

TNReady Listening Tour Feedback Report

Presented by the Educator Advisory Team to Governor Bill Haslam

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INTRODUCTION

Tennessee has made incredible progress in education over the last decade, leading the nation as one of the fastest improving states in boosting student achievement. However, these historic gains did not come without difficult conversations and honest recognition about where we stood as a state and what we needed to do better in order to improve.

Given the challenges the state has experienced in the online administration of TNReady, our annual student assessment, the objective of Governor Haslam's six recent roundtable conversations and online feedback form was to listen directly to local educators and to gather feedback and recommendations from classroom teachers, administrators, and assessment and technology coordinators on specific ways to improve the state's testing program.

The challenges experienced by too many students, teachers, testing coordinators, administrators, and parents across the state, particularly from distractions and delays in the online administration of the new TNReady assessment, have raised serious concerns and created a growing lack of confidence in our ability to successfully implement an annual online student assessment.

The following report offers an overview of the concerns we, the educator advisory team, heard, suggestions gleaned during our visits across the state, and specific recommendations on ways we can and must improve.

Based on the feedback from this listening tour, in addition to the considerable input gathered previously and from its ongoing work, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) is currently taking or has already taken specific steps to address the concerns as the state moves into the 2018-19 TNReady testing cycle.

This work is urgent and important. The online implementation and delivery challenges with TNReady are real and must be addressed. What too many students, educators, and parents have experienced in recent years is clearly unacceptable. But these challenges should never cloud the real value of the information TNReady provides: detailed, actionable feedback for educators and families about students' strengths and weaknesses to help inform instruction and improvement, and clear data points that serve as one key feedback loop for our state's collective work in continuing to make Tennessee one of the fastest-improving states in the nation in boosting student achievement. We can and we will make this right.

SECTION 1: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In many ways, today's discussions about the best ways to implement TNReady, our annual student assessment, are a continuation of the work begun several years ago when educators, policymakers, and education stakeholders came together to discuss shared challenges and solutions toward a common goal of making Tennessee the best place for our children to learn and excel.

These efforts began in 2007 as our state confronted the inadequacy of its existing standards and assessment program. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce had just given Tennessee an “F” for truth in advertising for the mismatch between state tests, where 90 percent of Tennessee students earned proficient scores, and national tests, where less than 30 percent of those same students achieved proficiency. Over the next several years, Tennessee began an intentional process to improve the rigor of our academic standards—the grade-level expectations that inform what educators teach—so all students would graduate from high school truly ready to meet the demands of postsecondary education and the workforce.

Beginning in 2008, the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) began the work of revising the state’s academic standards, starting with the Tennessee Diploma Project and later resulting in the adoption of what were known as “Common Core” standards, to be phased in over a three-year period. These standards—adopted at the time by 45 states across the nation—won recognition from Tennessee educators for their strong emphasis on critical thinking skills and their overall level of rigor. The change in standards required a corresponding change in the state’s annual assessment since current tests were not fully testing the depth and breadth of the new, more challenging academic standards. Given that other states were also shifting to a more rigorous, fully aligned assessment, Tennessee chose to join a consortium of states, known as the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which was created to develop and deliver a fully aligned, high-quality assessment.

That work was halted in 2014 when concerns about the federal government’s role in education and the state’s ability and authority to control our own education policies led the Tennessee General Assembly to instruct the state to leave the PARCC consortium. Pulling out of the PARCC consortium necessitated the TDOE to immediately embark on developing our own state student assessment independently and on a tight timeline. Additionally, the task of creating a test with new types of items aligned to more rigorous standards posed new challenges, which were increased by the state’s decision to deliver a statewide computer-based assessment.

On the heels of the decision to pull out of the PARCC consortium and create a Tennessee-specific student assessment, the General Assembly also codified a new comprehensive standards review process in 2015. This action resulted in the development and adoption of new, Tennessee-specific math and English language arts (ELA) standards by the SBE in 2016 and necessitated additional changes to Tennessee’s assessment, which was already in the design phase.

