

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

TENNESSEE

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

Tennessee is in the process of implementing the state's final assessment system, entitled the **Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**. This program was mandated by the state legislature with the 1992 Education Improvement Act. Various components of the system are already in place – the elementary achievement test, writing test, and Competency Test. Other end-of-course tests will be implemented in 2000-2001 as well as a new set of exit exams in 2001-2002.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* The **Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program** currently includes the elementary achievement test (**Achievement Test**), the **Writing Test**, the **Competency Test** and the **High School Subject Matter Tests**. The Achievement test is produced by CTB and is similar to TerraNova, but is unique to Tennessee.

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

- Grades 3-8: The **TCAP Achievement** test measures basic skills in reading, vocabulary, language, language mechanics, mathematics, mathematics computation, science, social studies, spelling, and word analysis.
 - Grade 9: The **TCAP Competency Test** is designed to measure student achievement in certain skills in mathematics and language arts. Students may retake this assessment, passage of which is currently required for graduation.
 - High School: The **High School Subject Matter Tests** (also called End-of-Course tests) are taken by high school students at the end of a course of study in any of the following subjects: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Mathematics for Technology I. New **Gateway Tests** are being developed in Algebra I, Biology, and English II. Additional End-of-Course tests are being developed in Physical Science, Chemistry, English I, U.S. History, and Math Foundations II (replacing Math for Technology I) to make a total of ten subjects tested.
- *Norm or Criterion Referenced* TCAP Achievement Test is both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. The High School Subject Matter Tests are criterion-referenced.
 - *Matrix or Census Testing* Census
 - *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* TCAP Achievement Test is multiple-choice. TCAP Competency Test is multiple choice. The High School Subject Matter Tests are currently math only, and are multiple choice.
 - *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)* The end-of-course assessments are administered during the last ten days of instruction; norm-referenced tests are administered during the spring, generally mid-March to mid-April; the Competency Tests are administered in October, February/March, early June, and mid-July (school systems must choose between one of the summer dates, they cannot offer both).
 - *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)* Tennessee students currently take a Competency Test which consists of a Mathematics subtest and a Language Arts subtest. Students may take this test for the first time in ninth grade and may have several opportunities to retake it if they fail either portion. Students entering high school in 2001-2002 will be required to take and pass end-of-course tests in Algebra I, Biology, and English II (Gateway Tests) in order to graduate. The last time the Competency Test will be administered is summer 2004. In accordance with the EIA, all students will complete an exit examination. Students who complete the university curriculum will take either the ACT or SAT. Students who complete the technical preparation curriculum will take the ACT, SAT or Work Keys assessment.
 - *Other Assessments* SAT, ACT, NAEP
 - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Implementing final assessment system.

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

- *State Department of Education*
- *Commercial Testing Organization*
- *State teachers and administrators*
- *Assessment Committee*

CTB-McGraw/Hill has the contract for the achievement test and for the High School Subject Matter Tests; the same company also won the proposal for the Gateway assessments. The competency tests are developed by the assessment division of the State Department of Education. The writing assessment contract was recently granted to Measurement Incorporated.

Tennessee teachers are involved in item development and the items must be approved by teachers and by staff of the assessment division of the Tennessee Department of Education.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

There are no state requirements for local assessment in Tennessee.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

- *Refining standards*
 - *Revamping assessments*
 - *Adding components to assessments*
- What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?*

The High School Subject Matter tests are subject specific. However, the End-of-Course tests and the new Gateway tests are and will be aligned with more specific objectives in the state curriculum.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The Tennessee Department of Education has been working over the past year to align all activities so that everything they do is consistent with the testing initiative. The department has established committees of practicing classroom teachers in middle grades, Biology, English II, Algebra I and corresponding vocational courses to define what the tests will look like and to take the Gateway curriculum from broad-based learning expectations to very specific Performance Indicators. The goal was to make certain that there are reasonable expectations for each of these subjects and that they are aligned as closely as possible with the assessments in terms of asking students to apply information, problem solving, and higher order thinking skills.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification*
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*

- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

The primary use of data from the state assessment system is for instructional guidance and school improvement. However, the data does have additional uses, including: graduation (for the Competency Tests); TVAAS calculations, which determine teacher effect in student learning and improvement; Title I evaluation; and at the local level, the data may be used in retention decisions.

8. Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

1998-99

- Performance measures were developed for Algebra I, Biology, and English II; distributed; placed on Department of Education Web site.
- Summer institutes for educators held on Gateway Tests.
- Spring of 1999 was the last year for end-of-course test in Pre-Algebra.

1999-2000

- Test items for Algebra I, Biology and English II were developed and field-tested.
- Spring of 2000 was the last year for end-of-course test in Math for Technology I.
- Performance measures were developed for English I, Math Foundations II, Algebra II and Geometry.

2000-2001

- Gateway tests are administered statewide on a no-fault basis to students completing Algebra I, English II, and Biology to provide baseline data for school systems and data for State Board of Education to use in setting passing scores.
- Test items for English I, Math Foundations II, Algebra II and Geometry are developed and field-tested.
- Performance measures are developed for Physical Science, Chemistry and U.S. History.

2001-2002

- Passing Gateway tests becomes a graduation requirement for students entering high school as freshmen. Gateway end-of-course testing begins in Algebra I and Biology.
- End-of-course testing also begins in English I, Math Foundations II, Algebra II and Geometry.
- Test items for Physical Science, Chemistry and U.S. History are developed and field-tested.

2002-2003

- End-of-course testing begins for the English II Gateway test and for Physical Science, Chemistry and U.S. History.

2003-2004

- Gateway and end-of-course tests continue to be administered in all 10 subjects.

2004-2005

- Gateway tests first affect high school graduating class of 2005 as a requirement for earning a regular high school diploma.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

Tennessee officials noted two issues:

- The quality of the assessment is always an area of concern, particularly whether the items do address the curricular objectives they are intended to measure.
- The appropriate use of assessment for the improvement of instruction is an important issue; the focus of assessment may be diverted from this purpose.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies for students with Limited English Proficiency: Tennessee does not allow any exclusions for students with Limited English Proficiency. However they are allowed to phase in the subjects in which these students are tested. The first year that students are in the United States, they are assessed only in math computation. The second year, they are assessed in math computation, language expression and vocabulary. The third year, they are tested in all subjects in which their English-speaking peers are assessed. As with native English speakers, Tennessee expects LEP students to work their way to the proficient level. Tennessee officials believe it is important to test LEP students early to determine that the ESL programs are meeting the needs of the students and that they are making sufficient progress. Officials note that more attention is paid to the needs of these students when their progress can be charted and when there is accountability. However, the TCAP assessments are not the only ones upon which Tennessee relies for measuring the academic progress of LEP students; they have also adopted language assessments and they conduct classroom assessments as well.

Policies for students with disabilities: The 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA states that all students must be included in state, regional, and district large-scale assessments, with results from assessments reported and findings aggregated with the total school population. This means there can be no exemptions from State Mandated Assessments. Therefore, all students will be participating in the TCAP Assessments given at scheduled grade levels.

A “seamless” assessment system has been developed for students with disabilities, wherein all students must participate in state- and district-wide assessments, with results of these assessments reported and aggregated with the total school population. For a small number of students (approximately 1-2% of the total school population) who cannot participate in the state assessment, even with extensive accommodations, an alternate assessment will be provided with full participation, reporting, and accountability.

The state has developed guidelines to direct IEP Teams as they make participation decisions for students with disabilities. These guidelines stress factors such as the cognitive level of students, their ability to generalize information, and their need for instruction in multiple settings. Using results for accountability purposes will encourage schools to direct instructional attention and resources toward students who are assessed. This will lead to improved student learning toward state standards. By holding schools accountable for every student’s performance, the goal is to increase the achievement of students with disabilities. The information collected will also help each Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team in making appropriate decisions for assessment and the instruction of each student. The student’s IEP Team will meet prior to state- and district-wide assessments to determine the nature of the student’s participation. Special education students may take:

- The TCAP Assessments Without Accommodations
- The TCAP Assessments with Allowable Accommodations—According to State Testing guidelines any student may use these accommodations, which were part of the standardization of the TCAP
- The TCAP Assessments with Special Conditions Accommodations—Developed for special education students only, with specific guidelines for the IEP Team to determine need and appropriateness of accommodations, and to ensure the test construct has not been invalidated, allowing results to be reported and aggregated with the total school population.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Allowable state test accommodations include the following:

Alternative Test Editions/Revised Format/Presentation

- Braille (readers for illustrations and graphs permitted)
- Large Print (with no extended time allowed)

Signing Directions

- All Oral Instructions and Passages

Flexible Setting

- Individually (student may read silently or aloud)
- Small Group
- Study Carrel
- Front of Room

- Special Education Class
- Home/Out of school

Auditory Aids

- Amplification
- Noise Buffer

Flexible Scheduling

- Flexible Scheduling of subtests (within allotted time)
- Flexible time of day

Recording Answers

- Student marks in test booklet
- Recorded by Scribe

Other

- Magnification Equipment
- Abacus
- Templates, Masks, Pointers

3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?

