

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
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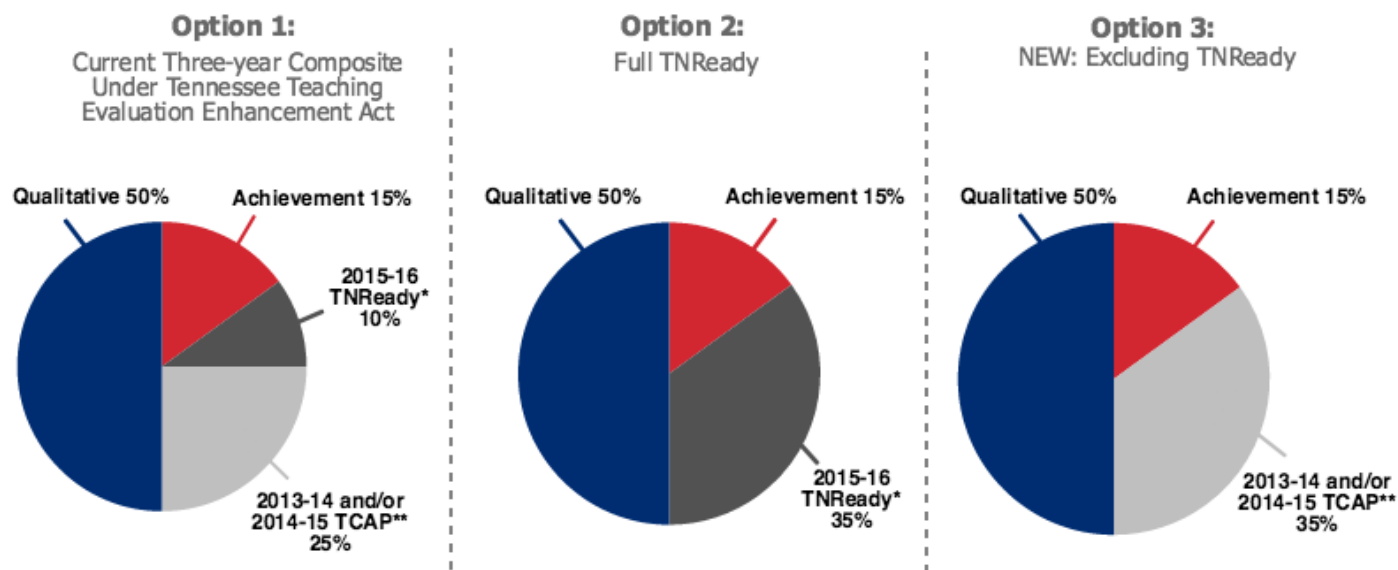
How the flexibility applies for different categories of teachers

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.

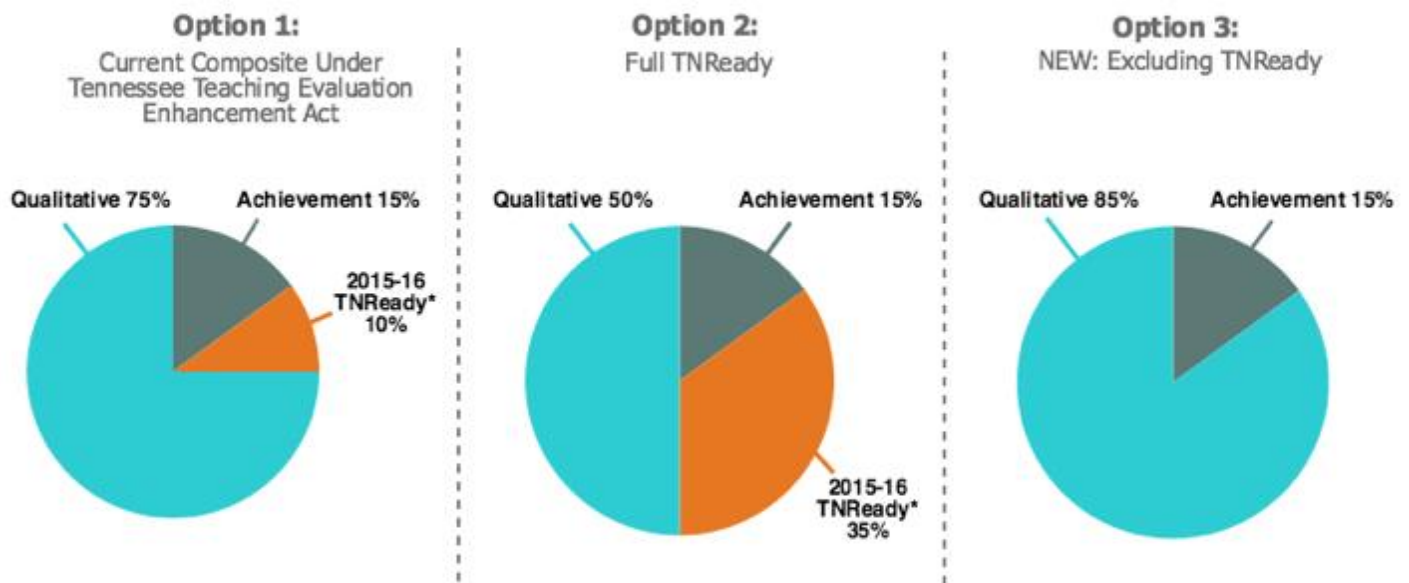
Note: Districts will have the ability to allow their teachers to choose a new achievement measure for 2015-16.

