

Essential to any district offering a diverse set of early postsecondary offerings is a district's full awareness of how these different options are (or can be) funded. Supporting districts in this way is important in relieving students of financial burdens and in providing more EPSO opportunities to students.

Early Postsecondary Opportunity	Available Funding Options
Advanced Placement (AP) **International Baccalaureate (IB)** **Cambridge International Exams (CIE)**	• State Exam Fee Assistance Pilot • Federal Grants: ESSA Title IV Block Grant (TBD), Title I • Perkins Basic (when course is listed in a CTE program of study) • The College Board (ED fee waivers) • LEAs
Dual Enrollment	• State Dual Enrollment Grant • Perkins Basic (when course is listed in a CTE program of study) • Tuition gap scholarships (local postsecondary institutions/local chambers of commerce/LEAs)
Statewide Dual Credit	• Challenge (end-of-course) Exam costs fully covered by Tennessee Department of Education
Local Dual Credit	• Standard fee of $25 across all community colleges; which can be covered as a scholarship by participating colleges or districts
Industry Certification	• Perkins Basic • Perkins Reserve Grant • Industry Partners/Local Chambers of Commerce
CLEP Exam	• Perkins Basic (when course is listed in a CTE program of study) • LEAs • Local Chambers of Commerce

Advanced Placement

In 2013, Tennessee counted nearly 7,000 students in the senior cohort whose academic skills when they entered high school suggested they were on track to earn college credits through AP exams. Yet just over half of these students graduated with an AP credit, and less than one-third of students, who were economically disadvantaged, earned credit.

In 2015, only 64 percent of graduating students enrolled in AP classes actually sat for their aligned exam; however, 2,000 additional AP tests were taken in 2016 compared to 2015. The federal grant program, which provided funding to states for the purpose of providing exam fee assistance (AP, IB, and Cambridge), was not reauthorized in ESSA. To offset this, the department may utilize the Title IV, Part A statewide program dollars in ESSA to provide exam fee assistance to districts for economically disadvantaged students, pending appropriate funding levels.

Cambridge International Examinations

A division within the University of Cambridge, Cambridge International Examination (CIE) provides internationally-recognized academic programs for students age 5 to 19. The high school A and AS level courses, available only through approved Cambridge International Schools, provide students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit that is accepted by colleges in the United States and abroad.

Though there are few districts in the state that currently implement the CIE program, the department is working to expand the reach of Cambridge for additional students. To date, the state board has approved Cambridge courses as appropriate content-area substitutes for graduation requirements and has added them to the state's course management system.

College Level Examination Program

Developed by the College Board, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams are used to assess mastery of postsecondary-level material acquired in a variety of ways—through general academic instructions, significant independent study, or extracurricular work. Through CLEP, students can earn credit for postsecondary coursework in a specific subject.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is a postsecondary course that can be taught at the postsecondary campus, the high school, or online, by postsecondary faculty or credentialed adjunct high school faculty. Dual enrollment instructors must meet postsecondary requirements but do not have to meet specific Tennessee K–12 teacher licensure or endorsement requirements. The offered location of the course does not affect its status as a dual enrollment course. Students are enrolled at the postsecondary institution and earn postsecondary credit upon completion of the course. If a course reflects a required graduation requirement, high school credit can be awarded.

Dual Enrollment Grant

The dual enrollment grant is one of the state funded education lottery scholarships and provides grant funding for dual enrollment tuition and fees. Information on grant eligibility and participation requirements is available on the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation website.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the grant pays the full cost of tuition and fees for a high school student's first two dual enrollment courses at a community college ($500 per course). For students taking dual enrollment courses through a Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT), the grant provides $100 per contact hour (up to $600 per semester).

The award amounts at eligible two-year institutions and four-year institutions are as follows:

- Up to $500 for the first course
- Up to $500 for the second course
- Up to $200 for the third course
- No award for the fourth course

TCAT Dual Enrollment Pilot

The department and the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) are working with select high schools and TCATs to pilot early postsecondary partnerships. The TCAT Dual Enrollment Pilot, which began in the 2015-16 school year, is designed to link select secondary CTE programs of study with TCAT courses to create opportunities for high school students to earn postsecondary credit while in high school. Targeted programs of study include: Diesel Technology, Cosmetology/Barbering, and Mechatronics. The pilot is intended to:

- ensure better alignment with TCAT curriculum and instruction;

- allow students to begin working toward postsecondary credential/degree while still in high school; and
- identify options for transitioning the programs fully to postsecondary.

International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB), which is available only through an approved IB World School, provides high school students the opportunity to take a rigorous, pre-university courses of study. IB courses are aligned to internationally-benchmarked exams, which provide opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school. There are only a few districts in the state that currently implement the IB program; however, the department is working to expand the reach of IB for additional students. To date, the state board has approved IB courses as appropriate content-area substitutes for graduation requirements and has added them to the state's course management system.

Local Dual Credit

Local Dual Credit (LDC) is a high school course aligned to a local postsecondary institution's course and exam. LDC is currently offered across the state. Students, who pass the course, earn credits that are accepted and/or recognized by the participating local postsecondary institution. These credits may or may not be transferable to other postsecondary institutions. The department is working with partners, including the TBR and the University of Tennessee system, to share data and identify accurately student success in LDC.

Statewide Dual Credit

Statewide Dual Credit (SDC) courses are high school courses, created by Tennessee secondary and postsecondary educators, which incorporate college-level learning objectives and have an aligned end-of-course challenge exam.[139] Students who meet the cut score on the culminating challenge exam earn credit that can be applied to any public postsecondary institution in the state. The exam fees are paid by the state, so there are no exam fees for the student.

Industry Certifications

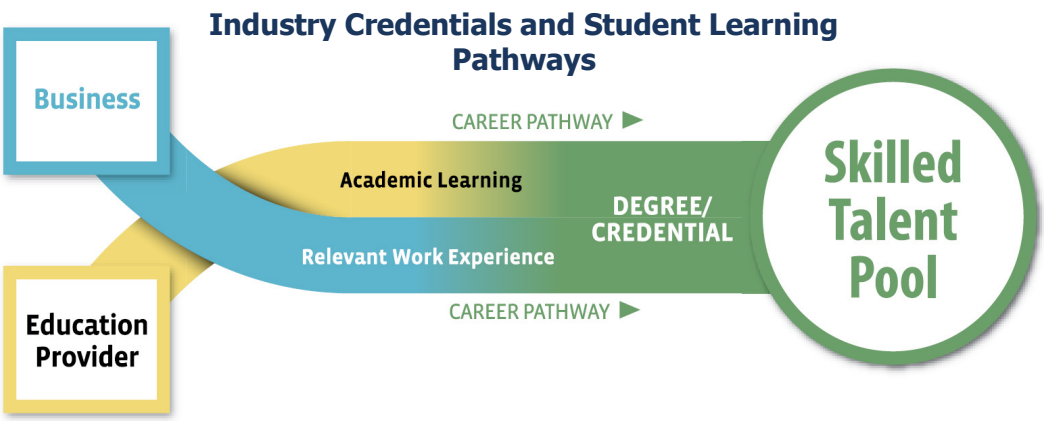
Tennessee's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study are meant to provide a relevant framework of industry-aligned, rigorous courses that progress a student in knowledge and skills year over year. They provide invaluable opportunities for students to experience a subject they are passionate about and explore interests that lead to postsecondary learning and future career paths.

[139] See Appendix R

2017-18 Career Clusters
Advanced Manufacturing
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
Architecture & Construction
Arts, A/V Technology, & Communications
Business Management & Administration
Education & Training
Finance
Government & Public Administration
Health Science
Hospitality & Tourism
Human Services
Information Technology
Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security
Marketing
STEM
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics

These sequenced courses also reflect and support the three credit elective focus requirement for graduation. Level one courses are encouraged to be taken by students in ninth grade; however, districts may make scheduling decisions that work best for their communities and students. Industry certifications are an important assessment of a student's technical skill and mastery within a specific program of study. The department promotes specific capstone industry certifications that are aligned to CTE courses and programs of study. Districts are encouraged to increase the number of students sitting for and passing these industry certifications.

Starting with the 2016-17 school year, specific industry certification data will be received directly from certifying agencies to show how many students earn industry certifications by district and school, as well as overall participation and pass rates. All department-promoted industry certifications now count for postsecondary hours at the state's Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology, which will decrease the cost of the student's continuing education in postsecondary education and training. The *Ready Graduate* indicator also includes a check for industry credentials; a student that participates in two EPSOs and earns an industry certification will be considered a *Ready Graduate*.
The department will begin work to develop and release a report on the pass rate and number of students earning industry certifications by district and by school. Additionally, the 2017-18 report card will include a transparency metric demonstrating the percent of students earning an industry certification at the state, district, and school levels. In addition, the department currently awards districts up to $12,000 through the 2016-17 federal Carl Perkins Reserve grants to pay for student industry certification exam fees. Full student participation and pass rates will be available by June 30, 2017.



Work-based Learning

Work-based learning (WBL) is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. Students build on classroom-based instruction to develop employability skills that prepare them for success in postsecondary education and future careers. Through experiences like internships, apprenticeships, and paid work experiences, juniors and seniors (16 years or older) may earn high school credit for capstone WBL experiences.[140] The department also strengthens the WBL program by supporting educators through training and PLCs. Additionally, the department will include WBL participation rates as a transparency metric for schools and districts.

WBL experiences should occur throughout K–12 and provide authentic interactions for young people and industry professionals to build a knowledge base and skill set. These skills are foundational to student success after high school in both postsecondary education and in careers. WBL experiences are aligned to proposed career counseling standards and are considered essential to student readiness as they foster skills that are best learned beyond the classroom. Students who are 16 years old or older, may participate in a "practicum" level capstone WBL course for credit, through which they develop portfolios as summative assessments of their knowledge and skills. The department also promotes a suite of capstone course options that are designed to align to the student's area of elective focus and her or his long-term goals and interests.
In support of the department's All Means All strategic priority, we believe all students, including student with disabilities, should have access to WBL. Based on the needs of the student, an IEP team determines if the student should take WBL for credit or gain work experience through a community-based transition activity. If a student takes WBL for credit, it should be documented in the student's transition plan. Also, if the student participates in a transition activity separate or in addition to WBL for credit, it should be documented in the student's transition plan.

Economic success for students, families, and communities relies on young people having the knowledge and skills needed to earn a living wage and positively contribute to their communities after graduation. This foundation is critical for breaking cycles of poverty, demonstrating the relevance of

[140] Tennessee Department of Education. Career & Technical Education. Work-based Learning. Web.

postsecondary education in a real and personal way. Experiences like WBL are effective in elementary, middle, and high school, in urban and rural environments, and may be personalized for all students. Students explore careers, set realistic goals, identify the steps required to attain their goals, and gain realistic expectations of the workplace. At the highest level, students gain relevant work experience that sets them on a trajectory for increased earnings over a lifetime.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, Tennessee has been a on a path of improvement through increased rigor of standards, aligned assessment, high-quality teaching, and a strengthened accountability framework. In 2015, Commissioner McQueen developed the *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan, and articulated our vision and four big goals for the future.

The most notable shift to the education landscape is the returning of authority and autonomy to the states under the Every Student Succeeds Act. From May 2016 through January 2017, we have engaged with stakeholders across the state to build our state plan under ESSA as a continuation of our strategic plan. We look to be an example for the country when it comes to setting high expectations and reaching goals that benefit all of our students. This process has ensured alignment and consistency, as well as taking stock in what has and has not been successful. By sharing our state plan as a companion and continuation to our strategic plan, we have provided our state with a useful guide for the future of Tennessee education.

Tennessee is well-equipped to continue its trajectory as the fastest-improving state by building on the past accomplishments, and furthering opportunities and advancement for all students. The Tennessee Department of Education appreciates the opportunity to share our unique plan with USEd and begin implementation in the 2017-18 school year.

