2013-2014
STATE OF EDUCATION IN TENNESSEE
The Volunteer State at a Crossroads
January 27, 2014

In 2013, Tennessee’s work to prepare students for success after high school was put to the test. This test was reflected in a series of questions that we have asked ourselves: Why should we raise the bar academically for students? How do we balance a sense of urgency for our state’s and our students’ futures with the hard work that is necessary to successfully implement policy? What barriers remain in place as we work to prepare our students for success in the global economy?

When SCORE was launched in 2009, we identified a “once-in-a-lifetime opportunity” for unprecedented growth in student achievement in Tennessee. Over the last several years, the effort of educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders have helped Tennessee become the fastest-improving state in the nation in terms of student achievement. The gains Tennessee students have made have been significant and are unprecedented in our state’s history.

From raising academic standards to developing meaningful educator evaluations, Tennessee has become a national leader in the work to improve student achievement. Our state has passed bold policies to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for college and the workforce and has implemented those policies with fidelity. As we move into 2014, it will be important for us to examine the progress we have made and recommit to the important work that is still ahead of us.

While we have made tremendous progress as a state, our work is not done. Student achievement is improving, but this improvement must be sustained and accelerated. To ensure our students continue to grow in 2014, we will need to focus on recommitting to rigorous standards and assessments, strengthening schools through effective leadership, expanding student access to great teaching, investing in technology to enhance instruction, and supporting students from kindergarten to career. We must measure our progress, identify challenges, and make adjustments when needed.

The 2013-2014 State of Education in Tennessee report provides an overview of the academic gains the state has made, examines the work that has contributed to the improvements students have experienced, highlights education priorities for Tennessee in 2014, and provides extensive state and district data. We share this information with the knowledge that our ultimate goal is that every student in Tennessee graduates high school prepared for college and the workforce. It will take the dedication of all partners in the work – from educators and policymakers to parents and students – to help Tennessee reach this goal.

We believe it can be done. Join us in making it happen.
ExECUTIvE SUmmAry

From parents to policymakers, Tennessees' continued focus on improving public education is helping ensure students have the best opportunities and brightest futures. While 2013 was, in many ways, a banner year for education in the state, Tennessee is at a unique crossroad.

Tennessee’s commitment to improved student achievement – in leadership, policy, and practice – has led to strong early gains for students. Nearly 10,000 more Tennessee students are proficient in Algebra II since 2011, the year that subject became a requirement for high school graduation. Since 2010, an additional 73,000 students in grades 3-8 are proficient in math and an additional 94,000 students are proficient in K-12 math. Importantly, Tennessee reached a significant milestone in 2013. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – also known as the Nation’s Report Card – Tennessee is the fastest improving state in the nation in terms of student achievement outcomes across four levels of coursework, reading and math. Following only the District of Columbia.

However, work remains to continue on the path that will help all students graduate with the skills and knowledge they need to be competitive with their peers across the state, country, and globe. Data from both national and international assessments show that Tennessee students are significantly behind their peers in academic performance. On the ACT, only 27% of Tennessee students, and 15 percent of a public school students, graduating in 2013 met all four college readiness benchmarks (an indication of success in college-level coursework). Tennessee ranks 31st out of 50 states in which more than 75 percent of high school students take the ACT. And while Tennessee made significant gains on NAEP between 2011 and 2013, state scores are still below the national average. On international assessments, Tennessee ranks 49th in reading and 80th in math out of 116 countries national average. On international assessments, Tennessee state level.

2013-2014 State of Education in Tennessee

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Tennessee needs to maintain its commitment to rigorous standards and authentic assessments to ensure that students are educated in a way that prepares them for the demands of college and the workforce, both today and in the future. Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards are intended to ensure that instruction in classrooms is providing students with the real-world skills needed to succeed in higher education and the workforce, and Tennessee must continue the implementation of these standards. In addition, Tennessee must continue its commitment to implementing the PARCC assessments to ensure that school districts have high-quality assessments that can measure student learning with the Common Core State Standards. Specifically, parents, need to be fully informed about Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards and the aligned assessments through PARCC. It will continue to be important to enlist the support of various partners, including businesses, education, civic, and faith-based leaders, to maintain the commitment to preparing our students for their future. As Tennessee moves forward in implementing more rigorous standards, a solid foundation in literacy will help student learning across all subjects. Recent results on Tennessee state assessments show that student progress in reading has not been strong. Ten-

nессee’s Common Core State Standards provide demanding and rigorous expectations for student achievement. Tennessee must focus not only on implementing the standards themselves but also on proving, research-based strategies that will increase literacy for all students, including English-language learners.

Strengthening schools through effective leadership will help Tennessee continue to improve student-centered initiatives, including efforts to identify and support effective teaching. Tennessee’s school principals have vital roles in improving student achievement, but the work to ensure all schools have effective leaders has continued to be lag behind other efforts. More work remains to ensure that principals are receiving the type of training that will prepare them to lead schools and that once they are in those positions they are receiving the supports and continued development they need to succeed. In 2014 there is a need to provide principal preparation programs and work to expand the most effective programs. The Tennessee General Assembly should consider mandating an annual evaluation of the principal preparation programs in the state, similar to the statute required Re-

port Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. These reviews should include an understanding of the current con-
itions of principal evaluation, ongoing development, and support across the state. The Tennessee Department of Edu-
cation should use emerging research and feedback from the field to both review the principal evaluation rubric and inform the implementation process. For school leaders, the prin-
cipal evaluation system must be able to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses of their ability to serve as instruc-
tional leaders. Additionally, relationships between school dis-

tricts and leader preparation programs must be stronger to ensure that the programs are training future leaders with the unique skills and knowledge that districts need.

Expanding student access to great teaching continues to be a key focus for the state. In recent years, Tennessee has taken steps to create a system to identify effective teaching, provide school and district leaders with more accurate in-
formation to recognize excellence in teaching, and provide teachers with the supports and feedback they need to im-
prove their craft and growth. Finally, Tennessee is ensuring that all students have access to great teaching, efforts are needed to recruit and retain excellent teachers. It is imperative that teachers are given the opportunity to be experts in the classroom, their profession, and the Tennessee Department of Education and local districts should work together to identify gaps in teach-
er support. Current funds must be strategically invested in initiatives and programs that are having the greatest impacts for teachers and ultimately students, as identified through data and research. Additionally, teacher preparation programs should implement more selective admissions processes and rigorous curriculum requirements that prioritize the skills and knowl-
edge teachers need to support students in the classroom. Tennessee’s policymakers have also taken steps to determine how to better use public policy to support effective teaching, recognize effective teaching, provide compensation, evaluation, and teacher licensure. It is important that the implementation of those policies, as well as future policies enable the state to attract and retain the best teachers.

Investing in technology can enhance instruction and person-

alize student learning. To realize the full potential of technol-

ogy, districts and schools need to be equipped with the proper
devices, infrastructure, and training to ensure seamless integra-
tion throughout the school day, week, and year. It is im-
portant to use technology as a vehicle for improving quality instruction and content and individualizing student learning. Investing in technology must be an ongoing priority that goes beyond a one-time purchase. Schools and districts should ensure all students and teachers have training and daily access to the different technologies. The upcoming PARCC assessments should not just be an end goal but as a catalyst for ramp-

ing up technological capacity in districts across the state. But in preparation for PARCC, the Tennessee Department of Edu-
cation should work directly with districts to aid in imple-
mentation. As technology use increases, it is important to have security measures in place that will protect student and teacher information.

