

Fall 2020 EOC TCAP Administration Guidance and Supports

Updated Dec. 8

Overview

This document provides options and supports for Fall EOC testing.

This school year has presented all schools and districts with unprecedented challenges. The global pandemic has increased the need for accurate measures of student learning so we can support all students in their development. This document outlines the additional district **flexibilities, supports, and guidance** available so that each district can have a successful Fall 2020 End of Course (EOC) TCAP administration.

2020 Fall TCAP EOCs will be administered in person and on paper.

All educators need the best measures of student learning and need it even more this year after school building closures, the Spring 2020 cancellation of testing, and varying needs across the state. On September 3, 2020, the Tennessee Department of Education (the department) received a letter from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education stating the requirement for annual state assessments for the 2020-21 school year, which includes schools and districts with block schedules needing Fall TCAP end of course (EOC) exams. Since there is no way to securely administer TCAP assessments remotely, the department will be using, as much as possible, the previously printed assessments from Spring 2020. **In instances of reuse of available printed materials, some materials may have the 2019-20 test date- this is not a mistake.** Where updates or re-prints were necessary, these dates have been updated accordingly to reflect the 2020-21 testing cycle.

Our focus is to support districts with logistics and participation.

The largest concerns from our on-going conversations with directors of schools and district testing coordinators (DTCs) are related to student grades, calendar changes, and solutions for test participation, especially for students who have been learning in a virtual or remote context or schools who have experienced closures or quarantines. The department has been working on solutions with our stakeholders and vendors, including on-going conversations advocating for those policies that may help districts but are outside of the department's authority. This document seeks to offer the maximum flexibility and support to districts for Fall 2020 TCAP administration while staying compliant with both state and federal statute.

Full Menu of Flexibilities Available to Districts for Fall EOC Tests

Each district has different testing needs, and the following pages serve as a guide to help tailoring the Fall EOC testing experience to match local context and provide enough local control so districts can navigate participation and administration challenges. The “menu” below outlines the flexibilities and district choices found in this guidance document and can serve as a starting point for district- and building-specific testing administration decisions, based on input received from stakeholders.

Successful Fall EOC District Menu

Three Testing Windows Available

1. First Window: Nov. 30 - Dec. 17, 2020
2. Second Window: Jan. 4 - Jan. 21, 2021
3. Third Window: During Spring TCAP Window (last three weeks of school)

Additional Supports for Test Participation

1. Make-up Testing Extension Options
2. Letter for Parents about Testing Requirements

Flexibilities for Administering Assessments during the Testing Window

1. *More Time*: Extended Windows (above)
2. *More Space*: Flexibility for using other facilities or locations for testing
3. *More Staff*: Guidance for training non-staff proctors
4. *More Options for Administration*: Ability to break apart test sections across multiple days
5. *More District Individualization*: Step-by-step protocol for leaders to check-in and collaborate with their testing coordinators, to maximize solutions that match local resources
6. *More Problem-solving Support*: One-on-one DTC supports available from the department

Additional Areas of Guidance

1. Considerations for Grades
2. Guidance for Medical Exemptions, Quarantine, Health Considerations, Test Requirement

What do I need to do by when?

By Monday, October 19, each district DTC needs to confirm their choice of the following options:

- (1) test during first Fall window (with option for student make-ups during second Fall window),
- (2) test during second Fall window in January,
- (3) test during either first or second fall window for majority of students and allow limited student opt-ins to Spring window,
- (4) forgo fall testing and test all students in Spring window.

Importantly, **window selections impact when student results arrive**. While other decisions, supports, and flexibilities can be made in the coming weeks, window decisions need to be made and submitted to Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov by October 19 so that the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring Fall EOC tests runs smoothly for everyone. We know that the timeline is tight, and we appreciate your partnership and urgency. **Districts that remain unsure of timing for test administration should elect the first window and be prepared to provide secure storage** for materials until administration of the tests. We are confident that districts will find the option that works best for their students and stakeholders.

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Flexibilities for Fall EOC Testing

This section provides **District Testing Coordinators (DTCs)** with descriptions and instructions for accessing each of the flexibility options to take advantage of each district option for 2020 Fall TCAP EOC testing.