Glossary

ACCESS	Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State – an exam given to English learners to measure listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
ACT / SAT	Standardized college readiness assessments
AMO	Annual measurable objective – a target that is set for meeting goals within the accountability model
AP	Advanced Placement
APBA	Alternate performance-based assessment
APR	Annual Performance Report
APTT	Academic Parent Teacher Teams
Arc	The Arc – the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
ARCC	The Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) serves SEAs in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Our key objective is to provide high-quality, relevant, and useful technical assistance that enhances specific SEA capacities to undertake state education reforms successfully, support district and school implementation of reforms, and maintain effectiveness once our services are complete.
ASD	Achievement School District is the state-run school district; Priority schools are transitioned from the LEA to the ASD.
AWARE	Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education
BEP	Basic Education Plan – state's funding plan for schools
BHN	Black/Hispanic/Native American – combined student group used in accountability model (historically underserved); student group used in accountability model
CAEP	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
CAL	Center for Applied Linguistics
CCLC	21st Century Community Learning Centers
CCR	College and career readiness
CCSSO	Chief Counsel of State School Officers

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFA	Consolidated funding application – state's online grants management and federal programs planning system, ePlan
CFG	Customer Focused Government
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COE	Certificate of Eligibility
Competitive Grant	Unlike a formula grant, a competitive (or discretionary) grant awards funds on the basis of a competitive process
CORE	Centers of Regional Excellence – eight offices located across the state that provide technical assistance and support to district and schools
CPM	Consolidated Planning and Monitoring – division within the TDOE that provides technical assistance and support to districts for multiple federal programs
CSH	Coordinated School Health
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DCI	Disciplinary core ideas
DCS	Department of Children's Services
Discretionary Grant	Unlike a formula grant, a discretionary (or competitive) grant awards funds on the basis of a competitive process
DOC	Department of Corrections
Drive to 55	Governor Haslam's initiative focused on ensuring that more Tennesseans are equipped with the skills and credentials that will be needed to support the state's economy now and in the future
ED	Economically disadvantaged – low-income students who are directly certified as participating in state or federal assistance programs and students who are homeless, migrant, or runaways; student group used in accountability model
edTPA	A performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system
EIA	Education Improvement Act of 1992
EIS	Education Information System – district and school student data is uploaded and stored in this state-level data system

EL	English learners – students with limited English proficiency; student group used in accountability model
ELA	English language arts – includes all related courses for grades K–12, most grades of which are used in accountability model
ELD	English language development
ELM	Early Learning Model
ELP	English language proficiency
EOC	End of Course – high school exam administered at the end of a course
ePlan	Tennessee's online grants management system
EPP	Educator preparation programs
EPSO	Early postsecondary opportunity
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
ETS	Educational Testing Service
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
Focus School	A school with underperforming student groups, identified through the accountability model for targeted support and improvement
Formula Grant	Noncompetitive grant which awards funds based on a predetermined formula
FRC	Family Resource Center
GASL	Governor’s Academy for School Leadership
HE	Highly effective
Historically Underserved	Includes four primary student groups: economically disadvantaged (ED), students with disabilities (SWD), English learners (EL), and Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN); student groups used in accountability model
HLS	Home Language Survey

HOPE Scholarship	Tennessee college scholarship for eligible high school graduates
IB	International Baccalaureate
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation
IEP	Individualized Education Plan – plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services
IES	Institute of Education Sciences
InTASC	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
IPI	Instructional Partnership Initiative
KEI	Kindergarten entry inventory
LEA	Local Educational Agency – a public school district
LEAPS	Lottery for Education: After School Programs – overall goal is to provide Tennessee students with academic enrichment opportunities that reinforce and complement the regular academic program
LIFT Education	Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education – a leadership group of school superintendents that was launched to focus on ensuring high-quality instruction and student success in Tennessee; focused on policy leadership, thoughtful and strong advocacy, and building a network of school leaders for professional learning
LOE	Levels of overall effectiveness
LRE	Least restrictive environment
MAAS	Modified Academic Achievement Standards
MLO	My Licensing Office
MSAA	Multi-State Alternate Assessment
MSIX	Migrant Student Information Exchange
MTSS	Multi-tiered system of supports

NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress – the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know across all 50 states; math, reading, and science results are based on representative samples of students in grades four and eight; often referred to as "the nation's report card"
NBPTS	National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
NCLR	National Council for La Raza
NELB	Non-English Language Background
NICs	Networked Improvement Communities
NIET	National Institute for Excellence in Teaching
N-size	Minimum student group size; 30 for inclusion in accountability; 10 for reporting
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
OSI	Office of School Improvement
OSY	Out of School Youth
PaP	Parents as Partners
PD	Professional development
PDG-E	Preschool Development Grant – Expansion
PIRS	Personnel Information Reporting System
PLC	Professional learning community
Priority School	A school categorized in the lowest performing five percent of all schools in the state, identified through the accountability model for comprehensive support and improvement
Questar	Tennessee's new assessment vendor; a national leader in large-scale assessment
R2BR	Read to be Ready
REL	Regional Educational Laboratory – works in partnership with educators and policymakers to develop and use research that improves academic outcomes for students
RFP	Request for Proposals – a competitive process used to procure a vendor for a service or good

RTI^2	Response to Instruction and Intervention
RTI^2-B	Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Agency
SAP	Specialty area program
SAT-10	Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Edition
SAVE	Schools Against Violence in Education
SBE	State Board of Education
SCALE	Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity
SCORE	State Collaborative on Reforming Education
SDC	Statewide Dual Credit
SiMR	State-identified Measureable Result
SISN	School Improvement Support Network
SKEMA	Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment
SLD	Specific learning disability
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SPDG	State Personnel Development Grants
SRC	Standards Recommendation Committee
SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
SSAE	Student Support and Academic Enrichment
SSIP	State Systemic Improvement Plan
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and math
Student group	A group of students disaggregated from all students for which districts and schools are held accountable under the accountability model (includes specific racial/ethnic groups; economically disadvantaged (ED) students; students with disabilities (SWD); English learner (EL) students; and the combined Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN) group); also referred to as subgroups

Subgroup	A group of students disaggregated from all students for which districts and schools are held accountable under the accountability model (includes specific racial/ethnic groups; economically disadvantaged (ED) students; students with disabilities (SWD); English learner (EL) students; and the combined Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN) group); also referred to as student groups
SWD	Students with disabilities – students with IDEA defined disabilities; student group used in accountability model
T.C.A.	Tennessee Code Annotated
TA	Technical assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TASL	Tennessee Academy for School Leaders
TBSP	Tennessee Behavior Supports Project
TCAP	Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program
TCAT	Tennessee College of Applied Technology
TDOE	Tennessee Department of Education
TEAM	Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model
Tennessee Succeeds	TDOE strategic plan launched in 2015
TERA	Tennessee Education Research Alliance
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
THEC	Tennessee Higher Education Commission
TILS	Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards
TLDS	Tennessee Longitudinal Data System
TN Promise	Tennessee college scholarships funded from the state's lottery reserves
TNCompass	Online educator data management system
TNCRED	Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Design
TN-ELDS	Tennessee Revised Early Learning Developmental Standards
TN-MEP	Tennessee Migrant Education Program

TNReady	New assessment Tennessee transitioned to during the 2015-16 school year
TNTP	The New Teacher Project
Traditionally Underserved	Includes four primary student groups: economically disadvantaged (ED), students with disabilities (SWD), English learners (EL), and Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN); student groups used in accountability model
Transitional Student	Students scoring fluent English proficient and exited from ESL services who are monitored academically for a four-year period
TTLA	Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance
TVAAS	Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System
UHY	Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
USEd	United States Department of Education
VPK	Voluntary Pre-K
VPN	Virtual Private Network
W-APT	WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test
WBL	Work-based learning
W-CER	Wisconsin Center for Educational Research
WIDA	A non-profit cooperative group whose purpose is to develop standards and assessments that meet federal requirements and promote educational equity for English language learners

Appendices

Appendix A: Stakeholder Engagement

A.1 Advisory Groups

Personalized Learning Task Force

The personalized learning task force was facilitated by the department's deputy commissioner and chief operations officer and supported by various divisions within the department.

Tennessee Personalized Learning Task Force Members	
Member	Title / Organization
Sam Brooks	Personal Learning Coordinator, Putnam County Schools
Kim Clemmons	Instructional Technology Supervisor, Wilson County Schools
Brenda Dean	2020 Project Promise, Hamblen County Board of Education
John Fischer	Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Chad Fletcher	Principal, Westwood Middle School, Manchester City Schools
Keilani Goggins	Director, Tennessee State Teacher Fellows Program, Hope Street Group
Alfred Hall	Director, West Tennessee STEM Hub, University of Memphis
Wes Hall	Director, Tennessee STEM Innovation Network
Gary Lilly	Director of Schools, Bristol City Schools
Beverly Miller	Asst. Director of Schools/Chief Technology Officer, Greeneville City Schools
Rachael Milligan	Managing Director, Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation
Nina Morel	Dean, College of Professional Studies, Lipscomb University
Hope Nordstrom	Director of M.Ed/Ed.S. Programs, Lipscomb University
Theresa Nixon	Director of Instructional Technology, Knox County Schools
Sally Pardue	Director, Millard Oakley STEM Center, Tennessee Tech University
Kecia Ray	Executive Director, Center for Digital Education
John Ross	Technical Assistance Specialist, Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center
Robert Sharpe	Asst. Superintendent, Hamilton County Department of Education
Chris Smallen	Chief Technology Officer, Lenoir City Schools
David Timbs	Supervisor of Instructional Technology, Johnson City Schools
James Witty	Executive Principal, MNPS Virtual School, Metro Nashville Public Schools
Joe Wood	State Coordinator, Battelle for Kids

Assessment Task Force 1.0

On March 2, 2015, Commissioner of Education, Dr. Candice McQueen, announced the creation of the Tennessee Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment. The task force was formed as a result of feedback from the field about the amount of testing, quality of testing, and associated test preparation.

Assessment Task Force 1.0 Members	
Member	Title
Nancy Ash	Assistant Director of Schools, Lebanon Special Schools
Virginia Babb	Member, Knox County Parent-Teacher Association
Harry Brooks	Chairman, House Education Administration and Planning Committee
Jasmine Carlisle	11th grade Student, Mt. Juliet High, Wilson County Schools
Phillip Eller	Teacher, Cedar Grove Elementary, Rutherford County Schools
John Forgety	Chairman, House Education Instruction and Programs Committee

Assessment Task Force 1.0 Members	
Member	Title
Dolores Gresham	Chairman, Senate Education Committee
Bill Harlin	Principal, Nolensville High School, Williamson County Schools
Sara Heyburn	Executive Director, State Board of Education
Valerie Love	Teacher, Dobyns-Bennett High, Kingsport City Schools
Rebecca McBride	Teacher, Brighton High, Tipton County Schools
Sharon McNary	Principal, Richland Elementary, Shelby County Schools
Candice McQueen	Tennessee Commissioner of Education
Mary Reel	Director of Schools, Milan Special Schools
Debbie Shedden	President-Elect, Tennessee School Boards Association; Board Member, Hawkins County Board of Education
Wanda Shelton	Director of Schools, Lincoln County
Beth Unfried	Director of Elementary Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
Mike Winstead	Director of Schools, Maryville City

Assessment Task Force 2.0

Commissioner Candice McQueen reconvened the Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment in order to continue the dialogue around creating intentional and streamlined assessments.

Assessment Task Force 2.0 Members	
Member	Title
Nancy Ash	Assistant Director of Schools, Lebanon Special Schools
Virginia Babb	Member, Knox County Parent-Teacher Association
Harry Brooks	Chairman, House Education Administration and Planning
Jasmine Carlisle	High School Student, Mt. Juliet High School, Wilson County
Tina Childers	Middle School Teacher, Hixson Middle, Hamilton County
Phillip Eller	Elementary School Teacher, Cedar Grove Elementary, Rutherford County
John Forgety	Chairman, House Education Instruction and Programs
Randy Frazier	Director of Schools, Weakley County
Dolores Gresham	Chairman, Senate Education
Bill Harlin	Principal, Nolensville High School, Williamson County
Sara Heyburn	Executive Director, State Board of Education
Valerie Love	High School Teacher, Dobyns-Bennett High, Kingsport City
Rebecca McBride	High School Teacher, Brighton High, Tipton County
Candice McQueen	Commissioner, Department of Education
Debbie Shedden	President, TSBA, Hawkins County Board of Education
Wanda Shelton	Assistant Director, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents
Beth Unfried	Director of Elementary Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County
Mike Winstead	Director of Schools, Maryville City
B.J. Worthington	Director of Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County
Joann Young	Literacy Coach, College Grove Elementary, Williamson County

Consolidated Planning & Monitoring Advisory Council

The advisory council is facilitated by Eve Carney, Director of Consolidated Planning & Monitoring, and supported by various divisions within the department.

Consolidated Planning & Monitoring Advisory Council		
Member	Organization	Role
Kathleen Airhart	TDOE	Deputy Commissioner
Sherry Asaro	Rogersville City	FP/IDEA
Joanna Bivins	TDOE	Special Populations
Salena Buress	DCS	DCS
Eve Carney	TDOE	CPM, Executive Director
Jessica Castenesa	TOPS	Program - migrant
Merrie Clark	Davidson County	Grants Manager
Meghan Curran	TDOE	Executive Director - CORE
Marjorie Douglas	Shelby County	Federal Programs Director
Maryanne Durski	TDOE	Executive Director Local Finance
Rachel Elliott	Hamilton County	Fiscal Director
Selena Elmore	Sumner	Family engagement
Laura Encalade	TDOE	State Board of Education
Robin Fairclough	Houston	Sped Supervisor
Rita Fentress	TDOE	CPM, Director of School Improvement
Mike Garren	Loudon	Asst. Superintendent
Norma Gerrell	Paris SSD	
Jamie Glass	Lawrence	FP/Instructional Supervisor
Preston Gonter	Hamilton County	Federal Program Director
Barbara Gray	TEA	President, TEA
Jess Grayum	Murfreesboro City	Counselor/Psychologist
Jeff Harshbarger	Anderson	Principal
Kim Henegar	Warren	Admin/ESL
Sarah Huffman	Bartlett	Sped Supervisor
Jim Hundertmark	Oak Ridge City	Data/Assessment Coordinator
Sandra Hurtado	Davidson County	ELL Parent
Jan Lanier	TDOE	CPM, Director of EL, Immigrant & Migrant Programs
Bradford Leach	DeKalb County	CTE Teacher
Alyson Lerma	TDOE	CPM, Director of Monitoring
Jamie McAdams	Lexington City	FP / Attendance
Vivian Mccord	Dickson	Admin/Higher Ed/teacher
Elizabeth McFall	Oak Ridge City	Federal Programs Assistant
Tina McMurray	Kingsport City	Title I Parent
Janey Morris	Athens City	FP and IDEA

Consolidated Planning & Monitoring Advisory Council		
Member	Organization	Role
Theresa Nicholls	TDOE	Special Populations
Brinn Obermiller	TDOE	Family engagement
Renee Palakovic	TDOE	CPM, Deputy Director
Sam Pearcy	TDOE	Office of Deputy Commissioner
Judy Pickering	Knox County	Title I Supervisor
Tyra Pilgrim	Rutherford County	Former CTE Teacher/Current Coordinator
Dan Schlafer	Cumberland	FP/Board member
Carol Smith	Bedford County	Title III Director
Kevin Stacy	MNPS	Executive Director, English Learners
Valerie Starks	TDOE	CPM, Administrative Services Assistant
Lee Anne Strictland	Monroe	LEA admin/parent
Mike Taylor	Weakley County	Community Member
Janine Whited	TDOE	CPM, Director of Project Management
Kevin Whittington	Rutherford County	Data
Therese Williams	Diocese, Nashville	Non-public Schools
Amy Wise	Rutherford County	FP

TDOE Parent Advisory Council

Parent Advisory Council		
Member	Region	District
Katie Blalock	First TN	Kingsport City Schools
Kim Cagle	Southwest	Jackson-Madison Schools
Jennifer Frazier	First TN	Hamblen County Schools
Dr. Coral Getino	East	Knox County Schools
Janine Hopkins	Mid-Cumberland	Williamson County Schools
Paula Johnson	Southwest	Germantown Municipal Schools
Erica Lanier	Mid-Cumberland	Metro Nashville Public Schools
Cindy Massaro	Mid-Cumberland	Rutherford County Schools
Kristina McClure	Southeast	Hamilton County Schools
Michelle McKissack	Southwest	Shelby County Schools
Jessica Morris	Mid-Cumberland	Clarksville-Montgomery Schools
Jessie Parker	South Central	Giles County Schools
Will Quinn	Southwest	Decatur County Schools
Jessica Steed	East	Oak Ridge Schools
Apryle Young-Lanier	Southwest	Achievement School District

Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents

The Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS) is the leading advocate organization for public education in the state of Tennessee. Since 1975, TOSS has been progressing public education and addressing the needs of its students and administrators.

Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents	
Board of Directors	
Member	School District / Region
Dr. Jack Parton	Sevier County Schools (East)
Dr. Mischelle Simcox	Johnson County Schools (First)
Dr. Danny Weeks	Dickson County Schools (Mid-Cumberland)
Ms. Sandra Harper	Trenton Special School District (Northwest)
Dr. LaDonna McFall	Coffee County Schools (South-Central)
Dr. Melanie Miller	Athens City Schools (Southeast)
Ms. Susie Bunch	Lexington City Schools (Southwest)
Diane Elder	Pickett County Schools (Upper Cumberland)
Dr. Mike Looney	Williamson County Schools (Director At-large)
Alternates	
Member	School District / Region
Mr. Don Roberts	Meigs County School (Southeast)
Mr. Jason Vance	Loudon County Schools (East)

Superintendent Study Council	
Member	School District / Region
Mr. Rob Britt, Chair	Blount County Schools, East Tennessee
Mr. Joe Barlow, Past-Chair	Upper Cumberland, Jackson County
Mr. Steve Wilkinson, Vice-Chair	Henderson County, Southwest
Dr. Richard Bales	Johnson City, First Tennessee
Mr. Eric Williams	West Carroll Special, Northwest
Mr. Mickey Blevins	McMinn County, Southeast
Mr. Chad Moorehead	Moore County, South Central
Mr. Jerry Strong	Clay County, Upper Cumberland
Dr. David Snowden	Franklin SSD, Mid Cumberland
Ms. Valerie Rutledge	Higher Education Adviser, UT-Chattanooga
Ex Officio Members	
Mr. Wayne Miller	TOSS, Ex Officio
Dr. Candice McQueen	Commissioner of Education, Ex Officio

Career Forward Task Force

Tennessee Commissioner of Education Candice McQueen announced the formation of the Career Forward Task Force on March 22, 2016. The task force's charge was to (1) examine and explore ways to better engage students in their academic preparations, personal and social development, and workforce readiness; and (2) identify overarching principles leading to the development of actionable recommendations that reflect the strong integration of secondary, postsecondary and workforce readiness into K–14/16 education. The ultimate goal of the group was to craft the picture of a successful K–12 graduate in the state of Tennessee and develop recommendations to support that vision. Review the complete task force report online, here.

Career Forward Task Force	
Member	Title
Missy Blissard	School Counselor, Rutherford County Schools
Jerry Boyd	Director of Schools, Putnam County Schools
Harry Brooks	Chairman, House Education Committee, Tennessee General Assembly
Celeste Carruthers	Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Tennessee
Tony Cates	Human Resources Manager, Gestamp
Russ Deaton	Interim Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Ed. Commission (at the time)
Tristan Denley	Vice Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents
Catherine English	Student, Metro Nashville Public Schools and Vanderbilt University
Susan Farris	Career and Technical Education Director, Lauderdale County Schools
John Faulconer	District Administrator, Knox County Schools
John Forgety	Chairman, House Education Committee, Tennessee General Assembly
Jeff Frazier	Principal and Dean, Regional Ctr. for Adv. Mfg., Eastman Chemical
Dolores Gresham	Chairman, Senate Education Committee, Tennessee General Assembly
Jade Grieve	Senior Director, America Achieves
Sara Heyburn	Executive Director, Tennessee State Board of Education
James King	Vice Chancellor, Tennessee Board of Regents
Stacey Kizer	Information Technology teacher, Williamson County Schools (at the time)
Mike Krause	Executive Director, Tennessee Promise and Drive to 55 (at the time)
Debbie Landers	Tennessee Assoc. of Non-Public Academic Schools, Executive Director
Becca Leech	Special Education teacher, Warren County Schools
Kristina McClure	Parent, Hamilton County Schools
Kristin McGraner	Executive Director, STEM Prep Academy, Metro Nashville Public Schools
Laura Moore	Education Liaison, Metro-Nashville Office of the Mayor
Burns Phillips	Commissioner, Labor and Workforce Development
Eddie Pruett	Director of Schools, Gibson County Special Schools
Arlette Robinson	Career and Technical Education Director, Bradley County Schools
Debbie Shedden	Tennessee School Board Assoc. President, Hawkins County School Board
Audrey Shores	COO and Dir. of Tech. & Comm., Professional Educators of Tennessee
Kyle Southern	Director of Policy and Research, SCORE
Ted Townsend	Chief Operating Officer, Dept. of Economic and Community Development
Cal Wray	Executive Director, Clarksville-Montgomery County Economic Dev. Council

A.2 ESSA Working Groups

The Commissioner invited sixty-six individuals to join six working groups. These working groups were organized around key topics: accountability, educator support and effectiveness, English learners, school improvement, standards and assessment, and student supports.

Each working group was led by two senior TDOE officials and included leaders from different education communities and districts, including district leaders and teachers, as well as other civil rights and advocacy groups across the state. The working groups were charged with providing recommendations and responding to feedback from other stakeholders on what Tennessee's ESSA plan should include within the following six areas of focus.

Accountability Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Lyle Ailshie	Kingsport City Schools	Director of Schools
Ashley Aldridge	Sumner Co. Schools	Principal
Dawn Bradley	Wilson Co. Schools	Special Education Supervisor
Maya Bugg	TN Charter School Center	Chief Executive Officer
Karla Coleman-Garcia	Conexión Américas	Policy Manager
Corey Kelly	Shelby Co. Schools	Principal
Shawn Kimble	Lauderdale Co. Schools	Director of Schools
Phyllis Nichols	Knoxville Area Urban League	Chief Executive Officer
Sharon Roberts	SCORE	Chief Strategy Officer
Clint Sattler	Knox Co. Schools	Supervisor, Research & Evaluation
Ron Woodward	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Principal
Daniel Zavala	StudentsFirst	State Policy Director

Educator Support Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Kasar Abdulla	TIRRC Valor Collegiate	Director of Family Engagement
Robert Blair	Greater Nashville Alliance of Black School Educators	President
Bethany Bowman	Professional Educators of TN	Director of Professional Learning
Tim Haney	Trenton SSD	Principal
Mark Hogan	Belmont University	Professor, Education Department Chair
Jeanine Johnson	Clarksville Montgomery Schools	Chief HR Officer
Chris Marczak	Maury Co. Schools	Director of Schools
Bill O'Donnell	TN Education Association	Coordinator of Instructional Advocacy
Heidi Ramirez	Shelby Co. Schools	Chief Academic Officer
Shannon Streett	Cannon Co. Schools	Teacher
Mike Winstead	Maryville City Schools	Director of Schools

English Learner Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Eben Cathey	TN Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coal.	Advocacy Director
Laura Delgado	Lipscomb University	Director, Increasing Teacher Diversity
Nona Hall	Rutherford Co. Schools	Title III Director
Dale Lynch	Hamblen Co. Schools	Director of Schools
Gini Pupo-Walker	Conexión Américas	Sr. Dir. of Ed. Policy & Strategic Growth
Angela Rood	TNTESOL Board Member	ESL Teacher & Interventionist
Sarah Sandefur	UT-Chattanooga	ESL Teacher
Dana Siegal	Hope Street Collierville	ESL Teacher
Samantha Singer	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Teacher
Kevin Stacy	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Executive Director, English Learners

School Improvement Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Tait Danhausen	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Principal
Sharon Griffin	Shelby Co. Schools	Regional Superintendent, iZone
Joey Hassell	Lauderdale Co. Schools / TDOE	Principal/Former Asst. Commissioner for TDOE Special Populations
Shannon Jackson	Knox Co. Schools	Exec. Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Beverly Miller	Maury Co. Schools	9-12 Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor
Cardell Orrin	Stand for Children - Memphis	Director
Elaine Swafford	Hamilton Co. Schools	Executive Director, CGLA
Greg Thompson	SCORE board member	Program Officer, Pyramid Peak Foundation
Cindy White	Knox Co. Schools	Principal
Clarissa Zellars	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Director, School Improvement Strategy

Standards and Assessment Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Patricia Griggs-Merriweather	Shelby Co. Schools	Principal
Tracey Beckendorf-Edou	Oak Ridge City Schools	Exec. Director, Teaching & Learning
Mike Cohen	Achieve	President
Brad Leon	Shelby Co. Schools	Assistant Superintendent
Cindy Massaro	Rutherford Co. Schools	Parent
Mary Cypress Metz	SCORE	Chief of Staff
Phil Oldham	Tennessee Tech	President
Eddie Pruett	Gibson Co. SSD	Director of Schools
Robert Sharpe	Hamilton Co. Schools	Assistant Superintendent
Kathy Whitehead	Chester Co. Schools	Teacher
Maria Paula Zapata	Conexión Américas	Family Engagement Manager

Student Support Working Group		
Member	Organization	Role
Brian Bass	Williamson Co. Schools	Principal
Laura Brimm	Dyer Co. Schools	Principal
Nicole Cobb	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Executive Director, School Counseling
Nancy Dishner	Niswonger Foundation	President & CEO
Kelly Drummond	Boys & Girls Clubs of TN	Chief Administrative & HR Officer
Melanie Harris	Lenoir City Schools	Director, CTE
Elaine Jackson	Stewart Co. Schools	Coordinated School Health Director
Troy Kilzer II	Chester Co. Schools	Director of Schools
Theresa Nixon	Knox Co. Schools	Director of Instructional Technology
Greg Wallace	Johnson City Schools	Supervisor - Safety and Mental Health
Anne Weber	Communities in Schools - TN	CEO - State Director
Joann Young	Williamson Co. Schools	Literacy Coach

A.3 Stakeholder Feedback

Overview

The following section details the Tennessee Department of Education's stakeholder engagement process during the development of its ESSA plan and how the department intends to continue stakeholder engagement during implementation. Tennessee has included a consultation section in the plan. USEd requires that the state educational agency (SEA) describe how it:

a) conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 299.13(b), during the design and development of the SEA's plans to implement the programs that the SEA has indicated it will include in its consolidated state plan; and following the completion of its initial consolidated state plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submitting the consolidated state plan to USEd for review and approval; and

b) took into account the input obtained through consultation and public comment. The response must include both how the SEA addressed the concerns and issues raised through consultation and public comment and any changes the SEA made as a result of consultation and public comment for all components of the consolidated state plan. (ESSA Final Consolidated Plan Template, p. 9 USEd 2016).

Stakeholder Engagement Timeline

How We Engaged

In the development of its ESSA state plan, and in accordance with § 1111(a)(1)(A) of ESSA, Tennessee consulted with key stakeholders: the Governor, the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE), legislators, school districts, educators (including school leaders, charter representatives, specialized instructional personnel, and other staff), advocates, parents, students, and the public at-large on specific policies. The input received through meetings, webinars, conferences, and outreach directly informed the drafting process of Tennessee's ESSA state plan. The table below details the required key stakeholders and the specific activities taken to seek and respond to their feedback.