Supporting students from kindergarten to career will help ensure Tennesseans have the skills they need to work in the fastest-growing fields in the state, or in any field that they choose. As Tennessee embarks on work to ensure that citi-
zens have the skills they need to work in the fastest-grow-
ing fields in our state, the public K-12 education system has an important role to play. To begin with, all high school stu-
dents should have access to multiple options for rigorous coursework, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit, and dual enrollment courses. Ad-
ditionally, opportunities for students to study STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and math) and pursue ca-

re opportunities in STEM fields should be expanded across the state. The work to support STEM education in the state must continue to be a priority in the absence of Race to the Top funding. Finally, Tennessee must ensure that all students have access to great teaching, efforts are needed to recruit and retain excellent teachers. It is imperative that teachers are given the opportunity to be experts in the classroom, their profession, and the Tennessee Department of Education and local districts should work together to identify gaps in teach-
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November 7, 2013

“These historic gains are a result of years of hard work by a lot of people across Tennessee: our teachers, students, principals, superintendents, parents, lawmakers, school board members, business leaders, and many others. As a state we’ve come together to make education a top priority.

– Governor Bill Haslam

November 7, 2013

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Tennessee is at a critical point in its pursuit of a better public education system.

Important policy changes have been made over the last few years that focus squarely on academic growth of students, including higher academic standards, an educator evaluation system that identifies and supports effective teaching, and the ability for the state to intervene in the lowest performing schools, among other efforts. These changes, combined with a focus on successful implementation in schools and communities across the state, are helping to drive improvements in teaching and learning.

With new policies in place, successful implementation has been a high priority in 2013. Tennessee’s commitment to improved student achievement – in leadership, policy, and practice – has led to strong early gains for students. Since the state began implementing higher academic standards in 2009, students have continued to advance each year. Results from the 2013 state assessments show that high school students are making significant gains in math and science, areas we know are critical in preparing students for postsecondary education and the workforce.

Nearly 10,000 more Tennessee students are proficient in Algebra II since 2011, the year that subject became a requirement for high school graduation. Also, since 2010 an additional 73,000 students in grades 3-8 are proficient in math and approximately 91,000 more students are proficient in K-12 math. Importantly, Tennessee reached a significant milestone in 2013. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—also known as the Nation’s Report Card—Tennessee is the fastest-improving state in the nation in student achievement across fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math, following only the District of Columbia.

While 2013 was, in many ways, a banner year for education in the state, Tennessee is at a crossroad. Work remains to continue on the path that will help all students graduate with the skills and knowledge they need to be competitive with their peers across the state, country, and globe.

Data from both national and international assessments show that Tennessee students remain significantly behind their peers in academic performance. On the ACT, only 18 percent of all Tennessee students, and 15 percent of public school students, graduating in 2013 met all four college readiness benchmarks (an indication of success in college-level coursework). Tennessee ranks 13th out of 17 states in which more than 75 percent of high school students take the ACT. While Tennessee made significant gains on NAEP between 2011 and 2013, state scores are still below the national average. On international assessments, Tennessee ranks 87th in reading and 86th in math out of 166 countries and U.S. states.

Leaders and Laggards

While challenges exist, the recent progress shown on both state and national assessments are proof points of what Tennessee students are capable of achieving. It is important to continue to build on this success by accelerating academic gains for students, while staying committed to student-centered decision making at the school, local, and state level. The following sections of the report provide an update on the progress and remaining areas of work for key pillars of Tennessee’s work to support public education.

There are also specific recommendations for how Tennesseans can help advance the work within each of the following areas: (1) maintaining a commitment to rigorous standards and assessments; (2) strengthening schools through effective leadership; (3) expanding student access to great teaching; (4) investing in technology to enhance instruction; and (5) supporting students from kindergarten to career.

Finally, this report was informed by feedback from educators, students, policymakers, and other Tennesseans. Sources include:

- The 2013 SCORE Leadership Summit, with over 500 participants and 21 small group sessions
- Eight Community Conversations with approximately 500 participants
- Eight in-depth interviews with superintendent and their leadership teams
- Three focus groups with teachers, three with principals, and one with high school students
- 10 interviews with state-level leaders in education
- Input from the Rural Education Network
- Interviews with representatives from three national organizations focused on education reform
- Results from a statewide public opinion survey of 500 registered voters in May 2013

Tennessee’s education system and therefore its economic vitality are at an important juncture. The hard work of dedicated educators and parents, accelerated by bold policy decisions, has led to early and significant improvements in student achievement across Tennessee. The ability to ensure an excellent education for all students is the foundation that will continue to support the state’s successful future.
Overview

Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards are a set of academic expectations for math and English language arts that were developed through a state-led process to align student learning with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the real world. Since 2011, Tennessee has taken a lead role in one of the two state consortia working to develop assessments that measure student learning aligned to the new standards. As a governing state in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Tennessee educators, higher education faculty, and TDOE officials have been helping to develop and review the assessments as well as related policies for implementation. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that all schools are equipped to both successfully teach to the standards and accurately assess student learning and that communities understand the need for higher expectations for all students.

Update on the Work

During the 2011-2012 school year, Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards were introduced for kindergarten through second grade. The following year, 2012-2013, all districts began implementing the new math standards in grades 3-8 and 60 school districts chose to pilot the new English language arts standards. The 2013-2014 school year is the third and final year of the implementation transition period. In the 2014-2015 school year, new assessments will replace the state’s current English language arts and math tests and will measure student learning with the new standards.

Implementing the standards in the classroom is resulting in new approaches to teaching and learning. In early 2013, the Tennessee Department of Education selected 704 educators through a rigorous application process to serve as Common Core coaches. These coaches went through extensive training in the Spring in preparation to lead five weeks of Common Core training for their colleagues. As part of the state’s First to the Top initiatives, the TDOE provided these hands-on training opportunities for educators to help implement the standards in their schools and classrooms. Through the Common Core coaches, the training was peer-led, allowing teachers to learn from and work with other educators in their communities and regions. More than 42,000 teachers attended the state training on the standards between 2012 and 2013.

Although this is a substantial number of educators, many have not received the state training. To help reach more teachers, some districts have leveraged their Common Core coaches to provide ongoing guidance and support on teaching the new standards. However, the coaches are not evenly distributed across the state. Forty-two districts—nearly one third—do not have a coach and 27 districts have only one coach.

The TDOE also provided training sessions specifically for school leaders throughout the Spring 2013. Survey responses from these Tennessee Common Core Leadership trainings show that 96 percent of school leader participants believe that the new standards will be beneficial to teachers and 95 percent believe they will be beneficial to students.

The work to assess student learning is aligned with the efforts to implement higher standards. During the 2012-2013 school year, local school districts administered constructed response assessments (CRA) on three occasions (October, February, and May) to help students and teachers prepare for assessments aligned with the new standards. The CRAs provided an opportunity to measure student performance on Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards for math through written answers. Results from the May administration show that students consistently scored lower on tasks that involved understanding problems and persevering in solving them.