Immediate One-on-One Coordination Supports

Increased DTC Support Now: To ensure districts are able to choose the testing flexibilities being made available, and ensure that the statewide logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring of Fall EOC assessments are available, the **department will be reaching out individually to each District Testing Coordinator** to help collaborate and determine which of the various options below will help them most in their administration of Fall TCAP assessments. In order to ensure the complicated logistics of these flexibilities are met, many Fall EOC decisions will need to be decided soon.

First Fall EOC Window

Power in Predictability. The first window has the benefits of having been communicated since last school year and being the target used by DTCs to prepare for Fall EOC testing. The [2020-21 Calendar for Required Assessments](#) lists the **fall testing window for end of course assessments as Nov. 30 - Dec. 17, 2020**, with Subpart 1 for English I and II assessments being completed during the first week of the window (Nov. 30 – Dec. 4). Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) § 49-6-6002 grants the education commissioner authority to set and adjust testing schedules for TCAP. For most schools and districts testing this fall, this standard window is appropriate and recommended, since it covers all available school days between the week of Thanksgiving and holiday break. District testing coordinators (DTCs) and building testing coordinators (BTCs) should adhere to the preparation dates outlined in the department's [Tennessee Assessment Milestones, 2020-21 School Year \(Milestones\)](#) document.

Second Fall EOC Window Participation Option for Delayed Semesters or Assessments

Districts with Delayed Semester Dates

Lining Up with Each Block Schedule: The second window is beneficial for those Tennessee districts who delayed the start and end of their fall semester due to the impacts of COVID-19 in their communities. In the cases where this delay was significant enough to impact the typical number of instructional days expected for students prior to summative testing and to shift the end of the semester for the tested course until the new calendar year, the department is offering a second fall EOC testing window after the holiday break in January to respond to the needs of local districts and ensure assessment fidelity. This second testing window for Fall end of course assessments will be **Jan. 4 to Jan. 21, 2021**.

Impacted districts will be contacted directly with modified dates for materials shipments and returns, as well as expected results availability. **Districts automatically qualify** for this flexibility based on their fall semester start dates, end dates, and instructional days, as submitted in EIS by Oct. 15. **The department will contact the DTCs of these districts directly regarding this opportunity to test in the second window by Oct. 16.**

If a district who does not automatically qualify believes that administration during the second Fall window would better meet their districts' needs, contact Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov by **Oct. 19**, in order

to have sufficient time for the department to adjust the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring Fall EOC tests across Tennessee.

Students Identified as Unable to Test During First Window

Adjusting for Student Needs: With the challenges of meeting the local health protocols and procedures and operating with new or modified instructional models and schedules, there may be an increased need for districts to offer make-up assessment opportunities (e.g. students impacted by illness or quarantine). While maintaining on-going make-up opportunities during their testing window is recommended, the department will work with districts in extenuating circumstances for students who were not able to assess during the First Window. Districts may choose to offer make-up testing opportunities during the second, additional window for students who were unable to test during the standard window due to COVID-19.

Because the management of additional testing windows greatly complicates logistics for shipping and scoring, in order to participate in these additional make-up days, the **districts administering during the first window must complete the [Make-Up Request Online Survey](#) by Dec. 18 to request the flexibility** in order to have sufficient time for the department to adjust the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring Fall EOC tests across Tennessee.

Third Fall EOC Window: During the Spring 2021 TCAP Window

Maximum Fall EOC Flexibility: As schools, districts, and communities are looking for solutions given their individual contexts, additional flexibility may be needed to help families of students receiving remote instruction or to overcome logistical barriers with more planning time. For this, the Spring EOC testing window can provide a third option for students, families, schools, and districts.

Spring TCAP Windows

Individualized Spring: Continuing instruction is critical, and the department is committed to prioritizing instruction and learning. The Spring TCAP Window will be **extended and will be individualized for each district**, allowing each district to administer the TCAP exams **during the last three weeks of the calendared school year**. This means that the 2021 Spring window will begin no earlier than April 21 and will extend into June for the 2020-2021 school year. This maximum flexibility will provide districts with more time to focus on learning, instruction, and be responsive to the shifting needs of their communities. The decisions made by districts may affect reporting timelines, so dates and logistics for receiving scores and reports may not be available until later, during the Spring semester.

School or District Spring Opt-in

Testing Fall in Spring: A district may optionally choose to administer the Fall EOC exams of individual schools or of the entire district during the Spring testing window. If a district believes that administration of Fall EOCs during the 2021 Spring TCAP administration window for whole schools, known tests or student groups, or as an entire district would better meet local needs, contact Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov **by Oct. 19**, in order to have sufficient time for the department to adjust the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring Fall EOC tests across Tennessee.