These policy shifts put Tennessee in a unique position compared to other states. We invested considerable hours in teacher and public review of our educational standards to ensure they met our expectations for Tennessee’s students. The change in standards also meant that any assessment of teaching and learning would need to be uniquely designed for Tennessee. As the state moved to procure a qualified testing vendor to create the new Tennessee assessment, it became increasingly clear that the task of creating such a customized test, and the added complexity of including a computer-based assessment on the required timelines, posed many difficulties. Creating new and better test items, aligning teacher resources, and designing a delivery platform that met the state’s online testing

requirements was a monumental task and has been a particular challenge for two consecutive vendors that won contracts from the state to assist the TDOE in the creation and delivery of the state’s new TNReady assessment.

But despite the problems with assessment delivery, there are many positives to highlight and build upon from this evolving process. Today, Tennessee has the right academic standards in place and our own assessment—TNReady—that fully aligns to those standards. In fact, Tennessee recently received the highest grade in the state’s history for the rigor of our academic standards, moving from an “F” in 2009 to an “A” in 2017.¹ With the development and administration of TNReady, the state has also essentially eliminated the “honesty gap” highlighted by the U.S. Chamber report in 2007.²

SECTION 2: PURPOSE OF THE LISTENING TOUR AND ROUNDTABLES

Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam convened a statewide listening tour in fall 2018 to listen to and learn directly from educators through a series of regional roundtable discussions about the frequency and severity of concerns. In addition to the individuals who were nominated by district leadership to represent their colleagues in the roundtables, educators were also encouraged to submit feedback through an online feedback form. The goal of each roundtable was to:

1. **Engage in an open and honest conversation** about TNReady and how to improve administration;
2. Gather **feedback to inform a smooth delivery of state assessments** this school year and beyond, including feedback on the selection of the state’s future assessment vendor to be chosen later this school year;
3. Discuss how to better provide schools, educators, parents and students with **meaningful and timely results** from assessments; and
4. Distinguish assessment content from concerns about delivery in an effort to understand the **value assessments can provide.**

Wayne Miller, retired long-time educator and former executive director of the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, facilitated each conversation with the assistance of an educator advisory team. This team included:

- Cicely Woodard, the 2018 Tennessee Teacher of the Year;
- Dr. Derek Voiles, the 2017 Tennessee Teacher of the Year; and
- Dr. Mike Winstead, the 2018 Tennessee Superintendent of the Year.

¹ EducationNext, (Fall 2018), *Have States Maintained High Expectations for Student Performance? Vol 18, (4)*. Retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/have-states-maintained-high-expectations-student-performance-analysis-2017-proficiency-standards/>

² Achieve, (May 16, 2018), *Proficient vs. Prepared 2018: Disparities Between State Tests and the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, Retrieved from <https://www.achieve.org/proficient-vs-prepared-2018>

Governor Haslam and Commissioner McQueen attended each of the six roundtables to listen to the challenges that classroom teachers and educators across the state have faced in administering TNReady. Each of the six visits proved to be fruitful and beneficial as educators shared both smaller fixes and larger considerations as the state moves into the fall testing window and determines how best to improve future test administration. Teachers were open and honest regarding challenges they faced, as well as their desire to have a reliable assessment in order to gauge student growth against the state's standards as a diagnostic tool for parents and students and to help them improve their own classroom instruction. The following sections of this report outline the major themes of the listening tour as well as considerations that need to be made relative to recommendations and implementation.

The six roundtables that have taken place thus far are not intended to be the end of the input gathering. Rather, they serve as the beginning of an ongoing engagement process that continues this fall. The findings laid out in this report do, however, provide foundational information with a specific focus on guiding the content of the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for the state's future assessment partner, which is set to release in November. As we enter into Phase II and III of this continuing engagement process, the information heard during these Phase I roundtables and online responses will serve as a foundation upon which to gather even more feedback to inform tangible steps and improvements in implementing TNReady.

SECTION 3: FINDINGS/THEMES

- 1. Credibility:** One of the major pieces of feedback communicated during the listening tour was that **credibility of TNReady** is in disarray and must be restored. With the recent online testing challenges and implementation issues resulting in scores not being factored into student grades, as well as messaging and media coverage that amplified those concerns, some students did not take the test seriously, which meant the results of the assessment did not necessarily reflect the learning that occurred during the school year. Most teachers are eager to use the data to guide and improve instruction, but some question the validity of the results. According to feedback from the roundtables, the most critical step to restoring credibility is to ensure seamless operational delivery of the assessment, regardless of whether it is delivered on paper or on a computer.
- 2. Technology:** Another theme of the conversations was the **accessibility students have to technology**, as determined by whether they have opportunities for technology to be a normal part of their daily instruction. Those educators in schools with regular access to technology for all students felt considerably better about computer-based testing. Teachers whose students have more limited access to technology expressed concerns that the assessments were as much about digital literacy skills as they were evaluating assessment content and competency. During the roundtables, it became evident that there is still a large discrepancy from district to district regarding the amount of technology available to students and the frequency with which technology is used as an instructional tool. Also, without access to technology—both in school and at home—some teachers felt students faced additional challenges meeting the skillsets necessary to participate in computer-based testing.