The TDOE also revised the state Writing Assessment to align with Common Core English language arts standards, incorporate key instructional shifts, and help prepare students and teachers for an online format, which is the format in which the PARCC assessment will be given. The writing assessment was administered online in February 2013 for students in grades 5, 8, and 11. The requirement and will be available for students in grades 3-11 in February 2014. Results from the February 2013 writing assessment indicate that students are generally strong in their ability to write (in terms of style and convention) but have difficulty using sources and evidence from texts in their writing.

Districts are using their experiences with these assessments to examine how students perform on more complex assessment tasks and to address areas in need of improvement before implementing a new assessment system that is tied to accountability.

Tennessee’s new assessments, which are designed to measure whether students are gaining the real-world skills and knowledge that are the foundation of the Common Core State Standards, are being developed by PARCC. PARCC represents one of the two state consortia working to create rigorous assessments to measure student learning aligned to the new standards. As a governing state in the consortium, Tennessee has been involved in the development and review of the assessments as well as related policies for implementation. PARCC assessments will replace the current state tests for grades 3-11 in math and English language arts beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. In addition, the PARCC exams for 11th grade will be used as a college readiness indicator, both public university systems in Tennessee—the Tennessee Board of Regents and the University of Tennessee System—will use PARCC results to determine whether or not an incoming freshman will require remedial coursework. In preparation for full implementation of the new assessments, PARCC will be conducting a pilot during Spring 2014. The pilot will provide the consortium with information about the specific test questions and format, but can also help schools and districts prepare for test administration.

The Tennessee Department of Education maintains the website, www.tncore.org, which provides up-to-date information on Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments. Educators can access all materials from past training sessions on the site. The TDOE also sends out frequent TNCore email updates to direct educators to new information and resources that are updated regularly. The Expect More, Achieve More Coalition is a statewide alliance of organizations in Tennessee that is working together to actively support high-achieving standards for all students. Currently, there are over 400 coalition members representing business, education, community-based, and philanthropic organizations.

Instructional Shifts

The goal of Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards is to provide a set of rigorous academic standards that will help prepare all students for success after high school. To achieve this goal, teaching and learning includes more critical thinking and problem solving, with students gaining a deep understanding of concepts and then applying them to new, everyday situations. With the emphasis on developing critical thinking, applied knowledge, and problem solving skills, teachers are engaging their students in new ways. These instructional shifts are challenging students with opportunities to think through multiple solution pathways, show their work, and learn from mistakes. Through mathematical modeling, students are using math concepts to analyze real-world situations and develop informed solutions. For example, students might estimate water and food needs in a disaster area. In other subjects, high school students might analyze historical documents to understand the country’s founding, learn how to evaluate the validity of an argument, or conduct research projects that address multiple sides of one issue.
Priorities for 2014

Tennesssee’s success rests on the ability to compete in a global economy. It is critical that we educate students in a way that prepares them for the demands of the workforce both today and in the future. Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards are intended to ensure that instruction in classrooms across the state is providing students with the real-world skills need ed to succeed in higher education and the workforce. Along with implementing higher standards in the classroom, families need to have access to accurate information about the standards, including what they are, what they are not, and how to support students at home. In addition, it is important that students are prepared for college and career. Tennessee moves forward in implementing more rigorous standards, a solid foundation in literacy will help student learning across all subjects. Recent results on Tennessee state assessments show that student progress in reading has not been strong. Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards provide demanding and rigorous expectations in reading and math. Tennessee must focus not only on implementing the standards themselves but also on proven, research-based strategies that will increase literacy for all students, including English-language learners. These strategies include a focus on reading in grades K-3, additional instructional time spent on reading in all grades, and ensuring that educators are using the most effective strategies in reading instruction. Even though an intentional focus on literacy is critical to student success, leaders should be cautious to not lose the current focus and momentum on increasing achievement in math and science.

1. Tennessee must continue its commitment to hold high expectations for all students through the Common Core State Standards. Tennessee is leading the nation in the work to raise academic standards, helping to ensure all students are prepared for success after high school. In raising academic expectations, Tennessee is holding students to a nationally competitive standard. The state must stay the course in the continued implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

2. Tennessee must continue its commitment to implementing the PARCC assessments to ensure that school districts have high-quality assessments that can measure student learning with the Common Core State Standards. Measuring student success with higher standards not only shows whether the students are meeting the new standards, but is also a precursor to informing more effective instruction.

3. Citizens, particularly parents, need to be fully informed about Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards and the aligned assessments through PARCC. It will be important to enlist the support of various partners, including business, education, civic, and faith-based leaders, to maintain the state’s commitment to preparing our students for their future. As students begin taking the PARCC tests, proficiency levels may drop initially because the tests will be more challenging. There needs to be clear communication that a decline in proficiency rates is a reflection of raised expectations to ensure all students are prepared for college and career.

4. As Tennessee moves forward in implementing more rigorous standards, a solid foundation in literacy will help student learning across all subjects. Recent results on Tennessee state assessments show that student progress in reading has not been strong. Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards provide demanding and rigorous expectations in reading and math. Tennessee must focus not only on implementing the standards themselves but also on proven, research-based strategies that will increase literacy for all students, including English-language learners. These strategies include a focus on reading in grades K-3, additional instructional time spent on reading in all grades, and ensuring that educators are using the most effective strategies in reading instruction. Even though an intentional focus on literacy is critical to student success, leaders should be cautious to not lose the current focus and momentum on increasing achievement in math and science.

The state must stay the course in the continued implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Priorities in Action: High Expectations for All Students

Across Tennessee, educators and families are raising academic expectations for all students. Tennesseans are focused on high expectations for good reason – research shows that when teachers increase their expectations for student success, students make academic gains. As Tipton County Grades 6-12 Supervisor Peggy Murdock recently said, “We are competing in a global economy. We are not simply competing against one another inside a district or inside a school. We have much larger concerns for our children to make sure that they are well prepared.” Below are examples from schools and districts across Tennessee that are raising expectations and helping to establish Tennessee as a national leader in improving public education.

Accelerating and Graduating All Students

At director of Trousdale County Schools, Clint Satterfield’s mantra of “doing it, doing it right, and doing it right now” in transforming a small Middle Tennessee community. The district leaders, Academics and Credibility, is grounded in the philosophical statement that all teachers are expected to advance students academically every year as demonstrated through value-added growth measures which ultimately leads all students to college and career readiness upon graduation. The district leadership, in its leadership, and in teams share a common culture that sets high expectations for all students to achieve at higher levels than may have been previously expected. Students, no matter their background, are required to take a rigorous high school curriculum established through the Tennessee Diploma Project, ensuring that all students are prepared to pursue any career they choose after high school graduation. Holding high expectations for all students has led Trousdale County to have strong growth, particularly in Biology and Algebra.

At Maryville High School in East Tennessee, all students are expected to achieve at high levels. Maryville has an intentional, data-driven approach to placing students in courses each year. Students at Maryville are challenged to take the most rigorous classes available and are only allowed to adjust recommended classes after an administrative and staff review process. In addition, Maryville provides extensive assistance for special education students, including classroom support so that special education students can take rigorous courses and graduate with a regular diploma alongside their classmates.