Tennessee is a refugee relocation center, and many languages are represented in the state. Hence the state does not offer assessments in languages other than English. However, they do collect data on student performance with the assistance of a native speaker of the student's language and the classroom teacher.

4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?

The TCAP – Alt assessment went into effect July 1, 2000. This portfolio-based assessment has been piloted, and the scores can be disaggregated or aggregated with the total population, depending on confidentiality issues.

5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?

Tennessee has the goal of full inclusion of all students on statewide assessments: no exclusions, no exemptions.

6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

Tennessee officials plan to periodically review their guidelines.

Performance Standards

1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?

Tennessee has established five performance levels: Step 1, Progressing, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced. The TCAP Achievement test also reports information in terms of five performance levels that describe a Pathway to Proficiency. The five levels of performance are appropriate for grade span three through five, and grade span six through eight. These performance levels are only applicable for the **Achievement Test**.

The **TCAP Writing assessment** is scored based on a six-point rubric, but the scores are not expressed in performance levels. The **High School Subject Matter Tests** are reported simply in raw scores and percent of questions correct.

Tennessee is in the process of developing **Gateway Tests** which will act as high school graduation tests, to be implemented in 2001-2002. These tests are expected to have performance levels, and Tennessee officials will set cut scores after the tests are piloted.

Tennessee officials have descriptive definitions for each of the subjects, at each grade span. Following is an example for reading performance standards for grades 3 – 5.

Advanced: Students use analogies to generalize. They identify a paraphrase of concepts or ideas in texts. They can indicate thought processes that led them to a previous answer. In written responses, they demonstrate understanding of an implied theme, assess intent of passage information, and provide justification as well as support for their answer.

Proficient: Students interpret figures of speech. They recognize paraphrases of text information and retrieve information to complete forms. In more complex texts, they identify themes, main ideas, or author's purpose/point of view. They analyze and apply information in graphic and text form, make reasonable generalizations, and draw conclusions. In written responses, they can identify key elements from text.

Nearing Proficiency: Students use context clues and structural analysis to determine word meaning. They recognize homonyms and antonyms in grade-level text. They identify important details, sequences, cause-and-effect, and lessons embedded in the text. They interpret character's feelings and apply information to new situations. In written responses, they can express their opinion and support it.

Progressing: Students identify synonyms for grade-level words, and use context clues to define common words. They make simple inferences and predications based on text. They identify characters' feelings. They can transfer information from text to graphic form or from graphic form to text form. In written responses, they can provide limited support for their answers.

Step 1: Students select pictured representations of ideas and identify stated details contained in simple texts. In written responses, they can select and transfer information from charts.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, dropout rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

With regard to the TCAP Achievement Test, Tennessee aims to move students to Proficient or Advanced level by the end of grade five and to the Proficient or Advanced level again by the end of grade eight. These objectives cover grade spans: a student in grade three may only be scoring at the Progressing level, but this is considered entirely appropriate; it is at the end of the grade span that they should be scoring at the Proficient or Advanced level.

In addition, Tennessee law identifies the following state goals for schools:

- Dropout rate of no more than 10%
- Attendance rates of 95% for K-8, 95% for grades 9-12
- Promotion rate of at least 97%
- TVAAS value added score of 100 (details on the TVAAS system are provided in the “accountability” section of this profile.)
- All teachers fully certified in the area of instruction
- Class size reduction targets

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The performance standards described in question 1 are based on assessments. The school-based standards outlined in question 2 are not yet tied into an accountability system, but will be incorporated into the new accountability system, to be implemented during the academic year 2000-2001. However, districts do currently report on these goals.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

All students, schools, and districts are included in performance calculations.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are anticipated for performance levels in Tennessee, with the exception of the setting of cut scores for the Gateway assessments, when they are fully developed.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Not currently applicable.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports*

The “home report” in Tennessee includes information for parents on their child’s performance including percentile ranks, stanines, the Objectives Performance Index (OPI), and mastery of objectives.