Additionally, test scheduling, logistics, and preparation for the platform tools are more difficult to address in schools without adequate technology access. Educators in schools with one-to-one student to technology devices did not face the same issues of getting students scheduled and moved in and out of computer labs. Adequate access to technology in classroom teaching allows for better preparation and comfort with the online environment for students and teachers. More importantly, it provides students with the exposure and familiarity they will need as colleges and businesses increasingly require students to use technology.

Access to a one-to-one technology environment varies considerably across the state and carries with it a large cost. The challenges of scheduling the test were only exacerbated when the technology did not perform in the 2018 spring testing window, particularly in districts that were not one-to-one. Educators spoke of working relentlessly to prepare for the transition to computer-based testing only to be frustrated when online delivery of the test did not meet expectations.

- 3. Timely Results:** There is a strong desire for educators, students, and families to receive **results from the assessment** in a timely manner. Each roundtable discussion included universal agreement of the importance of timely data to make instructional decisions related to student learning and placement, teacher instruction, parent conferences, and personnel hiring and placement practices. Results are useful to teachers if they can be used for reflection and instructional planning. One related issue raised is that there appears to be a lag between when the state releases results to districts and when those results actually get into the hands of teachers, students, and families. The state provided results to district offices over the summer this year, but the time it took for the district to review and disseminate those results have added to the delay for teachers, students, and families. Therefore, there needs to be greater emphasis not only on delivery of results from the state to school districts but also delivery of results from school districts to educators, parents, and students.
- 4. Alignment of Instructional Resources:** The final key theme of the listening tour was the desire to see **greater alignment** of assessment expectations across all facets of teaching and learning. In particular, teachers spoke of the need for resources and tasks throughout the year that were more closely aligned to the rigor of the state's standards and end-of-year assessment. Overall, educators felt the standards in place were strong, but they did not have access to the high-quality materials needed to teach at the level of those standards. For many, this resulted in hours curating content of their own without having a deep knowledge of how a particular standard would be tested. As a result, teachers asked about receiving more sample test questions to better guide their instruction during the school year.

SECTION 4: IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS AND CHANGES FOR 2018-19 TESTING

Based on the feedback from the roundtables and online comments from the listening tour, in addition to considerable input gathered previously, the TDOE has already taken or is currently taking several specific steps to address concerns going into 2018-19 testing cycle. Because the TDOE must work within the limits of the current contract with its vendor, and since testing begins for some students less than two months from now, some of the larger-scale changes proposed during the listening tour cannot be made until the state procures a vendor for the 2019-20 school year. Below is a list of some of the problems that were raised and how those issues will be addressed for 2018-19:

Test Administration Manual Access

Issue: Schools need earlier access to the test administration manual so that educators have ample time to review and familiarize themselves with the content before the testing window begins. The manuals also need to be printed so that testing coordinators are not trying to get them printed the as late as the night before.

Solution: For fall (late November/December) testing, the Test Administration Manual (TAM) has been provided online and was physically printed and provided to testing coordinators during the last week of September. This was the earliest release of the TAM in three years. In addition, the TAMS and Test Administrator/Proctor Scripts (TAPS) will be printed and delivered to schools in the spring.

TAM and TAPS Clarity and Consistency

Issue: The TAM and TAPS need to be reviewed more thoroughly as they have previously contained grammatical or logistical errors and inconsistencies. For example: If the manual says that students need to spend time reading the directions and stop when they come to the stop sign, it should be stated the same way in all content area tests.

Solution: The TAM has already been reviewed by the state's new TNReady ambassadors, a group of classroom teachers and school district testing coordinators, to ensure that instructions are clear and consistent. The TAPS will undergo the same review process.

Test Booklets

Issue: In elementary grades, where the test was completely on paper, there were too many booklets to sort through and organize prior to the testing window, and it was difficult to make sure the right test forms and answer documents were matched for each student.