Engaging Families and Communities

At Mt. Carmel Elementary in Hawkins County, a focus on engaging parents andcommu nity members in conversations about Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards has contributed to significant gains in student achievement. The school provides parents with a wide variety of activities that support higher standards, including academic nights at the school to discuss expectations and parent volunteers to support instruction in the classroom. The school also sends home weekly progress notes that allow for parents to help their child with assignments. Mt. Carmel provides professional events and engages the local media to help leverage community partnerships and convey the importance of high standards. Mt. Car mel’s commitment to high expectations has helped its students achieve growth in math and reading that significantly out-paces its local benchmark.

Focusing on Literacy

At Norman Smith Elementary in Clarksville, Tennessee, everything has a role in supporting the school’s literacy efforts. Teachers at the school engage in intensive professional development focused on understanding standards, including the Common Core State Standards for literacy, and learning how to plan and assess appropriately. Students are provided with a wide variety of high-interest, high-engagement reading such as school-wide book clubs and weekly Family Reading Nights. Parents complete contracts of what they will do to support academic achievement at home, including reading with their children. Norman Smith’s focus on strong reading instruction has supported significant growth across all subjects including reading.
The State of Education in Tennessee: Strengthening Schools through Effective Leadership

Principal Preparation, Evaluation, and Ongoing Training

STRENGTHENING SCHOOLS THROUGH EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP:Principal Preparation, Evaluation, and Ongoing Training

Tennessee has taken important steps regarding teacher development and support, yet the work to support school leaders has continued to lag behind.

Overview
School leaders play a critical role in student learning and are second only to teachers in terms of the in-school factors affecting student success. While research has found significant connections between high-quality school leadership and positive student achievement outcomes, there is work to do to identify the characteristics and specific skills that principals need to best serve their schools. Tennessee has taken important steps regarding teacher development and support, yet the work to support school leaders has continued to lag behind. Some progress has been made, however. The State Board of Education passed the Learning Centered Leadership Policy in 2008 in order to support school leaders with resources and training. Districts have been required to develop and implement plans for a new principal preparation program to help build a pipeline of effective school leaders across the state. In October 2013, Governor Bill Haslam announced the state’s plan for a new principal preparation program to help build a pipeline of effective school leaders across the state. He stated, “Successful organizations have great leaders at the top, and one of the most important things we can do is to transform our schools.” In order to transform our schools, we must first prepare and train our leaders. This initiative has helped elevate the importance of training school leaders, but the work has only just begun.

Instructional Leadership
The role of the principal has evolved from building manager to instructional leader. School leaders set the culture and expectations within their schools, and are critical to both student and teacher success. The principal also needs to cultivate a strong instructional leadership team by tapping into the expertise of effective teachers. As one director of schools in Tennessee explained, “The days of just running the school and making sure the doors are open and the kids have books are long gone. You can’t be a principal anymore the way you may have been taught 20 or 15 years ago. It’s a whole new ball game.”

Instructional Leadership Standards
The Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards provide the foundation for this work. The standards were revised in 2013 to reflect new research and best practices. The standards now include four key components of instructional leadership: a) builds a comprehensive system of instructional leadership training, development, licensure, and evaluation; b) the objectives and activities specified in the plans; c) develops and implements the capacity of all educators by providing support to school leaders across the state.

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) has been working to provide support to school leaders in recent years. For example, the state has developed a new principal preparation program to help build a pipeline of highly trained and effective principals. This initiative has helped elevate the importance of training school leaders, but the work has only just begun.

Impact
In Tennessee, the impact of strong instructional leadership is evident in improved student outcomes. For example, districts that have implemented strong instructional leadership programs have seen significant gains in student achievement. Additionally, strong instructional leadership is critical to teacher development and support, as principals are responsible for providing supportive and collaborative leadership.

Conclusion
The State of Education in Tennessee: Strengthening Schools through Effective Leadership

The importance of strong instructional leadership cannot be overstated. As school leaders, we must continue to work towards developing a pipeline of highly trained and effective principals who can truly transform the local education system. The work is ongoing, but the potential for positive change is tremendous. With continued support and resources, we can ensure that every student in Tennessee has access to a high-quality education.
One of the most important things we can do to transform our [schools] is to have each one led by a great principal.

Focus groups with principals across the state during Spring 2013, SCORE based consistently that principals wanted more opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues in other districts. The TDOE offices are working to provide opportunities for school leaders to work together across districts through the principal collaborative initiative. Additionally, the TDOE plans to use the CORE offices to provide support for the implementation of the principal evaluation system.

As part of the 2010 First to the Top Act, all public school principals in Tennessee are required to have annual performance evaluations. Fifty percent of the overall evaluation score is based on qualitative measures, 35 percent is based on school-wide academic growth measures, and 15 percent is based on student achievement measures. The Tennessee Department of Education is currently piloting a revised principal evaluation tool during the 2013-2014 school year and will make revisions based on the results of the pilot, as well as recommendations from the Administrator Evaluation Advisory Council. The current rubric to measure qualitative standards was informed by the revised Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), which “identify core performances and effective instructional leaders.” The TILS were developed and refined using best practices, current research, and the experiences of Tennessee’s principals. The revised standards are a promising step toward an improved principal evaluation system, but it is critical that districts have the supports and resources they need to fully implement the tool and use results to drive improvement.

Priorities for 2014

As Tennessee continues to implement student-centered initiatives, including the new teacher evaluation system and Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, it is crucial to have strong instructional leadership in every school. As Tennessee Commissioner of Education Kevin Huffman remarked in 2013, “Training educators to be future leaders is one of the most important things we can do to ensure the sustainability of our work. Having effective principals and district leaders in place will make sure our educators improve and that our schools are on the trajectory to sustainable improvement.” It is critical for state and district leaders to remain committed to the continuous improvement of this system. Additionally, principals should be given targeted feedback through the evaluation system that will help identify professional development needs and opportunities for improvement.

1. Principal preparation programs must have rigorous selection processes and curriculum requirements that prioritize the skills and knowledge that instructional leaders need. Further, the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission should work together to measure the effectiveness of the state’s principal preparation programs and ensure that this data is both publicly reported and used for program accountability. The Tennessee General Assembly should consider mandating an annual evaluation of the principal preparation programs in the state, similar to the statute already required Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Once identified, the most effective programs and practices should be expanded across the state.

2. Relationships between school districts and leader preparation programs must be stronger to ensure that the programs are training future leaders with the unique skills and knowledge that districts need. Local ownership and implementation of initiatives to support school leaders will be critical moving forward.

3. The TDOE should use emerging research and feedback from the field to both revise the principal evaluation rubric and inform the implementation process. The principal evaluation system must be able to accurately identify strength and weaknesses of leaders’ ability to serve as instructional leaders. It will be important for state and district leaders to remain committed to the continuous improvement of this system. Additionally, principals should be given targeted feedback through the evaluation system that will help identify professional development needs and opportunities for improvement.

4. There is a need for a comprehensive study on Tennessee’s school leadership pipeline, including selection, preparation, evaluation, and ongoing development and support. The focus on instructional leadership is especially important in the context of the need to sustain the momentum and for positive change in the state’s public education system. Examining current practices in the state can help inform the specific steps that need to be taken to make improvements.