Date	Event	Topic	Method of Engagement	Stakeholder Group Type Represented
12/6/16 12/8/16 12/14/16 12/15/16	Town Halls (5): Knoxville Jackson Memphis Nashville	ESSA Plan	Community presentation, small group discussion, written survey	Broad community participation, including educators, parents, general public, press

Date	Event	Topic	Method of Engagement	Stakeholder Group Type Represented
1/17/17	Chattanooga			
Feb. 2015 – March 2017	Commissioner Classroom Chronicles Tour	Student supports and resources needed to reach potential in high school and beyond	Focus groups, classroom visits, shadowing students	Dozens of students, teachers, Student Advisory Council
Nov. 2014 – Jan. 2016	Standards Review Process	ELA and Math Academic Standards Review	Public comment, roundtable, online comment	Educators, parents, general public, higher education faculty
Winter 2015 – Present	Standards Review Process	Social Studies Academic Standards Review	Public comment, roundtable, online comment	Educators, parents, general public, higher education faculty
Sept. 2015 – Oct. 2016	Standards Review Process	Science Academic Standards Review	Public comment, roundtable, online comment	Educators, parents, general public, higher education faculty
Spring – Summer 2015 and Summer – Early Fall 2016	Assessment Task Force Meetings	Best practices in student assessment, appropriate use of assessments to improve student achievement	Discussions	Educators, legislators, parents, school board members, students, and communities
Nov. 2015 – June 2016 and Sept. 2016 – May 2017	Multi-tiered Monitoring Framework	Monitoring framework revision	Surveys, focus groups	District and school personnel, other divisions within TDOE, Title I Committee of Practitioners, and Metropolitan Area School System committee members
Spring & Summer 2016	Career Forward Task Force	Workforce readiness	Six in-person convenings	District & school leaders, parents, students, school boards, legislators, business, higher ed, state officials, advocates/associations.
Spring & Fall 2016	Webinars, trainings, conferences calls	School-wide Consolidation Pilot, fund consolidation benefits	Presentation, discussion	Districts, USEd, office of special education programs (OSEP), state auditors from the comptroller's office
May 2016	Launch of Online ESSA Feedback	ESSA in Tennessee	ESSA online feedback form	All stakeholders, open to the public
May 2016	TN School Boards Association	ESSA in Tennessee	Webinar	Local school boards
May – June 2016	Director of Schools Listening Tour	ESSA and Tennessee Succeeds	Press release, regional meetings (east, middle,	Directors of schools

Date	Event	Topic	Method of Engagement	Stakeholder Group Type Represented
			west)	
June 2016 & March 2017	Hope Street Fellows	ESSA	Overview of draft and follow-up discussion	Teachers
June 2016 & Jan. 2017	Professional Educators of TN	ESSA and Educator Support	Webinar	Teachers
July 2016	Students with Disabilities Advisory Council	ESSA	Discussion	District & school leaders, state officials, teachers, civil rights/equity stakeholders, community organizations, advocates/associations
July 2016 – Sept. 2016	SCORE sessions	ESSA Implementation in Tennessee	Discussions	Superintendents, school leaders, teachers, parents, business leaders, EL stakeholders, community organizations, advocates/associations, civil rights/equity stakeholders, school choice leaders
July 2016 – Feb. 2017	Title I Committee of Practitioners (CPM Advisory Committee)	ESSA	Discussions	District & school leaders, teachers, parents, students, state officials, EL & special populations stakeholders, advocates/associations, community organizations
July 2016 – March 2017	Working Group Meetings	ESSA: accountability, educator support, ELs, school improvement, standards & assessment, student support	Group discussions	Teachers, parents, school leaders, districts, civil rights/equity stakeholders, EL stakeholders, higher ed, advocates/associations, community organizations
July 2016 & March 2017	Governor's Teacher Cabinet	ESSA	Discussion	Teachers
Aug. 2016	ESSA Directors Institute	ESSA: school improvement, ELs	Annual conference	Federal programs directors, other district leadership, EL teachers & leaders
Aug. 2016	Nashville Chamber of Commerce	ESSA	Discussion	Businesses, community organizations, advocates/associations
Aug. 2016	New Special Education Supervisors Meeting	ESSA	Discussion	District & school leaders, teachers
Aug. 2016	Lunch & Learn	Understanding ESSA	Webinar, meeting	TDOE internal stakeholders and other state officials
Aug. & Sept. 2016	TN Education Association	ESSA	Discussion, webinar	Teachers, districts
Sept. 2016	Parent Advisory Council	ESSA	Discussion	Parents
Sept. 2016	Webinar with	ESSA	Webinar	Teachers

Date	Event	Topic	Method of Engagement	Stakeholder Group Type Represented
	Librarians			
Fall 2016	Superintendent Study Council	New school accountability proposal, including A–F grading system	In-person meeting	Superintendents

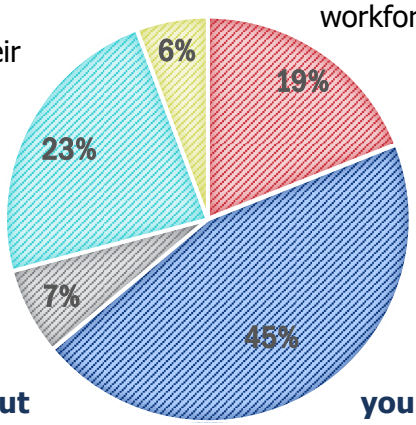
Key State Stakeholders	Evidence of Feedback from Tennessee Stakeholders
The Governor or appropriate officials from the Governor's office	The Governor was provided overviews of ESSA, TDOE's stakeholder engagement plan, and the key components of the plan prior to the release of the state plan for public comment.
Members of the State legislature	General Assembly Testimony, Commissioner McQueen highlights of ESSA and engagement plans
Members of the State board of education, if applicable	Webinars series; over a dozen TN School Boards Association regional meetings
LEAs, including LEAs in rural areas	Statewide listening tours; 6 Regional Town Halls hosted by districts; 3 meetings with state superintendents association and targeted feedback from rural LEAs include X, Y and Z.; School-wide Consolidation Pilot webinars
Representatives of Indian tribes located in the State	Currently no nationally recognized Indian tribes in Tennessee.
Teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals	Root Cause Analysis, Equity Plan feedback; survey and focus group feedback to ELA, Science, Math and Social Studies Standards Review Processes; Classroom Chronicles Tour blogs; webinar and in-person sessions with Teacher advisory and leadership groups, teacher training program fellows
Charter school leaders	SCORE sessions
Parents and families	Over 300 comments to discussion forum questions published online; Feedback on high level themes from draft status report (Oct 2016)
Community-based organizations	Root Cause Analysis, Equity Plan feedback; SCORE sessions
Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved students	Root Cause Analysis, Equity Plan feedback; Feedback from TN Urban League, NAACP and gathered through Conexión Américas Tennessee Educational Equity Coalition
Institutions of higher education (IHEs)	Survey and focus group feedback to ELA, Science, Math and Social Studies Standards Review Processes
Employers	SCORE sessions
Representatives of private school students	Feedback from webinar offered to non-public schools
Early childhood educators and leaders	Internal Tennessee Early Intervening Services feedback
General public	Over 300 comments from discussion forum questions published online; social media engagement
TN-Specific: Existing Advisory Groups	Input during regular meetings of Assessment Task Force, Career Forward Task Force, the Personalized Learning Task Force, the Consolidated Planning and Monitoring Advisory Council, the TDOE's Parent Advisory Council, and the Superintendent Study Council, Title I Committee of Practitioners (CPM Advisory Committee)

A.4 ESSA Town Hall Feedback

Five town hall in December 2016: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Jackson, Memphis, and Nashville

1. Which of the five opportunities will most benefit our students?

19%: Set high expectations that align to postsecondary and workforce readiness so all of Tennessee's students are able to pursue their chosen path in life
45%: Attend to the needs of all students in pre-K–12 —especially historically disadvantaged students—so they can experience success after high school
7%: Provide support, funding, intervention, and innovation for persistently low performing schools
23%: Focus on strengthening and supporting educators
6%: Empower districts to drive toward student goals



2. What information is most important for you to know about your school?

- **Accountability**
  - EPSOs
  - Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
  - Achievement
  - Growth and progress metrics
  - Grading: All schools can be an "A"
- **Educator support**
- **Teacher Effectiveness**

2a. Also, based on what you have heard regarding school accountability, what resonated with you?

- **Accountability**
  - School Grade and Weighting
  - Multiple achievement measures – numerous indicators
  - Growth & Achievement
  - Absenteeism
  - EPSO
  - TVAAS is one factor
  - Ready Graduate Indicator
  - Details of how A–F will be assigned
  - Weighting distribution concerns
- **ED and ESL** student achievement released on report card
  - Questions on ESSA and EL students
- **Ensuring quality teachers** for all students
- **Techer and school leadership** development and support

2b. What, if anything, do you still want to know or would change?

- **Accountability**
  - EL Accountability
  - Ready Graduate
  - TVAAS

  - Chronic Absenteeism
- **Score (A-F)**
  - Score explanation concerns
  - Every school can earn an "A"
  - Weight of score concerns
- **Student Supports**
  - Coordinated School Health/Nursing Needs/Health & Wellbeing
  - Cultural sensitivity training
  - Family resource center needs
  - Library staffing
  - Whole Child/Well Rounded Education
- **Subgroup Performance**
  - Special Education – clarify diploma, instruction, support
  - English learners
- **Other**
  - Assessment/Testing
  - District Flexibility (funding, curriculum)
  - Funding support concerns
  - Pay/Incentives
  - Teacher support/quality

3. What do you believe should be our top three priorities to ensure teachers, schools, and districts provide effective instruction to ALL students?

- Teacher preparation/support/training
- Professional Development: effective, high-quality
- Funding equality (teachers, technology, programming)

4. What are the top three ways you believe we can ensure all students receive a well-rounded education?

- Community/family involvement
- Arts Education
- Academics/Academic needs/Quality Curriculum
- PD, teacher training
- Coordinated School Health
- Access to technology equipment and resource materials, CTE program funding
- Equity across district

5. What else would you like us to continue to consider regarding Tennessee's ESSA draft plan?

- **Accountability**
  - Achievement
  - Ready Graduate
  - TVAAS (concern)
  - EPSO
  - Chronic Absenteeism pros/cons
- **Score (A–F)**
  - Score explanation concerns
  - Weight of score concerns

- **Student Supports**
  - Whole Child/Well Rounded Education
  - Art education
  - Educator support
  - Family Resource Centers
  - Library support
- **Subgroup Performance**
  - Special Education (clarify regular diploma, support)
  - English learners (challenges, teacher support, marginalization
- **Other**
  - Acknowledgement of teachers frustration
  - District curriculum alignment with state standards
  - How will the violation of school rules be expanded to capture data?
  - Parent/family involvement
  - Role of community schools in providing basic needs
  - Student/teacher ratio
  - Treat teachers like professionals instead of skilled labor
  - What can we do to ensure BEP funding?

"Attend to the needs of all students; the well-being and education of all students is necessary for an informed, functional citizenry and workforce. Inequity anywhere threatens [our future]."

– Memphis educator

A.5 ESSA Feedback Summary

ESSA Feedback

What we heard from Tennesseans on our draft plan to transition to the new federal law

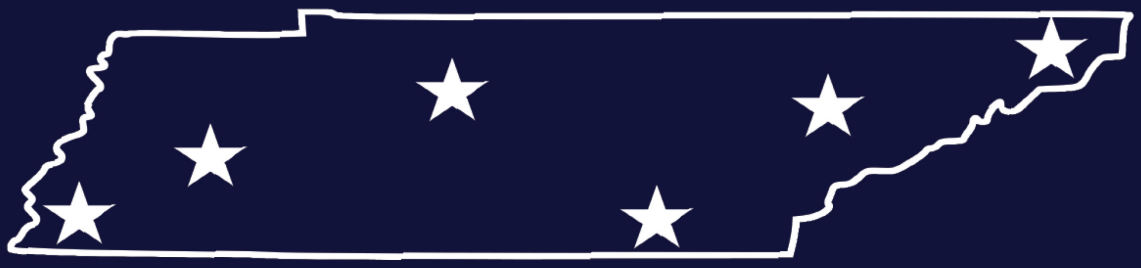
February 2017

Who we heard from: Educators, parents, advocates, students, district and school administrators, business leaders, school board members, librarians and counselors, special education teachers, higher education faculty, legislators, state officials, and other community members

"Let's work together to improve the quality of education for the children in Tennessee."
—Deborah, teacher in Shelby County

Additional advisory councils and committees, along with six working groups, weighed in and gave feedback over the past nine months as we have been drafting our plan.

Six town halls | 1,000 participants



Online & emailed feedback | 2,000 comments

100 percent of school districts provided input

Most town hall attendees believe that of the five opportunities we identified in ESSA, this one most benefits students:

Attend to the needs of all students in pre-K–12, especially historically disadvantaged students, so they can experience success after high school.

TN Department of Education

Common

- Tennessean
  education
- They like the
  leadership
- Across the s
  transparen

"The founda
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—Patrick She
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—Tony, par
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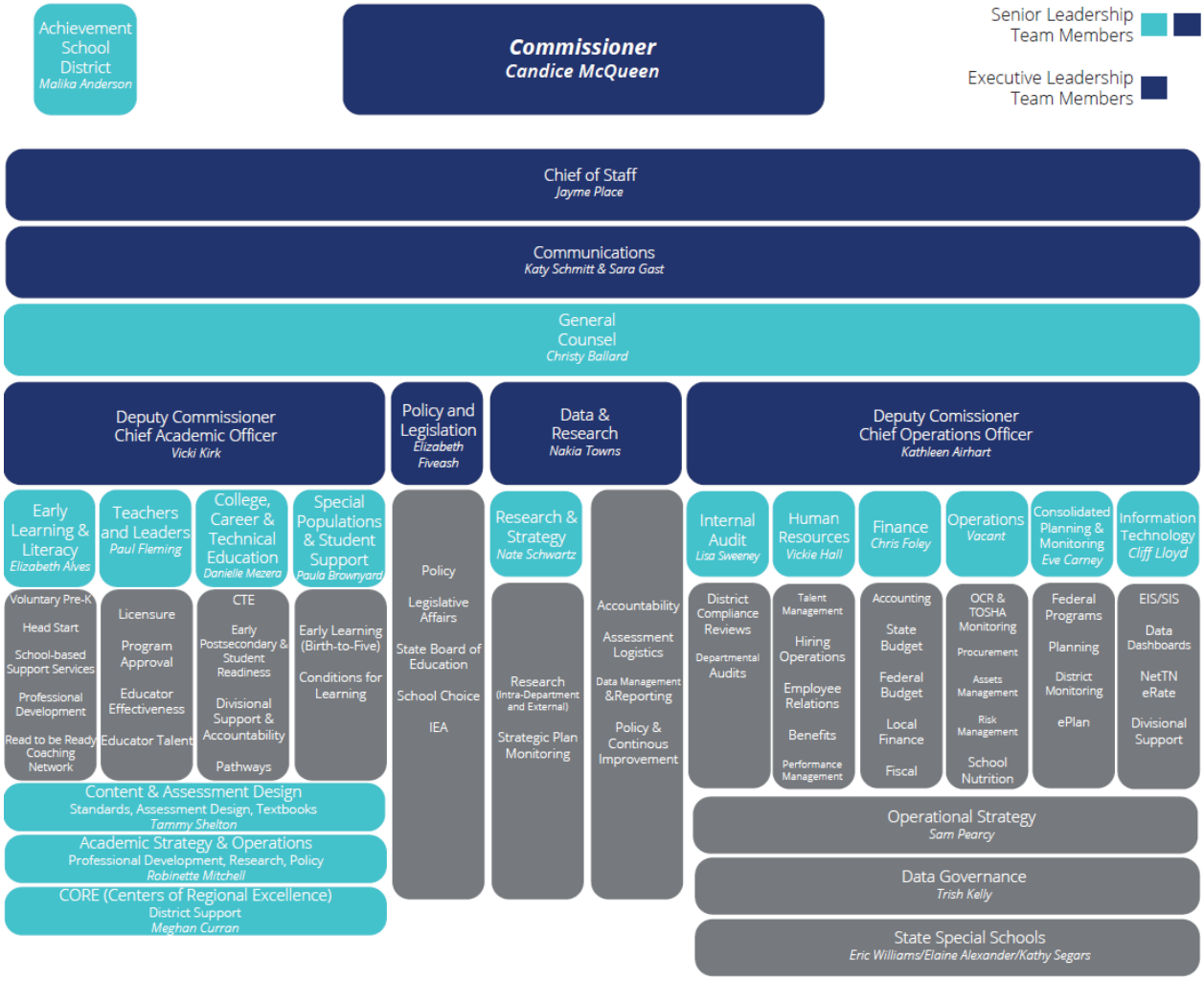
Appendix B: TDOE Organization Chart



