

# Pre-K and Kindergarten Student Growth Portfolio Model

## 2017-18 Implementation Q&A

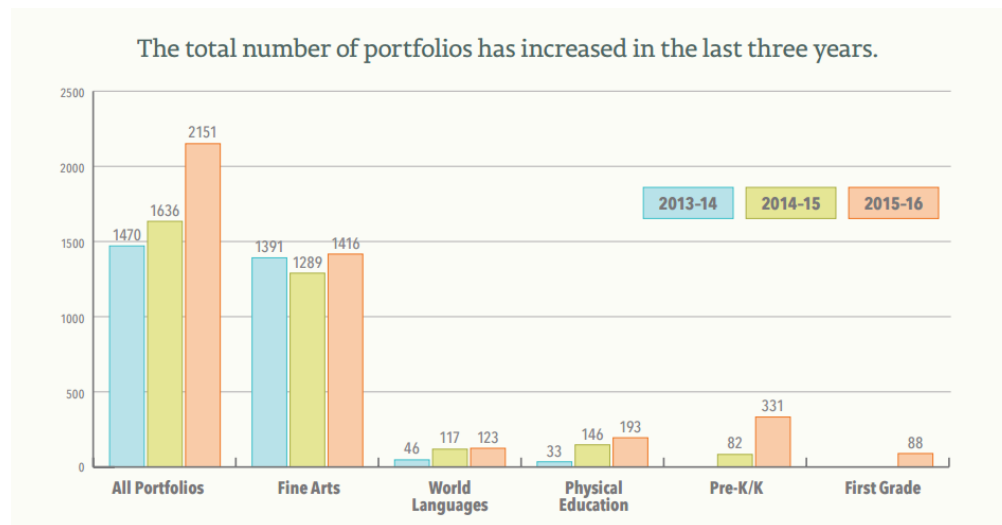
May 3, 2017

During the 2016 legislative session, the General Assembly passed the [Pre-K Quality Act](#). One key component of this law is the requirement that **all districts that have a voluntary pre-K program (VPK) must utilize the state board-approved pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models for evaluating pre-K and kindergarten teachers** (see T.C.A. §§ 49-6-103–49-6-110).

### General Questions

**1. What is the history of portfolio use in Tennessee?**

Portfolios have been implemented in Tennessee since the 2011-12 school year when the fine arts portfolio was first piloted. In the past three years, the use of student growth portfolios has notably increased (see the chart below). In the 2017-18 school year, the following portfolio options will be available: fine arts, physical education, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade.



**2. What does the research around portfolios say?**

Research conducted on the Tennessee portfolio model found that portfolio scores are well aligned to observation scores. In fact, teachers implementing portfolios had slightly higher observation scores than similar teachers not implementing portfolios, particularly in the areas of Activities and Materials, Thinking, and Problem Solving. Roughly 50 percent of teachers who implemented portfolios received higher growth scores than they would have without the portfolio and about 20 percent received the same score. Additionally, teachers on the whole reported that portfolios were more appropriate and understandable as part of the evaluation process than any other measure, aside from classroom observations. For more details, read the department’s report, [The Rise of Student Growth Portfolio Models in Tennessee](#).

Additionally, based on the 2016 Tennessee Educator Survey, 83 percent of educators who expected the portfolio to be a part of their evaluation understood what they were being evaluated on. Of that same group of teachers, 75 percent agreed that the portfolio model is appropriate for use in their overall evaluation, and 71 percent reported taking at least some professional development action as a result of the feedback from their portfolio.

**3. *What is an approved voluntary pre-K program (VPK)?***

Approved voluntary pre-K programs (VPKs) have been awarded funds for the 2017-18 school year because the district has met quality benchmark standards in its VPK application. For more information regarding the application process or high-quality programs, reach out to [Candace.Cook@tn.gov](mailto:Candace.Cook@tn.gov).

**4. *What is a student growth portfolio model for pre-K and kindergarten, and how will it impact teachers?***

The pre-K/K student growth portfolio model allows teachers to demonstrate students' progress towards mastery of English language arts (ELA) and math standards. Teachers collect student work artifacts at two points in time (Point A and Point B) and select artifacts from differentiated groups of students to submit for review via an online platform by April 15, 2018. Then, certified peer reviewers score student work based on a comprehensive scoring guide.

Implementation of a student growth portfolio model produces an individual growth score, which is used for the 35 percent student growth component of the teacher's level of overall effectiveness (LOE); as a result, teachers implementing student growth portfolio models have an evaluation composite similar to that of "tested" teachers. More information about scoring and evaluation is provided beginning with question 12.