- *School reports*

Tennessee School Report cards are accessible, interestingly, on the website for the newspaper, The Tennessean. Indeed, the Tennessee Department of Education website provides a link to the Tennessean website for this purpose.

The school reports on the Tennessean include only assessment information from the TCAP, grades 5-8 in language, math, reading, science, and social studies. The scores are presented by school, grade, subject, including overall score and rate of improvement.

- *District reports*

District report cards are accessible on the state education website and include the following information:

- ✓ Schools accredited by SACS for system and state
- ✓ Personnel data
- ✓ Waivers and permits issues
- ✓ Year 2001-2002 Class Size Standards, percent of schools and classes meeting the standard
- ✓ Enrollment, disaggregated
- ✓ Writing assessment: percent competent or above
- ✓ Comprehensive Assessment results by grade, subject, percentile, system and state, showing two year trend
- ✓ ACT, SAT and Work Keys results by subject, system, and state, showing four year trend
- ✓ Percent of first-time freshman passing competency test, by subject, for system and state
- ✓ Attendance rate, K-6, 7-12
- ✓ Promotion rate
- ✓ Dropout rate, disaggregated, by event rate and cohort rate
- ✓ Expulsions/Suspensions, disaggregated

- ✓ Comprehensive Assessment Program Value added three year average by grade span, subject, system, and state, showing six year trend, Tennessee gain compared to national gain.

- *State reports*

The State report, **A Summary of Tennessee's Public School Systems Report Card, 21st Century Schools Program**, is accessible on the state department of education website. This report includes the following information (most data is provided by system and state, since 1992-93):

Tennessee Student Data

- ✓ Number of students in public school systems
- ✓ Ethnic composition of Tennessee public school systems
- ✓ Title I compensatory education participation, percent of Title I schools meeting academic expectations
- ✓ Free and reduced-price meal programs
- ✓ Special Education programs
- ✓ English language learner programs
- ✓ Adult High school students

Tennessee Student Performance

- ✓ Attendance rates for students in public schools
- ✓ Promotion rates for Kindergarten through Eighth grade
- ✓ Dropout rates for students in public schools, grades nine through twelve
- ✓ Students expelled or suspended
- ✓ Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program grades three through eight
- ✓ Tennessee writing assessment
- ✓ Tennessee Value-Added assessment system
- ✓ Tennessee Competency Test
- ✓ High School Subject Matter Tests – Math
- ✓ SAT, ACT, and Work Keys results
- ✓ Progress in Reading and Mathematics Grade 2

Tennessee School Systems Demographics

- ✓ Total Schools and Grades served
- ✓ School accredited by SACS
- ✓ Class-size requirements
- ✓ Personnel by category
- ✓ Employment standards waivers and permits

Finance

- ✓ Expenditures by public school systems
- ✓ Expenditures by function
- ✓ Expenditures by student
- ✓ Expenditures for principal and interest on bonded debt by other agencies
- ✓ Average salaries for teachers

- ✓ Public school funding by source
- ✓ Basic Education Program formula
- ✓ County-Area education fiscal capacity
- ✓ Performance Incentives
- ✓ Licensure/Class size sanctions

- *Title I reports*

Title I data is included in the state report. In addition, the Title I office provides a performance report to the federal government with information on student participation, demographics, SES, assessment data disaggregated, etc.

2. How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?

State law requires the state Department of Education to disseminate information to the public, the press, all school systems, superintendents, and school boards. Much information is accessible on the state department of education website, and through its link to the website of the Tennessean.

3. At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?

Tennessee disaggregates by race/ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian), gender, free/reduced lunch, Title I, and students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. However, this data is not routinely included in public reports. Disaggregated information that is reported includes dropout, expulsion, and suspension rates.

4. Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?

The trend information on which Tennessee reports ranges from two years (for the Comprehensive Assessment) to four years (for the SAT, ACT and Work Keys).

5. How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?

At present, the scores of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency are not disaggregated, and are included if they participated in statewide assessments in a manner which does not compromise the validity of the test. In the future, Tennessee officials intend to both aggregate the scores of all students with disabilities (even those who take the alternate assessment) and to disaggregate these scores.