Solution: Beginning in spring 2019, paper tests will be distributed so that each school receives only one form/version combination for any given test. In addition, grades 4-8 will have combined math and ELA booklets to reduce the number of documents. Grade 3 will continue to have separate test booklets in which they write directly in the booklet.

Paper Test Delivery Boxes

Issue: The paper test was delivered in flimsy boxes, making handling difficult.

Solution: The TDOE has already flagged this concern for the assessment vendor. The vendor has purchased new, sturdier boxes for spring 2019, which the TDOE has examined and approved.

Test Tickets

Issue: The test tickets that students received to log into the computer-based assessments were too small in size and easy for students or their teachers to misplace.

Solution: The vendor offers two size options: 1x2.6 or 2x4 inches. The larger version can be prioritized for usage at the local level.

Timing of Information and Material Delivery

Issue: Educators were receiving information and materials at the last minute. This created tension and frustration that could have been resolved if educators were better equipped and trained in the testing process.

Solution: Not only will testing materials arrive earlier in districts this year, but the TDOE is focused on extensive training and engagement opportunities this fall and spring to ensure educators have the information they need to explain the testing process to students and families. Those opportunities include but are not limited to:

- New testing coordinator boot camp
- Regional road show meetings across the state with district and school teams
- Engagement and training led by TNReady ambassadors throughout the State of Tennessee
- Online training modules related to testing administration: one for building-level testing coordinators and one for teachers and administrators
- Multi-month practice test window for computer-based testing
- Statewide verification test to ensure the computer-based assessment platform is ready and provide an additional practice opportunity

Help Desk

Issue: The vendor help desk was not timely in its responses to educators and testing coordinators needing immediate solutions.

Solution: The state has specifically strengthened response time requirements in the contract and will have an individual at the department who will be focused full-time on improving the customer-service experience during and leading up to the testing windows.

Timing of Assessment Results

Issue: The assessment is valuable provided educators, students, and families receive results and analyses back in a timely manner. For the last few years, as the state has been setting cut scores as required for all new tests, the delay between the administration of the test and when educators and

families have actually received results (from the state to the district and from the district to local educators and parents) has been too lengthy and has contributed to students not taking the test seriously. Additionally, a more rigorous test, as we have now, which includes hand-scored items that match the depth and breadth of the standards, requires more time to grade.

Solution: In 2018-19, the TDOE plans to deliver results earlier as outlined below:

- **Jan 4: State will return raw scores for all fall block End-of-Course assessments (EOCs)** assuming all constructed response items are completed by Nov. 30.
- **May 20: State will return raw scores for all spring EOCs**, assuming all constructed response items are completed by April 19.
- **May 20: State will return raw scores for all grades 3-8 testing**, assuming all tests are shipped to Questar by May 6.
- **June/July: State will return all scores to districts in online format followed by hard copy score reports to be disseminated to student and families.**

Additional dates and assessment milestones can be found [here](#).

Submission Errors

Issue: Students finished testing but were not able to submit individual tests because the system had gone down, and testing coordinators and students were in a holding pattern until the system came back online. This created a great deal of frustration and anxiety.

Solution: The vendor is able to automatically cache submissions, and this is being improved for 2018-19. The department is also improving trainings, so that testing coordinators and proctors understand the standard operating procedure in the event of a problem that requires recovery protocols to be used.

Real World Verification of Testing Platform

Issue: During spring testing last year, the computer-based testing platform, Nextera, failed in part because of unique patterns of usage in Tennessee caused by a change the vendor made to the text-to-speech function and dual time zones that results in large numbers of students downloading and submitting tests at the same time. The vendor, in partnership with the state, should adequately simulate the load on the system that occurs during a real testing window through a verification or stress test that is just as rigorous and widespread as the real world testing patterns.

Solution: On October 23, 2018, the state will orchestrate a large-scale verification (“stress”) test of the computer-based testing platform in preparation for testing this fall. The assessment vendor has made numerous changes to improve its computer-based testing platform since last year, but this is a critical opportunity to ensure those changes are effective prior to fall and spring testing. It will also identify if any further issues need to be resolved before fall testing. The success of this stress test hinges on wide-scale involvement, so districts are strongly encouraged to use this opportunity to practice on the Nextera

platform before fall testing. Additionally, the vendor will provide districts with mini score reports about students' performance on the test they take during the large-scale verification test, which can be used to inform instruction.