**5. *What are the types of evidence that can be collected?***

Various types of evidence can be collected to indicate student performance on a standard(s). This evidence, also referred to as "student work artifacts," can include but is not limited to video segments that demonstrate student action or talk, audio recordings of student conversation or think aloud, photographs of student work, recorded think alouds, videos of students performing a task, conceptual maps, writing samples, and art projects.

**6. *What is the time requirement for teachers implementing a pre-K or kindergarten portfolio?***

The time necessary for portfolio implementation outside of the normal expectations for classroom instruction is minimal. Teachers should gather student work artifacts for the portfolio during the course of regularly planned classroom instruction and assignments—this should not be an extra or different assignment.

Pre-K teachers submit four total portfolio collections—one for each of the assigned strands: (1) literature/narrative text; (2) informational/explanatory text; (3) counting and cardinality; and (4) geometry or measurement and data. Each collection includes a Point A and Point B artifact from each of the three differentiated groups of student performance: emerging, proficient, and advanced.

Kindergarten teachers submit four total portfolio collections—one for each of the assigned strands: (1) literature/narrative text; (2) informational/explanatory text; (3) counting and cardinality; and (4) operations and algebraic thinking. Each collection includes a Point A and Point B artifact from each of

the three differentiated groups of student performance: emerging, proficient, and advanced.

The additional time required for portfolio implementation is primarily related to the purposeful sampling process. Purposeful sampling refers to the time when teachers select student artifacts that illustrate growth over time for each differentiated group of student performance (emerging, proficient, advanced) for each portfolio collection.

### **7. What steps can districts take to prepare for portfolio implementation?**

Strong, standards-aligned planning and instruction are the best preparation for portfolio implementation. Additionally, here are some suggested ways to prepare:

- Continue to support teachers with the key learnings from the Early Learning Model (ELM) training. In particular, ELM Chapter 2 built knowledge of strong instructional practices around learning environment, differentiation, and developmentally appropriate practices. For links to all ELM materials, click [here](#).
- Develop a deep understanding of the 2017-18 revised standards in ELA and math by attending standards trainings and/or reviewing related materials located [here](#).
- Engage teachers in meaningful professional learning communities on topics that will prepare them for the portfolio process. Topics could include building depth of knowledge of the revised standards, scoring guides, and task-based expectations, creating performance tasks, analyzing student work, differentiating instruction, creating high-quality learning environments, identifying developmentally appropriate instructional activities, etc.
- Utilize the district Early Learning Model Needs Assessment [here](#) to identify district strengths and needs regarding fit, resources, readiness, and capacity. This information can be used to create a plan of action for supporting educators with portfolio implementation.
- Reach out to the [TEAM coach](#), ELA consultant, math consultant, and/or Read to be Ready coach in your area for on-site assistance.
- Review portfolio implementation materials that will be made available throughout the summer (see question 9 for timeline of resources and events).

### **8. What steps can pre-K and kindergarten teachers take to prepare for portfolio implementation?**

Strong, standards-aligned planning and instruction are the best preparation for portfolio implementation. Additionally, here are some suggested ways to prepare:

- Review the *2017-18 ELA Standards Outline* and *Portfolio Planning Guide* and *2017-18 Pre-K/K Math Portfolio Resource Guide* (coming on May 23) prior to standards training.
- Develop a deep understanding of the 2017-18 revised standards in ELA and math by attending standards trainings and/or reviewing related materials located [here](#). Bring portfolio materials with you for reference during the training.
- Engage in professional learning opportunities, particularly on the following topics: building depth of knowledge of the revised standards, scoring guides, and performance-based expectations, creating performance tasks, analyzing student work, differentiating instruction, creating high-quality learning environments, identifying developmentally appropriate instructional activities, etc.
- Read *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* (coming May 17), the department's "how" resource for teaching literacy, and participate in the summer learning series (details [here](#)).
- Review and engage with all portfolio materials and opportunities that will be available throughout the summer (see question 9 for timeline of resources and events).

