Accountability

Summary of New Accountability Hold Harmless Law for Districts and School Board Members

On January 21, 2021, during the 1st Extraordinary Session of the 112th General Assembly, the Tennessee General Assembly took bold action by passing the Accountability Hold Harmless Law (SB7001/HB7003) to hold your schools, teachers, and students harmless from negative consequences resulting from the 2020-21 TCAP assessments.

The Governor, the General Assembly, and the department heard from districts that the COVID-19 pandemic created the need for common-sense flexibilities regarding school and district accountability, educator evaluations, and the incorporation of TCAP data in student grades. These flexibilities include:

- **School-level accountability:** Student performance and growth data generated by TCAP assessments administered in the 2020-2021 school year shall not be used to assign a letter grade to schools, identify any schools for the priority list, or assign any schools to the achievement school district so long as districts administer assessments to at least 80% of eligible students or receive a waiver from the Commissioner of Education.

- **Ratings:** The department shall not issue letter grades or any other summative ratings for schools or districts on the state report card for the 2020-2021 school year, so long as the district meets the 80% threshold or receives a waiver.

- **Student growth composites:** Student growth data generated by the 2020-2021 TCAP assessments will not be used for educators’ student growth composites for the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years, unless such inclusion results in a higher overall final evaluation score for the educator.

- **Alternative growth model evaluations for teachers in non-tested grades and subjects and pre-k and kindergarten portfolio/portfolio alternatives:** The state shall not require educators to be evaluated using alternative growth models or pre-k and kindergarten portfolio or portfolio alternatives. As a district LEA, you may locally decide to evaluate your teachers in non-tested grades and subjects using an alternative growth model, portfolio, or portfolio alternative, but the evaluations may not be used in your educators’ final evaluations, unless such use results in a higher final evaluation score for the educator.

- **Incorporation of TCAP scores in student grades:** For the 2020-2021 school year, districts may choose the percentage that scores from the TCAP assessments will count on students’ final grades. The range currently allowable is 0% - 25%.