



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**District Accountability**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Summer 2015**

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**Q1: What is the background on Tennessee's accountability model?**

Signed into law in 2001, the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB) mandated that the state, district, and schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) towards the goal of 100 percent of students being proficient in math and reading by 2014. The federal government allowed states to waive out of the AYP provisions in NCLB in 2012 by submitting an ESEA Flexibility Waiver. Tennessee submitted its waiver in 2012. Principle 2 of the waiver outlines the state's accountability model. Tennessee first implemented its new accountability model in the 2012-13 school year. You may download the most recent version of the flexibility waiver from this address: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/map/tn.html>.

**Q2: What changes have been made to Tennessee's ESEA Flexibility Waiver since it was first used for accountability in 2012?**

Since 2012, we have made the following changes to the state's ESEA waiver:

1. The state outlined a methodology for setting Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). For more information on this methodology, see questions [Q8](#) through [Q10](#).
2. The state added assessments in English III and Algebra II. Baselines were set in 2012, and districts began to be held accountable for performance in those subjects in 2013.
3. The state began using a methodology for determining Gap AMOs that combines Algebra I with Algebra II and English II with English III. For more information on this methodology, see question [Q14](#).
4. Districts that hit a majority of their Achievement AMOs with safe harbor but did not improve in half or more of the measures or did not improve in 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, and half or more of the high school measures cannot be given exemplary status.
5. The state added a safe harbor for gap closure. For more information on this safe harbor, see question [Q31](#).
6. The state added a safe harbor for graduation rate. For more information on this safe harbor, see question [Q26](#).
7. The state gave districts the option to assess grades K-2 using SAT 10. Districts that choose to test grades K-2 have a grade 3 value added composite which is used in a safe harbor when making district accountability determinations.
8. The state provided a second pathway for districts to pass the subgroup improvement test. For more information on both pathways, see question [Q32](#).

**Q3: What is the difference between district accountability and school accountability?**

As outlined in Tennessee's ESEA Flexibility Waiver, Tennessee has two accountability models, one for districts and one for schools. The district accountability model uses Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). The school accountability model is based on school success rates. For more information on district AMOs, see questions [Q8](#) through [Q13](#).

In addition, district and school determinations are different. District determinations are exemplary, intermediate, in need of subgroup improvement, and in need of improvement. School determinations are reward, priority, and focus. For more information on district determinations, see questions [Q4](#) through [Q43](#). For more information on school accountability, see the School Accountability FAQ document.

**Q4: There are two parts of Tennessee’s district accountability framework as outlined in its ESEA Flexibility waiver – achievement and gap closure. What is the difference?**

The achievement part of the accountability framework evaluates the performance of all students. The gap closure part evaluates the performance of select subgroups and gap groups.

**Q5: What tests are used for district accountability?**

District accountability includes results from the TCAP tests in grades 3 through 8 math and reading/language arts. It also includes results from the following End of Course (EOC) assessments: Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, and English III. The English Linguistically Simplified Assessment (ELSA) is a modified version of the TCAP for English Language Learners (ELL). ELSA math and reading results are included in accountability calculations.

TCAP-Alt Portfolio Assessment is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities and is based on alternate content standards. Portfolio math and reading test results are included in accountability calculations.

Districts have the option to participate in the K-2 assessment. Although no annual measurable objectives are set on K-2, districts are eligible for a grade 3 TVAAS safe harbor if they participate in grades K-2 testing.

**Q6: For the 2014-15 school year, Tennessee eliminated the TCAP Modified Academic Achievement Standards (MAAS) assessment. What adjustments have been made in the accountability system to reflect potential achievement differences in students transitioning from MAAS to TCAP?**

Based on the prior achievement of students transitioning from MAAS to TCAP, the state anticipated a drop of roughly 1-2 in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced (P/A). In order to account for this change in proficiency levels resulting from assessment transitions, the state provided MAAS-adjustment safe harbors to the achievement and subgroup improvement tests and achievement and gap-closure AMO targets in the district accountability system via an automatic appeals process. These adjustments have been automatically applied. District data reflects the updated designation (NOTE: no action is necessary on the district’s behalf – these checks and calculations have been run automatically). Letters detailing which tests and content areas-grades-subgroups received this appeal will be sent to directors. For more details on the calculations please see the document titled “2014-15 MAAS Adjustments to Accountability: Methodology” on the Announcements tab of the Accountability Application.

