



# **Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model**

## **TEAM Teacher Evaluation**

### **Supplemental Materials**

**2016-17**

*The contents of this manual were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.*

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# Core Beliefs

- We all have room to improve. Because the stakes of our work are significant, we must honestly reflect on our practice and work to continuously get better.
- The rubric is designed to present a rigorous vision of excellent instruction. The expectation is not perfection. The scaling is built to allow for honest conversations about areas for growth.
- We score lessons, not people. Every lesson will have strengths and areas for improvement. The rubric is not a checklist of teacher actions. Instead, observers should look for the effectiveness of teacher actions based on evidence of student actions and learning.
- We support improvement best when we link feedback with ongoing learning. We all need to own our development and look for ways to learn from each other's strengths.
- As evaluators, we too must improve. In particular, we should look to continuously strengthen our vision of instructional excellence and our practice giving feedback.

# Scoring and Evidence Template: Planning

Evidence Notes	Planning	Score
	Instructional Plans	
	Students' Work	
	Assessments	

# Scoring and Evidence Template: Instruction

Evidence Notes	Instruction	Score
	Standards and Objectives	
	Motivating Students	
	Presenting Instructional Content	
	Lesson Structure and Pacing	

# Scoring and Evidence Template: Instruction

Evidence Notes	Instruction	Score
	Activities and Materials	
	Questioning	
	Academic Feedback	
	Grouping Students	

# Scoring and Evidence Template: Instruction

Evidence Notes	Instruction	Score
	Teacher Content Knowledge	
	Teacher Knowledge of Students	
	Thinking	
	Problem Solving	

# Scoring and Evidence Template: Environment

Evidence Notes	Environment	Score
	Expectations	
	Managing Student Behavior	
	Environment	
	Respectful Culture	



# Pre-Conference Plan

Prior to announced observations, observers conduct a pre-conference meeting to obtain pertinent background information about the lesson plan and students involved for additional context, and to address any potential areas of concern before the lesson. During the pre-conference, the teacher being observed engages in a coaching conversation with the observer. As part of this conversation, the observer asks questions about the lesson plan, grouping structures, classroom configuration, specific students, etc. The teacher provides background information, including the makeup of the students in the class; the context of this lesson in the larger unit plan; assessment information; extenuating circumstances; and evidence of planning with the rubrics. In the pre-conference meeting, teachers are provided with specific support for improvement when possible.

## General Tips

- Sit next to the teacher with whom you are conferencing and maintain eye contact.
- Nod and show signs of active listening, including writing down some of the responses that the teacher gives.
- Paraphrase what the teacher is saying in order to demonstrate active listening; provide a summary at the end.
- It is the observer's responsibility to redirect a teacher during the pre-conference if their instructional plan is inappropriate.
- Adjust your questioning and use the teacher's responses to develop probing follow-up questions.

## Sample Pre-Conference Questions

- What is the objective of your lesson?
- What do you expect the students to know and be able to do after the lesson?
- Where is this lesson in the context of your unit plan?
- What are the prerequisite skills that the students have to know in order to be successful in this lesson?
- What changes or adjustments to the lesson will you need to make if students do not show evidence that they have mastered the sub-objectives?
- How will you know that students have mastered the objectives in this lesson?
- Is there anything else you want me to be aware of before going to look at the lesson tomorrow?
- Are there any other special circumstances that I should be aware of before the announced observation?
- How will you differentiate your instruction in order to address a variety of learning styles?
- Are there any particular grouping structures in place? If so, how will you hold students accountable for group work?

- Is there anything in particular you want me to be observing with regard to your areas of reinforcement and refinement?
- What are your plans for lesson closure and reflection?

# Post-Conference Plan

While the TEAM rubric is used to evaluate teachers' lesson planning and instruction, its primary purpose is to provide the basis of support teachers receive for their own professional growth. This support should be provided in numerous ways from administrators and/or teacher leaders, including the modeling of specific indicators in professional development meetings, in teachers' classrooms, and in the post-conference.

The purpose of the post-conference is to provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on their lessons with guidance and support from the administrator or teacher leader who conducted the observation. This guidance should be provided through the use of leading questions by the observer, along with the identification of an area of reinforcement (relative strength of the lesson) and an area of refinement (area in which the observer needs to help the teacher improve). Therefore, the focus of the post-conference is on two indicators or descriptors from the rubric as opposed to multiple areas. By focusing on just two areas, teachers have the opportunity to segment their own learning with support from an administrator or teacher leader.

When choosing an area of reinforcement and refinement from the rubric, observers should ask themselves several guiding questions to ensure that a teacher's professional growth will have the maximum impact on the achievement of his/her own students.

## Hints and Questions for Choosing Areas of Reinforcement and Refinement

- Which areas on the rubric received the highest scores (reinforcements) and the lowest scores (refinements)?
- Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on student achievement?
- Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on other areas of the rubric?
- In which area will the teacher have the most potential for growth? *For example, with new teachers it might be better to focus on developing objectives and sub-objectives instead of improving a teacher's ability in problem-solving.*
- Make sure that the reinforcement is not directly related to the refinement.
- Choose a refinement area for which you have sufficient and specific evidence from the lesson to support why the teacher needs to work on this area.
- Choose an area of refinement for which you can provide concrete next steps for improvement. If you do not have the personal knowledge or experience to recommend next steps, seek out someone who can provide you with more information. You could also connect the teacher with a person who is able to provide specific examples for improvement and model these examples for the teacher.

Once the areas of reinforcement and refinement have been selected, then the post-conference can be developed. Below is a format for developing an effective post-conference. It is important to note that **a post-conference does not begin with a presentation of the scores**, but with coaching

questions that, through reflection, lead to the identification of the areas of reinforcement and refinement.

## Post-Conference Introduction

1. **Greeting/Set the tone.** This time should be used to put the teacher at ease.
2. **Establish the length of the conference.** Assure the teacher that you respect his/her time and have set a time limit for the conference.
3. **Review the conference process.** Review the conference format with the teacher so he/she knows what to expect.

*Ex. "Good afternoon, it was great for me to get to visit your classroom and observe your lesson. Our purpose in meeting today is for professional growth. We will spend time discussing your lesson with a focus on your instruction and how the students were involved with the lesson. The ultimate goal will be to develop ideas on how to enhance student achievement."*

4. **Ask a general impression question.** This allows the teacher to begin the post-conference by self-reflecting on his/her lesson.