**9. What resources can I expect to receive from the department in order to prepare for portfolio implementation?**

- May 17:
  - ✓ *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* document and kick-off webinar (details [here](#))
- May 23:
  - ✓ *2017-18 Pre-K/K Math Portfolio Resource Guide*: This resource guide will contain both the Mathematics Portfolio Planning Guide and the Mathematics Scoring Guide
    1. Math planning guide: This is an optional tool that teachers can utilize to consider the time of year they might expect to collect student work artifacts, the type of artifact that would best allow students to demonstrate performance, and time span that might exist between collecting student work artifacts.
    2. Math scoring guide: This is a standards-based tool that identifies the criteria and descriptors of each performance level and will be used to score student work artifacts.
  - ✓ *2017-18 Pre-K/K ELA Standards Outline*: This resource will provide options for selecting ELA standards within each domain to include in portfolio collections. This will be a helpful document to utilize during summer standards training.
  - ✓ *2017-18 Pre-K/K ELA Portfolio Planning Guide*: This is an optional tool that teachers can utilize to consider the time of year they might expect to collect student work artifacts, the type of artifact that would best allow students to demonstrate performance, and time span that might exist between collecting student work artifacts.
- May 30:
  - ✓ Webinar regarding all pre-K/K portfolio resources for math
- July 14:
  - ✓ *2017-18 Pre-K/K ELA Scoring Guide*: This is a standards-based tool that identifies the criteria and descriptors of each performance level and will be used to score student work artifacts.
  - ✓ Webinar regarding all pre-K/K portfolio resources for ELA
- July 17:
  - ✓ Virtual “Back to School” portfolio training module for use by districts and/or teachers
  - ✓ *2017-18 General Portfolio Administrative Guidebook*: This resource will provide technical details for portfolio submission in the spring of 2018.

**10. How will the pre-K and kindergarten portfolios for ELA and math look different in 2017-18 than they did in the 2016-17 pilot?**

**Math**

The math collections required for pre-K/K in 2017-18 have not changed. The pre-K collections represent counting and cardinality and geometry or measurement and data. The kindergarten collections represent counting and cardinality and operations and algebraic thinking.

**ELA**

In 2016-17, the two ELA collections in pre-K represented one reading foundational skill collection and one language collection, and in kindergarten represented one reading foundational skill collection and one writing collection. **In 2017-18, both pre-K and kindergarten will include two ELA collections representing a reading literature/writing narrative collection and reading informational/writing expository collection.** This change integrates standards from the foundational, reading, and writing strands. This revision will support teachers as they weave standards together in a way that helps students understand that mastery of foundational skills leads to proficient reading and writing and that these do not happen in isolation but occur in an integrated way. The purposeful layering of standards is designed to build conceptual knowledge in students and is aligned with Tennessee’s literacy instruction framework.

In 2017-18, both the math and ELA portfolio scoring guides have expanded from 5 to 7 proficiency levels aligned to the revised math and ELA standards. The additional levels will guard against a ceiling effect that could impact the growth that higher performing students are able to demonstrate.

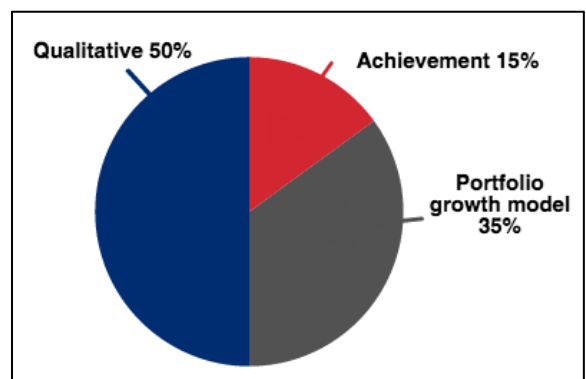
**11. What does the process of creating a high-quality portfolio include?**

- Create a long term instructional plan for the school year, considering when standards will be introduced, pre-assessed, and monitored.
- Break apart (deconstruct) standards so that planning can be explicit and clear for students and develop or identify aligned performance tasks that will be used to measure performance.
- Utilize the scoring guide to develop task-specific expectations.
- Collect Point A work at the most appropriate time within the instructional plan.
- Sort Point A work into differentiated groups of students (emerging, proficient, advanced) based on the scoring guide and task-specific expectations.
- Differentiate instruction for specific needs and strengths that were identified within the Point A student work artifacts.
- Collect Point B work at the most appropriate time within the instructional plan.
- Analyze growth between Point A and Point B student work artifacts. Determine which samples within each differentiated group demonstrates the most growth, which guides the process of purposeful sampling.
- Submit the purposefully sampled student work artifacts into portfolio collections using the online platform prior to the April 15 due date.