6. What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?

During the school improvement planning process, Tennessee schools are required to conduct a “data gathering and analysis” step, during which educators and administrators examine student performance and identify desired student performance goals.

7. Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?

In the past, Tennessee has not produced school-level report cards, but they will do so for the first time in November 2000. The school report cards will contain the same type of information as is currently included in the district report cards, with additional information on the accountability system and measures.

8. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.

Tennessee officials identified development of the measure of progress as a current challenge in the area of performance standards for schools (aside from TVAAS). They are currently exploring ways in which this indicator may be developed, and throughout the process they are asking questions such as:

- ✓ How much progress does a school have to make to be removed from the low-performing list?
- ✓ What are reasonable expectations for progress?
- ✓ Over what period of time should progress be measured?
- ✓ How could immediate progress be demonstrated?

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is one of the cornerstones of the Tennessee accountability system. Developed by Dr. William L. Sanders, TVAAS is a statistical process which provides measures of the influence that school systems, schools, and teachers have on indicators of student learning. TVAAS was mandated by the Education Improvement Act which took effect in July, 1992.

By basing TVAAS on statistical mixed model methodology, unbiased estimates of the influence of these variables on student learning and achievement can be obtained, even when differences exist in students’ environments. TVAAS analyzes the scale scores students make over a period of three to five years on the norm-referenced items on the TCAP. These scale scores should increase from year to year as the student learns. The idea is that – even if all students don’t achieve at the same levels – school and teachers should at least be adding “value” to each student’s performance.

One of the most powerful and controversial aspects of TVAAS is that it can reach beyond the school level to produce a measure of an individual teacher’s effectiveness, based on how well the students in his or her classroom perform each year. In Tennessee, such information is shown

only to school officials and the teachers themselves. State law allows administrators to use the scores in teachers' formal job evaluations after three years of data have been collected.

The Education Improvement Act also mandated the development of a system of identifying low-performing schools. The guidelines associated with the requirements of this bill with regard to accountability have recently been completed, and should be implemented following the summer of 2000.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?*

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

Organize the response into the following subsections:

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Currently, Tennessee students are required to pass the TCAP Competency Test in Language Arts and Mathematics in order to graduate from high school. In addition, State Board policy calls for students' end-of-course test scores to be made a part of their grades for the subjects in which they take tests.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

At present, Tennessee has a fairly basic system of school-based accountability. However, this situation should change after July 21, 2000, when the state board of education is scheduled to approve a new school-based accountability system. Details on this system are provided in the response to question 8 of this section.

Tennessee has mandated five performance goals for students annually presented in a System Report Card in areas of attendance, promotion, drop-out and value-added assessment. These were established by law in 1991, and are reported in district reports. However, sanctions attached to failure to attain these goals had not been fully developed or integrated into an accountability system. These goals are evaluated through the School Approval process, which is used for reviewing school and system information to determine compliance with the State Board of Education Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards and the State laws.

Class size reduction goals were also established with the 1991 legislation, but schools have until 2001-2002 to meet those standards, so no probationary action has been taken in this regard.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Tennessee will integrate districts into the new accountability system, using the same performance based measures as apply to schools.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*

The new accountability system will focus on an absolute target (50th percentile on TerraNova) and relative growth (a TVAAS score of 100).

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

All students are included in measures of progress, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

While the Title I system of accountability incorporates some of the same measures as the general state accountability system, the two are not aligned.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

No, subgroup performance results are not used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Tennessee has no charter schools, and students in non-public schools do not have to take state assessments.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

On July 21, 2000 the Tennessee State Board of Education is scheduled to approve the new accountability system. Tennessee has recently completed the development of an accountability system that will identify of schools in need of assistance based on the following criteria: assessment results, Value-Added scores, and non-academic variables of promotion, dropout, and attendance.

Tennessee officials are developing a warning list of schools based on these criteria. Schools will be placed on this list if:

- School results on the reading, math, and ELA portions of the Achievement assessment are not above the 50th percentile nationally (reminder: the Achievement assessment is based on TerraNova)

OR

- The school TVAAS score is in the bottom 1/3 of the state.