Students Identified as Unable to Test During Fall Windows

Districts can allow for students who will not be able to participate in either Fall EOC window to instead test these courses during the Spring assessment window, providing more time to work with staff, students, and families. **Districts administering Fall EOCs in the First Window and Second Window must complete the [Make-Up Request Online Survey](#) to request this flexibility by Dec. 18 and Jan. 21, respectively.** in order to have sufficient time for the department to adjust the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring Fall EOC tests across Tennessee.

Test Schedule Flexibility

Fit the Test Timings to Local Needs: All districts, regardless of the testing window in which they will be participating, will have the opportunity to set their own testing schedules for their schools. This will provide districts the flexibility to make modifications to their typical testing schedules within their chosen testing windows in order to accommodate district health protocols and procedures (such as social distancing or sanitation), coordinate participation needs, and scheduling additional make-up testing opportunities for students who may be impacted by illness or quarantine. Each TCAP EOC exam can be divided up across multiple days to accommodate staffing and facilities constraints, following district health protocols and policies.

As long as state test security protocols are observed, schools and districts will have complete flexibility to administer assessments in the manner that works best for them. If districts require additional time to complete Subpart 1 of English I and II beyond the Dec. 4 required shipment date, please reach out to Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov to ensure the department is aware and can work with shipping and scoring teams to be prepared to process completed assessments when available.

Make-up Assessments

Making the Most of Make-ups: With the challenges of meeting the local health protocols and procedures and operating with new or modified instructional models and schedules, there may be an increased need for districts to offer make-up assessment opportunities (e.g. students impacted by illness or quarantine). While maintaining on-going make-up opportunities during the testing window is recommended, the department is willing to work with districts in extenuating circumstances for students who were not able to assess during the standard window.

Districts may choose to offer **make-up testing opportunities during the second window** for students who were unable to test during the first window due to COVID-19. Because the management of additional testing windows greatly complicates logistics for shipping and scoring, in order for individual students to participate in these additional make-up days, the **district must complete the [Make-Up Request Online Survey](#) by Dec. 18 to coordinate if they administered tests during the First Window and by Jan. 21 if they administered tests during the Second Window.** Additionally, to ensure logistical needs are met for all districts, those requesting this additional flexibility will need to submit a testing schedule, materials security plan (including storage of secure materials at a district location), and the number of impacted students and assessments to the department in advance of the end of the standard window on Dec. 17. Students who complete make-up tests during the second window **will not** be able to receive raw scores on the first raw score return date.

Location and Facilities Flexibilities

Getting More Space: To follow district health protocols and policies, some schools may need additional flexibility on testing locations, and districts may use buildings at neutral sites to test groups of students, if on-site rooms, gymnasiums, or cafeterias are not able to accommodate school space needs. Such flexibilities may include partnering with local organizations (such as community centers, libraries, or churches) who have additional space or better access for students coming in for the Fall EOC.

To use the off-site TCAP test administration flexibility at a location that is not a district building, districts administering assessments during either the First Window or Second Window must complete the [Off-Site Test Administration Form](#) by Nov. 13 so the department can support successful administration in each context. This form is meant for locations testing groups of students and is not needed for districts to complete testing of an individual student who is in a homebound setting. For homebound testing, districts should follow existing procedures and protocols outlined in the student's educational plan and in the [BTC Guide](#).

Test Proctors and Test Support Flexibilities

Getting More Staff: In order to follow district health protocols and procedures, extra support may be needed in executing all the campus assessment logistics. This may require more staff than is typically used during an assessment administration, and the department is committed to providing maximum flexibility when identifying and training non-educator proctors, when responding to their local needs.

The school's principal, under the direction of the director of schools, has the responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of each test administration within his/her building, and they can support a BTC in ensuring staff are sufficiently trained to support during assessment windows. Trained proctors may be assigned to assist Test Administrators in administering the tests. A proctor is typically a teacher's aide, a paraprofessional, or another paid district or school staff member. **Proctors may also be volunteers who must receive the same training** as proctors employed by the school or district. See the Security Manual for more details on the department's [LiveBinder](#) site.

