

Additional information on the improvements to TNReady

Education Commissioner Candice McQueen has announced several new steps to improve the state's TNReady student assessment. These will immediately improve the state assessment—TNReady—and establish a longer-term framework for success. The steps being taken to improve TNReady include:

- Releasing a new Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify the assessment vendor or vendors that can successfully administer the state test in 2019-20 and beyond
- Amending the state's current contract and relationship with Questar to improve the assessment experience in 2018-19
- Adjusting the pace of the state's transition to online testing

Releasing a new RFP to identify the assessment vendor or vendors that can successfully administer the state test in 2019-20 and beyond

This fall, the state will publish a new RFP to identify the vendor or vendors who will support TNReady beginning in 2019-20. The RFP will look for and prioritize vendors who have had success, particularly in administering a statewide test online, and it will strengthen the requirements for online administration based on what the department has learned over the past few years. The RFP will also separate the core components of the testing program to allow different vendors to bid on different pieces depending on that company's strengths.

TNReady is a high-quality assessment that is aligned to Tennessee's rigorous academic expectations. In May, a national study recognized Tennessee as the No. 1 state in the country for improvement in the quality of our academic standards, going from an "F" rating in 2007 to an "A" in 2017. TNReady is designed to measure those standards, and it has a variety of different types of questions to look for the depth of students' knowledge. All of those aspects of the test will not change, but the RFP process will better ensure that students can take TNReady seamlessly and without disruption.

Amending the state's contract and relationship with Questar to improve the assessment experience in 2018-19

Given the timeline needed for successful administration of TNReady, the department will seek to extend the contract with Questar as the primary assessment vendor for 2018-19. However, the department has transferred the test design and development portion of TNReady to ETS, which has successfully worked with Tennessee for several years. This transition will allow the management team at Questar to focus on administering and scoring the test.

Additionally, the department will propose amendments to the contract with Questar to further improve the assessment. This includes reducing a number of specific pricing components, adding performance indicators to better measure success, and adding a number of steps Questar must take to improve readiness for online—such as a multi-state stress test, a third-party review, providing crisis-level monitoring throughout testing window, and improving customer service.

Adjusting the pace of the state's transition to online testing

Tennessee has been in a multi-year phase-in to online testing. In the original timeline, all students in grades 5-8 and high school were scheduled to take TNReady online in 2018-19. The department is committed to



moving toward online testing—Tennessee is one of less than 10 states who still has a paper test in middle school—and both state and district leaders recognize that the workforce of the 21st century is increasingly online. We also want every student to have a positive testing experience, and we want to maximize the ability to have a seamless online administration. Accordingly, we are adjusting the timeline to continue the transition to online but at a modified pace. For 2018-19:

- Students in grades 3-8 will take TNReady on paper for math, English, and social studies.
- Students in grades 3-4 will take their TNReady science test on paper, and students in grades 5-8 will take their science test online. Science is a field test in 2018-19 because the state is transitioning to new academic standards; therefore, the results will not count for students, teachers, or schools, nor will any public scores be released. This provides an option for all students to experience the online platform and do so in an environment that is low-risk for them.
- Students in high school and those taking end-of-course exams will continue to test online.

Further, the department will improve paper administration, as well. In addition to having Tennessee teachers review all test questions, scripts, and test forms, the department is streamlining test logistics to have fewer versions of the test distributed across the state. This makes it much easier on testing coordinators and proctors to administer. The state has also combined the answer document and test questions into one test booklet in lower grades so it is easier for students to take the test.

More information about TNReady and the state's assessment program is posted on TNReady.gov.