**Q7: What grades and content areas are evaluated in district accountability?**

The accountability calculations evaluate performance in the following content areas and grade levels: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading/language arts, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, 3rd-8th grade math, 3rd-8th grade reading/language arts, Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, English III, and graduation rate.

**Q8: What are Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)?**

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) are quantifiable goals based on student achievement on state assessments and achievement gaps between historically disadvantaged groups and their relevant comparison groups. AMOs are set at the state, district, and school levels. For the state and districts, accountability status is determined by the number of goals the state or district meets. The state’s report card shows performance against those AMOs.

**Q9: How are Achievement AMOs Calculated?**

Achievement AMOs are set for the following subjects/grade levels: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading/language arts, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, 3rd-8th grade math, 3rd-8th grade reading/language arts, Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, English III, and Graduation Rate. AMOs are set so that the percentage of students scoring basic or below basic is reduced by half over the course of eight years. Achievement goals and targets are always rounded to the tenth place.

<b>Achievement AMO Formula</b>
<b>Growth Goal</b> = $(100 - \% \text{ Proficient/Advanced in Previous Year}) \div 16$ <b>Achievement Target for Current Year</b> = $\% \text{ Proficient/Advanced Previous Year} + \text{Growth Goal}$

For example, District X had 70 percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in Algebra I in 2014. We would calculate District X's Achievement AMO as follows:

$$\text{Growth Goal} = (100 - 70) \div 16 = 1.875 = 1.9$$

District X would be expected to improve the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced in Algebra I by 1.9 percentage points.

$$\text{Achievement Target for 2015} = 70 + 1.9 = 71.9$$

District X's achievement target in Algebra I would be 71.9 percent for 2015.

**Q10: How are Gap Closure AMOs Calculated?**

Gap Closure AMOs are set for the following subjects/grade levels or measures: 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, combined Algebra I/Algebra II, and combined English II/English III. Gap-Closure AMOs are set for each of the following subgroups and comparison groups: Economically Disadvantaged vs. Non-Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners vs. Non-English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities vs. Non-Students with Disabilities, Black/Hispanic/Native American vs. All Students. Gap-Closure AMOs are calculated so that the gap between the subgroup and the comparison group is reduced by half over the course of eight years. Gap-closure goals and targets are always round to the tenth place. Gap-Closure AMOs are set using the following formula:

<b>Gap-Closure AMOs Formula:</b>
<b>Gap-Closure Goal</b> = $\text{Gap in Previous Year} \div 16$ <b>Gap-Closure Target for Current Year</b> = $\text{Gap in Previous Year} - \text{Gap-Closure Goal}$

For example, District X had a gap between Economically Disadvantaged Students (ED) and Non-Economically Disadvantaged Students of 20 percentage points in 2014. We would calculate District X's Gap Closure AMO as follows:

$$\text{Gap Closure Goal} = 20 \div 16 = 1.25 = 1.3$$

$$\text{Gap Closure Target} = 20 - 1.3 = 18.7$$

District X's Gap Closure Target for Economically Disadvantaged Students for 2015 would be 18.7 percentage points.

**Q11: What is a negative gap and are districts held accountable for negative gaps?**

A negative gap occurs when the subgroup outperforms its comparison group. For example, if Economically Disadvantaged students outperform Non-Economically Disadvantaged students, then a negative gap occurs. Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) are not set for negative gaps. The accountability model does not hold districts with negative gaps accountable in the subsequent year.

**Q12: What subgroups are included in district accountability?**

As outlined in Tennessee’s ESEA Flexibility waiver, students are divided into applicable subgroups for the following races/ethnicities: White, Hispanic, Black, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Students are also assigned to the following gap subgroups: English Language Learners (ELL), Non-English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged (ED), Non-Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities (SWD), or Non-Students with Disabilities, Black/Hispanic/Native American (BHN), and/or All Students.