Potential Effects on Returning Student Results

Different Testing Windows have Different Reporting Windows: The combinations of these various flexibilities should help districts find the best option for their contexts, but they will increase the complexity of the logistics at the state level, especially score reporting. Timelines for reporting windows will change based on the window selected by the district. Raw scores and comprehensive data files (CDFs) will be returned on two separate timelines (one for each fall testing window) at the expected results return dates outlined in the [Milestones](#) document. These dates will allow districts to plan for using raw scores according to local or state board policies. Final printed student reports and statewide summary files will arrive after both windows are complete.

However, those districts and schools who choose to administer Fall EOC during the Third Window (which is the same as the Spring 2021 TCAP Window) will not have return dates identified yet, as the decisions made by each Tennessee district may affect reporting and scoring timelines, dates, and logistics.

When making plans specific for their schools, districts need to weigh the impact of using each of these flexibilities within their communities. For example, if students from the same school are taking their Fall

EOC assessments in different windows, they most likely would not receive their scores at the same time. And if there are schools choosing to administer Fall EOCs during a window that occurs after the end of the course, they would not be able to receive raw scores in time for using in grading. Districts should make sure that the flexibilities they choose are mindful of and fair for all students.

Important Note about Test Security

Administering the Fall EOC TCAP assessment will require a lot of effort from educators across the state, and these increased flexibilities may help overcome some of the many challenges we face during a pandemic. But with all these logistical flexibilities, we have to be even more meticulous about test security as a state, because the extra time between tests, testing sections, students taking tests at different times, and other flexibilities all increase the risk of compromising secure testing materials. We want these tests to be meaningful measures of student learning for districts and schools, but in this age of online and social media, one mistake could lead to large scale effects for students across the state, jeopardizing all the work that districts and schools have been investing to make this work. We need to select the flexibilities that work for each local context, and then we need to stand strong and vigilant as a state to ensure every student, educator, school, and district can get the most out of the Fall EOC testing experience.

For more information, see the *Test Security* manual on the department's [LiveBinder](#) site.

Guidance Topics

This section directly **addresses topics and challenges** surfaced through our on-going conversations with districts by providing guidance, supports, and resources.

Grading Policies

Department Advocacy for District Flexibility: While the authority for providing grading flexibility for Fall EOCs does not currently lie with the department, the department is continually advocating for greater flexibility to be provided for districts and schools. As of the release of this document, **there have been no changes to the State Board of Education rule** that currently outlines the grading requirements for inclusion of EOC results, but the department will continue to advocate for flexibility here.

State law, [State Board of Education rule](#), and local board policies outline the use of raw scores in the calculation of student grades, if these scores are received within five instructional days before the scheduled end of the course. Districts who do not receive scores by this timeframe, or who choose window options that end later than the semester, may choose not to include their students' TCAP scores in the students' final grades.

Resources for Overcoming Local Logistics Challenges

Immediate District Support

To ensure districts are able to choose the testing flexibilities being made available, and ensure that the statewide logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring of Fall EOC assessments are available, the **department will be reaching out individually to each District Testing Coordinator** to help collaborate and determine which of the various options will help them most in their administration of Fall TCAP assessments. In order to ensure the complicated logistics of these flexibilities are met, many Fall EOC decisions will need to be decided soon.

Empowering Testing Coordinators

There are complex logistical challenges at both the school and district levels, and coordinators may need extra support and focus, and leaders can help them to think more creatively around constraints or access additional resources (e.g. staff, space).

To support leaders who oversee either building or district coordinators, a step-by-step guide for regular check-ins can be found in [Appendix A: Checklist: 11-Step Management of Testing Plans and Testing Coordinators](#) found in this document. This resource provides a set of questions that will help school and/or district teams determine the necessary calendar, space, people, and systems needed for a successful administration, and maximize available flexibilities. Additional information and guidance can be found in the of the *Assessing Student Learning School Reopening Toolkit*.

Sample Testing Schedules

The department hopes to share the highlights, best practices, and solutions found by each district across the state. To this end, use the following resources to plan and adjust assessment schedules to adapt to the unusual circumstances of this school year.

- Review a sample reduced testing calendar to allow for social distancing at 50% capacity on page 16 of the [Assessing Student Learning School Reopening Toolkit](#) and compare to previous assessment calendars to adjust for this fall.
- Find a template worksheet for completing your fall testing schedule here: [2020-21 Testing Schedule](#).
- Use the [Testing Times Breakdown](#) to assist in planning how long each set of students will be testing in each subject.