Appendix C: Standards Review Stakeholder Engagement

Key Revisions in the Tennessee Academic Standards

Background:

The work to revise math and English language arts (ELA) standards has been underway for more than a year. The process began in November 2014 with the posting of standards for a period of public review. Educator advisory teams then reviewed the feedback and revised standards throughout summer 2015. In the fall the revised standards were posted for an additional round of public feedback from October 20, 2015 through December 1, 2015. During these review periods:

- More than 2,600 people evaluated the standards, submitting 166,552 reviews and 7,009 and 27,353 comments
- The majority of the feedback on the website came from Tennessee K–12 teachers who compromised more than 78 percent of all reviews. Parents and guardians made up another 11 percent of the total reviews
- Overall, 82 percent of reviews indicated that the revised standards should be kept

The state board also solicited feedback on the revised standards from several other sources. Higher education faculty from each of the state's university systems completed a review of the standards. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) drafted an external review of the standards. Finally, the State Board of Education held a series of regional roundtables attended by more than 200 parents and educators to gather additional feedback on the standards revisions.

The math and ELA Standards Recommendation Committee (SRC) is composed of ten individuals appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House, and Lieutenant Governor. They are charged with reviewing the feedback and making the ultimate recommendation to the State Board of Education for a revised set of standards.

The SRC met throughout fall 2015 to review the standards revisions and resulting feedback. They finalized their work in January 2016, and the revised standards were presented to the state board at their January 29, 2016 meeting for first reading. The final reading of the math and ELA standards took place in April 2016, and the standards will be implemented in the 2017-18 school year.

Appendix D: Standards Review Process

Tennessee's standards revision process is rooted in the belief that robust and transparent public engagement is essential to the creation of rigorous, community, and educator-driven academic standards. The State Board of Education is charged under Tennessee statute with setting and approving academic standards. Additionally, state board policy 3.209 requires that the board review all sets of academic standards at a minimum of every six years.

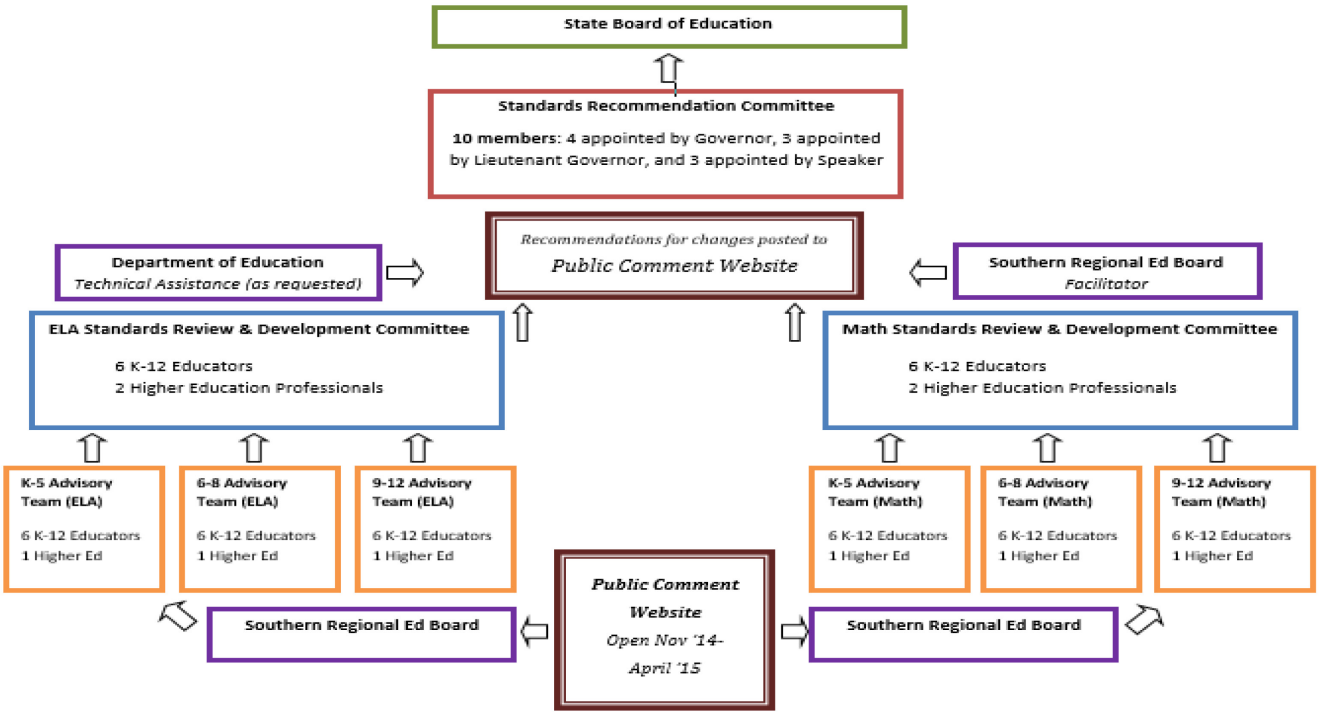
Background

In September 2014, Governor Bill Haslam convened a summit of educators and policy makers from across the state of Tennessee to discuss strategies for maintaining Tennessee's trajectory as one of the fastest improving states in the country on educational outcomes. In response to discussion regarding academic standards at this forum, Governor Haslam subsequently proposed a new process for a public review of the state's K–12 academic standards for English language arts and mathematics. This process was codified in Public Chapter 430 during the 2015 legislative session and was expanded to include science and social studies.

Process

The standards review process entails four distinct phases: public review and commentary, educator advisory team revision, the second period of public review, and standards recommendation committee evaluation and recommendation.

Timeline	Math	English Language Arts	Science	Social Studies
1st Phase: Public Review	November 2014–April 2015	November 2014–April 2015	September 2015–December 2015	January 2016–April 2016
2nd Phase: Educator Advisory Team	June 2015–September 2015	June 2015–September 2015	January 2016–March 2016	June 2016–August 2016
3rd Phase: Additional Public Review	October 2015–December 2015	October 2015–December 2015	March 2016–May 2016	September 2016–December 2016
State Board Final Approval	April 2016	April 2016	October 2016	July 2017
1st Year of Implementation	2017-2018	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020



TENNESSEE EDUCATION STANDARDS REVIEW PROCESS

Appendix E: Tennessee English Learner Count

Tennessee's English learner population has more than doubled from 2006 to 2016. We have averaged an annual gain of 20 percent enrollment of EL students each year. The recent growth has been averaging 4.96 percent annually for the past five years. If the current growth pattern continues, we will be exceed 60,000 EL students by 2020. Changes in this population will have a significant impact on the educational trends in the state.

Tennessee English Learner Count Data	
Year (October 1)	**Number of ELs**
2006	**23,009**
2007	**25,670**
2008	**27,428**
2009	**34,412**
2010	**38,401**
2011	**40,113**
2012	**42,902**
2013	**44,799**
2014	**44,810**
2015	**49,409**
2016	**51,154**

Appendix F: WIDA Framework

The WIDA framework outlined below is designed to raise English language development (ELD) standards for EL students which are aligned to Tennessee college and career readiness standards.

1. English learners communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting. The Features of Academic Language operate within sociocultural contexts for language use include the following performance criteria:
    - linguistic complexity (quantity and variety of oral and written text in communication,
    - language forms and conventions (types, array, and use of language structures in communication), and
    - vocabulary usage (specificity of word or phrase choice in communication).

    The sociocultural contexts for language use involve the interaction between the student and the language environment, encompassing the:
    - register,
    - genre/text type,
    - topic,
    - task/situation, and
    - participants' identities and social roles.

2. English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content areas of language of language arts.

3. English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.

4. English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.

5. English learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

WIDA recognizes that language learning is maximized in authentic and relevant contexts. In the standards framework, the Example Context for Language Use includes the task or situation in which communication occurs, for example, when students engage in group work or conduct research online. It also includes who participates in the communication, the intended audience, and the types of roles the different participants enact. In an example related to group work, the students may have roles assigned to them, such as facilitator or note taker, and the language expected for each of these roles is different. Likewise, if all participants in the group are peers, that also has an impact on the language used. The curriculum is also part of the context, since it impacts the register, genre, and text types that students and educators will need to try out or explore.[141]

[141] WIDA. Example Context for Language. Web.

Another important feature in the standards framework is the Topic-Related Language. These are example content-related words and expressions to which all students of that grade level should be exposed, regardless of their language proficiency. Although students may be at different points in their language development trajectory, when learning particular content, certain specific and technical language is essential for engaging in learning the ideas and concepts presented. Therefore, through the use of scaffolding and supports, students should have the opportunity to interact with that language.

Appendix G: Assessment Task Force

Tennessee Task Force on Student Testing & Assessment: Final Report

Excerpts from the report are included below; the complete document can be viewed here.

Executive Summary

On March 2, 2015, Commissioner of Education, Dr. Candice McQueen, announced the creation of the Tennessee Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment. The task force was formed as a result of feedback from the field about the amount of testing, quality of testing, and associated test preparation. Specifically, the task force's stated goals were to: (1) identify and study best practices in student assessment, (2) ensure local school districts and the state are appropriately using assessments to improve student achievement, and (3) better inform stakeholders about the state assessment program. In order to do this, the task force set out to accomplish the following:

1. Conduct an environmental scan of assessment usage and practices across the state.
2. Establish principles addressing purposes and goals of state assessments relative to locally chosen/designed assessments (i.e., formative assessments).
3. Define appropriate practices associated with these principles that best support decision making at the state, district, school, and teacher levels.
4. Gain insight on ways to best communicate about TNReady to all stakeholder groups.

Assessment Task Force 1.0 Members

Assessment Task Force 1.0 Members	
Member	Title
Nancy Ash	Assistant Director of Schools, Lebanon Special Schools
Virginia Babb	Member, Knox County Parent-Teacher Association
Harry Brooks	Chairman, House Education Administration and Planning Committee
Jasmine Carlisle	11th grade Student, Mt. Juliet High, Wilson County Schools
Phillip Eller	Teacher, Cedar Grove Elementary, Rutherford County Schools
John Forgety	Chairman, House Education Instruction and Programs Committee
Dolores Gresham	Chairman, Senate Education Committee
Bill Harlin	Principal, Nolensville High School, Williamson County Schools
Sara Heyburn	Executive Director, State Board of Education
Valerie Love	Teacher, Dobyns-Bennett High, Kingsport City Schools
Rebecca McBride	Teacher, Brighton High, Tipton County Schools
Sharon McNary	Principal, Richland Elementary, Shelby County Schools
Candice McQueen	Tennessee Commissioner of Education
Mary Reel	Director of Schools, Milan Special Schools
Debbie Shedden	President-Elect, Tennessee School Boards Association; Board Member, Hawkins County Board of Education
Wanda Shelton	Director of Schools, Lincoln County
Beth Unfried	Director of Elementary Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
Mike Winstead	Director of Schools, Maryville City

Assessment Task Force 2.0

Commissioner Candice McQueen reconvened the Task Force on Student Testing and Assessment in order to continue the dialogue around creating intentional and streamlined assessments.

Assessment Task Force 2.0 Members	
Member	Title
Nancy Ash	Assistant Director of Schools, Lebanon Special Schools
Virginia Babb	Member, Knox County Parent-Teacher Association
Harry Brooks	Chairman, House Education Administration and Planning
Jasmine Carlisle	High School Student, Mt. Juliet High School, Wilson County
Phillip Eller	Elementary School Teacher, Cedar Grove Elementary, Rutherford County
John Forgety	Chairman, House Education Instruction and Programs
Dolores Gresham	Chairman, Senate Education
Bill Harlin	Principal, Nolensville High School, Williamson County
Sara Heyburn	Executive Director, State Board of Education
Valerie Love	High School Teacher, Dobyns-Bennett High, Kingsport City
Rebecca McBride	High School Teacher, Brighton High, Tipton County
Candice McQueen	Commissioner, Department of Education
Debbie Shedden	President, TSBA, Hawkins County Board of Education
Wanda Shelton	Assistant Director, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents
Beth Unfried	Director of Elementary Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County
Mike Winstead	Director of Schools, Maryville City
Randy Frazier	Director of Schools, Weakley County
B.J. Worthington	Director of Schools, Clarksville-Montgomery County
Tina Childers	Middle School Teacher, Hixson Middle, Hamilton County
Joann Young	Literacy Coach, College Grove Elementary, Williamson County

Outcomes

One outcome of the task force recommendation that the department and districts should continue to focus on improving communication around testing and accountability to create clarity, transparency, and trust was the development of new score reports. The score reports have been newly designed for high school for 2015-16 results and all tested grades for 2016-17 to provide better, clearer information to parents, students, and teachers.