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



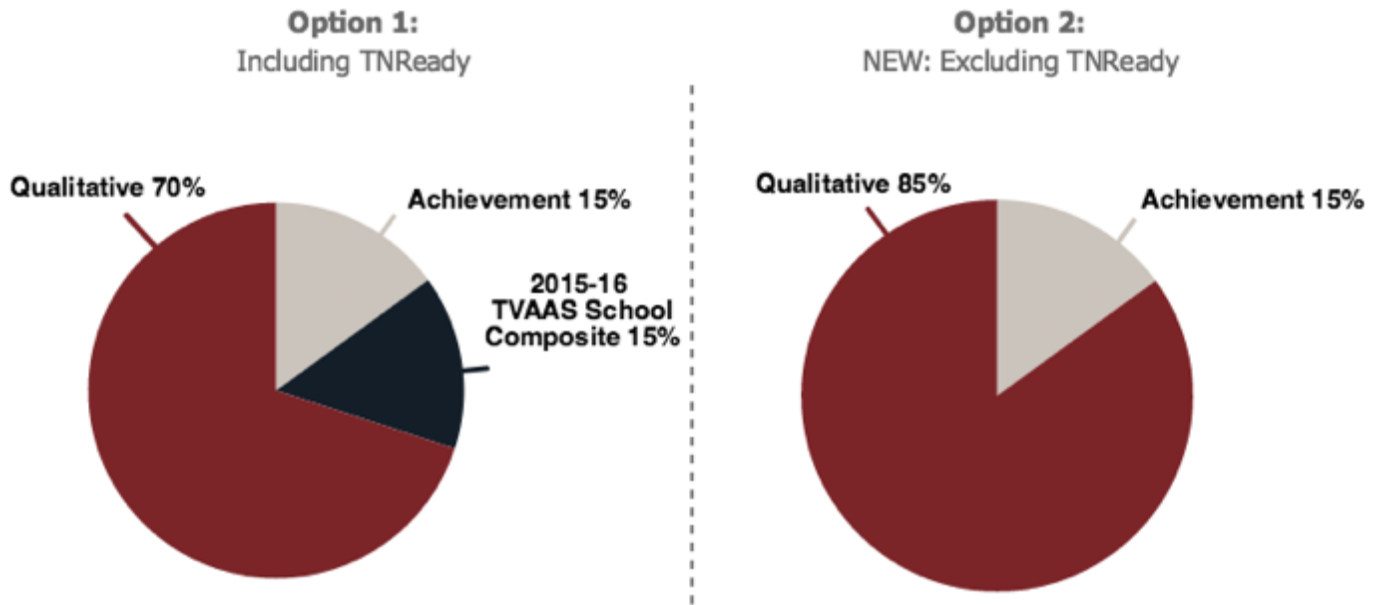
* For 2015-16, student growth data may come from all TCAP assessments, regardless of subject or grade, including TNReady in math or English language arts or the TCAP in social studies or science. The student growth data that factors into the score for a specific educator would come from the results of 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.

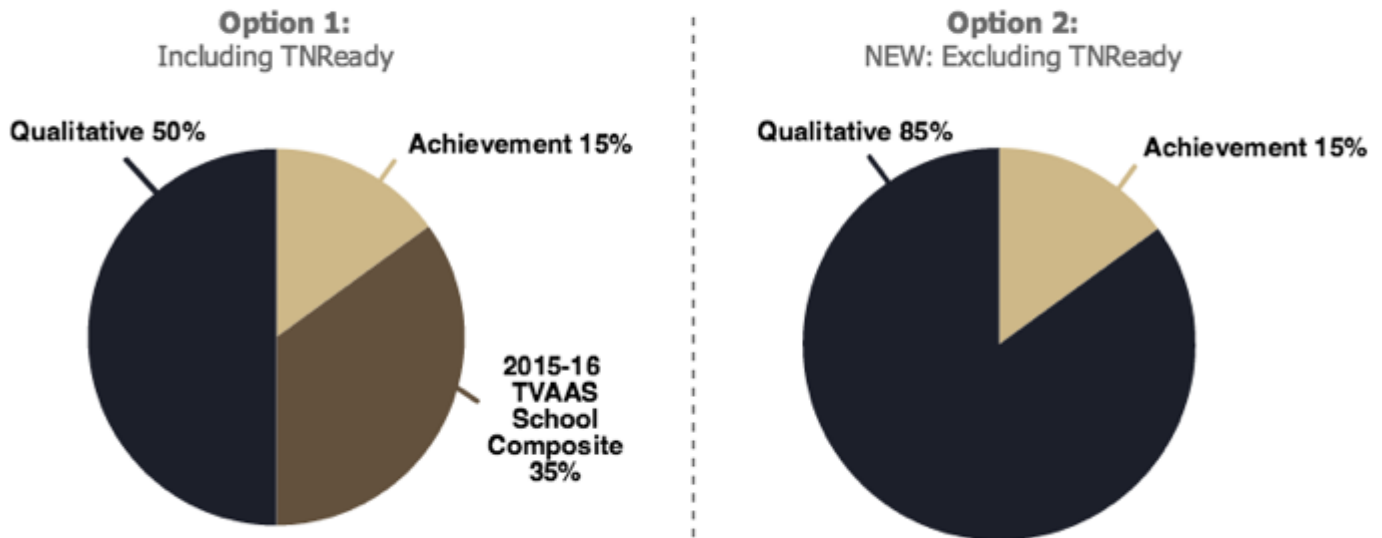
4. How are teachers using a portfolio growth measure impacted?

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.