**Q13: What subgroups and comparison groups are used for Gap Closure AMOs?**

For Gap Closure AMOs, the following subgroups and comparison groups are used:

- English Language Learners vs. Non-English Language Learners
- Students with Disabilities vs. Non-Students with Disabilities
- Black/Hispanic/Native American vs. All Students
- Economically Disadvantaged vs. Non-Economically Disadvantaged

**Q14: How is the combined gap for Algebra I/II and English II/III calculated?**

Calculating Combined Gap Closure AMOs
<p><b>Step 1:</b> Determine the achievement gaps between the subgroup and the comparison groups for each subject.</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Weight each individual subject gap by the number of students tested in the subgroup using the following formula:</p> <p><b>Combined Gap =</b></p> $\frac{(\# \text{ of subgroup students tested} \times \text{Subject 1 Gap}) + (\# \text{ of subgroup students tested} \times \text{Subject 2 Gap})}{(\# \text{ of subgroup students tested in Subject 1} + \# \text{ of subgroup students tested in Subject 2})}$ <p><b>Step 3:</b> Apply the Gap Closure AMO methodology</p>

For example, District X has 150 Economically Disadvantaged students tested in Algebra I and 125 Economically Disadvantaged students tested in Algebra II. The Algebra I gap between ED and Non-ED students is 15%, and the Algebra II gap between ED and Non-ED students is 12%. Using the formula above:

$$\text{Weighted Algebra I/Algebra II Gap} = [(150 \times 15) + (125 \times 12)] \div 275$$

$$\text{Weighted Algebra I/Algebra II Gap} = 13.6$$



The next step would be to determine the gap target and gap goal using the methodology outlined in question [Q9](#).

**Q15: How is the graduation rate calculated?**

Consistent with Federal Guidelines, Tennessee uses a 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Students are placed in a cohort based on the year they entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade. “Graduates” are students that receive a regular on-time diploma. On-time is defined as receiving a diploma within four years (including the summer after 12<sup>th</sup> grade). The cohort may be adjusted if a student transfers out of a cohort providing the district submits the appropriate supporting documentation. Graduation rate is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Graduation Rate} = \# \text{ of students receiving a regular, on-time diploma} \div \# \text{ of students in cohort}$$

**Q16: How is the graduation rate used in the accountability framework?**

Graduation rate is used as a measure on the achievement side of the accountability framework. Each year, districts must meet a graduation rate target which is set such that the percentage of students not graduating is reduced by half over the course of eight years.

**Q17: What year’s graduation rate is used in the accountability framework?**

The graduation rate has a one-year lag. For example, the 2014 graduation rate is used to determine whether a district met its AMO for 2015 accountability.

**Q18: How many valid tests must a district have to be held accountable for a measure?**

In order to be held accountable for an achievement AMO, a district must have at least 30 valid tests in both the year AMOs were set and the current year. In order to be held accountable for a Gap Closure AMO, the subgroup and its comparison group must each have at least 30 valid tests in the year the AMO was set and the current year.

**Q19: How is participation rate calculated?**

Participation rates are calculated by dividing the number of students tested by the number of students enrolled. For each subject, participation rate is calculated at the school, district, and state levels for all students and each subgroup and then rounded to the nearest whole percentage point. Districts and schools must meet a 95 percent participation rate, and may do so by using a one-, two-, or three-year average. If a district does not meet the participation rate test, the district’s achievement status is MISS: IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT.

**Q20: What is the procedure used to arrive at a district’s achievement status?**

Districts are evaluated on whether they meet AMO targets in subjects for which they are eligible, either outright or through safe harbors. In order for a grade and subject to be eligible, there must be 30 or more valid tests. The subjects and grades included are 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading/language arts, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, English III, and graduation rate.

Refer to the diagrams in the SAS District Accountability Protocol’s Appendix I and II for a step by step sequence of the logic used to arrive at achievement status.

**Q21: What is a safe harbor?**

Safe harbors provide districts alternative ways to demonstrate success. A safe harbor is a test that may allow districts to meet an AMO or be considered improved in a given content area and grade through a path other than meeting the AMO or improvement outright.

**Q22: What safe harbors exist for AMOs on the achievement side?**

The table below lists the safe harbors through which districts can pass their achievement AMOs. If the answer to any of the questions listed below is “yes” for any content area and grade, then the district meets their achievement AMO in that content area and grade.