**Scoring & Evaluation**

**12. Do teachers implementing portfolios still have to be observed?**

Yes. Classroom observations constitute the 50 percent qualitative component for a portfolio teacher’s LOE, while the portfolio serves as the 35 percent student growth component (see chart to the right). The portfolio process is strongly aligned with the instruction, planning, and environment domains of the TEAM rubric which can lead to rich conversations in pre- and post-conferences.



**13. Can teachers select the pre-K/K student growth portfolio model for the achievement measure?**

Student achievement measures are the basis for setting achievement targets that all students are expected to meet on summative assessments of grade-level or content standards. Because portfolio models provide a growth measure based on a subset of students for a subset of standards, they cannot be used as an achievement measure. However, it should be noted that the 3/4/5 override, outlined in state board policy 5.201, allows student growth data to be used in place of a teacher's achievement measure if it is a level 3, 4, or 5 and is greater than the achievement score.

**14. Does the 4/5 Trump Rule apply to portfolios?**

The portfolio score can be used to activate the 4/5 Trump Rule in districts that have opted into that flexibility. The 4/5 Trump Rule allows teachers who score a level 4 or 5 on individual growth to use their individual growth score for the entirety of their overall LOE.

**15. How does the department ensure validity and reliability of the portfolio scores?**

Portfolios are carefully scored based on the scoring guide by certified peer reviewers using a consensus protocol. In the event that a peer reviewer does not have consensus with a teacher's self-score within one performance level, a third peer reviewer will be utilized.

**16. What is the process for teachers self-scoring their portfolios?**

Teacher self-scoring is one of many reflective components of the portfolio. Teachers score Point A and Point B student work artifacts using the scoring guide and task-based expectations. It is this scoring process which will inform the purposeful sampling, which is the selection of students from each of the three differentiated groupings (emerging, proficient, and advanced). Other reflective components of the portfolio include evidence tagging, completion of the context form, and completion of the narrative.

**17. Will portfolio scores be included in school and district accountability?**

No. Portfolios are specifically intended to be a teacher-level measure of student growth rather than a school or district-level measure. TVAAS, in contrast, can be calculated separately at the teacher, school, and district levels and thus provides measures that are incorporated in school and district accountability that go beyond a roll-up of teacher-level data.

## **Student Work Collections**

**18. When should teachers collect Point A and B artifacts to ensure that they are authentic?**

As part of regular instructional planning, a teacher should select two points during the school year (Point A and Point B) that would best reflect student growth according to the state standards in math and ELA. Teachers should then collect the student work artifacts from these two points in time that are the most appropriate for documenting learning. We encourage teachers to be thoughtful in determining what evidence provides the clearest picture of their impact on student learning for differentiated groups of student performance (emerging, proficient, and advanced).

**19. How do teachers decide which students' artifacts to include in the portfolio collections?**

From each differentiated group of student work artifacts, teachers choose the student work artifacts to include in their portfolio collections through a process called purposeful sampling. Teachers examine the growth of each sample in the differentiated group using the Points A and B student work artifacts and select the sample that most accurately represents the growth of students in that differentiated group. This process is repeated for each differentiated group to complete the four required portfolio collections which are then submitted into the online platform (see questions 5 and 6).

**20. Can team teachers submit the same collections?**

Teachers who team teach or co-teach cannot submit the same student work artifacts for their portfolio collections. Student work artifacts that most closely represent the individual teacher's impact should be chosen for each collection and can contain similar evidence in terms of formatting and types of student work artifacts.

**21. Where can I find examples of collections?**

Examples of portfolio collections will be released along with the *2017-18 Pre-K/K Student Growth Portfolio Model Scoring Guide* this summer. When available, all portfolio resources will be posted on the [TEAM website](#).

## Technology

**22. What technology is required to implement portfolios? Is the district required to provide this technology?**

Portfolios were designed to be implemented without an additional investment in technology. For portfolios that include video collections to demonstrate student growth, teachers have used a variety of district-owned devices (e.g., tablets or video cameras) and low- or no-cost downloadable software. Some districts have found tripods to be helpful.

The department will provide an online platform for pre-K and kindergarten portfolio submissions at no cost to districts. Details about the online platform will be shared over the summer (see question 9).

**23. When should teachers submit their portfolio collections into the online platform?**

Portfolios must be submitted to the department via the online platform by April 15, 2018.

**24. Where should teachers keep student work artifacts as they are being collected?**

Teachers will be able to securely utilize the online platform beginning in October to store all student work artifacts collected throughout the year. Then, when teachers are ready choose the specific student work artifacts for their collections, the online platform will allow teachers to seamlessly select and submit specific student artifacts.