SECTION 5: CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TESTING IN 2019-20

One of the most important steps for the state and a key discussion point during the listening tour was how the state must ensure the state's new testing vendor, which will be selected through an RFP procurement process this fall, is equipped to successfully deliver the test in 2019-20 and beyond. In discussing the RFP for 2019-20, the first and primary piece of feedback is to make sure the process for selecting the next test vendor is extremely thorough, with particular emphasis on the technology elements. As previously discussed, the policy decisions around standards and assessments in 2014—which necessitated two quick procurement processes—significantly impacted the state's ability to select a proven vendor ready to meet the state's unique and large-scale student assessment needs.

Given the considerable challenges that Tennessee has experienced during the last three testing cycles, we strongly recommend the state partner with a third-party technology expert to work alongside the TDOE and the state's Chief Procurement Office (CPO) to set the highest standards for what is required in terms of technology capability and delivery going forward. The vetting process for this new test vendor must be even more thorough to avoid the same mistakes and pitfalls experienced from the last two procurements, where it appears the winning bidders have not had the needed experience or sophistication to match our specific state assessment needs.

During this listening tour, when asked how TNReady could be improved for 2019-20 and beyond, there were several additional key pieces of feedback that were provided. However, when considering the issues in depth and for the purpose of making a sound recommendation, each requires the consideration of important trade-offs. A few of the larger considerations are outlined below, along with a recommendation on how to proceed.

Test Delivery: Computer-Based vs. Paper-Pencil

Considerations: We live in an ever-increasing digital world. The students in our schools will graduate and enter an environment where digital literacy and competence is a needed skillset for the vast majority of college and career pathways. The digital influence is also being felt in schools with a substantial number of instructional resources and materials now accessed via electronic means instead of paper. Most commercially available formative assessment programs are delivered as computer-based tests.

During the roundtable discussions, various opinions were shared around assessment delivery. Many educators expressed a desire to maintain computer-based testing, except for the elementary grades, to improve timeliness of results, provide for easier and more

efficient test scheduling, and improve digital literacy skills. Others communicated that testing should return only to paper delivery to reduce the risk of problems experienced over recent years.

Another suggestion shared during some of the roundtables was to give districts the option to move forward with computer-based testing **or** with paper and pencil testing.

Recommendation: The option of having some districts go online and some use paper-pencil testing was previously considered by the Assessment Task Force 3.0 in May 2018 with strong agreement to move forward with computer-based testing through a phased-in approach. We concur with the Assessment Task Force, because of the added complexity it creates in administering the statewide assessment program.

To best serve the needs of students and parents and to address concerns on both sides of the online and paper test format discussion, we recommend striking a compromise by differentiating test format by grade span:

- Continue to administer all high school end-of-course assessments as computer-based tests, but offer reading passages in paper copy so students can mark them up as they do during the school year;
- Gradually phase-in online assessments for grades 5-8. For 2018-19, adhere to the plan to administer the science field test online with all other TNReady assessments paper-pencil. The “live” science assessment would remain computer-based in 2019-20. Other subject areas would be moved online as quickly as possible in subsequent years assuming the new testing vendor demonstrates readiness to administer broad-based online testing;
- For grades 3-4, keep annual assessment paper-only for the foreseeable future.

One additional way to address the lag time in results is to have the next vendor create an online login so that both teachers and families can get access to results once they are available to the district.

Scheduling

Considerations: Several educators participating in the listening tour recommended administering the writing portions of the ELA and social studies assessments earlier in the year (in late March) to allow for an earlier return of results and to reduce testing fatigue among students. However, because this would create another testing window during the school year, other educators did not share the same position.

Recommendation: The consideration of a separate testing window for the writing portion of the ELA and social studies assessments must be explored further. Superintendents, testing coordinators, and other key stakeholders should be engaged prior to the release of the RFP

to determine if one or two testing windows will best serve the needs of students across Tennessee.

Test Preparation

Considerations: Many educators have asked for the release of a greater number of practice test questions so that teachers and students can be more thoroughly prepared for the actual tests. However, the state would have to do more field testing in order to have a bank large enough to distribute practice test items, which would require the state's assessment to be longer. After three years of field testing and development of TNReady, the state is finally in a good place with items for test design for the next several years and currently does not need to do stand-alone field testing for the next two years. This, however, assumes that the state is not releasing an abundance of test items for practice purposes.