The process for improving the score reports was extensive. The task report included the recommendation to ensure annual tests provide clear reports for educators, students, and parents that point to alignment to postsecondary readiness. Beginning summer 2015 the department collected initial input on single-subject & multi-subject portfolio reports. In spring 2016, the department received additional input from educator and parent groups, including the Teacher Advisory Council, the Governor's Teacher Cabinet, the Parent Advisory Council, parent survey, CORE Regional PTA, and educator roundtables. Through this feedback the design was finalized in summer 2016 for student reports.

Families of high school students will receive the new and improved score report in fall of 2016. Samples are included below.

TN Department of Education

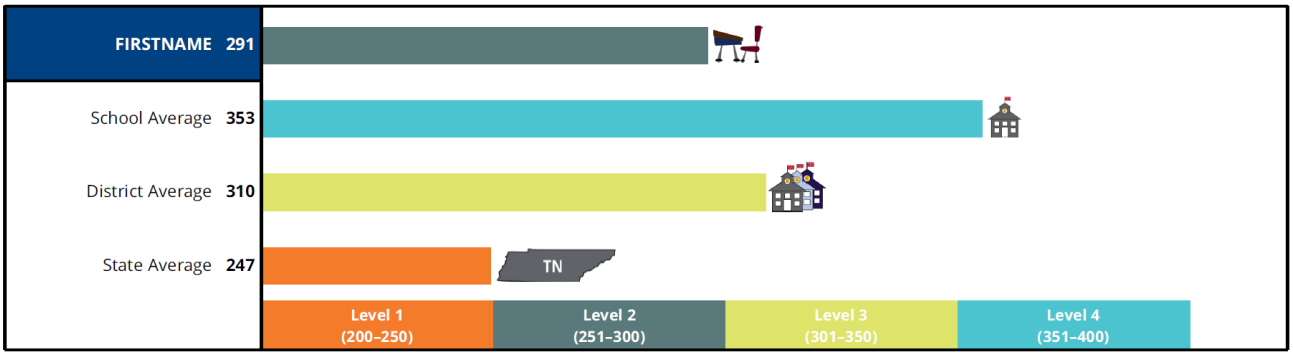
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORT
FIRSTNAME M LASTNAME

Grade 9
USID: 12345XXXX

Teacher: LASTNAME
Test Date: 2015-2016

CITY HIGH SCHOOL
CITY SCHOOLS DISTRICT

SUBJECT	PERFORMANCE LEVEL	OVERALL SCORE
ENGLISH I	LEVEL 2	291



FIRSTNAME scores within the Level 2 range on the English I End of Course (EOC) exam. This student may need assistance to be on track for postsecondary and career readiness.

Generally, students who score at this level demonstrate they have a partial understanding of the literacy concepts and analytical skills expected of high school students.

Level 4	Mastered	Performance at this level demonstrates that the student has an extensive understanding and expert ability to apply the English I EOC knowledge and skills as defined by the Tennessee academic standards.
Level 3	On track	Performance at this level demonstrates that the student has a comprehensive understanding and thorough ability to apply the English I EOC knowledge and skills as defined by the Tennessee academic standards.
Level 2	Approaching	Performance at this level demonstrates that the student is approaching understanding and has a partial ability to apply the English I EOC knowledge and skills as defined by the Tennessee academic standards.
Level 1	Below	Performance at this level demonstrates that the student has a minimal understanding and nominal ability to apply the English I EOC knowledge and skills as defined by the Tennessee academic standards.

Performance Level Comparison

Percent of students scoring at each level	School	District	State
Level 4	6%	10%	9%
Level 3	24%	32%	27%
Level 2	45%	40%	44%
Level 1	24%	18%	20%

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mmddyy-Z9999999-99999-9999-9999999

The **Sub-score Expectations** indicate how a student performed in each **Sub-score Category** *compared to other students in Tennessee*. Sub-scores are used to identify potential **Strengths** and **Areas for Improvement**. This is different from the overall **Performance Level**, which measures how a student performed *compared to the criterion standard set by teachers and other educators in Tennessee.*

ENGLISH I

Sub-score Category	*Students meet expectations by ...*	Sub-score Expectations	Points Possible	Student Points Earned
Reading: Literature	reading and analyzing fiction, drama and poetry for grades 9-10.	Below ⬇	0–8	3
Reading: Informational Text	reading and analyzing non-fiction for grades 9-10.	Meets ⬌	0–8	4
Reading: Vocabulary	using context clues to determine the meaning of words and phrases in text for grades 9-10.	Exceeds ⬆	0–8	7
Writing: Focus & Organization	effectively organizing writing for clarity.	Exceeds ⬆	0–8	2
Writing: Development	using relevant evidence from the text to thoroughly develop a topic.	Below ⬇	0–8	5
Writing: Language & Style	using precise language and literary techniques.	Meets ⬌	0–8	4
Conventions	correctly using the rules of standard English.	Exceeds ⬆	0–8	7
		FIRSTNAME'S Total ENGLISH I EOC Raw Score = 32/56	**0–56**	**32**

LEGEND

⬇ **Below Expectations:** scored less than students who met overall grade level expectations

⬌ **Meets Expectations:** scored as well as students who met overall grade level expectations

⬆ **Exceeds Expectations:** scored better than students who met overall grade level expectations

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	NEXT STEPS
FIRSTNAME may have a strong understanding in these areas:	**FIRSTNAME may need to improve skills in these areas:**	**Consider the following to increase FIRSTNAME's performance:**
• Using context clues to determine the meaning of words and phrases • Including an effective introduction and conclusion in writing • Using effective organizational techniques when writing • Editing text for correct grammar and conventions	• Determining the theme or central idea of grade-level literary text • Writing a response appropriate to purpose and audiences • Using details from a text to demonstrate understanding	• Read and discuss complex text in the 9-10 grade band with others • Focus on determining the meaning of unknown words using context • Practice supporting ideas with evidence from both literary and informational text • Reference the Family Report Guide for more information

The **Family Report Guide** at **www.TNReady.gov** provides more detailed information to help you interpret this report. If you have further questions, please contact FIRSTNAME's teacher or principal in City Schools District at (800) 123-4567.

TN Department of Education

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Appendix H: Alternative Assessments Participation Decision Flowchart

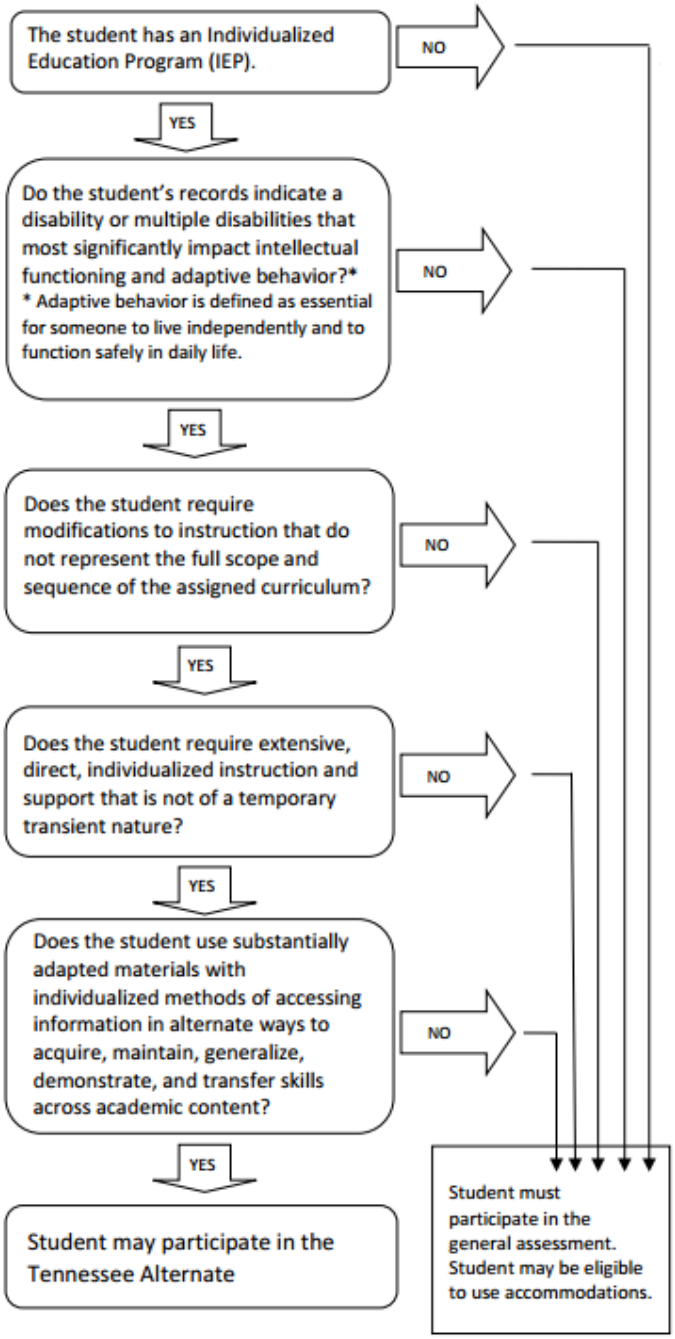
Tennessee Guidance to IEP Teams on Participation Decisions for the Alternate Assessments

Tennessee Alternate Assessments Participation Decision Flowchart

Consider These:

- Anecdotal parent input
- Individual Cognitive Ability tests
- Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment
- Individual/group administered achievement tests
- District-wide alternate assessments
- English language proficiency assessment (if applicable)
- Data from scientific research-based interventions
- Progress monitoring data
- Results of informal assessments
- Teacher collected data and checklists
- Examples of curriculum, instructional materials, and work samples from community-based instruction
- Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and Transition Plan

This flowchart must be used in conjunction with Participation Criteria.



Appendix I: Industry Certifications

2016-17 CTE Promoted Industry Certifications				
Certification	**Aligned Course**	**Program(s) of Study**	**Career Cluster(s)**	**Capstone for Course or Program of Study (POS)**
Machining Level I - Measurement, Materials, and Safety Certification (NIMS)	Principles of Manufacturing (5922)	Machining Technology	Advanced Manufacturing	Course
Production Certification (CPT)	Principles of Manufacturing (5922)	Machining Technology	Advanced Manufacturing	Course
Level I Siemens Certified Mechatronic Systems Assistant	Mechatronics II (6157)	Mechatronics	Advanced Manufacturing	POS
AWS SENSE Entry Level Welder	Welding I (6078)	Welding	Advanced Manufacturing	Course
AWS SENSE Advanced Level Welder	Welding II (6033)	Welding	Advanced Manufacturing	Course
American Welding Society Certified Welder	Welding II (6033)	Welding	Advanced Manufacturing	POS
Commercial Pesticide Certification – Core (03) (Note: Must be 18 years old)	Landscaping and Turf Science (5951)	Horticulture Science	Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	Course
Tennessee Specific Industry Certification-Animal Science (currently in pilot year)	Veterinary Science (5961)	Veterinary and Animal Science	Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	POS
HVAC Excellence, Heating, Electrical, Air Conditioning Technology (H.E.A.T.)	HVAC (6077)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
HVAC Excellence Employment Ready Certifications	HVAC (6077)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
Universal R-410A	HVAC (6077)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
EPA Section 608 Universal	HVAC (6077)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
NCCER Electrical Level One	Electrical Systems (6075)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	POS
NCCER Plumbing Level One	Plumbing Systems (6082)	Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	POS
NCCER Construction Technology	Residential & Commercial Construction I	Residential & Commercial Construction	Architecture & Construction	Course

2016-17 CTE Promoted Industry Certifications				
Certification	**Aligned Course**	**Program(s) of Study**	**Career Cluster(s)**	**Capstone for Course or Program of Study (POS)**
	(6162)			
NCCER Core Curriculum	Fundamentals of Construction (6073)	Residential & Commercial Construction Structural Systems Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing (MEP) Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
NCCER Carpentry Level One	Structural Systems I (6164)	Structural Systems	Architecture & Construction	Course
NCCER Carpentry Level Two	Structural Systems II (6165)	Structural Systems	Architecture & Construction	POS
Microsoft Office Specialist (Excel)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Specialist (PowerPoint)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Specialist (Word)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Expert (pass the two-part Expert Exam in Excel)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Expert (pass the two-part Expert Exam in Word)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Master - Track 1 (Word Expert + Excel Core + Elective)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Master - Track 2 (Excel Expert + Word Core + Elective)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
Microsoft Office Master - Track 3 (Word Expert + Excel Expert)	Advanced Computer Applications (5904)	Office Management	Business Management & Administration	POS
National Certified Compliance Officer (NCCO)	Banking & Finance, Financial Planning	Banking & Finance, Financial Planning	Finance	POS
Certified Personal Trainer	Exercise Science (6170) followed by Clinical Internship (5993)	Clinical Exercise Physiology	Health Science	POS
Certified EKG Technician	Cardiovascular Services (6131)	Diagnostic Services	Health Science	POS