From the beginning of the school year until the submission deadline (April 15, 2018), teachers can also store student work artifacts using any district-approved resource (e.g., free, cloud-based storage service, external hard drive, classroom files or folders, etc.).

## Other

**25. *What are the expectations for special educators?***

There are no plans to develop and implement a student growth portfolio model for special educators for the 2017-18 school year. The department will facilitate the development of a special education student growth portfolio model for inclusive special educators during the 2017-18 school year.

**26. *How do we manage transitional classes that include pre-K and kindergarten?***

All student work submitted *within* a collection must represent one grade level (either pre-K or kindergarten). However, a teacher may submit all pre-K collections, all kindergarten collections, or a combination of pre-K/K collections. A minimum of three students must be rostered within a grade level in order to submit a complete collection.

**27. *What happens if a teacher does not submit a portfolio?***

Per the Pre-K Quality Act, districts that receive VPK program approval must utilize the pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolio models approved by the State Board of Education in the evaluation of pre-K and kindergarten teachers. Teachers who do not submit portfolios put districts out of compliance with state law, and districts may dismiss or suspend the teacher for neglect of duty as per T.C.A. § 49-5-511. When available, more information regarding the process for exemptions will be included in the portfolio administrative guidebook, which will be available [here](#).

**28. *Whom do I contact with questions?***

For any questions about the student growth portfolio models, please reach out to [Portfolio.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:Portfolio.Questions@tn.gov).



## Key Terms

**Portfolio** – The student growth portfolio model is designed to provide teachers with an authentic, individualized, student-centered growth measure that contributes to professional learning and development. It measures student growth through student work artifacts scored by a peer reviewer. Essentially, it is a tool to both promote and assess learning.

**Evidence collection** – A portfolio evidence collection contains student work artifacts from two points in time (Points A and B) that demonstrate growth within three differentiated groups of students: emerging, proficient, and advanced.

**Student work artifacts** – Student work artifacts are student work samples. These can include Word documents, PDFs, images, audio, video, or other evidence or “snapshots” that show students attempting to complete or completing tasks connected to the state standards. Student work artifacts are collected as evidence of a student’s progression toward mastery of state standards.

- Point A – a student work artifact collected at the onset of instruction connected to the selected standard(s) to be measured in the portfolio
- Point B – a student work artifact collect at the completion of instruction connected to the selected standard(s) to be measured in the portfolio

**Differentiated grouping** – Process in which teachers sort Point A student work artifacts into three groups: emerging, proficient, and advanced. Teachers will refer back to their differentiated groups upon collecting Point B student work artifacts to identify the students from each differentiated group to include in their portfolio collections.

**Purposeful sampling** – Process in which teachers analyze the student work artifacts from Point A to Point B in order to determine growth and select the artifacts from each differentiated group (emerging, proficient, advanced) to include in each portfolio collection. A teacher will select 1 artifact from each differentiated group.

**Portfolio planning guide** – An *optional* tool that teachers can utilize to consider the time of year they might expect to collect student work artifacts, the type of artifact that would best allow students to demonstrate performance, and time span that might exist between collecting student work artifacts.

**Scoring guide** – The scoring guide refers to standards-based tool that identifies the criteria and descriptors of each performance level and is used to score student work artifacts.

**Task-specific expectations** – Specific contextual descriptions aligned to the scoring guide developed by the teacher which outlines concrete skills or content knowledge that would be expected at each performance level. These expectations promote clarity and understanding of the scoring guide and can serve as a feedback tool for teachers and students.

**Peer reviewers** – Experienced educators who are trained and certified to score portfolios in an objective manner based on the content specific scoring guide. Peer reviewers are also teachers who submit portfolios in the grade level or content area in which they score.

## Key Terms

**Self-Score** – Reflective process in which teachers utilize the scoring guide to identify the performance levels of student work artifacts.

**Tagging** – Process in which teachers identify the evidence within a student work artifact that demonstrates a level of performance in the scoring guide.

**Context form** – An *optional*, short form that accompanies uploaded student work artifacts that allows a teacher to describe the characteristics of the classroom and circumstances that might impact learning.

**Narrative** – An *optional* teacher reflection on student work artifacts and instructional decisions that led to the observed student outcomes.

**Consensus review** – A third round of review necessitated if the teacher's self-score and the peer reviewer's score differ by more than one performance level. Scoring mechanism employed when a peer reviewer score and teacher score are separated by more than one performance level. In these cases, additional peer reviews will occur until consensus is reached.