*Ex. "How do you think the lesson went?"*

## Reinforcement Plan

1. **Reinforcement objective.** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective.  
*Ex. "By the end of the conference, the teacher will be able to explain how she plans for the types and frequency of questions that she asks during a lesson."* This objective includes specific language from the 'Questioning' indicator.
2. **Self-analysis question.** Prompt teacher to talk about what you want to reinforce. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric. This can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of reinforcement as it relates to the lesson.  
*Ex. "When you plan a lesson, how do you decide on the type and frequency of questions that you will ask?"*
3. **Identify specific examples from the evidence about what the teacher did relatively well.** It is critical that the observer leading the post-conference provides specific examples for the lesson of when the teacher incorporated descriptors from the indicator being reinforced.

*Ex. "You asked a variety of questions throughout the lesson to check for student understanding. You asked numerous questions on the knowledge and comprehension level that led students to review previous learning as they identified the elements of a pictograph and defined mean, mode, median, and range. You also asked them to define vocabulary within the lesson's objective, which allowed you to restate the objective, using their response. As you progressed through the lesson, you continually asked students to explain how they arrived at their answers and to explain their classmates' responses. This*

*type of questioning moves students to a deeper understanding of the content being taught as they must justify their thinking. You also asked questions that required students to evaluate the purpose and advantages of using a pictograph."*

## Refinement Plan

1. **Refinement objective.** Use specific language from the rubric to develop the objective.

*Ex. "By the end of this conference, you will be able to explain how you plan for the pacing of a lesson that provides sufficient time for each segment and provides for a clear closure."* This objective includes specific language from the 'Lesson Structure and Pacing' indicator.

2. **Self-analysis.** Ask a specific question to prompt the teacher to talk about what you want him/her to improve upon. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric. This can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of refinement as it relates to the lesson.

*Ex. "When developing lessons, how do you decide on the pacing of the lesson so sufficient time is allocated for each segment?"*

3. **Identify specific examples from the evidence about what to refine.** It is critical that the observer leading the post-conference provides specific examples from the lesson to support the indicator being refined. This is the most important element of the plan because it models a strong example and labels why it is a strong example. This provides support for the teacher as they apply the model to future lessons.

*Ex. "You began the lesson with an explanation of the lesson's objective and an overview of the lesson. Modeling for students how to analyze a pictograph followed, and then students were to work in groups to read a pictograph and complete questions on a worksheet. You mentioned earlier that you wanted students to be able to work in groups and then report their findings. However, there was not sufficient time for this to occur during the lesson."*

4. **Recommendations.** Provide specific examples of what to refine with suggestions that are concrete. Also indicate the example is strong and how it will improve student learning. Ideally, the teacher should leave with next steps, a resource to support those next steps, and a date by which you will follow-up to monitor progress.

*Ex. "As you plan your lessons, ask yourself which learning activities are essential for students to meet the objective, and then ask yourself how much time each segment of the lesson will need. In thinking back on this lesson, each of the segments you used were essential: the beginning hook using our high school baseball team's batting averages; the modeling of your analytical thinking with a pictograph; the students working in groups to apply their analytical thinking to their pictographs; the students reporting their findings and justifications; and the students reflecting in their math journals about their learning for the day, which is the part they didn't get to. When we think about the time spent on each segment, I know that learning happens when students are problem-solving, discussing, justifying, reflecting, and/or writing, so I want to ensure these chunks have the*

*most time. The beginning hook that took twenty-one minutes could have been accomplished in four to six minutes; leaving you the fifteen minutes to have students share their learning, reflect on their learning, and write in their math journals. For future lessons, continue to ask yourself which learning activities are essential for students to meet the objective and then ask yourself how much time each segment of the lesson will need. These questions will help you ensure you're able to focus on the learning experiences you know will help them succeed. Mrs. Smith has worked on this in the past, and she could be a great resource to support you. For next week's lessons, take the plans that you normally submit, and jot the time blockings you want for each segment of your math lessons. This shouldn't take any extra time, and it will help me support you because I will provide feedback and send it to you. I'll pop in sometime in the next couple of weeks to see how it is helping you provide your students with the closure and reflection opportunities. Are there any other things I can do to support you? What questions do you have?"*

- 5. Share the performance ratings.** At the very end of the conference, the administrator will share scores with the educator.

# Sample Post-Conference Coaching Questions

## Standards and Objectives

- How do you decide on the standards/objectives you will teach?
- How do you identify the sub-objectives for a lesson?
- How do you decide on the method you will use to communicate the standards/objectives to students?
- How do you utilize a visual of the standards/objectives during a lesson?
- How do you communicate your expectations to the students?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?

## Motivating Students

- How do you organize the content of a lesson so that it is meaningful and relevant to the students?
- How do you develop learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to ask questions and explore?
- How do you reinforce and reward the efforts of all students?
- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and explore for the answers?
- How does motivation impact student achievement?

## Presenting Instructional Content

- How do you decide on the types of visuals you will use during a lesson?
- Why is it important for the teacher to model his/her expectations for students?
- How do you plan for effective modeling during a lesson?
- How do students clearly know your expectations for their assignments and for what they are to learn?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the sequencing of the instruction within the lesson?
- When planning a lesson, how do you decide on the manner in which the different elements of the lesson will be segmented?
- How do you maintain focus on the learning objectives in a lesson?

## Lesson Structure and Pacing

- How do you decide on the manner in which you will segment the different parts of a lesson?
- How do you plan for effective closure within a lesson?

- How do you plan for the pacing of a lesson that provides opportunities for students who progress at different rates?
- How do you ensure that instructional time is used efficiently throughout a lesson so that all students remain actively engaged in learning?

## **Activities and Materials**

- How do you decide on the types of materials you will use during a lesson?
- How do you decide on the types of activities you will use during a lesson?
- How do you develop activities that are aligned to the learning objectives?

## **Questioning**

- How do you decide on the types and frequency of questions you ask during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher-order questions during a lesson?
- How do you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- How do you provide wait time during a lesson?
- What is the purpose of a teacher providing wait time?

## **Academic Feedback**

- How do you decide on the type of feedback you provide to students?
- How do you use student feedback to make adjustments to your instruction?
- How do you engage students in providing quality feedback to one another?

## **Grouping**

- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles individuals will have when working in groups?
- How do you communicate your expectations to students for their own work and that of the group?
- How do you assess the performance of groups and individuals when it is completed in a group setting?

## **Teacher Content Knowledge**

- How do you prepare yourself to teach (insert a topic taught)?
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How do you decide on the ways in which you will connect the content being taught to other subjects?
- What are some other ideas to which you could have connected during the lesson?



## **Teacher Knowledge of Students**

- How do you identify the learning styles of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you identify the interests of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?