Priorities in Action – Great Leaders

Traditionally, the principal has resembled the middle manager suggested in William Whyte’s 1950s classic, The Organization Man – an overseer of buses, boilers, and books. Today, in a rapidly changing era of standards-based reforms and accountability, this has dramatically changed. Below are two examples where the roles of school and district leader have been redefined on Tennessee’s top priority – student learning.

Changing the Leadership Culture in a District. In Trousdale County Schools, a PK-12 district serving just over 1200 students, there has been a tradition of excellence in sports but not in academics. However, over the last five years, this has been changing. Director of Schools Clint Satterfield has connected the district and put energy behind a handful of impactful strategies including teacher quality, rigorous curriculum, and expanded opportunities for postsecondary education and training. But perhaps the most effective thing Satterfield has done is put in place the work of the school leadership team.

In Kingsport City Schools, a district serving approximately 7,000 students in Northeast Tennessee, the focus on instructional leadership has a keen focus on student learning. Kingsport’s Associate Principal Program provides an opportunity for teachers interested in becoming a principal to serve alongside principals, taking responsibility for many of the same duties as assistant principals. This is a strong practice for a few reasons. First, highly effective and motivated teachers have an opportunity to take on leadership responsibilities within a school for a set period of time, then return to the classroom with valuable insight into administrative responsibilities. From a district perspective, a pipeline of leaders is built internally and schools serve as a testing ground for potential administrators. When school leadership positions open up, district officials have no problem filling these spots with bright, well-trained candidates who understand Kingsport’s unique context.

In addition to building strong, instructionally focused school leaders, Kingsport also has a unique approach to district office administration. Kingsport’s approach, which is supported by research from the University of Washington, provides customized support and applies “case management” to serving schools. It begins with changing the name of the central office to the Administrative Support Center (ASC). Central office teams, made up of a cross section of departments, are responsible for working with schools within the district. ASC staff have taken on the heart and face of the district, building strong relationships with schools and advocates for their schools during district-wide discussion. Teachers, parents, and school leaders like this approach because it makes them feel that the central office is truly working to understand and support classroom instruction. It also enables ASC staff to have a better understanding of how their work translates into student success.
The State of Education in Tennessee: Expanding Student Access to Great Teaching

Overview

Tennessee holds high expectations for its educators. Teachers are expected to improve student achievement each year while responding to the individual learning needs of all students. Throughout 2013, the Tennessee Department of Education, local school districts, and research-based advoca-cy organizations have continued to focus on the importance of fostering effective teaching.

Expanding student access to great teaching begins with recruiting intelligent, talent-ed candidates into the profession and providing rigorous training programs that prepare them to meet the demands of today’s classrooms. Once in the classroom, teachers need opportunities for ongoing professional learning and support, which should be informed by the results of a meaningful educator evaluation system. While progress has been made in improving teacher evaluation and providing high-quality training on Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, there is still work to do to ensure these efforts produce educational improvement for students.

Update on the Work

By the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) had completed transitioning the State Department of Education (TDOE) completed transitioning the department of Education (TDOE) to the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The new CORE offices are focused on providing direct support to teachers as well as school and district leaders. SCORE is based on feedback from educators across the state that they relied on support from the CORE offices and appreciated having a local contact with the TDOE. Each office has instructional academic specialists charged with helping districts improve classroom instruction and implement the Common Core State Standards. Because the CORE offices are regional service agencies, they can provide opportunities for educators to collaborate with their colleagues across multiple districts. While the CORE offices have been an asset to the districts, there are ongoing capacity challenges due to a relatively small staff serving multiple districts in one region. Each of the eight CORE offices has approximately 10 staff members and serves an average of 15 districts.

The TDOE offered comprehensive, high-quality professional development for educators on Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards in Summer 2012 and 2013. (“See Maintaining a Commitment to Rigorous Standards and Assessments’ in this report for more information.) In addition, the TDOE hired and trained more than 700 educators to serve as Common Core coaches to their peers across the state. While an unprecedented number of teachers have received this state-funded support, not all educators attended the summer trainings, and about one-third of the districts (over 5,000 teachers) do not have a Common Core coach. For example, in the northwest region of the state, half of the districts (over 1,000 teachers) do not have access to a coach.

Refinements continue to be made to Tennessee’s teacher evaluation system. Since the First to the Top Act of 2010 established requirements for an educator evaluation system, the state has continued to improve upon the Tennessee Education Acceleration Model (TEAM) which is used for about 80 percent of teachers in the state. In the original legislation, 90 percent of an educator’s evaluation is based on student performance, and 15 percent is derived from measures of learning growth, based on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAS) where available. Now legislation passed in 2013 made two key changes regarding the use of TVAS data. For educators relying on school-wide TVAS data, the weighting has been reduced to 25 percent. In addition, districts now have the discretion to allow educators with individual TVAS scores of a four or a five to use that score for 100 percent of their overall evaluation. Since not all teachers have individual growth scores, the TDOE has been working with educators and content experts to develop growth measures for specific areas including career and technical education, fine arts, world languages, and early grades. The new measures used in the 2012-2013 school year increased the total percentage of teachers with individual growth data from about 30 percent to just over 50 percent. While this is an improvement, the TDOE estimates that approximately 70 percent of teachers could have growth measures in 2013-2014 if all districts elect to use all approved measures. The TDOE has also used feedback from educators to fine-tune the observation rubrics for the 2013-2014 school year to ensure alignment with Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards. Furthermore, districts using one of the approved alternative models of teacher evaluation are also working to assess and improve these evaluation systems.

Many educators across the state have begun praising the new evaluation models for initiating meaningful conversations about classroom instruction and identifying specific areas to improve. The Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TN CRED), which provides external research and evaluation on Tennessee’s First to the Top initiatives, released a report in 2013 based on educator feedback. The results related to teacher evaluation reflect what many educators and policymakers had been hearing in the field - teachers are more satisfied and comfortable with the system they rely on.

High-Quality Professional Learning

Professional learning should increase educator effectiveness and results for all students. Educators use professional learning opportunities as a way to continually expand their knowledge and skills so that they can best serve their students. For professional development to be effective, it needs to be thoughtfully planned and executed to ensure it is resulting in improved instructional practices. Additionally, professional learning should be job embedded and individualized for the individual and/or team of teachers. The Tennessee State Board of Education adopted Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning in 2012, which establish the following as essential elements of professional development:

1. Learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment
2. Leadership that develops capacity, advocates, and creates support systems for professional learning
3. Resources that have been prioritized, monitored, and coordinated for educator learning
4. Data that are used to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning
5. Learning designs that integrate theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve intended outcomes
6. Implementation that applies research on change and supports long-term change
7. Outcomes aligned with educator performance and student curriculum standards.
able views if they were using one of the alternative models. The Tennessee Department of Education plans to continue to examine the data and use educator feedback to inform ongoing improvements. As part of the state’s efforts to improve and connect different aspects of the teaching profession, the State Board of Education (SBOE) revised policies in 2013 related to teacher compensation and educator licensing. By streamlining the state minimum salary schedule and broadening differentiated pay plan guidelines required by Tennessee Law, the revised compensation policies provide local districts with additional flexibility in determining criteria for educator pay. These changes support Tennessee’s efforts to encourage school districts to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to professional capital decisions and develop new and innovative ways to support effective teaching. Differentiated pay plans allow districts to align resources with local goals and priorities for improving student achievement. This will require districts to reexamine existing resources, budgets, and funding levels as they determine compensation plans to meet local needs. The revised educator licensure policy seeks to streamline the process for educators to renew and advance their licenses. The policy introduces more rigorous entry requirements, reduces the duration of a license and connects advancement and renewal to a minimum level of performance on the teacher evaluation system. Under the new policy, teachers will begin with a practitioner license, valid for three years, and advance to a professional license, valid for six years, provided they meet minimum performance expectations. Those meeting the minimum performance expectations will have their license automatically renewed. The policy is scheduled to take effect August 1, 2015. The State Board of Education plans to use the interim time to study the policy and consider feedback to improve the system. This interim period is an opportunity for educators and district leaders across the state to engage in the policy conversation about licensure and contribute ideas for continuing to improve the process.

Initiatives are under way to strengthen teacher preparation programs and ensure that pre-service teachers are prepared to be successful in today’s classrooms and schools. Since 2010, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) has been working to improve the reporting system and use available data to evaluate teacher preparation programs. The annual Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs provides outcome-based information, including placement and retention rates, Praxis scores, and value-added data for the traditional and alternative preparation programs in the state. The 2013 report also included trend data for the first time, highlighting the programs with consistent positive value-added results, as well as those with consistent negative results over the last three years. Interviews with leadership teams from select districts in Tennessee revealed that districts are incorporating data from this report in their recruitment and hiring processes. However, there is no formal process by which the data is used as part of program improvement or accountability.

While the public report provides general information on the performance of program graduates, many training programs need more detailed information to target areas for improvement. To that end, THEC contracted with the organization that conducts the state’s value-added analysis (SAS, Inc.) to create in-depth analytic reports on each training program. The reports are due to programs in early 2014. THEC has also partnered with the Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning and Innovation at Lipscomb University to develop courses and instructional materials for the preparation programs to use for teaching Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards. In Spring 2013, more than 500 higher education faculty members received training on these modules at five trainings across the state. Many programs are also integrating the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) evaluation into their student teaching placements to better align the student teaching experience with that of the classroom teacher. Finally, SCORE heard in focus groups and interviews with school and district leaders that more work is needed to ensure candidates graduating from teacher preparation programs are better prepared to meet the new expectations.

Teachers must have access to instructional coaching, collaborative planning time, and targeted professional learning.
The State of Education in Tennessee: Expanding Student Access to Great Teaching

Priorities for 2014
Perhaps the most critical component of student success is access to effective teaching. To ensure that all students have this opportunity, efforts are needed to better support both current and future teachers. In recent years, Tennessee has taken steps to create a system to identify effective teaching, provide school and district leaders with more accurate information, and provide teachers with the support and feedback they need to improve instruction for students.

1. It is imperative that teachers are provided with the tools and resources that will enable them to be experts in their profession. The information and research available about effective ways to support teachers must be used to foster excellent teaching in every school across the state. Teachers must have access to instructional coaching, collaborative planning time, and targeted professional learning. Further, all districts should ensure that their teachers have the supports they need to teach the Common Core State Standards.

2. Local ownership and implementation of initiatives to support teachers will be critical moving forward. Districts should create, as well as protect, time and opportunities throughout the academic year for high-quality professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students. Current funds need to be strategically invested in these initiatives and programs that have the greatest impacts for teachers, and additional coaching, collaborative planning time, and targeted professional learning. Further, all districts should use data to enhance teacher preparation program improvement and accountability.

3. The Tennessee Department of Education and local districts should work together to identify gaps in teacher support. The CORE offices should provide support teachers will be critical moving forward. Districts should create, as well as protect, time and opportunities throughout the academic year for high-quality professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students. Current funds need to be strategically invested in these initiatives and programs that have the greatest impacts for teachers, and additional coaching, collaborative planning time, and targeted professional learning. Further, all districts should use data to enhance teacher preparation program improvement and accountability.

4. Developing a pipeline for excellent teaching must be a priority for the state. Districts and teacher training programs should work together to recruit the best future teachers and support teachers will be critical moving forward. Districts should create, as well as protect, time and opportunities throughout the academic year for high-quality professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students. Current funds need to be strategically invested in these initiatives and programs that have the greatest impacts for teachers, and additional coaching, collaborative planning time, and targeted professional learning. Further, all districts should use data to enhance teacher preparation program improvement and accountability.

5. Tennessee’s policymakers have also taken steps to better use public policy to support effective teaching, resulting in changes to tenure, compensation, evaluation, and teacher licensure. It is important that the implementation of these policies, as well as future policies, enable the state to attract and retain the best teachers. The state must:

   • Support districts in using the new teacher evaluation process to drive professional capital decisions, as well as inform improvements in instruction and professional learning.
   • Continue to prioritize development of individual growth measures for as many teachers as possible, especially as growth measures play an important role in Tennessee’s teacher evaluation system.
   • Provide guidance to districts on how to use the flexibility of the compensation system to benefit teachers and ultimately students.
   • Ensure that the State Board of Education uses to revise the new licensure policy is robust and offers multiple opportunities for feedback.
   • Empower districts to use the evaluation process and new tenure policy to ensure that low-performing teachers who do not improve over time do not remain in the classroom.

Help assess district needs and develop strategic plans to ensure teachers have access to individual support and professional learning. This is particularly important in light of the fact that nearly one-third of districts do not have a Common Core Coach.

4. Developing a pipeline for excellent teaching must be a priority for the state. Districts and teacher training programs should work together to recruit the best future teachers and support teachers who do not improve over time do not remain in the classroom.

Priorities in Action: Educator Support to Enhance Instruction
Fostering effective teaching starts with quality feedback, but it doesn’t stop there – schools and districts must have practices in place to respond to feedback through coaching, support, and follow-up. This consistent attention to teacher development results in engaging classrooms and increases in student achievement. Examples from Tennessee schools that are expanding student access to great teaching are highlighted below.

Using Evaluations for Teacher Coaching and Mentoring
At Freedom Preparatory Academy, a public charter school serving grades 6-12, Memphis teachers rotate coaching and targeted professional development on a weekly basis. Teachers are observed on Monday and given “growth” areas of strength and “growth” areas of need for improvement. Teachers are observed on Tuesday and Wednesday and are expected to show improvement based upon Monday’s “growth.” Every Friday teachers have opportunities for tailored professional development. In addition, Freedom Prep leverages high-performing teachers to provide some of the feedback during the weekly observation cycle.

At Norman Smith Elementary in Clarksville, Tennessee, school leaders use evaluation and student performance data to create a cadre of mentors and coaches within the school. First-year teachers are paired with a highly skilled mentor teacher who provides support and instructional coaching. Norman Smith also intervenes when any teacher in the building struggles, providing an instructional coach who will model lessons, observe the teacher trying out new strategies, and provide feedback. Teachers also participate in weekly collaborative planning with the academic coach and administration. As specific curriculum needs arise, “Just in Time” trainings are provided.

