A Parent's Guide to Tennessee Student Assessments in the 2014-15 School Year

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview for parents about the types of state assessments students may take during the 2014-15 school year.

K – 2nd Grade

State Assessment	Description
K-2 State Assessment	This assessment measures basic reading and math skills. Some students in grades K-2 will take this assessment. Districts have the option to choose to use this assessment.

3rd Grade – 8th Grade

State Assessment	Description
TCAP Achievement	All students in grades 3-8 will take the TCAP Achievement assessment in reading, language arts, math and science. The TCAP Achievement assessment is a timed, multiple-choice, paper-pencil assessment. In 2013, the Tennessee State Board of Education approved new social studies standards (available here) that schools will use beginning in the 2014T 15 school year. All students will take the field test of the new online social studies TCAP assessments in Spring 2015.
TCAP Writing Assessment	All students in grades 3-11 will take the Writing Assessment which will require writing essays in response to passages.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Some Tennessee students in fourth and eighth grade will take the NAEP assessment. NAEP focuses on math and English language arts. Tennessee students will be participating in the 2015 NAEP administration in winter 2015. For more information about NAEP, click here.

High School

State Assessment	Description
TCAP High School End of Course Examinations	TCAP End of Course examinations are given in certain high school courses: English I, II, & III, Algebra I & II, and Biology I & Chemistry. The assessments are multiple-choice and paper/pencil. A new US History test is being developed; all students enrolled in US History will take the field test of the new online US History TCAP assessments in Spring 2015.
TCAP Writing Assessment	All students in grades 3-11 will take the Writing Assessment which will require writing essays in response to passages.
ACT or SAT	All students must take the ACT or SAT before graduation from high school. The ACT/ SAT tests are college admission tests. Districts choose which test to administer.

ACT EXPLORE & PLAN

Students in middle and high school must also take a career and interest inventory assessment to help them explore their options for the future. In the 2014-15 school year, Tennessee school districts may select the ACT EXPLORE (middle school) and PLAN (high school) assessments to meet this requirement. For more information, please contact your school guidance counselor.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. When will my child take the state assessments and how long will the assessments take?

The timing of the tests will vary by district. Parents can refer to the 2014-15 assessment calendar (available here) for general timelines, but please check with your school district to confirm the exact dates for your child's assessment.

2. Will the results of the assessments impact my child's grades?

For some subject areas and courses, yes. For students in grades 3-8 or high school students who take certain science, and English language arts courses, TCAP scores will be factored into students' grades in the 2014-15 school year as required by state law and State Board of Education policy. Your school district will decide what percentage of student's grades (between 15 and 25 percent) is based on the assessment scores.

Social studies TCAP scores *will not* impact student grades in 2014-15. Your school district will decide whether TCAP Writing Assessment scores will impact student grades in 2014-15.

3. This says my child is only taking two assessments this year, but I feel like there are more, what are they?

Ongoing curriculum and instruction decisions are made by your local school and district. Schools or districts can choose to give additional assessments to monitor your child's progress throughout the year; however, these are the only required state assessments.

4. What supports are available if my child has a disability?

Students with disabilities have access to test accommodations (for example, extended time to take the test, or having someone assist in reading the test questions to them) as identified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Section 504 plans. Similar to instructional accommodations, test accommodations are intended to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in assessments and demonstrate knowledge and skills on assessments without being limited by the effects of their disability. Your child's IEP team will determine whether your child should take an alternate assessment or receive special accommodations based on their individual needs.

5. Where can I find information on assessments if my child has a disability?

Click here for information on TCAP alternative assessments for students with disabilities.

6. Where can I find information on assessments for my child if English is not their first language?

Click here for more information on English learner assessments.

7. Can my child use a calculator on the state assessments?

Students may use a calculator on all the sections of the TCAP Achievement and End of Course math assessments.

8. How can I help my child prepare to take the state assessments?

Parents and guardians should consult with your child's teacher for information on how you can support what your child is learning in the classroom.

Visit www.tn.gov/education/assessment for more information and resources
Email questions about Tennessee state assessments to TNed.assessment@tn.gov