The state goals with regard to promotion, dropout, and attendance rates will also be integrated into the evaluation of schools. Schools may be placed on probation, or “on notice,” for up to two years. If no progress is being made, the Commissioner of education will be authorized to take over the superintendent’s job and that of the school board.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Tennessee officials noted several issues and challenges, including:

- The validity and reliability of assessments, including the alignment between what is measured by the test and what the teacher is teaching
- The inclusion of fresh and non-redundant test items, which leads to questions of how to equate pre-and post-test measures.
- Complying with federal mandates

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

At present, Tennessee does not identify schools as low-performing, aside from the Title I system. However, the new accountability system, described above, will do so in following years.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

Not currently applicable.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Tennessee provides some assistance in school improvement planning, and financial assistance is available through various federal funds and state grants.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

Assistance available to Tennessee schools takes the form of Technology Literacy grants, Goals 2000 funds, Education Edge, and class size reduction. In addition, schools may receive assistance in school improvement planning.

5. Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?

Title I support is distinct from that which is provided to non-Title I schools across the state. The Tennessee Title I office contracts with non-profits and universities to provide support to schools in need of improvement; this assistance is not available for non-Title I schools.

6. Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?

Tennessee has not yet set this criteria.

7. Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?

Schools are not yet formally identified as low-performing in Tennessee, but school boards and schools are expected to have improvement plans. The State Board of Education requires that school improvement plans address curriculum and instruction, professional development, are linked to school board five-year plans, and are based on a community partnership. The plans should include the following components:

- I. Beliefs
Mission/Vision Statement/Philosophy
School Profile
- II. Student Expectations
- III. Curriculum and Instruction Strategies
- IV. Performance Assessment (Evaluation of student knowledge and skills)
- V. Strategic Results Plan, School Improvement Plan
Goals
Intervention/Strategies
Timelines
Staff/Personnel
Required Costs/Resources
Means of Evaluation
Professional Development Plans
Link to School Board 5 Year Strategic Plans
Community Involvement

VI. Next Steps
Areas of Need
Higher Expectations

8. Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

The changes to the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools will reflect those of the accountability system. Schools will be identified as “in need of assistance” and a new system of technical assistance will be developed. However, details on the new forms of technical assistance are not currently available.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

For grades 3-8, Tennessee currently utilizes the performance levels developed for the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, 5th Edition (CTBS/5) which is a component of the TerraNova Assessment series. The following five performance levels are used: 1) Step 1, 2) Progressing, 3) Nearing Proficiency, 4) Proficient, 5) Advanced. Additional measures, including some local measures, may be included as criteria in determining adequate yearly progress, when considering preponderance of evidence.

For grades 9-12, the primary measures on which adequate yearly progress is based are the Language Arts and Mathematics portions of the Tennessee Competency Test, on which passing scores have been set.

2. What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress?

The current state Transitional Assessment Standards (definition of AYP) are as follows:

- Grades Pre-K – 2: Developmentally appropriate measures established by the LEA.
- Grades 3- 8: In reading and math, the mean performance level across grades will increase by 0.05. Schools with fewer than 25 students tested must demonstrate progress through a preponderance of evidence.
- Grades 9-12: In math and language arts, the percentage of students demonstrating competency by the end of tenth grade shall increase yearly toward a goal of at least 90%.

The following table provides information about the grades 3-8 standard:

TerraNova National and State Mean Performance Level Increase, by Grade, and Percentage of a Year’s Growth Necessary to Meet Title I Standard

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 7	Grade 8
READING				
<u>Increase from previous grade</u>				
National norm group	0.34	0.30	0.23	0.25
Tennessee students	0.28	0.34	0.22	0.29
<u>Percent growth to meet standard</u>				
National norm group	115%	117%	122%	120%
Tennessee students	118%	115%	123%	117%
MATHEMATICS				
<u>Increase from previous grade</u>				
National norm group	0.52	0.47	0.36	0.36
Tennessee students	0.55	0.42	0.25	0.45
<u>Percent growth to meet standard</u>				
National norm group	110%	111%	114%	114%
Tennessee students	109%	112%	120%	111%

For schoolwide programs, LEAs should consider results for all students in both areas. For targeted assistance schools, the LEAs may consider results for all students in both areas, or, if a school looks at only students served, they must use results for those children in both language arts and mathematics, even if students are served in only one area.