2016-17 CTE Promoted Industry Certifications				
Certification	**Aligned Course**	**Program(s) of Study**	**Career Cluster(s)**	**Capstone for Course or Program of Study (POS)**
Emergency Medical Responder (First Responder)	Emergency Medical Services (5995)	Emergency Services	Health Science	POS
Certified Pharmacy Technician	Pharmacological Science (6133)	Therapeutic Clinical Services	Health Science	POS
Certified Clinical Medical Assistant	Medical Therapeutics (5999) followed by Clinical Internship (5993)	Therapeutic Clinical Services	Health Science	POS
Certified Nursing Assistant	Nursing Education (6000)	Therapeutic Nursing Services	Health Science	POS
TN Board of Cosmetology & Barbering - TN Master Barber 1010	Barbering III (5974)	Barbering	Human Services	POS
CDA- Child Development Associate	Early Childhood Education Careers (ECEC) III (6017)	Childhood Development Services	Human Services	POS
TN Board of Cosmetology & Barbering - TN Cosmetology 1010	Chemistry of Cosmetology (5984)	Cosmetology	Human Services	POS
CompTIA IT Fundamentals	Information Technology Foundations (6905)	All Information Technology POS	Information Technology	Course
CompTIA Security +	Cybersecurity II	Cybersecurity	Information Technology	Course
Cisco Certified Entry Network Tech (CCENT)	Computer Systems (6094)	Networking Systems	Information Technology	Course
CompTIA A+	Computer Systems (6094)	Networking Systems	Information Technology	Course
CompTIA Network+	Networking (6097)	Networking Systems	Information Technology	POS
CCNA Cisco Certified Network Associate	Networking (6097)	Networking Systems	Information Technology	POS
CompTIA A+	Programming and Logic II (6099)	Programming & Software Development	Information Technology	POS
CIW Web Design Specialist	Web Site Development (6101)	Web Design	Information Technology	POS
Certified Solidworks Associate (CSWA)-Academic	STEM III (6146); Engineering Design II (6139); Robotics & Automated Systems (6143)	STEM, Engineering, Technology	STEM	POS
I-CAR Refinish Technician ProLevel 1 or I-CAR Non-Structural Technician ProLevel 1	Collision Repair: Non-structural (6062)	Automotive Collision Repair	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	POS

2016-17 CTE Promoted Industry Certifications				
Certification	**Aligned Course**	**Program(s) of Study**	**Career Cluster(s)**	**Capstone for Course or Program of Study (POS)**
Automotive Service Excellence Student Certification: Painting and Refinishing	Collision Repair: Painting & Refinishing (6063)	Automotive Collision Repair	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	POS
Automotive Service Excellence Student Certification: Nonstructural Analysis/Repair	Collision Repair: Non-structural (6062)	Automotive Collision Repair	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	POS
Automotive Service Excellence Student Certification: Structural Analysis/Repair	Collision Repair: Structural (6064)	Automotive Collision Repair	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	POS
Automotive Service Excellence Student Certification: Maintenance & Light Repair Certification	Maintenance & Light Repair IV (5882)	Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	POS

Appendix J: State-level District Strategies Report

In September 2016, during the Superintendent Study Council Conference, the department released a state-level district strategies report and provided directors of schools district-specific documents with strategy guides to:

- inform their thinking and decision-making;
- spark conversation and collaboration about what others are trying and what is working; and
- empower districts to reach their goals for their students and teachers.

Excerpts from the district strategies report are included below; the complete document can be viewed here.

Introduction

At the start of the 2015–16 school year, the department laid out our goals for Tennessee's students and what it will take to reach them. This strategic plan—called Tennessee Succeeds— aims to give a clear, overarching vision for what we believe are the most important strategies our state should undertake over the next several years to build strong schools.

Tennessee Succeeds outlines the critical components of the Tennessee Department of Education's work that build on the educational foundation Tennessee has laid over the past several years. But we also want to ensure that you—our district and school leaders—understand our goals and priorities and have the ability to take the department's work and make it your own. This document provides a set of proposed actions that will allow districts to best take advantage of the state's ongoing initiatives in order to advance our shared goals.

Ultimately, we believe if our work is aligned around these similar elements, teaching will be strengthened, students will make progress, and we will achieve our joint vision for education in Tennessee.

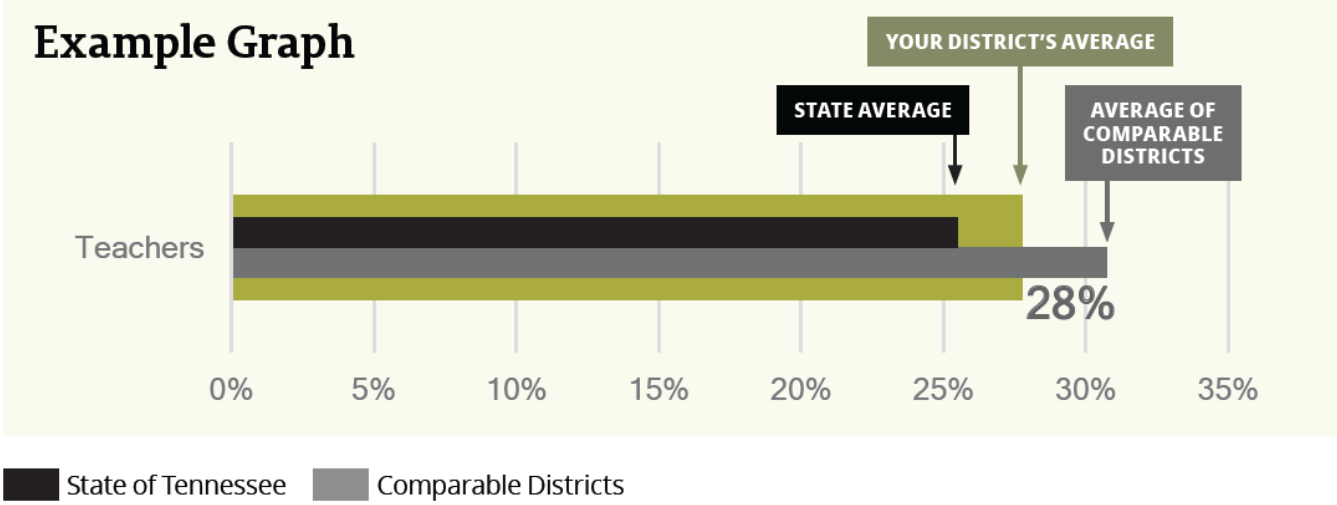
How to Use this Document

This is not a checklist. Instead, these are a series of targeted strategies that we believe will help move our schools towards greater levels of success. We want to share them with you to start the conversation with your teams, but we encourage you to determine what makes sense for your schools. We hope that now—and in the years to come—this guidance will contribute to informing your decisions on how to invest your time, energy, and resources.

Within each area of our state strategic plan, we have identified two district-level strategies that we believe will have the biggest impact in progressing the work in those respective areas. We have also included additional strategies you can take to go further. None of these efforts exist in a silo, so you will see overlapping strategies and connections that show how work in one area may benefit efforts in another. Each set of strategies is accompanied by a set of guiding questions and data to help ground your thinking. The metrics we show match the data we are tracking at the state level to gauge our state's progress.

This document contains graphs that show your district's and state averages, as well as the average of four comparable districts. The colored bar and numbered label are your district's average, while the black and gray bars reflect the state's and comparable districts' average, respectively. In the example

graph below, the district outperformed the state average, but performed below comparable districts. The comparable districts were chosen based on per pupil expenditure, student enrollment, and student demographics. The data for the individual averages of the comparable districts are show in the chart in the Data Appendix at the end of the document.



Throughout this document, we have noted where we are providing additional resources, training, guidance, and support. As we engage more with this work, in partnership with you, we expect to further increase our efforts and adjust as needed based on what we hear from you and what students and teachers are experiencing.

Note: This version of the District Strategies document only contains state-level data.

How We are Working Toward our Goals in 2016-17

Standards and Assessment

We must continue our focus on **helping educators understand the full depth of our academic standards**—especially in the transition to new math and English language arts standards in 2017–18, and new science and social studies standards in subsequent years. This happens through **outcomes-focused training and resources** designed for district teams that connect standards to student work. These should be coupled with **aligned assessments and practice tools that give us better information for decision making at every level**— student, classroom, school, district, and state.

Early Grades Reading

We must ensure that **all of our students are reading proficiently every year** and that every child receives a rich literacy foundation from birth. That is the purpose of the state's Read to be Ready campaign. This means we must better **prepare educator candidates** to teach reading in a way that integrates both knowledge- and skill-based competencies. It also requires **developing tools and data** to measure the effectiveness of early instruction and intervention practices. With that information as well as solid coaching and training, educators will be equipped to provide the **highest quality early learning opportunities** for our students.

Clear and Guided Pathways for Students

Students must be on clear and guided pathways that move them toward realizing their potential and the opportunities afforded through Tennessee Promise. This requires a **deliberate focus on student planning and engagement**—beginning in middle school—coupled with redefining the **role of the school counselor** to serve as an advisor and guide on college and career pathways. To ensure those pathways create opportunity for all students, we must focus on **rigorous and engaging coursework** that includes both early postsecondary opportunities and work-based learning experiences.

Appendix K: Tennessee Education Research Alliance

The Tennessee Education Research Alliance measures its success not simply by the number of academic papers published, but by the extent to which its work changes the way educators and policymakers think and act. To that end, the Research Alliance is committed to producing an expanding body of knowledge on a set of interrelated areas of focus that figure prominently in the state's school improvement strategies.

Its research agenda is determined by a joint steering committee representing Peabody College and the Tennessee Department of Education. Specific research questions are informed by members of a broad-based Advisory Committee representing Tennessee education groups and stakeholders.

Based on that input, the Research Alliance has prioritized four areas of focus:

- Improving early reading,
- Reimagining state support for professional learning,
- Driving improvement in low-performing schools, and
- Strengthening Tennessee's education labor market.

Improving early reading.

While achievement gains among Tennessee's students have outpaced that of the nation in recent years, the progress made in reading in the early grades has lagged behind that in other grades and subjects. In response, the state has prioritized increasing the percent of Tennessee students who are proficient readers by third grade.

To inform those efforts, the Research Alliance plans to investigate:

- The effectiveness of TDOE's Read-to-be-Ready initiatives, including the Coaching Network.
- Implementation of Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2) model for identifying and meeting the needs of students at different performance levels.
- The relationship between educator preparation programs, state structures to support early reading instruction, and instructional practices employed in the classroom.

Reimagining state support for professional learning.

Consensus among many stakeholders is that more effective approaches to professional learning are needed for Tennessee to build on its educational progress of recent years. While an increasing number of the state's teachers see evaluation as supporting improvement in practice, many also report that they are not receiving helpful feedback.

To address these challenges, the Research Alliance will seek to better understand the instructional guidance teachers receive—from peers, from administrators, and from their district and the state—and how the state can make that guidance more coherent and effective.

Specific topics to explore in this area include:

- The content and nature of the feedback teachers receive as part of evaluation.
- Variations across schools in professional learning and instructional supports.
- Analysis of evaluation data to identify the circumstances in which instructional improvement occurs.

Driving improvement in low-performing schools.

Like many states, Tennessee has sought to find the right approach toward intervening in persistently low-performing schools. The Research Alliance is building on an existing body of knowledge on school turnaround efforts in the state and elsewhere to better understand the dynamics of chronic underperformance and the ways in which different intervention models can change them.

Among the related topics the Research Alliance is studying:

- The various instructional supports in place in different state and district turnaround efforts across Tennessee, including the Achievement School District (ASD) and district-managed Innovation Zones or iZones.
- Student and staff mobility within low-performing schools.
- The characteristics of educators who succeed in the most challenging schools, and effective strategies to recruit and retain them.

Strengthening Tennessee's education labor market.

All school improvement strategies are ultimately implemented by teachers and school leaders, and hence success depends on the strength of the state's education workforce. An ongoing objective of the Research Alliance is to better understand the human capital needs of Tennessee's schools, and how those needs can be more effectively addressed by strategies related to educator preparation, recruitment, placement, retention, and compensation.

Specific topics for investigation in this area include:

- Factors in the success of first-year teachers, including preparation programs and school and district support strategies.
- The reliability and validity of tools for screening pre-service teaching candidates.
- Recruitment and retention of teachers and leaders of color.
- The impact of different approaches toward teacher preparation on teaching practice.

Read more about the Tennessee Education Research Alliance here.

Appendix L: Coordinated Spending Guide

View the complete coordinated spending guide released in September 2015 here.

