

Innovative Assessment Supports for 2020-21

As outlined in its strategic plan *Best for All*, the department is committed to ensuring all Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education, no matter where they live. This commitment includes providing free, optional, high-quality assessment tools and resources to districts during the 2020-21 school year.

The shifts in our education landscape as a result of COVID-19 have made access to these formative assessment tools *even more important* as schools or districts have faced prolonged, unexpected school closures and are facing unforeseen challenges with academic programming, or navigating an uncertain budgetary landscape. Students have missed academic instruction, and it is critical educators and schools are able to reliably benchmark progress and receive actionable data for the coming school year.

To support districts in addressing these challenges, the department is committed to providing several optional, free diagnostics and tools for the 2020-21 school year as part of our innovative assessment initiative:

1. **Optional Start of Year Checkpoint:**

A suite of optional assessments will be developed from actual TCAP items and aligned to the previous grade/course standards that are **most essential** for progression in the content of the student's current grade level/course. They will be available for grades 3-8 and end of course (EOC) in Math and English Language Arts (ELA). These beginning of the year assessments are intended to benefit districts looking for information on student performance at the beginning of the year.

- Incoming students would take the optional start of year checkpoint to measure their previous year's learning. This means that a 7th grade student would take the grade 6 ELA and math checkpoints. Their grade 7 teacher(s) would receive detailed student data on standards that more aligned with a **student's readiness to engage** in the content for the year.
- Designed to be administered within a standard class period, these checkpoints will be **aligned** to the Tennessee Academic Standards using actual TCAP items but will be **significantly shorter**. For even greater flexibility, some of the benchmarks will have modules for administering them across multiple days or for increasing the amount of time students have to complete them, as desired. This will help ensure flexibility for educators and schools.
- Checkpoints will be available to be administered in the mode most convenient for the educators, **via paper and online**, increasing flexibility for districts. Multiple scoring options will be available for educators to quickly receive information without having to wait for scoring.
- Each benchmark will have an instructionally-focused **results interpretation guide** that will provide detailed information about each question, including focused **explanations of common student errors** that aim to assist educators in pin-pointing and quickly addressing their students' needs from the prior year.

2. **Optional Online Formative Assessment Platform and TCAP Item Bank:** The department has heard the request from Tennessee teachers and is working to develop a free, optional assessment platform that will house **formative assessments, start of year checkpoints, and currently released TCAP items**, for easy access by all teachers throughout the year.

- The platform will allow educators to create their own assessments, using Tennessee standards-aligned questions developed expressly for TCAP.

- It will allow for the creation and administration of these assessments via a **printable PDF or an online testing experience**.
 - Online testing will provide **automatic grading and reporting capabilities**, and the same look and feel of TCAP online testing.
 - This platform is scheduled to launch in **early fall 2020**.
 - Training materials and log-ins available to teachers upon launch to assist schools and districts in technology set up in advance of the first day of school.
3. **Optional Full-length “Mock” Interim Assessment:** Mock Interim Assessments will be complete blueprint-aligned assessments that **mirror the current TCAP summative assessments**, as well as provide accurate scaled scores and performance bands that estimate each student’s performance*. Yielding better information for educators than a practice exam, these assessments are scheduled to be available **by the end of the fall semester** (mid-semester for EOC courses) for optional administration to students as a mid-year or spring checkpoint.
- The Mock IAs will be based on a previous year’s TCAP test**, allowing the state to provide immediate results without the need for shipping documents to an external vendor for scoring.
 - They will be developed to be identical to an actual TCAP administration, providing a more authentic practice testing experience for students prior to a summative exam.
 - Like all of our free and optional innovative assessments for this school year, the administration will be able to be administered via paper or online, increasing flexibility for districts.
 - The online assessment will have the same look and feel as TCAP. This can provide students with valuable practice for possible future online testing.
 - To support instruction, each item will be released with full item analysis to assist educators in pinpointing student misconceptions within standards to support efficient re-teaching, review, or remediation.

Additional information about these optional assessment tools and the formative assessment platform will be released as plans are finalized with the department’s assessment development and administration vendors. District testing coordinators will receive bi-weekly updates each Monday on progress, and formal releases will be included in the weekly *Commissioner’s Update for Directors*. If you have additional questions, please contact DT.Support@tn.gov.

** Authentic scale scores will be available for math and ELA, although constructed responses will need to be graded by educators. Social studies and science scale scores will be available in future years, after the standard setting process has occurred.*

*** Score interpretation for science and social studies will be provided and mock interims will be based on modifications to current practice assessments.*