

How we are improving assessments in Tennessee

With high standards, an aligned assessment, and strong accountability at the foundation of our work, Tennessee has seen significant education progress in recent years – becoming one of the fastest improving states in the nation in student achievement.

Tennessee students, parents, and educators have worked hard to achieve this progress, and we believe they deserve our continued commitment to these foundational pieces, especially in having a statewide assessment that works. Students should be able to show what they know in a way that is as seamless and non-stressful as possible, and then get feedback and support based on how they are doing in their big-picture progress toward college and workforce readiness.

We are committed to addressing the challenges that our schools, students, teachers, and parents experienced with TNReady. While we continue to address the long-term needs, here are some ways we are immediately improving.

- We are gathering **detailed feedback** from our districts leaders and other stakeholders.
 1. We have given a survey to our directors that asks for input from local assessment coordinators and technology directors.
 2. This summer, there will be feedback sessions with school directors and assessment coordinators in regional meetings across the state, and we will continue to talk with groups like our Assessment Task Force for specific input on the transition to online testing and other components.
 3. We are also seeking and look forward to direct feedback from teachers and principals. And, we will conduct focus group sessions with teachers, parents, and students.

- We are making specific **assessment program changes** as we look at the 2018-19 school year.
 4. We will transition to using ETS for all test design. This transition moves all of Tennessee's statewide tests, including math and English language arts, to one partner. This allows Questar to focus solely on test delivery and reporting. Test design is complex and sophisticated, and we believe the expertise and years of experience ETS brings is more suited to our needs in Tennessee.
 5. There will be no stand-alone field tests for the next two years, and we are continuing to reduce tests and time where we can, including eliminating two end-of-course assessments for next year.
 6. For our online assessments, we will engage a third-party expert to serve as an external consultant to conduct a review of all Questar technology systems.
 7. We will implement a large-scale stress test to verify the capacity of Questar's systems.
 8. We will continue to review the text-to-speech feature that caused slow-downs and issues for the Nextera platform.
 9. For the paper test, we are reducing the number of forms and exploring test booklet changes, which will streamline and simplify logistics for schools.

- We will **significantly improve customer service**.
 10. We did not believe Questar provided the quality of customer service and training support that our schools deserve. So, we will have a TDOE position focused solely on the student and educator experience who will provide additional support before, during, and after test administration.
 11. We are establishing new training protocols and a TNReady Ambassador Program that engages our testing coordinators in all regions of the state.