Coordinated Spending Guide

Braiding and Blending Funds

Comprehensive Strategies to Support Activities that Drive Performance and Improve Outcomes for Tennessee Students

Office of Consolidated Planning & Monitoring

TN Department of Education

September 2015

Following the release of updated federal guidance on ESSA, the consolidated planning and monitoring team will update the coordinated spending guide to disseminate during the 2017-18 school year. The current coordinated spending guide includes the following:

- INTRODUCTION
  - TDOE Strategic Plan and Goals – Tennessee Succeeds
  - LEA Strategic Plans and School Improvement Plans

- SECTION I: COORDINATED SPENDING TO MAXIMIZE FUNDS
  - Braiding Funds
  - Blending Funds

- SECTION II: FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATED SPENDING
  - Step 1 – Assess the Needs
  - Step 2 – Identify Components and Costs of Activities
  - Step 3 – Identify Federal Grants
  - Step 4 – Determine if Costs are Necessary and Reasonable
  - Step 5 – Verify Consistency with ePlan and Program Plans

- SECTION III: COMPREHENSIVE INITIATIVES – FUNDING QUICK GUIDES
  - Improve Effective Instruction for Literacy & Numeracy
  - Provide Instructional Coaches, Specialists and Other Supports for Teachers
  - Upgrading the Existing Curriculum
  - Redesign, Maximize or Extend School Day, Week, or Year
  - Advanced Coursework Options for Students
  - Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI^2)
  - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)
  - Ninth Grade Academy
  - Pre-Kindergarten Programs
  - Dropout Prevention

- SECTION IV: CONSIDERATIONS WHEN BRAIDING OR BLENDING FUNDS
  - Barriers to Coordinated Grant Spending
  - LEAs: Other Administrative Considerations
  - Schools: Other Administrative Considerations
  - Time and Effort Considerations
  - Inventory and Supply Considerations
  - Financial Management Considerations

- APPENDICES
  - APPENDIX A: SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT
    - Title I, Part A – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
    - "Title I–Like" Exclusion for Supplanting
    - Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children
    - Title I, Part D – Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
    - Title I, Part 1003(g) – School Improvement Grants (SIG)
    - Title II, Part A – Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
    - Title II, Part B – Mathematics and Science Partnerships
    - Title III – Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
    - Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Title VI, Part B – Rural Education Achievement Program
Title X, Part C – Education for Homeless Children and Youths
IDEA, Part B – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDEA, CEIS – Coordinated Early Intervening Services
Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE)

APPENDIX B: PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

Title I, Part A – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
Title I, 1003(a) – School Improvement
Title I, 1003(g) – School Improvement Grants
Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children
Title I, Part D – Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
Title II, Part A – Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
Title II, Part B – Mathematics and Science Partnerships
Title III – Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers
Title VI, Part B – Rural Education Achievement Program
Title X, Part C – Education for Homeless Children and Youths
IDEA, Part B – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDEA, CEIS – Coordinated Early Intervening Services
IDEA, Pre-K
Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Appendix M: IDEA Uniform Needs Assessment Protocol

Introduction

As per the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) of 2004, states are required to develop and send out local determinations to each district, measuring performance across 17 indicators. These indicators are a reflection of the special education policies, practices and procedures employed by districts across the state. In Tennessee, a series of cut points are used to assign districts to one of four categories: *Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention,* and *Needs Substantial Intervention*. Districts assigned to the *Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention,* and *Needs Substantial Intervention* categories must address flagged indicators of particularly low performance in ePlan and address them in their district's overall plan. For districts determined *Needs Intervention* and *Needs Substantial Intervention*, staff from the TDOE will conduct site visits to assess current needs of the district and how the department can support the district in the coming years.

This protocol is designed to facilitate discussion and assess the district's special education policies, practices, and procedures in order to identify improvement activities. Through this process, department staff will collaborate with the district to develop an action plan to improve upon the special education policies, practices, and procedures that led to low performance on the local determinations.

The full needs assessment protocol is online here.

Appendix N: STEM Strategic Plan

STEM Strategic Plan: An Integrated K–12 Proposal for Tennessee

Executive Summary

The need for fully integrated K–12 STEM education in Tennessee has never been more critical. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) is the fifth-fastest-growing occupational cluster in the South and the seventh-largest employer with projected employment of 2.6 million workers by 2020. In order to prepare our students to take advantage of the vast opportunities in this field, we must equip students with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon a STEM pathway and ultimately a high-demand STEM-related career. Too many STEM jobs are being left unfilled, meaning our graduates are missing valuable opportunities to join one of the fastest growing industries in the nation. STEM education stands as a key strategy to address these gaps, provide additional opportunities to Tennessee students, and to strengthen Tennessee's economic future.

If Tennessee is to lead the nation in STEM industry growth, it is essential that Tennessee adopt and promote robust STEM-based instruction utilizing Tennessee math and science standards as the primary focus. By aligning state math and science standards with STEM practices, we can increase student achievement in STEM learning, expand student access to effective STEM educators, and build broad-based community awareness for STEM professions. Together, Tennessee can equip students for the STEM careers of the future and lead the nation in STEM talent development.

In June 2014, the Tennessee Department of Education established a STEM Leadership Council to address the issue of STEM–related gaps. Specifically, the council has examined how to provide primary and secondary students in Tennessee access and exposure to rigorous STEM-related learning pathways through the state's math and science standards. This work is all with the ultimate goal of postsecondary attainment and the development of a dynamic pipeline of future STEM professionals who are highly skilled across industries and in academic research.

Access the full plan online here.

Appendix O: Teacher Retention in Tennessee

Teacher Retention in Tennessee: Are we Keeping Our Best Teachers?

Executive Summary

This report examines the extent to which teacher retention rates in Tennessee schools differ according to teachers' effectiveness and the ways this information might inform strategic retention efforts at the state and district levels. We find promising evidence that improvements in certain working conditions have the potential to improve the retention rates of highly effective teachers.

Through this analysis, we find that:

- Teachers who earn **higher overall teacher evaluation scores** tend to be retained at slightly higher rates than teachers who earn lower overall teacher evaluation scores, although the differences in these rates are not particularly large.
- **Early career teachers** are slightly less likely to be retained than other teachers. Highly effective early career teachers tend to be retained at slightly higher rates than other early career teachers.
- **Highly effective minority teachers** are considerably more likely to leave Tennessee public schools than other highly effective teachers.
- There is **substantial variation across districts** in overall retention rates, retention rates of teachers earning high evaluation scores, and the degree to highly effective teachers are retained at a higher rate than other teachers.
- **School conditions** such as effective time use and functional teacher evaluation were significantly related to retention rates of highly effective teachers. As a result, strategies aimed at improving these factors have the potential to improve the retention of these teachers).

Access the full policy brief online here.

Appendix P: Elementary Grades Reading in Tennessee

Setting the Foundation, A Report on Elementary Grades Reading in Tennessee

Executive Summary

By any measure, too many children in Tennessee struggle to read. We hear this from teachers who try to cover rigorous standards only to find that their students lack the skills and knowledge necessary to genuinely engage with classroom texts. We see it on our state test scores, which have improved in all subjects over the past several years except grades 3 through 6 English language arts. We see it on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), where only one-third of Tennessee fourth graders receive a proficient reading score.

By reading, we mean more than just decoding the letters on a page—although that is critically important. We want readers who draw meaning from text and make connections to the outside world. These are the critical thinking skills that determine success both in and outside the classroom. In past years, far too many of our students have passed through elementary school without acquiring this strong foundation—strong decoding skills coupled with deep comprehension—and have been met with escalating challenges as they move from grade to grade.

This report incorporates a series of studies and data analyses conducted over the past year by and for the Tennessee Department of Education to understand the challenges we face. The good news: Our classrooms are increasingly set up for success. Districts and schools in Tennessee have made reading a central priority—often, the central priority—in their daily schedules, their student placement decisions, and their teachers' professional development. Across classrooms, we find committed and knowledgeable educators who are pushing students forward. Yet each year, despite our collective efforts, at least half of our students complete third grade without becoming readers.

Read the full report online here.

Appendix Q: Homeless Student Placement Dispute Resolution Process

Prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths is critical. When a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the district homeless liaison shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The designated district homeless liaison is assigned to carry out the dispute resolution process in an expeditious manner.

The district must provide a written explanation of the decision to the parent or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, to the unaccompanied youth. The written explanation must include a description of the parent's or unaccompanied youth's right to appeal the decision. The notice and written explanation from the district about the reason for its decision, at a minimum, should include the following:

- a description of the action proposed or refused by the school;
- an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused;
- a description of any other options the school rejected;
- a description of any factors relevant to the school's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination including the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources;
- appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are not missed; and
- contact information for the local district homeless liaison and state coordinator including a brief description of their roles.

In a case where a dispute occurs regarding eligibility, enrollment, or school selection of a homeless child or youth, the following process must be used:

- Level 1: If a parent or unaccompanied youth wishes to appeal a school district's decision related to eligibility, enrollment, or school selection, the case is appealed to the district's homeless liaison or the school where the dispute is taking place.
- Level 2: If the appeal is unresolved, the case is appealed to the school district's superintendent or designee.
- Level 3: If the appeal continues to be unresolved, the case is appealed to the McKinney-Vento state coordinator.
- Level 4: **:** If the parent, unaccompanied youth, or district wishes to appeal a decision rendered by the McKinney-Vento state coordinator, the case may be reviewed by the Executive Director of CPM.

For level one appeals, parents or unaccompanied youth must submit a request to appeal to the district homeless liaison within five days of receiving notification. Within five business days of their receipt of the complaint, the liaison must make a decision on the complaint and inform the parent or unaccompanied youth in writing of the result. If the parent or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision made and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to level two, the parent or unaccompanied youth shall notify the district's homeless liaison of their intent to proceed forward to level two within five business days of receipt of notification of the level one decision.

If a parent or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision rendered by the district's homeless liaison at level one, the parent or unaccompanied youth may appeal the decision to the local district's superintendent, or the superintendent's designee using the appeals process provided at level one. The superintendent, or superintendent's designee, will arrange for a personal conference to be scheduled within five business days of the parent or unaccompanied youth's notification to the district of the intent to proceed to level two of the dispute resolution process. The local superintendent, or superintendent's designee, will provide a decision in writing to the parent or unaccompanied youth with supporting evidence and reasons. It is the responsibility of the district to verify the parent's or unaccompanied youth's receipt of the written notification regarding the superintendent's level two decision. If the parent of unaccompanied youth disagrees with the decision made at level two and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to level three, the parent or unaccompanied youth shall notify the district's homeless liaison of intent to proceed to level three within five business days of receipt of notification of the level two decision.

If the dispute remains unresolved, the process then moves to level three. The district superintendent shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the McKinney-Vento state coordinator for review within five business days of notifying the parent or unaccompanied youth of the decision rendered at level two. The McKinney-Vento state coordinator shall make a final decision within seven business days of receipt of the complaint. If the parent, unaccompanied youth, or district wishes to appeal a decision rendered by the McKinney-Vento state coordinator, the case may be reviewed by the Executive Director of CPM.

Finally, if a dispute arises at the school level over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the district homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute. Disputes between districts that remain unresolved shall be forwarded in writing to the McKinney-Vento state coordinator by either of the disputing districts. A decision will be made by the state coordinator within seven business days of the receipt of the dispute and will be forwarded in writing to the districts' superintendents, the districts' homeless liaisons, and the parent(s) of the homeless child or youth. The decision made by the McKinney-Vento state coordinator shall be the final resolution between the disputing districts.

Appendix R: Statewide Dual Credit

Overview

- Tennessee high school and college faculty collaborate to develop the learning objectives and challenge exam for each course.
- Students have the opportunity to earn credit that can be applied to any Tennessee public postsecondary institution.
- Prior academic performance, ability, and interest are used to inform student placement decisions.
- The courses add to the portfolio of available early postsecondary credit opportunities, but do not replace local agreements.
- High schools can offer SDC courses regardless of their access to a local postsecondary partner or funding for other courses.
- All students enrolled in a SDC course take the online challenge exam, which is used to assess mastery of the postsecondary-level learning objectives.
- Exam scores are reported on the high school transcript to ensure postsecondary credit is accurately awarded; however, they are not used in any state accountability measures.
- All SDC courses are approved by the Consortium for Cooperative Innovative Education before they can be offered as a part of the state's current pilot program. (See Tennessee Public Chapter 967 for more information).[142]

Statewide Dual Credit Pilot Courses

- Criminal Justice I
- Pre-Calculus
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Statistics
- World History

Statewide Dual Credit Full Implementation Courses

- Introduction to Agriculture Business
- Introduction to Plant Science

[142] State of Tennessee. Public Chapter No. 967. (27 April, 2012). Web.

Appendix S: Charter School Application Review Timeline

February 1 2017	Sponsor submits letter of intent to local board and TDOE
April 3 2017	Sponsor submits application to local board and TDOE
June 30 2017	Local board rules on initial application (within 90 days) *If approved, local board signs charter agreement. If denied, board sends written denial to sponsor*
July 31 2017	Sponsor submits amended application within 30 days of receipt of grounds for denial
August 31 2017	Local board rules on amended application within 30 days
September 12 2017	Sponsor appeals to state board of education within 10 days of final local decision
November 11 2017	State board of education or its designee holds a hearing in the LEA and rules within 60 days of receipt of the appeal
8-13 months	Planning Period
August 2018	School opens (unless operator chooses to defer opening)

Appendix T: 21st CCLC Program Quality

Performance Indicators & Self-Assessment

The performance goals, indicators, and measurements that align with the state's strategic plan are listed below.

Performance Goal 1: All students will reach high academic standards at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading/English language arts and mathematics. This goal aligns with the *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan priority area *All Means All*—providing individualized support and opportunities for all students with a focus on those who are furthest behind.

> Performance Indicators/Measurements: Student grades from fall to spring; state assessments—grades and assessment data are available across program sites and provide a level of consistency in measuring outcomes compared to district benchmark assessments.

Performance Goal 2: All students will exhibit positive behavior changes that support academic and social growth. This goal aligns with the *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan priority area *All Means All*—providing individualized support and opportunities for all students with a focus on those who are furthest behind.

> Performance Indicators/Measurements: Teacher-reported (survey) improvement in homework completion, class participation, classroom behavior, and relations with peers.

Performance Goal 3: The percentage of students who are chronically absent from school will decrease. This goal aligns with the *Tennessee Succeeds* strategic plan priority area *High School & Bridge to Postsecondary*—preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion.

> Performance Indicators/Measurements: School records of student attendance (total days of excused and unexcused absences does not exceed 18 during the course of the school year; 10 percent of 180-day school year).

Performance Goal 4: Family engagement will be embedded throughout the program. Parent and family involvement is critical to student success developing community support for promoting education and fostering growth for all students.

> Performance Indicators/Measurements: Parent-reported (survey) programming that engages families, program staff communication related to individual student needs, program atmosphere, and overall program satisfaction. Translation and interpretation of the parent survey will be available to families during the data collection process.