



February 3, 2016

Parents,

This year students in grades 3-11 will take TNReady, a new and improved TCAP in math and English language arts. TNReady will provide all of us – educators, parents, and students – with better information about our students' progress toward college and career readiness. It is designed to assess true student understanding and problem-solving abilities, not just basic memorization skills.

Over the past several months, the Tennessee Department of Education has been working with districts and schools across the state to transition to the online testing platform for TNReady. In fact, nearly 2.5 million practice tests have already been taken online during this school year, and we know that 171,000 high school End of Course exams in 99 districts were *successfully completed* in November and December.

As we have reviewed additional data and feedback from multiple sources, we know that some districts are experiencing challenges with the demand placed on local infrastructure by the online test software. Now that we have learned more about district infrastructure during recent capacity tests and district site visits, we have encouraged districts to *reassess* their readiness. As a result, some districts and schools will be moving to paper testing instead of online testing this year.

Whether the test is given online or on paper, TNReady is designed to measure our students' critical thinking and problem solving skills, providing schools, teachers, and parents with valuable information. Districts have selected the testing medium that will best ensure their students have a positive testing experience where they can show what they know.

It's important to know that the department has created paper-based tests that are **entirely comparable** to the online test. Both the online and the paper test cover the same standards, and questions included on both types of tests have been through the same review process. **There is no inherent advantage or disadvantage to a student in terms of taking paper version of TNReady versus a computer-based version.**

This year marks a historic transition- the first time in three decades that the state has made a significant assessment change. We knew this would not be perfect, but Tennessee teachers and students have provided invaluable feedback, and we are committed to continuously improving every day and every year.

As you have additional questions about TNReady, please feel free to send them to TNReady.Questions@tn.gov.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Candice McQueen".

Candice McQueen
Commissioner of Education