Paper-Based Test Administration

Due to the cancelation of the TCAP summative assessments in Spring 2020 and the significant investment made by the state in developing, printing, and packaging paper assessment materials for 2019-20, the department has decided to use available materials for testing in 2020-21. The administration of the TCAP in both fall and spring windows will be exclusively paper-based to ensure appropriate stewardship of taxpayer funds, reduction of costs for the 2020-21 school year, and validity and reliability across test administrations and windows. **In instances of reuse of available printed materials, BTCs and DTCs should expect to see some materials with the 2019-20 test date referenced – this is not a mistake.** Where updates or re-prints were necessary, these dates have been updated accordingly to reflect the 2020-21 testing cycle.

Healthy Testing and Medical Considerations

Student and Staff Health: Districts are given flexibility during the Fall EOC administration to create locally tailored Fall EOC plans so that they can work within their local health protocols for keeping student and educator health a priority. Districts should administer fall summative assessments following guidelines from local and state health authorities to minimize risk of exposure for all individuals. An ideal assessment schedule allows for flexibility and make-up exams throughout the entire assessment window. For example, scheduling testing early in the window allows for maximum opportunities for make-up exams or rescheduling exam dates if a classroom, set of students, or whole school is impacted by a COVID-19 quarantine.

Adhering to Local & State Health Guidance

DTCs should follow health guidance, protocols, and procedures when planning for and administering tests. Districts are encouraged to consider the following to ensure the safety of all students and staff during in-person testing:

- Adjust testing schedules to use additional testing days throughout the full testing window to ensure students are spread out appropriately to maintain social distancing.
 - Focus the first week of testing window on English I and II Subpart 1 only to ensure completed early. If additional time for Subpart 1 is needed, contact Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov.
 - Use the remaining two weeks to test math, Biology, and U.S. History, as needed.
 - Students in the same course may test on different days, to ensure adequate social distancing. Ensure all test security protocols and state procedures are followed.
- Follow state and local COVID-19 guidelines as appropriate, such as use of face masks, other personal protective equipment (PPE), and sanitation.

- Consider adjusting expectations or local policies for attendance designations and availability of virtual instruction for students not testing during this time, to ensure staff and school buildings are available for safe in-person test administration.

Preparing for Students with Existing Health Conditions

Known Medical Exemptions: Students with health conditions, such as those who may be immunocompromised, may qualify for a medical exemption, following the guidance outlined in the [BTC Guidebook and Test Administrator Manual](#) (found on the department's [LiveBinder site](#)), if the district testing coordinator is unable to accommodate the testing environment needed to ensure student safety. Students with other diagnoses whose needs can be addressed with appropriate supports throughout the school year should have a plan that includes the student's needs during testing as well. Districts should follow accommodations available to students as outlined in these plans, as long as they do not compromise test security or the validity of the assessment. See the [Attendance Records](#) section below for more details on medical exemptions.

Attendance Records

Guidance for Classrooms and Schools Impacted by Quarantine

Make-ups for Large Groups: In the case of a student, set of students, or school impacted by a quarantine due to COVID-19 in advance of testing, the BTC and DTC are strongly encouraged to schedule make-up testing opportunities that would be able to be administered at a date when students could safely return to school. As outlined above, districts may choose to offer make-up testing opportunities for students in the Second Window by providing the following to the department: a full testing schedule, security protocol for materials, and number of students and assessments. For questions about specific circumstances, please reach out to Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov or Mark.Jackson@tn.gov.

Medical Exemptions and COVID-19

Covid-19 and Medical Needs: In the case of a documented COVID-19 positive case, students may be exempt from testing following appropriate medical exemption documentation, which should be coded appropriately in PANext.

- Use the [Medical Exemption documentation](#) for students who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are unable to participate in any TCAP assessments throughout the entire available testing window. The department will share expectations with DTCs for submitting summary documentation of these exemptions. Full documentation must be retained at the district for auditing purposes.
- Follow the instructions in the *Pearson Access User Guide*, found in the Support Documents in the [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) platform to document the student as "Student Not Tested/Medically Exempt".

If a specific exam administration is impacted by an ill student or if all subparts of a specific exam are not able to be completed because of COVID-19 exposure, districts should document interruptions in testing following the protocols for a report of irregularity.