## **Thinking and Problem-Solving**

- How do you plan for activities and/or assignments that teach students different types of thinking and problem-solving?
- Ask teachers to reflect on the specific activities and/or assignments utilized within the lesson and then identify the types of thinking and/or problem-solving each taught. This type of reflection will provide a means for assessing a teacher's understanding of analytical, practical, and research-based thinking and the types of problem-solving referenced under this indicator.

# Reinforcement

**Reinforcement Area** (*indicator*):

**Self-Analysis Question:**

**Evidence from Script:**

# Refinement

**Refinement Area** *(indicator):*

**Self-Analysis Question:**

**Evidence from Script:**

**Recommendation** *(next steps, resource(s) to support next steps, date for follow-up):*

# Measuring Student Growth in Tennessee: Understanding TVAAS

The following pages contain an excerpt from this report published by the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) in October 2014. Use this link to access the full report: <http://tnscore.org/research-reports/policy-memos/>

For more about the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), visit the TVAAS website at <http://tvaas.sas.com>, or the department website at [www.tn.gov/education/topic/tvaas](http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/tvaas).

To read more about SCORE, visit <http://tnscore.org>.



## INTRODUCTION

Teachers have a greater impact on students' academic growth than any other in-school factor.<sup>1</sup> Studies on teaching quality have found that high-quality teaching can diminish the impact of a student's low socioeconomic background.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, consecutive years of access to high-quality teaching can boost higher-performing students to perform at even higher levels and accelerate lower-achieving students to catch up to their higher-performing peers.<sup>3</sup> For these reasons, shifts in policy and practice related to teaching quality have the potential to minimize achievement gaps and yield large and sustainable improvements in student achievement levels. To maximize student access to high-quality teaching, it is important to have an accurate measure that can be used to determine a teacher's impact on students' academic growth.<sup>4</sup>

Until recently, there was little data used in teacher evaluations that allowed schools to distinguish between effective and ineffective teaching. In 2009, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) conducted a study, "The Widget Effect," analyzing teacher evaluation practices in four different states and twelve different school districts. This study found that districts often used simple rating

systems for teacher evaluation, labeling teachers as either effective or ineffective, or satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Within these systems, TNTP found that 94 to 99 percent of teachers received a positive rating amidst high student failure rates.<sup>5</sup> These conflicting data indicate a failure to differentiate between effective and ineffective teaching, providing little information that could accurately inform decisions around teacher recruitment, teacher preparation, and teacher support and development.<sup>6</sup>

In the late 1980s, value-added measures were developed in an attempt to more accurately measure a teacher's impact on student growth.<sup>7</sup> While previous measures focused on student achievement levels, value-added measures instead focus on the amount of academic growth a student makes from one year to the next. For example, if a student enters third grade reading on grade level, value-added measures attempt to determine how much progress that student makes toward reading at a fourth-grade level by the end of the school year. Over time, value-added measures were used more frequently in schools throughout the United States to inform hiring and retention practices, professional growth plans for teachers, and the improvement of teacher preparation programs. Value-

added measures, when employed in combination with other effective evaluation tools, offer schools the opportunity to assess and improve student access to high-quality teaching, maximizing students' potential for growth throughout their educational career.<sup>8</sup>

## HISTORY OF TVAAS

In Tennessee, the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) was developed in an attempt to measure the impact teachers have on students' academic growth. TVAAS was created on the foundational belief that "society has a right to expect that schools will provide students with the opportunity for academic gain regardless of the level at which the students enter the educational venue."<sup>9</sup> In other words, those schools or teachers labeled as most effective by a TVAAS measure should be those

who provide high-quality educational opportunities for all students.<sup>10</sup>

In the late 1980s, Dr. William L. Sanders and Dr. Robert A. McClean of the University of Tennessee used longitudinal data to measure the impact different teachers had on student outcomes, laying the foundation for the statistical model employed in TVAAS. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Tennessee passed several pieces of legislation that emphasized the importance of statewide assessment and accountability systems on the path toward Tennessee's education improvement goals.<sup>11</sup> TVAAS was one recognized measure that could be used to evaluate Tennessee's progress toward accomplishing its educational goals. This research and legislation laid the foundation for the use of TVAAS in Tennessee's education system today. Table 1 outlines the history of TVAAS in Tennessee:

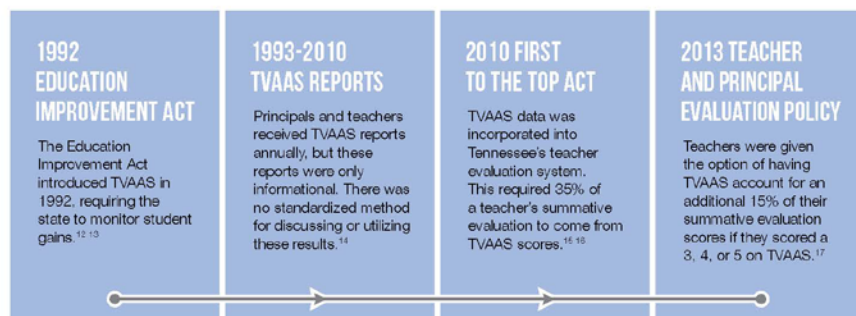


Table 1

TVAAS uses data from Tennessee's achievement tests to calculate yearly growth for all students in the state. To calculate yearly growth for students, TVAAS looks at a student's past testing data and predicts his or her growth based on the average growth of students statewide with similar initial levels of achievement. This component of the TVAAS model is meant to ensure that a student's initial achievement level will not affect the accuracy of the measure.<sup>18</sup> While other growth

models explicitly adjust for students' background characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and poverty status, TVAAS uses students' prior achievement levels to account for these factors. A TVAAS score for a teacher is determined by looking at the amount of growth above, below, or just at expectations that each of the teacher's students make in a given school year. Each student's growth is compared to the growth they were predicted to make during that school year.

## VALUE OF TVAAS MEASURES

Accurate TVAAS data has the potential to help stakeholders at all levels of the education system promote high-quality teaching and contribute to

improved achievement for all students. Tables 2-4 outline how teachers, principals, district leaders, and state policymakers can use TVAAS data to improve student achievement in Tennessee.

## HOW DOES TVAAS HELP TEACHERS?

### STUDENT SUPPORT

TVAAS data have the potential to facilitate meaningful conversations between teachers and students about a student's strengths and to set goals for students' academic growth during the school year. TVAAS data provide teachers with information that can help them identify students in need of early intervention and to group students based on their unique needs. These practices help teachers differentiate their instruction for different groups of students, improving students' potential for growth.

### INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

TVAAS data allow teachers to reflect on their instruction, illuminating instructional strengths as well as opportunities for growth. This kind of data-driven self-reflection allows teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in certain subject areas and with certain groups of students.<sup>19</sup>

### TEACHER COLLABORATION

TVAAS data can also set the stage for more directed and effective collaboration between teachers. This data can help principals identify highly effective teachers who can serve as instructional leaders and mentors for newer teachers or teachers struggling with specific areas of instruction.<sup>20</sup>

Table 2

### TVAAS SHIFTS THE CONVERSATION FROM PROFICIENCY TO GROWTH: NORMAN SMITH ELEMENTARY

Norman Smith Elementary, a school serving over 600 students in grades pre-kindergarten to five in Middle Tennessee, has achieved high levels of growth over the last three years. If you ask school leaders at Norman Smith what makes them so successful, one of the things they point to is building the confidence of their students. Former principal Beth Unfried explains, "We have to provide opportunities for students to have success in school. Once they experience success, they want it even more."<sup>21</sup> One of the things Norman Smith staff point to as a key to helping all students experience success is their continued focus on growth. Using TVAAS and other growth data, teachers at Norman Smith are able to set overall growth targets for students and incremental milestones along the way that help students build self-confidence and perseverance. Unfried cites TVAAS and other growth data as a game changer for students from low-income backgrounds. She emphasizes, "If students are never celebrated for their growth, then they feel defeated. It's not always about students making 100 percent on the test. For some students, going from a 20 percent to a 60 percent is just as important."<sup>22</sup>



## HOW DOES TVAAS HELP PRINCIPALS AND DISTRICT LEADERS?

### TEACHER DISTRIBUTION

TVAAS data can be used at the district and school levels to ensure that high-quality teachers are distributed equitably between and within schools. This data could help administrators and districts create systemic incentives to attract and retain high-quality teachers in historically lower-performing, low-income schools. Additionally, TVAAS data provide insight into teachers' instructional strengths, whether in certain subject areas or with specific groups of students. For example, TVAAS data may indicate that a teacher is more effective teaching math than English language arts or that a teacher yields high levels of academic growth for higher-achieving students. School leaders can use this information to capitalize on teachers' strengths, placing them with groups of students or in subject areas where they are most effective instructionally.<sup>23</sup>

### STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS

TVAAS data also inform school and district leaders of individual students or groups of students that need targeted instructional interventions. This information can inform professional development opportunities for teachers, the implementation of before or after-school tutoring programs, or the hiring and distribution of instructional coaches.

### TEACHER SUPPORT PRACTICES

One of the most important uses of TVAAS data occurs at the school level and informs principal practices around teacher support. When schools have instructional coaches or teacher leaders present, TVAAS data can guide these instructional leaders toward the teachers who need their help and support the most. In this way, TVAAS data can serve as foundational evidence for teacher improvement practices, gaining insight into teachers' opportunities for growth and providing them with the support they need to be successful.

Table 3

#### USING VALUE-ADDED DATA TO SUPPORT ALL TEACHERS: FRANK P. BROWN ELEMENTARY

At Frank P. Brown Elementary in Crossville, data are used to continually inform teacher support and improvement efforts. When TVAAS data indicate that a teacher is struggling in a certain subject area or with a certain group of students, school leaders will ask an instructional coach to spend time in the classroom with that teacher. Instructional coaches will observe, offer constructive feedback, collaborate on lesson planning, and model effective instruction for these teachers. Additionally, when value-added data show that a teacher is struggling in a particular subject or with a particular group of students, school leaders will pair them with a teacher who excels in the same area. The teacher will have a chance to spend a few days observing his or her colleague, learning from their instructional practices and classroom management style. At Frank P. Brown, teachers are given the opportunity to watch best practices in action and are provided with the resources they need to improve upon their own practices.<sup>24</sup>

#### BUILDING SCHOOL LEADER CAPACITY TO USE DATA: MARYVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

Maryville City Schools serves approximately 4,900 students. Dr. Mike Winstead, Maryville's current Director of Schools, points to the time that Maryville spent working with school leaders as a key to the success the district has with data. Winstead says, "We've always had a good culture here in Maryville, but in recent years we've really invested time and energy into helping school leaders understand and effectively use data. We have at least one person on each building's leadership team who is truly a data expert."<sup>25</sup> Winstead and his team spent time working with school leaders to ensure they know what TVAAS data tell them and using that information to inform school-level decisions. School leaders use TVAAS and other data to ensure teachers are assigned to subjects and grade levels where they are most effective instructionally. In addition, school leaders carefully examine TVAAS data to gain a clear understanding of how the school is addressing the needs of all learners, from those in the top 25 percent to those in the bottom 25 percent. This information helps schools to understand if there are students who are not being served well by the school and to direct resources to those students.<sup>26</sup>

## HOW DOES TVAAS HELP STATE POLICYMAKERS?

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TVAAS measures provide states and districts with data that could inform investments in professional development opportunities that more effectively align with their teachers' greatest needs.<sup>27</sup> For example, the state's TVAAS data indicate that students in grades 3-8 made little growth in reading over the last few years.<sup>28</sup> For this reason in 2013-2014, the Tennessee Department of Education invested in professional development opportunities for teachers in reading intervention.

### TEACHER PREPARATION

As TVAAS is more widely implemented, it can be used to track teacher preparation program graduates throughout their career. In 2007, the Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation that required the State Board of Education to create an assessment on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. This legislation requires that the assessment of the programs include TVAAS data, teacher placement and retention rates, and Praxis II scores.<sup>29</sup> This report card is currently used to help Tennessee identify best practices in teacher preparation and scale-up programs that consistently produce high-performing teachers.<sup>30</sup>

Table 4

#### ASSESSMENT AND TVAAS

As noted before, TVAAS uses data from Tennessee's achievement tests to calculate students' yearly growth. These achievement tests include Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) for students in grades 3-8 and end of course (EOC) exams

for students in grades 8-12. Research has shown that in order for the TVAAS measure to be accurate, standardized tests must be a reliable measure of what students know and can do, produce similar results in different environments and at different times, be aligned with academic standards, and be designed to measure the progress of students with diverse ability

levels.<sup>31</sup> A recent statement by the American Statistical Association emphasizes that “value-added measures are only as good as the data fed into them.”<sup>32</sup>

Recent research on other states’ assessments calls into question whether current assessments accurately measure student learning.<sup>33</sup> These analyses have found gaps in alignment between state standards and state assessments, both in terms of the content covered as well as in the depth and rigor of testing items.<sup>34</sup> These analyses found that on average, state assessments cover around 19 percent of the standards’ content in English language arts and reading and 27 percent of the standards’ content in math.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, these analyses found that 15 percent of items in math assessments and 26 percent of items in English language arts and reading are misaligned due to different levels of depth and rigor.<sup>36</sup> If state assessments are not reflective of the state standards teachers are required to teach in their classrooms, value-added measures could be an inaccurate reflection of a teachers’ ability to effectively create academic growth for their students.