Safe Harbor	Question
Confidence Interval Safe Harbor	Did the upper bound of the 95% confidence interval for percent P/A meet the AMO?
TVAAS Safe Harbor	Did the district receive an index value of 1 or higher in the current year?
Reduction in Percent Below Proficient Safe Harbor	Did the district reduce the number of students scoring basic/below basic by 10% over 1 year, 19% over 2 years, or 27% over 3 years?
Graduation Rate Safe Harbor	Did the district have a graduation rate of at least 95%?
MAAS-Adjusted AMO Safe Harbor	Did the upper bound of the 95% confidence interval for percent P/A meet the MAAS-adjusted AMO? (math and RLA only)

**Q23: How is the Confidence Interval Safe Harbor applied?**

The accountability framework uses a Confidence Interval Safe Harbor for Achievement AMOs (excluding Graduation Rate). If the upper range of the 95 percent confidence interval is greater than or equal to the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO), the district meets its AMO.

**Q24: How is the TVAAS Safe Harbor applied?**

The TVAAS Safe Harbor is used for Achievement AMOs (excluding Graduation Rate). To pass the TVAAS safe harbor, a measure must receive an index value of 1 or higher in a given grade and subject.

**Q25: How are the 1-year, 2-year, and 3-year reductions in the percentage of students scoring below basic/basic applied?**

Districts may obtain a safe harbor if they reduce the percentage of students scoring below basic/basic by 10 percent in 1 year, 19 percent over 2 years, or 27 percent over 3 years. For example, suppose a district did not meet its AMO target in 3rd grade math; however, the district reduced the percent of students scoring below basic/basic in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math by 11 percent in one year. By doing so, the district would have met its AMO.

**Q26: How is the Graduation Rate Safe Harbor applied?**

Districts that exceed a 95 percent graduation rate automatically meet their graduation rate AMO, regardless of their calculated AMO. For example, District X has a graduation rate of 96.1 percent, and

their AMO target is 96.3 percent. Even though District X failed to meet the target of 96.3 percent, it meets this AMO via the 95 percent graduation rate safe harbor.

**Q27: How is the achievement improvement test applied?**

There are two improvement tests applied and districts must pass both.

- **Improvement Test (Total)**: A district must improve in at least half of the total number of eligible measures (3<sup>rd</sup> grade math, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading/language arts, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, 3rd-8th grade math, 3rd-8th grade reading/language arts, Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, English III, and graduation rate).
- **Improvement Test (Aggregate)**: A district must improve in aggregate measures (3rd-8th grade math and 3rd-8th grade reading/language arts) and at least half of its eligible high school subjects (Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, English III, and graduation rate).

**Q28: What safe harbors exist for the achievement improvement tests?**

A safe harbor has been added to the Improvement test (Total) and Improvement test (Aggregate).

In this safe harbor the current percent P/A is compared to the MAAS-adjusted prior percent P/A.

In each applicable grade-content area, a district is considered improved if the current percent P/A is greater than the MAAS-adjusted prior percent P/A. The district must improve in at least half of the total number of eligible measures to pass the improvement test (Total). The district must improve in both 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> math and 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> reading/language arts and half of its eligible high school subjects to pass the Improvement Test (Aggregate).

**Q29: How is participation rate used in determining gap-closure status?**

Question 19 above describes how participation rates are calculated. For gap-closure status each district is evaluated on whether it meets a 95% participation rate for each of the following subgroups when there are 30 or more valid tests: White, Hispanic, Black, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, and English Language Learners. Subjects evaluated include 3-8 math, 3-8 reading/language arts, Algebra I + II (combined) and English II + III (combined). If a district fails the participation rate test for any subject/subgroup, it receives a gap closure designation of MISS: In Need of Subgroup Improvement.

**Q30: What procedure is used to arrive at a district's gap-closure status?**

For the gap-closure side of the accountability model, districts are held accountable for meeting gap-closure AMOs, either outright or through a safe harbor, in subjects that have 30 valid tests in both the subgroup and its comparison group for the prior and current years. You may find the list of subgroups and comparison groups in question Q13. The measures used for gap closure are: 3rd-8th grade math, 3rd-8th grade reading/language arts, Algebra I/II (combined), and English II/III (combined). Districts are also evaluated on whether they improved in at least half of eligible subjects for a number of subgroups. See [Q32](#) below for more details on this test. To determine how gap closure AMOs are set, please refer to question [Q10](#). Refer to the diagrams in the SAS District Accountability Protocol's Appendix III and IV for the logic used to arrive at gap closure status.

**Q31: What safe harbors exist for gap-closure AMOs?**

The table below lists the safe harbors through which districts can pass their gap-closure AMOs. If the answer to the any of the questions listed below is "yes" for any content area, grade and subgroup, then the district meets their gap-closure AMO in that content area, grade, and subgroup.