- Follow the protocols for documentation of a report of irregularity found in the [BTC Guide](#) and *Test Security* manual on the department's [LiveBinder](#) site.

- Follow the instructions in the *Pearson Access User Guide*, found in the Support Documents in the [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) platform to document a report of irregularity for involved students.

Recording Absences

Regular Absences have Regular Attendance Procedures: After a district has selected its flexibility options for Fall EOC administration, districts should address individual student absences on testing days in the same manner as they would in any other school year by applying the district's or school's attendance policies, make-up opportunities, and/or [the medical exemption](#) outlined in the [BTC Guidebook and Test Administrator Manual](#) (found on the department's [LiveBinder site](#)). Local boards may update attendance or assessment policies to address the unique situations that arise in each district in response to the global coronavirus pandemic (e.g. a policy to address absences and grading for students who only took one of two EOC exams during the window).

DTCs and BTCs should follow local and state policies and procedures for student absences and test security and the guidance outlined in the [BTC Guidebook and Test Administrator Manual](#) (found on the department's [LiveBinder site](#)) to determine when and if a student, or group of students, should be marked with a Student Not Tested (SNT) status – either absent or medically exempt – or if a Report of Irregularity (RI) should be documented.

Classrooms and Schools Participating in Distance Instruction

Communicate and Coordinate: Many districts have students and families who were offered a choice between in-person and virtual instruction for the fall 2020 semester and who have been learning remotely. Other districts have offered hybrid models or allowed students to shift to virtual instruction depending on local spread of COVID-19. While all students who are currently enrolled in public school tested courses are still required to participate in aligned summative assessments, the selection of testing windows, schedules, facilities, and staff along with consistent, proactive, and clear communication with families can help each district prepare for all students to test.

Supporting Strong Plans: All the flexibilities in this document aim to support districts so they can achieve their test participation goals, especially for students who have been learning in a virtual or remote context or schools who have experienced closures or quarantines. If additional preparation time is needed to coordinate the needs of exclusively distance learners, districts may want to select a different window (e.g. the Second Fall or the Spring 2021 window). District and school leaders are encouraged to communicate early and often with families well in advance of the selected testing window. Use the [Scheduling for Assessment Provisioning](#) document to review all required tested courses and their appropriate course codes. To use the second or third windows, DTCs should contact Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov by **Oct. 19**, in order to have sufficient time for the department to adjust the logistics of shipping, delivering, administering, and scoring needs.

Possible District Processes for Distance and Virtual Learners: Planning for virtual learners can be challenging, but each district or school may already have some solutions in place. Here are some questions to assist in planning in-person testing for students in virtual instruction:

- Does the district have a policy for testing homeschool students? If so, virtual students may be addressed similarly. For example, do homeschool students test at their zoned school or at a central district location?
 - If additional flexibility on testing locations is needed, districts may use buildings at neutral sites. For considerations of off-site TCAP test administration at a location that is not a district building, please complete the [Off-Site Test Administration Form](#).
 - Additional considerations for Home School students can be found in the guidance document [Alternatives to TCAP Testing for Independent Home Schoolers](#).
- Is the entire school virtual or just a percentage of students?
 - If the entire school, can instructional and staff schedules be modified to test in-person appropriately? How many rooms/proctors would be necessary for appropriately socially distanced test administration? What cleaning/sanitation of the building should be done in advance, during, and after test administration?
 - If only a certain percentage of students are virtual, can they be adequately added to available testing rooms and locations during testing? What changes to schedules or room set-ups may be needed to accommodate additional students on testing days? What additional rooms in school buildings (such as libraries, cafeterias, gyms) may be available for testing students in virtual instructional models? What additional staff may be needed to administer assessments in additional rooms? Should one day be designated for testing virtual students only.

Comments regarding “opting out” of testing

No such thing as “opting out”: There may be misconceptions about “opting out” of testing; since both state and federal law also requires student participation in state assessments, there is no option to “opt out” of testing. Finding the testing windows, make-up opportunities, and consistent communication with families can help overcome some of these concerns.