While the quality of current state assessments indicates a cause for concern around the accuracy and utility of the TVAAS measure, it also presents an important opportunity to select a higher-quality, better aligned assessment to be implemented with Tennessee’s State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. As Tennessee begins the assessment selection process, it should evaluate assessments for alignment to these standards both in terms of content and rigor. This shift to a new assessment provides the opportunity for improved accuracy in the TVAAS measure and, as a result, improved utility of the information it provides students, teachers, principals, and district and state leaders.

### A MULTIPLE MEASURES APPROACH: TVAAS AND TEACHER EVALUATION

Prior to 2010, teacher evaluations in Tennessee relied only on information collected during formal and informal observations, which were not required for all teachers on an annual basis. From these observations, principals scored teachers on a rubric with general categories intended to indicate levels of teaching effectiveness.

While these classroom observations provided teachers with an opportunity to receive feedback, the quality of the rubrics used and the infrequency of observations limited their ability to truly inform teacher support and improvement practices. Additionally, prior to 2010, student growth and student achievement data were not included as components of the teacher evaluation.

With Tennessee’s passage of the First to the Top Act in 2010, multiple measures of teaching effectiveness were incorporated into the Tennessee teacher evaluation. While TVAAS serves as a foundational component of Tennessee’s teacher evaluation system, the evaluation incorporates additional measures of teaching effectiveness to improve the accuracy, reliability, and utility of the evaluation as a whole. Since 2010, new rubrics for classroom observations have been implemented that aim to provide teachers with more detailed and rigorous feedback on their practice. The teacher evaluation also requires teachers to be observed multiple times each year.<sup>37</sup>

While TVAAS provides important information about teaching effectiveness and insight into what kinds of students teachers are most effective at teaching, TVAAS provides teachers with limited information on what they can do to improve. By balancing the weight of different measures, the teacher evaluation aims to prevent teachers from focusing too narrowly on one aspect of practice. Additionally, providing teachers with feedback on different areas of practice increases the usefulness of the evaluation and provides more effective data that can better inform professional growth opportunities.

For example, while value-added data allow teachers to identify strengths and opportunities for growth in certain subject areas or with certain groups of students, feedback from classroom observations allows teachers to identify strengths and opportunities for growth in classroom management, instructional practices, or lesson planning. When these measures are combined with additional measures of teaching effectiveness, teacher evaluations have the potential to provide more accurate, informative, and complete feedback to teachers. This information can inform the improvement and development of support systems for teachers and increase student access to high-quality teaching.<sup>38</sup>

### **Growth measures for teachers of traditionally non-tested grades and subjects:**

Diverse stakeholders often voice concerns related to the use of TVAAS to measure teaching effectiveness in grades or subject areas that are traditionally not subject to end-of-year assessments. This is a valid concern that deserves continued attention, but it is also an area where Tennessee has made considerable progress. Since the implementation of the new teacher evaluation system, the Tennessee Department of Education has used portfolio-based assessments to develop innovative growth measures for teachers of creative arts, physical education, and world language classes.<sup>39</sup> While innovations such as portfolio-based assessments provide additional teachers with growth measures, these innovations should be continually monitored and evaluated for accuracy and reliability. Tennessee should also learn from the innovative assessment models other states have implemented for these grades and subjects, evaluating their utility and relevance in the Tennessee context.

### **Links to professional development and teacher support practices:**

The information the teacher evaluation system provides school leaders, districts, and state policymakers offers the opportunity to improve professional development and teacher support systems currently in place in Tennessee. Data from TVAAS could be linked to professional development practices, identifying teachers in the greatest need of support.<sup>44</sup> At the school level, school leaders have the opportunity to use TVAAS data to help to identify their most effective teachers to serve as instructional leaders. These teachers could provide targeted support to novice and struggling teachers in their efforts toward instructional improvement. Further, this data can inform professional learning communities at the school level, providing a forum for data-driven conversations across subjects and grade levels that are centered on the needs of students.

While the above concerns and opportunities necessitate continued research and improvement efforts around the TVAAS measure, its use as one of multiple measures of teaching effectiveness in Tennessee’s teacher evaluation system should continue, unless research indicates that changes

to the measure and its uses will yield better outcomes for teachers and students. The state’s current teacher evaluation system provides more in-depth and comprehensive information to teachers, principals, districts, and policymakers than was previously available, ensuring that decisions ranging from professional development supports to teacher placement can be made with a more robust set of data.

## CONCLUSION

TVAAS measures in combination with improved observations, innovative student perception surveys, and other measures of teaching effectiveness provide teachers, school leaders, district leaders, and state policymakers with valuable information about the state of teaching in Tennessee. While none of these measures are perfect on their own, they provide individuals at diverse levels of the education system with information that improves their ability to support effective teaching and improve outcomes for students. As outlined in this report, TVAAS offers schools and school districts the opportunity to better understand teachers’ impact on student outcomes. This understanding can help school leaders and policymakers make data-driven decisions that increase Tennessee student access to high-quality instruction and, in turn, improve student achievement levels statewide.

## FAQ on Evaluation Flexibility for Teachers

Updated: April 12, 2016

In April 2016 Gov. Haslam signed a new law that provides the option **to include or not include results from the 2015-16 TNReady and TCAP tests** within the student growth component of a teacher's evaluation, depending on which scenario benefits the teacher.

In other words, if TNReady results from this year help a teacher earn a higher evaluation score, they *will* be used. If they do not help a teacher earn a higher score, they *will not* be used. And, if at any point in this three-year transition an educator's evaluation would not benefit by including the student growth data from the 2015-16 test, that data will be excluded from the educator's score. Educators will automatically receive the option that provides them with the best score.

We are providing this additional flexibility in light of the unexpected transition from an online assessment to a paper format, and we are doing so in a way that supports Tennessee's efforts to strengthen teaching, learning, and accountability. The proposal keeps student learning and accountability as factors in an educator's evaluation.