Recommendation: The greater the alignment between what students can practice on during the school year and what the end-of-course assessment looks like, the better. The TDOE should explore options to put as many test items as possible in teachers' hands. Options include purchasing aligned items from other states or testing vendors and engaging more Tennessee teachers to create aligned test items.

Amount of Testing

Consideration: Some educators expressed concerns regarding the amount of tests at the high school level while others focused on the length of the current tests. Tennessee's tests are currently designed to achieve full alignment to the state's academic standards in the shortest time possible. Some educators suggested the state move solely to a singular summative assessment in high school to further cut down on the number of assessments. However, many educators desired more feedback on individual standards at each grade level so they know how they're performing, where they need to improve, and with which educators they should collaborate.

Recommendation: The state should maintain a state assessment system to ensure full alignment and assessment of the state's academic standards at each grade level and not move to a single test in high school to evaluate learning.

In addition to the recommendations outlined above, any changes made for this school year should also be folded into the RFP for the next assessment partner. Educators also suggested the following helpful pieces of feedback as the RFP is developed: (1) Passages on the test should be balanced between classic texts and more culturally relevant texts that may engage students in different ways; (2) score reports and resources should be accessible to non-English speaking parents and families; (3) the test should have a built-in timer so students are aware of how much time they have left on each subpart, and (4) the testing platform views should be the same regardless of whether you are a teacher, administrator, or testing coordinator.

SECTION 6: EDUCATOR FEEDBACK TO THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION

As we move into a time of significant change in statewide leadership—both in the executive and legislative branches—one of the discussion questions during the listening tour asked educators what the next administration should know and be thinking about as it relates to statewide assessment administration and delivery. Below is a list capturing the themes of those comments along with quotes from Tennessee educators.

- **Reinstill the value and purpose of the TNReady assessment:** “Let’s communicate clearly about the purpose of the assessment. Parents, students, community members, and policymakers should all know that assessment aligned to the standards that we teach provides valuable information that improves instruction, helps parents know how to help their children, and gets schools the support they need.”
- **Stay the course with testing, but let's fix it:** “We do not want to start over. We need you to be consistent from year to year. Assessment is valuable, but the state has to make sure it works.”
- **Timely results matter.** “In order for the assessment to be valuable, we have to get our results back sooner. Students want to know how they did, but we want to know how to improve our teaching.”
- **Open dialogue is critical.** “The open dialogue between educators and the state needs to continue so there is a way to provide feedback and drive improvement across the K-12 system.”
- **Address technology gaps.** “If we’re moving in the direction of keeping the test computer-based, we need to prioritize investments in improved technology access in districts that are not one-to-one. This will alleviate scheduling and logistics issues while also advancing the skills of our students.”
- **Increase testing personnel at district- and state-level.** “Consider adding a dedicated testing coordinator for each district in the current BEP formula in order to ensure smooth test administration.”

SECTION 7: CONCLUSION

The online implementation and delivery challenges with TNReady are real and must be addressed. The experience that our students, teachers, and communities have faced with our assessment process is not acceptable nor is it what we as Tennesseans want.

Now that Phase I of the TNReady engagement process is complete, we encourage the governor—and the next administration—to strongly consider the findings of this report along with the tradeoffs that come in making any large-scale changes for 2019-20. Phase I was focused specifically on gathering feedback from a representative group of “on-the-ground” educators who experienced firsthand the challenges and frustrations of the test administration this past spring.

As we move into the next phases of the work this fall, Phase II should focus on continuing to listen to an even broader set of stakeholders, implementing necessary changes for the 2018-19 test, ensuring seamless administration of fall TNReady assessments, and releasing a strong RFP for a new testing

partner. The overarching take away from the feedback process to date is that assessment matters and we do not need to start over. Phase III should consider how to protect the need for a strong and reliable statewide student assessment as we experience a transition in statewide leadership and ensure that educators regain trust and confidence in a test that works.

Most importantly, we must never let the implementation challenges we've experienced cloud the real value TNReady provides: detailed, actionable feedback for educators and families about students' strengths and weaknesses to help inform instruction, and clear data points that serve as one key feedback loop for our state's collective work in continuing to make Tennessee one of the fastest-improving states in the nation in student achievement.