Parent Facing Resources and Talking Points

The department has some messaging appropriate for parents about assessment requirements, in the [form of a memo, here](#). Additionally, the text below is guidance that can be shared to help explain the reasons:

In Tennessee, one measure of student, school, and district academics is through the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), which are tests aligned with our state’s academic standards, outlining what students are expected to know, guiding educators as they design their lessons and curriculum. As Tennessee’s teachers work to equip all students with the knowledge and skills they need, we have to ensure that we can identify any major gaps in students’ learning and find variations in growth among different schools – both so we can strengthen support in places that need it and learn from educators and students who are excelling.

Results from TCAP tests give both teachers and parents a unique feedback loop and big-picture perspective to better understand how students are progressing and how they

can support their academic development. This yearly academic check-up is the best way to see how all students in Tennessee are doing, and it is one key measure through which we learn if we are meeting our responsibility to prepare all students for college and the workforce. Because of the importance of annual assessment, we believe it is crucial for all students to take all TCAP tests each year, including TNReady in math and English language arts. State and federal law also requires student participation in state assessments. In fact, these statutes specifically reference the expectation that all students enrolled in public schools in Tennessee will complete annual assessments.

Given both the importance and legal obligation, parents may not refuse or opt a child out of participating in state assessments. Except for situations where the Tennessee General Assembly has specifically provided the right to opt out in the law, such as the family life curriculum, parents and/or students may not opt out of state-mandated content or instructional programs, including assessments. Similarly, there is no provision in federal law directly authorizing parents and/or students to opt out of mandated assessments. Therefore, school districts are not authorized to adopt policies allowing these actions. If a school offers alternate activities for students whose parents refuse to have them participate in state assessments, they would in effect be allowing them to opt out.

Regular Absences have Regular Attendance Procedures: After windows, make-up, and other flexibilities, if there still students who did not participate, districts should address these student absences, just like those described by the preceding paragraphs, on testing days in the same manner as they would address a student's failure to participate in any other mandatory activity at school (e.g. final exams) by applying the district's or school's attendance policies. Students who are given the opportunity to test but refuse to participate in testing should be marked as a "Report of Irregularity" (RI) in the [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) platform (PANext) following guidance in the [BTC Guidebook and Test Administrator Manual](#) found on the department's [LiveBinder site](#). Please see the section above, *Supporting Students with Existing Health Conditions*, to address questions about students who are not opting out of testing, but based on pre-existing health conditions, such as those who may be immunocompromised, may not be able to come for in-person testing.

Paper-Based Test Administration

Why Paper? Due to the cancelation of the TCAP summative assessments in Spring 2020 and the significant investment made by the state in developing, printing, and packaging paper assessment materials for 2019-20, the department has decided to use available materials for testing in 2020-21. The administration of the TCAP in both fall and spring windows will be exclusively paper-based to ensure appropriate stewardship of taxpayer funds, reduction of costs for the 2020-21 school year, and validity and reliability across test administrations and windows. **In instances of reuse of available printed materials, BTCs and DTCs should expect to see some materials with the 2019-20 test date referenced – this is not a mistake.** Where updates or re-prints were necessary, these dates have been updated accordingly to reflect the 2020-21 testing cycle.

Appendix A: Checklist: Managing of Testing Plans and Testing Coordinators

This is a checklist for supervisors of DTC/BTCs or DTCs when checking in with BTCs when reviewing assessment logistics plans: these principles hold true for any assessing of student learning that requires coordination across an entire school or district. This is particularly helpful if a district or school needs to use a modified or new testing schedule to accommodate unusual circumstances, whether for a Start of Year Checkpoint, district interim or formative assessments, coordinated distance learning assessments, or summative tests like TCAP. The key to using this checklist is to complete all 12 steps with the testing coordinator at least one month in advance of any test requiring coordination across classrooms or schools. This will provide adequate time to troubleshoot and provide advanced communication for teachers and families to plan with. Meetings using this checklist with your coordinator should recur to match the needs of the district and/or school testing calendars.

- 1) **Assessment Calendar:** Identify which assessments are to be delivered and make sure the plan includes the windows and any needed additional assessments (e.g. for alternative testers, English language learners), as appropriate. If this is for practice or mock exams, does it align with the instructional calendar (i.e. check to see if there are other assessments also occurring during nearby dates like ACT)? Are any assessment's subparts that will be administered over multiple days clearly indicated?
 - a. If YES, move on.
 - b. If no, solve right now.