Safe Harbor	Question
MAAS-adjusted AMO Safe Harbor	Was the current gap less than or equal to the MAAS-adjusted AMO gap closure target? (3-8 math and RLA only)
Gap Closure Safe Harbor	Did the subgroup meet their subgroup AMO target for a given subject? <u>AND</u> , did the gap stay the same or decrease? (both of these elements are required for this safe harbor)

### Q32: How is the subgroup improvement test applied?

For the following subgroups – White, Hispanic, Black, Native American/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners – with 30 or more valid tests in the prior and current year, a test is run for whether the subgroup improved from the previous year in each subject. Districts may pass the subgroup improvement via one of two pathways.

Pathway 1: The subgroup must improve in half of the subjects for which it is eligible: 3-8 math, 3-8 Reading/Language Arts, Algebra I, Algebra II, English II, and English III. All measures are counted as individual measures.

Pathway 2: The subgroup must improve in half of the subjects for which it is eligible: 3-8 math, 3-8 Reading/Language Arts, Algebra I/II, and English II/III. To improve in Algebra I/II, the district/school must improve in both the individual subjects of Algebra I and Algebra II. The same applies for English II/III.

### Q33: What accountability determinations can a district receive?

Districts can obtain one of four accountability determinations: Exemplary, Intermediate, In Need of Subgroup Improvement, and In Need of Improvement. Accountability determinations will be made public in early August and are posted on the Tennessee Department of Education website and on district report cards.

### Q34: How are districts' final accountability determinations made?

A district's final accountability determination combines both the achievement and gap closure determinations. Districts are evaluated on whether they pass a series of tests (listed in the table below). The SAS District Accountability Protocol's Appendix V shows how we combine achievement and gap closure statuses to determine a district's final accountability determination.

Test	Question
Achievement Participation Rate Test	Did the district pass the participation rate for achievement?
Achievement AMO Test	Did the district meet the majority of eligible AMOs after all safe harbors have been applied?
Achievement Improvement Test	Did the district improve in at least half of eligible subjects after safe harbor has been applied?
Achievement Aggregate Improvement Test	Did the district improve in all aggregate measures (3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade math, 3 <sup>rd</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade reading/language arts, or at least half of the high school measures) after safe harbor has been applied?

Subgroup Participation Test	Did the district have a 95% participation rate over 1, 2, or 3 years for every subject/subgroup combination?
Subgroup Improvement Test	Did the district meet improvement goals via 1 of the 2 pathways after safe harbor has been applied?
Gap Target Test	Did the district meet the majority of eligible gap targets after all safe harbors have been applied?

**Q35: What students are excluded from accountability?**

In general, students are excluded from accountability data in the following cases:

1. Private or Parochial testing records (District Number > 1000)
2. Homeschooled students
3. Medically exempt students
4. Adult high school students
5. Career & Technical School students
6. Homebound students (excluded from school level data, but not district or state level data)
7. Grade 13
8. Test voided
9. Tests flagged as ineligible
10. Portfolio with a testing flag of not required to test

**Q36: What is the Every-Test Taker Policy?**

This policy states that a student is included in the accountability results of the school, district, and state regardless of when the student entered the school, district, or state.

**Q37: If a student in grades 3-8 takes an End-of-Course Test, how is it counted for accountability?**

For accountability purposes, the student's proficiency level on the EOC assessment counts in the grade that the student is enrolled. For example, if a student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade takes Algebra I, his or her score will be included in 8<sup>th</sup> grade math measures for the school and district. It does not matter that the student took the course at a high school or with a high school teacher.

**Q38: If a student takes TCAP and EOC, which testing record counts?**

The End-of-Course (EOC) Assessment will count and the TCAP test will be dropped. For example, if a student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade takes the Algebra I EOC and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math TCAP, the Algebra I score will count and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade math score will be dropped.

**Q39: If a student is in grades 9-12 and takes a TCAP-Alt Portfolio Assessment, how do they count for proficiency levels in accountability data?**

Portfolio students in grades 3-12 with math and reading/language subjects are included in accountability calculations. If a student is in grade 9 or above and takes Portfolio math, then the score is included as Algebra I. If a student is in grade 9 or above and takes Portfolio Reading/Language, then the score is included in English II. The score is also subject to reassignment. Refer to question [Q49](#) on Portfolio reassignment for more details.