### Sections:

- How the flexibility applies for different categories of teachers
- Details on how the flexibility works
- Impact on school and district accountability
- Other questions



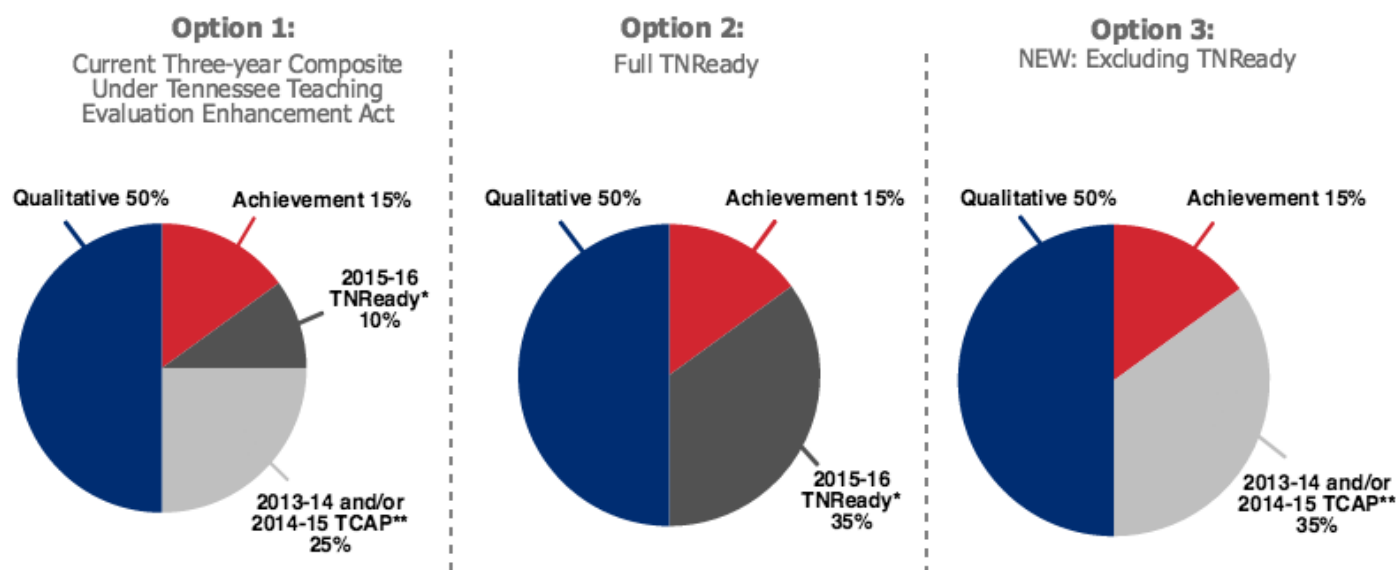
## How the flexibility applies for different categories of teachers

### 1. What are the 2015-16 options for teachers who have prior student growth data?

Teachers who have prior individual TVAAS data, which includes most educators who have been teaching for two years or more, have three options for how the department of education will calculate their evaluation. These methods include or do not include 2015-16 data as part of the student growth score, depending on what most benefits an educator's overall evaluation.

This additional flexibility applies to teachers whose students are taking TNReady in math and English language arts, as well as teachers whose students are taking TCAP tests in other subject areas. The student growth data that factors into the score for a specific educator will come from the results of that teacher's students, in whichever grade/subject(s) that educator taught them.

## 2015-16 Teacher Evaluation Options for educators who have prior individual TVAAS data



\* For 2015-16, student growth data may come from all TCAP assessments, regardless of subject or grade, including TNReady in math or English language arts as well as other TCAP tests. The student growth data that factors into the score for a specific educator would come from the results of that teacher's students, in whichever grades/subject(s) that educator taught them.

\*\* The individual scores from the two years will be weighted according to the number of students in each score. For teachers with no 2013-14 TVAAS data, their 2014-15 TVAAS data would be used. This would increase the amount by which the 2014-15 TVAAS data would factor into their score. Similarly, for teachers with no 2014-15 TVAAS data, which includes many social studies teachers, their 2013-14 TVAAS data would be used for the entirety of that portion.

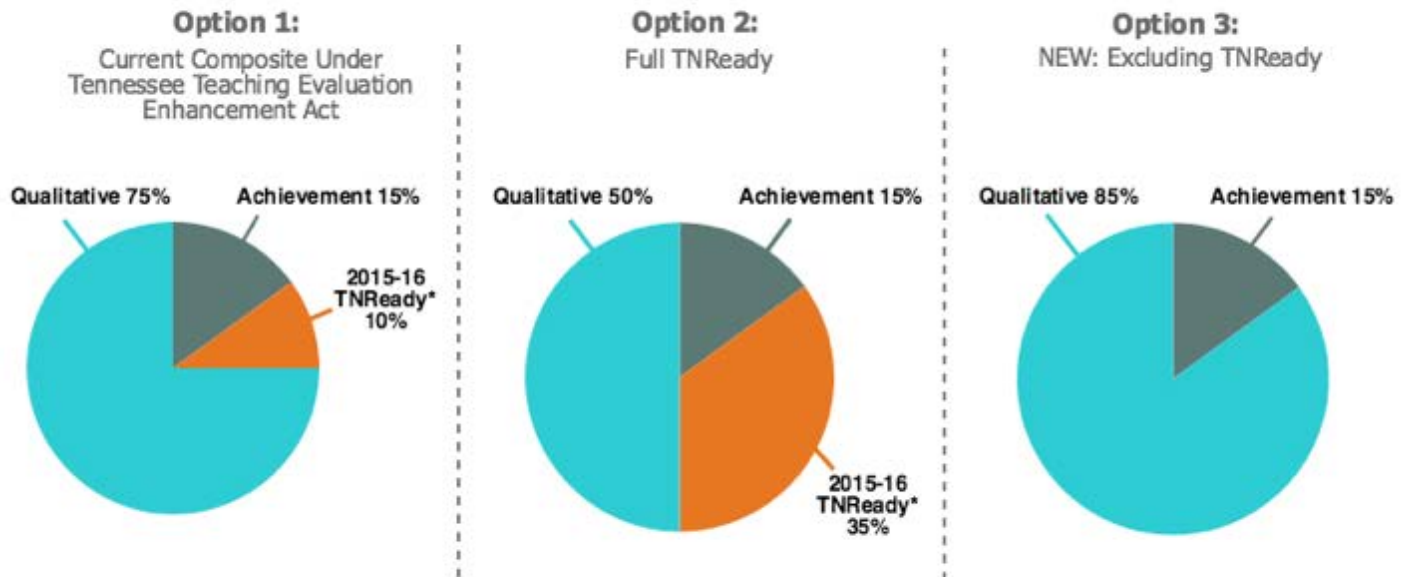
Note: Districts will have the ability to allow their teachers to choose a new achievement measure for 2015-16.