- 2) **Space and People:** Number of testing groups, rooms, proctors, and administrators are adequate to accommodate a safe and secure testing environment for students and teachers. This should be compliant with any district health policies. (For TCAP tests, ask for the context for any home school and virtual school testers, as well as adjusted rooms for accommodations.)
 - a. If YES, move on.
 - b. If no, solve right now.

- 3) **Materials and Systems:** Are there sufficient materials such as calculators, scratch paper, etc. for the kind of test you are administering (e.g. math, science)? If students will be sharing resources (like rotating desks) or having their assessment materials collected with other students' materials for redistribution later, are there clear district health policies and/or procedures for cleaning these resources between use? Depending on the assessment, is the level of test security appropriate for the test being administered?
 - a. If YES, move on.
 - b. If no, stop. (You may choose if you want to help the BTC or DTC solve or if they are to solve the issues later and bring them back to you.)

- 4) **Prioritizing Learning:** Effects on non-testing students (if any). How will plan this affect learning and instruction for those students who aren't testing? If the plan for the non-testers ensures quality learning, then move on. (Remember to ask what feedback has been received from teachers towards preserving learning. Includes draft of schedule). NOTE: This is where many BTCs will miss—before you prioritize setting up the rest of testing, you need to ensure that students not testing are *learning*.

This step is very important for any tests that a district or school may be offering that will be longer than the class periods in the current schedule.

- a. If YES, move on.
- b. If no, make sure the vision is communicated (then either solve or delegate solving to another). Remember to run the non-tester plan past some teacher leaders for their input.

5) Proctors and Testing Roles: Assignments (and appropriate certifications or trainings as needed) for proctoring and administering have people strategically assigned to proctoring during testing that is motivating to testing students, ensures safety and sanitation, and maintains strong learning for non-testers.) Consider all types of testers, including home school, virtual school students, and students who may need different schedules (such as extended time) and accommodations when planning total numbers of proctors needed. Additionally, if there are district health policies that require additional roles, these should be included as well.

- a. If YES, then move on.
- b. If no, solve right now, or delegate another to solve.

6) Assessment Schedule: When adjusting school-level schedules, do the times assigned match the needs of non-tester learners and testers alike? Do the times accommodate for extra time for transitions that are compliant with district health policies (e.g. sanitation, social distancing, etc.) and other student needs? Tests can be administered across multiple days, as long as test security procedures are followed.

- a. If YES, then move on.
- b. If no, stop. (You may choose if you want to help the BTC solve or if they are to solve the issues later and bring them back to you.)

7) School Operational Needs: Other administration and non-instructional logistics (nutrition, meals, emergencies, supplies, copies, bus timing, restrooms, etc.). Consider all types of testers, including home school, virtual school students, and students who may need different schedules (such as extended time) and accommodations. Are all students considered with your current logistics plan?

- a. If YES, move on.
- b. If no, stop. (Choose if you want to help the BTC solve or if they are to solve and bring plans back later.)

8) Make-up testing: Repeat steps 1-7 for any make-up testing scenarios that would require coordination.

- a. If make-up testing plan meets above criteria, move on.
- b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

9) Student Clarity: What are we doing to ensure that students will be able to know where to go and what to do without any confusion? (Where/when do I go? What do I do? What do I need? What do I need to know?) Note: The execution of this may be part of the next step. Also note that running a benchmark exactly how you run your TCAP administrations is one way to help avoid these issues on the date of a summative assessment, since it provides them in advance.

- a. If YES, then move on.
- b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

10) Staff Testing Instructions: Will communication ensure implementation without any confusion for school staff? (Do I have clear logistics document that communicate where to go, what to do?) Are they all clear on post-testing logistics (turning in materials, cleaning rooms, etc.)? Does the plan include cafeteria, custodial, and operations staff? Review the communication plan (modes of communication, documents, emails, etc.). *This communication needs to be sent to educators with as much advanced notice as possible, because it will affect how teachers plan.*

- a. If YES, move on.
- b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

11) Family Testing Communication: Will communication with families provide them with the information they need to understand their role with assessment? Do they have a document with clear, concise, and relevant information? Do families have any responsibilities (e.g. sending students with materials) and are these clear? (Note: For parents supporting assessments, it is typically not safe to assume that all parents will be available to support testing, so two-way communication with families and explicit support is a must for any non-staff responsibilities. Review the communication plan (documents, emails, modes of communication, etc.) to maximize participation among students most at risk.

- a. If YES, move on.
- b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan. End meeting.