Engaging, Relevant, and Rigorous Classroom Instruction
At Rose Park Math and Science Magnet, a school that serves grades 5-8 in Nashville, effective teaching means students are actively engaged in instruction. Teaching and learning at Rose Park looks very different – students present their ideas, justify their thinking with explanations, and critique the reasoning of others with teacher support. Students engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world application. School leaders are in classrooms every day to assess the extent to which this kind of teaching and learning is occurring. Rose Park also leverages community resources to provide engaging instruction to students. Through a partnership with Vanderbilt University, each grade level has a Scientist-in-the-Classroom who teaches the class one week per term to provide students with high-quality, hands-on learning activities that are standards-based.

In Kingsport City Schools, a PK-12 district serving slightly more than 7,000 students in Northeast Tennessee, rigor is expected across every grade level and subject. Principal of the 12 schools, Superintendent of the Kingsport City School District, Dr. Alaida Wiles, recently said, “We can’t afford to have weak acts of citizenship, but greatness everywhere, every day.” The district’s goal of greatness in every building is achieved in part by the use of teacher leaders. Kingsport City schools have teacher leaders who model lessons, provide coaching, create common core curriculum, and serve as master teachers throughout the district. In addition, schools have worked to reduce the course loads of teacher leaders to enable them to support their colleagues. Teacher leaders in Kingsport have deep expertise in the subject areas that they focus on and, in many cases, are Common Core coaches. This teacher-led approach to support and coaching not only leads to rigorous, aligned instruction across the district, but it also assists in the deployment of a distributed leadership model that drives innovation.
The State of Education in Tennessee: Investing in Technology to Enhance Instruction

INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE INSTRUCTION: Providing Students with the Tools to Succeed

Overview
Tennessee has an unprecedented opportunity to leverage technology to transform education and prepare students for success in college and the workforce. Schools and districts are investing in technology and working to upgrade their current infrastructure and devices to not only meet the requirements of new online assessments but more importantly to enhance teaching and learning. As a representative from the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) explained, “Investing in technology is not about putting new toys in the classroom. It needs to be about providing assistive technology that will enhance both the delivery of instruction and the ability for students to learn.” The TDOE has been working with districts to assess current needs and to help make a successful transition to the new Common Core State Standards-aligned tests that will be administered online. However, it is unclear whether districts are prepared to administer online tests, and whether teachers and students are adequately prepared to use new technology to truly enhance learning.

Update on the Work
Throughout 2013, school districts have been assessing their current technology systems and determining what improvements need to be made. A driving force behind this work has been the state’s plan to administer online assessments in the 2014-2015 school year. As part of the transition to higher expectations through Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, the state will assess student learning in math and English language arts through PARCC assessments. See “Maintaining a Commitment to Rigorous Standards and Assessments” for more information about PARCC. The state’s efforts to help districts transition to the online assessments include targeted assistance from the TDOE, as well as $51 million in the state’s 2014 budget toward technology for school districts.

The PARCC assessments are being designed to leverage technology so that the tests complement, enhance, and accurately measure student learning. Districts have been working with guidance from the TDOE and PARCC – to upgrade their technology infrastructure and Internet bandwidth to ensure that they are ready for online assessments by the 2014-2015 school year. While a paper and pencil version will be available to districts, at least during the first year, there are many benefits to using the online version, including potentially faster results, more dynamic and interactive test questions, and lower cost.

The TDOE administered a survey to districts in October 2013 to help assess their readiness for online PARCC assessments.

Investing in technology is not just about preparing for a new assessment system, but about utilizing technology that enhances the classroom experience. For example, STEM School Chattanooga, L&N STEM Academy in Knoxville, and Innovation Academy in Kingsport have a one-to-one technology structure, providing all students with iPads to use both inside and outside the classroom. The iPads are used to facilitate a flipped classroom structure, in which students use their time out of class to study material and then devote classroom time to practicing and mastering concepts. Computer labs and iPads are also used as part of a blended learning approach, which helps students use technology to enhance their access to content, use of the content, and ultimately application of the content. Both L&N STEM Academy and Innovation Academy have earned the honor of Apple Distinguished School or Program, by providing all students, teachers, and administrators with comprehensive school-wide access to mobile devices and computers and by demonstrating an innovative learning environment that engages students and provides tangible evidence of academic accomplishment.

The Power of Technology

Schools are using technology to enhance teaching and learning through a variety of ways to achieve multiple goals, including:

1. Expanding access: Students receive the opportunity to engage with technology and develop digital skills they may not otherwise develop and will need in college and career.
2. Engaging students: Various devices provide students the opportunity to learn through multiple pathways and invites students to engage with the teacher and each other.
3. Personalizing instruction: Online or computer-based learning can be used to provide opportunities for rigorous learning, differentiated learning, and remediation.
4. Supporting educators: Online resources can be used to provide professional development and facilitate professional learning communities.
5. Using data: Technology can provide immediate feedback on student performance that can help teachers and parents identify individual student progress and specific needs.

Districts were provided with their status (red, yellow, green) and initial assistance as needed. Looking ahead to 2014, the TDOE plans to provide further assistance to districts through the Centers of Regional Excellence offices. Additionally, the TDOE’s work to administer constructed response assessments, as well as online writing assessments provided districts with practical experience. A priority during this transition will be to ensure the new assessments measure content knowledge rather than students’ technological skills.

Investing in technology is not just about preparing for a new assessment system, but about utilizing technology that enhances the classroom experience.

While technology is emerging as an effective strategy to enhance teaching and learning, many schools and districts face challenges related to equipment, infrastructure, and adequate training for students and educators. There is variability across the state in terms of technological capacity. Even some districts that are more technologically prepared have expressed concerns about their ability to accommodate whole-school online testing. An underdeveloped infrastructure limits the extent to which technology can be used to meet additional school and district needs, like individualized learning for students, professional development for teachers, and greater access to advanced and college-level coursework.

Enrolling in online, distance learning, Advanced Placement, or dual enrollment courses through NETCC xxix

Technology is also being used to expand opportunities for students to take academically rigorous courses. The North- east Tennessee College and Career Ready Consortium (NET- CO), formed by the Cleveland Foundation in 2010, is a network of 29 high schools and five colleges and universities across 14 counties that has invested in and leveraged technology to increase student access to rigorous courses, such as Advanced Placement. The Advanced Placement teachers use audio-video equipment to live-broadcast their lessons to students in other high schools, while facilitators in the remote classrooms supervise the learning that takes place. In the 2012-2013 school year, more than 10,000 students were enrolled in online, distance learning, Advanced Placement, or dual enrollment courses through NETCC xxix.

While technology is emerging as an effective strategy to improve student learning, many schools and districts face challenges related to equipment, infrastructure, and adequate training for students and educators. There is variability across the state in terms of technological capacity. Even some districts that are more technologically prepared have expressed concerns about their ability to accommodate whole-school online testing. An underdeveloped infrastructure limits the extent to which technology can be used to meet additional school and district needs, like individualized learning for students, professional development for teachers, and greater access to advanced and college-level coursework.
Priorities for 2014

Technology can be a powerful education tool to enhance instruction and personalize student learning. To realize the full potential of technology, districts and schools need to be equipped with the proper infrastructure, devices, and training to ensure seamless integration throughout the day.