**Q40: Are summer school students included in accountability data?**

Yes. The previous year's summer testing data is included in the current year's accountability data. For example, for accountability determinations made in 2015 for the 2014-15 school-year students that tested in the summer of 2015 are included.

**Q41: How do T1 and T2 affect the English Language Learner Subgroup?**

Year 1 Transition Students (T1) and Year 2 Transition Students (T2) are former English Language Learners (ELL) that are in their first or second year out of the program. T1 and T2 students are included in the ELL subgroup if the ELL subgroup without T1 and T2 has at least 30 valid tests.

**Q42: May students enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses take End-of-Course assessments?**

No. Consistent with Tennessee State Board of Education's High School Policy, 2.103, only students who are enrolled in a course with an associated end-of-course examination on shall take the end-of-course examination. You may find that policy at: [http://www.tn.gov/sbe/Policies/2.103\\_2009\\_High\\_School\\_Policy\\_2-1-13\\_update.pdf](http://www.tn.gov/sbe/Policies/2.103_2009_High_School_Policy_2-1-13_update.pdf).

**Q43: How are proficiency percentages calculated?**

The percentage of students at a given proficiency level equals the number of valid tests at that proficiency level divided by the number of valid tests at all proficiency levels. The formulas are as follows:

- Percent Basic =  $\#Basic \div (\#Below\ Basic + \#Basic + \#Proficient + \#Advanced)$
- Percent Proficient =  $\#Proficient \div (\#Below\ Basic + \#Basic + \#Proficient + \#Advanced)$
- Percent Advanced =  $\#Advanced \div (\#Below\ Basic + \#Basic + \#Proficient + \#Advanced)$
- Percent Below Basic is calculated during the rounding process. See question [Q44](#).

**Q44: What are the rounding procedures for calculating proficiency levels?**

The values of (Below Basic + Basic) and (Proficient + Advanced) must sum to 100. The steps for calculating each level are described below, and must be done in this order.

- Separately round Advanced, Proficient, and Basic percentages to one decimal place.
- Percent Below Basic =  $100 - (\text{Percent Basic} + \text{Percent Proficient} + \text{Percent Advanced})$
- Percent Proficient + Percent Advanced = sum of rounded values.
- Percent Below Basic + Percent Basic =  $100 - (\text{Percent Proficient} + \text{Percent Advanced})$

**Q45: Can a district/school change a student's demographic data after testing has occurred?**

No, once a district completes its Student Demographic Data Verification (SDDV) during the testing window, a district may not request further demographic data changes.

**Q46: In 2014-15, what tests were administered to students that were unable to access TCAP due to a disability?**

Tennessee administered the TCAP-Alternative Portfolio (Portfolio) assessment.

**Q47: Is there a limit on the number of students that may be administered the TCAP-Alternative Portfolio assessment?**

No, there is no limit on the number of students who may take the TCAP Portfolio Assessment; however, federal guidelines limit the number of students who may be claimed as *Proficient/Advanced* at the state level. This limit is called the alternative testing cap. See [Q49](#) for further information.

**Q48: If a high school student takes Portfolio math or reading/language arts, where do those subject count for the cap calculations?**

Students in grade 9 or higher who take the Portfolio assessment are always counted as Algebra I or English II.

**Q49: What is the one percent cap for Portfolio and how is it applied?**

Consistent with Federal Regulations, the state may not exceed a one percent cap for students scoring proficient or advanced on the Portfolio assessment. If the state exceeds the one percent cap, the scores on portfolio assessment must be reassigned from proficient or advanced to basic until the state no longer exceeds the one percent cap.

The cap is calculated as follows for each content area:

$$\text{\# of Students Scoring Proficient/Advanced on Portfolio} \div \text{\# of Enrolled Students}$$

If the state exceeds the one percent cap, the reassignment process begins using the following steps:

- 1) Determine the number of Portfolio records that should be reassigned from each system by ranking the systems with the greatest percentage of students taking portfolio and scoring proficient/advanced.
- 2) Select a student from the district with the highest percentage for assignment.
- 3) Repeat the process until the state is at the one percent cap.

**Q50: Is the Portfolio blanket waiver extended to the 2014-15 school year?**

Yes. This blanket waiver allows districts to exceed the one percent cap if the state is at or below its one percent cap.