**2. What flexibility will be provided for educators who will have individual TVAAS data for the first time or who have no historical data in 2015-16, including new teachers and social studies and geometry teachers?**

Teachers in tested grades and subjects with no prior individual TVAAS data will also have their student growth score calculated in three different ways, including one that eliminates the 2015-16 data. The educator will receive the calculation that provides the best result.

These options will also apply to teachers who had individual TVAAS data in earlier years – and who will have it again in 2015-16 – but who did not have individual data in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

## 2015-16 Teacher Evaluation Options *for new educators and those who do not have prior TVAAS data*



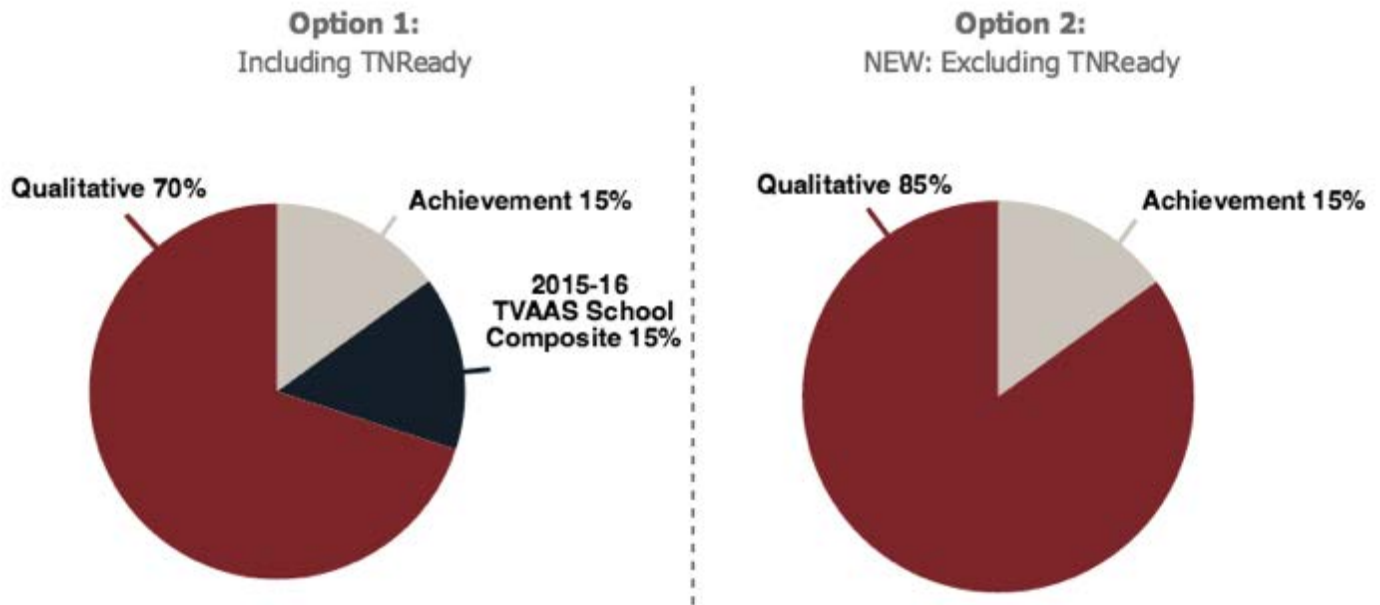
\* For 2015-16, student growth data may come from all TCAP assessments, regardless of subject or grade, including TNReady in math or English language arts or the TCAP in social studies or science. The student growth data that factors into the score for a specific educator would come from the results of that teacher's students, in whichever grades/subject(s) that educator taught them.

Note: Districts will have the ability to allow their teachers to choose a new achievement measure for 2015-16.

### 3. How are evaluations calculated for teachers in non-tested grade and subjects?

Teachers in non-tested grades and subjects, which includes teachers without individual TVAAS data, also have flexibility for the department to include or not include school-wide growth data, depending on what benefits them the most.

## 2015-16 Teacher Evaluation Options *for educators in non-tested grades and subjects*



Note: Districts will have the ability to allow their teachers to choose a new achievement measure for 2015-16.

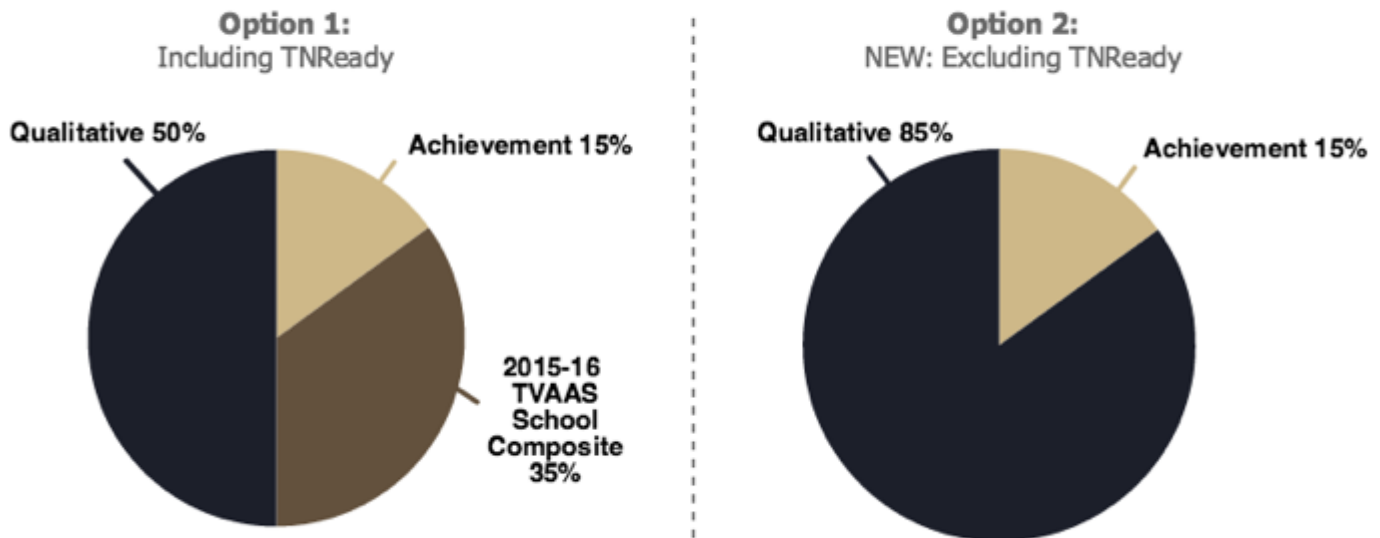
### 4. How are teachers using a portfolio growth measure impacted?