With regard to the preponderance of evidence measures, the following evidence of improvement may be provided:

- The majority of grades meet the .05 gain.
- Substantial improvement on mean performance level at grades 5 and 8
- Substantial improvement on percent proficient
- Substantial improvement on mean percent mastery or OPI (Objectives Performance Index)
- Growth of at least one NCE on the Reading or Mathematics subtest
- Substantial improvement on TCAP Writing Assessment
- Substantial improvement on the TVAAS relative to the USA norm
- Substantial improvement in curricular programs, e.g. Accelerated Reader, Learning Unlimited, etc.
- Substantial improvement in graduation rate

Evidence of Attainment

- The mean performance level is equal to or greater than the national mean performance level
- The percent of students at proficient or higher is equal to or greater than the national norm
- The mean percent mastery or OPI is equal to or greater than the national mean.

- The percent of students in the lowest quartile is equal to or less than the national percentage or the percentage of students in the highest quartile is equal to or greater than the national average.
- The TVAAS percent is at least 100% of the USA norm
- The majority of grades in the school are equal to or greater than the 50th percentile on the Reading or mathematics subtest.
- Meeting local desired outcomes, especially for preK through kindergarten.

The same transitional standards apply to districts for the purposes of determining adequate yearly progress. Districts may aggregate scores across grades to demonstrate gain, or present other measures if they so wish.

3. What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?

It is the responsibility of the LEA to determine if schools have made adequate yearly progress, but the state does so for districts. Tennessee does offer some guidance to local districts in this process; although the guidelines are not imposed on districts, they are strongly encouraged to adhere to them.

Tennessee offers the following guidelines to districts when selecting measures to use in the preponderance of evidence:

- 1) A minimum of two positive academic measures should be presented.
- 2) It is highly recommended that measures presented include evidence of improvement
- 3) If only two pieces of evidence are presented they should be based on two different measures.
- 4) When presenting averages, weighted averages are more statistically sound and are recommended.

4. What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?

A school will be identified by the LEA for school improvement if, for two consecutive years, in the same subject area, adequate progress is not made. The school then must show positive results for each area in two of the next three years or be subject to consequences as described in the LEA plan.

An LEA will be identified for improvement, depending on the size and number of schools, if:

- 1) For two consecutive years in the same subject area, the primary measure is not met when results are combined across schools;
- 2) More than 50% of its schools are in school improvement.

The LEA may choose the method for review and may also present a preponderance of evidence to show that adequate progress is being made.

All schools in Tennessee must develop a school improvement plan; schools that are in need of improvement under Title I are required to review their plan and specifically address areas of concern that pertain to Title I. However, they are not required to write a separate school improvement plan.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Tennessee offers expert assistance, and evaluation and planning assistance.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

The Title I system of support is provided through contracts with two non-profit organizations and two universities. Individuals from these organizations provide assistance to schools in need of improvement and those that are beginning to implement a schoolwide system, but may be encountering difficulties. In addition, Title I staff from the Tennessee Department of Education are available to provide technical assistance. Distinguished educators work through the non-profits and universities that are under contract to provide assistance.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have not played a significant role in Tennessee; they have had no new waivers granted in the past few years.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

There will be changes to the Title I system in Tennessee as the accountability system develops. The new accountability model has been approved. However, the exact process, including how various measures will be weighted, is still under discussion. Title I officials are trying to ensure that the new system will be appropriate for Title I purposes.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

At this point, the Title I and non-Title I systems of accountability are separate, but Title I officials hope they will be aligned in the future.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The most significant challenge that Tennessee officials noted is the implementation of all the federally required standards in a timely manner, and helping state Department of Education officials and staff understand what is required and why. The staff of the Tennessee Title I office is responsible for numerous federal programs, and keeping up with regulatory changes and directives poses a constant challenge.

Contact Information

Assessment

Karen Jenkins
Director of Testing Services
Tennessee Department of Education
Andrew Johnson Tower
710 J. Robertson Parkway
Nashville TN 37243
(615) 532-3027
kjenkins@mail.state.tn.us

Accountability

Connie Smith
Director
Office of Accountability
Tennessee Department of Education
Andrew Johnson Tower
710 J. Robertson Parkway
Nashville TN 37243
(615) 532-4703
csmith@mail.state.tn.us

Title I

Suzanne Fox
Tennessee Department of Education
Andrew Johnson Tower
710 J. Robertson Parkway
Nashville TN 37243
(615) 532-6246
sfox@mail.state.tn.us