Teachers who are using a portfolio growth measure are not affected by the evaluation adjustment. Non-tested teachers who receive an individual growth score from an approved portfolio growth model (fine arts, physical education, world languages, pre-K, or kindergarten) will continue to use the same weighting as in prior years. The weighting for these teachers will continue to be 35 percent individual growth from the portfolio growth model, 15 percent from the achievement measure, and 50 percent from qualitative measures.

## 5. How does this flexibility apply to school leaders?

School leaders also have the flexibility within their evaluation for the department to exclude 2015-16 student growth results if they do not benefit the educator.

# 2015-16 School Leader Evaluation Options



Note: Districts will have the ability to allow their educators to choose a new achievement measure for 2015-16.

## Details on how the flexibility works

### 6. How do educators select the option they want to use?

The option that results in the highest score will automatically be selected. Educators will be able to log into TNCompass, the state's new licensure and evaluation portal, to see which calculation benefited them the most and was ultimately incorporated into their evaluation. This information will be available in late summer or early fall when teachers' composite evaluation scores become available in TNCompass.

### 7. Does this flexibility extend to social studies, science, and third-grade teachers?

Yes, this flexibility applies to all grades and subjects for which TVAAS data is generated during the 2015-16 school year. This also includes first and second grade teachers, as applicable.

### 8. Can teachers select new achievement measures?

For the 2015-16 school year, districts have the option to allow their teachers to select a new achievement measure for the current school year. However, even if districts offer this flexibility, teachers are *not* required to change the achievement measure that they previously selected.

If a teacher selects a school-wide TVAAS composite as their achievement measure, that composite *will* be included in their evaluation.

**9. How does this flexibility impact school-wide growth measures?**

School-wide growth measures are based off of *one year* of data. If a school-wide growth measure helps an educator in a non-tested grade or subject, it will be used. If a school-wide growth measure does not help that educator's score, it will be excluded.

However, if a teacher selects a school-wide TVAAS composite as their achievement measure, that composite *will* be included in the evaluation.

**10. How will this flexibility affect teachers who have individual TVAAS data in the 2015-16 school year and in only one prior year (either 2013-14 or 2014-15)?**

If teachers have individual TVAAS data from the 2015-16 school year and only one prior year – either 2013-14 or 2014-15 – they will still have the flexibility outlined on page 2 for teachers with prior TVAAS data. The entire percentage designated for 2013-14 and 2014-15 data would come from the year for which data is available. For example, if a teacher only had prior data from the 2014-15 school year, the TVAAS composite in Option 1 would include 25 percent 2014-15 data and 10 percent 2015-16 data, while Option 3 would include 35 percent 2014-15 data.

***Impact on school and district accountability***

**11. Will the next Priority School list also provide this flexibility?**

The next Priority School list will be determined in August 2017. The department will still identify the bottom 5 percent of schools in terms of academic achievement, but in light of our transition to a new assessment, the department will provide a safe harbor for schools.

The department will run the Priority School list based on a three-year success rate, similar to how we have identified Priority Schools in the past. However, the department will also run the Priority School list *excluding 2015-16 TNReady results*, using a two-year success rate that incorporates *only* TCAP data from the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years. A school needs to be identified on *both* lists to be considered a Priority School in August 2017. If removing the first year of TNReady data moves a school out of the bottom 5 percent, that school will *not* be considered a Priority School.

Note, the safe harbor provision will not result in any additional schools being added to the list.

**12. How does this flexibility impact the next set of Reward Schools?**

Reward Schools will still be selected based on 2015-16 data.

**13. How does this flexibility impact district accountability?**

First, it's helpful to understand the recent history around district accountability. Signed into law in 2001, the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB) mandated that the state, district, and schools make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward the goal of 100 percent of students being proficient in math and reading by 2014. The federal government allowed states to *waive* out of the AYP provisions in NCLB in 2012 by submitting an ESEA Flexibility Waiver. Waivers allowed

states to determine local measures for district and school accountability. Tennessee was granted its first waiver in 2012, allowing the state to implement two accountability models, one for districts and one for schools. Based on our *2012 waiver*, the district accountability model used what we call Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), which are based on TCAP scores. The school accountability model was based on school success rates.

The Tennessee Department of Education applied for a second revised waiver in 2015, and in anticipation of a new assessment, the department proposed a **new district accountability model** to go into effect during the 2015-16 school year. Under this revised model, district AMOs were adjusted to account for the first year of a new test.

As a result of our waiver, during the 2015-16 school year districts will receive the better of **two options** for purposes of the achievement and gap closure statuses: a one-year growth measure or their relative rank in the state. If a district's achievement scores decline, but their peers across the state decline in tandem, a district's relative rank will remain stable. Or, districts have the option to use a one-year growth measure to measure their performance. Similar to the flexibility for teachers, districts will automatically receive the option that yields the higher score.

Understanding the revised district accountability model is important because districts were *never* going to be judged based on how many students scored proficient on a new and more rigorous test in the 2015-16 school year.

## **Other questions**

### **14. How does this impact future evaluations?**

If at any point in this three-year transition – through the 2017-18 school year – the student growth data from the 2015-16 test does not benefit a teacher, educators will have that data excluded from their evaluations.

### **15. Are existing policies that benefit educators' scores still in place?**

Some districts have chosen to implement the "4/5 Trump Rule," which allows teachers who score a level 4 or 5 on individual growth to use their individual growth score for the entirety of their overall level of effectiveness. That district decision will not be impacted by this additional adjustment.

Additionally, teachers who score a level 3, 4, or 5 for individual growth will still receive that score in lieu of the achievement measure when the individual growth score is higher.

### **16. Will TVAAS be stable during the transition to a new assessment?**

Yes. It's important to remember that TVAAS does not compare students' *absolute* performance on TNReady to their *absolute* performance on the previous TCAP tests. Instead, students will be expected to perform *about as well* on TNReady as their peers who had similar TCAP scores last

year. Because all students are making the transition to a new assessment at the same time, this levels the playing field.

The student score that will be factored into TVAAS is based on *academic growth*, not based on a student’s overall performance. Because students’ performance will be compared to the performance of their peers, any drops in statewide proficiency rates resulting from increased rigor of the new assessments will have no impact on the ability of teachers, schools, and districts to earn strong TVAAS scores.

While there is no set distribution of scores that TVAAS can be expected to produce, we expect to see a relatively stable and balanced distribution of scores through the transition. For example, below you will see a diagram that demonstrates what happened when we transitioned to a more rigorous Algebra I assessment in 2010. Despite the drop in proficiency rates, the overall distribution of TVAAS scores remained fairly stable because students were compared to their peers taking the same set of assessments. Similar stability can be expected as we move to new assessments.