1. It is important to use technology as a vehicle for quality instruction and content and for individualizing student learning. The upcoming PARCC assessments should serve not just as an end goal but as a catalyst for ramping up technological capacity in districts across the state. All Tennessee students should have access to the types of opportunities and advancements that technology can offer.

2. Investing in technology must be an ongoing priority that goes beyond a one-time purchase. Students need daily access to technology and should be trained to use it. Teachers also need training and daily access to technology. It is critical that educators understand how to use technology to improve instruction and transform how students learn. Fostering strong relationships and communication between school districts and their county commissions can help ensure agreement on how to strategically invest funds in ways that will benefit students.

3. Transparency is important as potential PARCC assessment transition barriers are removed. The Tennessee Department of Education should work directly with districts to find solutions to potential barriers in implementation. State leaders have a role to play in supporting local efforts by facilitating partnerships between districts, schools, community organizations, and educational associations.

4. As technology use increases, it is important to ensure security measures are in place. Innovations in technology enable educators to use data to enhance teaching and learning. However, student and teacher personal information must always be protected.

Priorities in Action: Using Technology to Drive Instruction and Learning

The use of technology in classroom instruction is a key strategy for accelerating student learning. The conversation about technology should be about more than simply acquiring new devices. Technology can be used to analyze student data in real time, interview with struggling students, enrich instruction for high-performing students, and assess what students know. The schools and districts below show how technology can be a key driver in accelerating student achievement throughout the year.

Using Technology to Make Instruction Engaging and Relevant. At Covington High School, located in Tipton County just north of Memphis, technology is leveraged to make classroom instruction more relevant and impactful. Teachers at Covington frequently record themselves teaching a lesson and then play the video during class while circulating in the classroom. This allows students to view the lecture and gives the teacher the opportunity to give individualized support to students. Teachers at Covington also use student response systems to quiz students during lessons in order to gather information that can be used to tailor re-teaching. Finally, most classrooms at Covington are equipped with Smartboard technology. Teachers regularly use this technology to leverage web-based, interactive resources to enhance student learning. Covington’s results are encouraging—the school is leading the state in Algebra I growth over the past three years.

Using Technology to Support Intervention. At McPheter’s Bend Elementary, a small, rural school in Northeast Tennessee, technology plays a key role in the school’s reading intervention program. McPheter’s Bend uses regular assessments and web-based programs to identify students who are in need of additional support in reading. McPheter’s Bend offers the dedicated support of a reading interventionist as well as computer-based reading programs such as Nystrom Max and Accelerated Reader. Technology is helping to keep students interested and engaged at McPheter’s Bend. “Technology really drives our instruction here,” said fourth-grade teacher Angela Smith. “Technology also increases interest—students are more interested in math if they can do math on an iPad.” McPheter’s Bend’s intervention program is working—the school has seen remarkable growth in reading and math over the last three years.

District-wide Initiatives to Support Technology Infrastructure and PARCC. In Greeneville City Schools, a small district of about 2,700 students in Northeast Tennessee, technology is front and center. The district is engaged in “REACH4IT,” a four-year campaign with a goal of raising $750,000 to upgrade the technology infrastructure in the district, including electronic notebooks, laptops, and tablets. District leaders in Greeneville believe in technology as a key lever to enhance student learning and prepare future generations of students for the PARCC assessments. Director of Schools Dr. Linda Bredem recently said, “Technology devices as educational tools are as critical today as paper, pencils, and encyclopedias have been in the past. Our students simply cannot succeed in the present or future worlds of education and work without them.” Beyond purchasing more devices, Greeneville has a deep commitment to professional learning on how to use technology to enhance instruction. Twenty-five teachers held the 50th annual Teacher’s Network—a system wide professional learning opportunity with breakout sessions led by tech-savvy teachers from within the district. Greeneville has seen great gains in math across the district, and technology has played a key role in their success.
Overview
It is critical that students receive an education that prepares them for the demands of the workforce, both today and in the future. Multiple state agencies—from the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) to the Department of Economic and Community Development—are working together to ensure students have access to rigorous academic and career pathways that are aligned with state and local economic needs. The goal is to develop an educated and skilled workforce across Tennessee.

Currently, too few Tennesseans graduate high school prepared for success in college or career. Less than 60 percent of high school graduates in the state go on to a postsecondary education, and 67 percent of students graduate from community college within six years, and about 50 percent graduate from high school. Further, less than 30 percent of students graduate from high school prepared for success in college or career. Less than 60 percent of students are ready to enter college or career. The key policy levers established by Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, which are designed to prepare “students with the essential knowledge and skills to compete in an increasingly global environment” provide a way to achieve these goals and develop a better educated workforce.

College and Career Readiness
The phrase “college and career readiness” is prevalent throughout the current education dialogue. It is used when discussing standards and assessments, as well as curriculum requirements and postsecondary opportunities for students. The focus on college and career readiness has elevated the conversation about how well today’s high schools are preparing students to meet the demands of postsecondary education or job opportunities. In fact, the Tennessee Board of Regents’ recent postsecondary and workforce initiatives are designed to better align what students learn in high school with the skills and knowledge that will help them be successful in the educational or career path they choose.

Students must develop critical thinking and problem solving skills, in addition to studying subject areas and content. Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, which are designed to prepare “students with the essential knowledge and skills to compete in an increasingly global environment” provide a way to achieve these goals and develop a better educated workforce.

Update on the Work
Tennessee’s path to higher academic standards, first through the Tennessee Diploma Project and now through Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards, has been propelled by the understanding that students need to be better prepared to meet the demands of life after high school. Whether graduates choose to pursue postsecondary education or enter the workforce, they must develop critical thinking and problem solving skills to succeed. Results from an international survey of adult skills in 2013 revealed that “what people know and what they can do with what they know has a major impact on their life chances.” For instance, individuals who are able to make complex inferences and closely evaluate written texts have a median hourly wage that is 60 percent higher than individuals with low literacy skills.

Since 2009, there has been a progression of initiatives that aim to ensure all students in Tennessee are prepared for college or career, while increasing the percentage of Tennesseans who complete postsecondary education. In January 2010, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Complete College Tennessee Act (CCTA) as a means to transform public higher education in the state and ensure that more Tennesseans are better trained and educated. The key policy levers established through this legislation include a new funding formula based on outcomes instead of enrollment, a new Performance Funding program that focuses on quality assurance, and the creation of mission statements or profiles that distinguish institutions by degree level, programs, and student characteristics. In November of 2010, the non-profit Tennessee College Access and Success Network (TCASN) was established to help increase the number of Tennesseans completing postsecondary education opportunities by creating a college-going culture in communities across the state, removing barriers to higher education, and promoting college persistence. In 2012, TCASN awarded over $400,000 in grant funding to 12 projects that will help 27,000 students access postsecondary education.

The TDOE’s Division of Career and Technical Education (CTED) has been leading several key initiatives to help ensure students are college and career ready. The division has been working with educators across the state to develop programs of study and course standards that reflect more focused pathways leading from secondary to postsecondary and career. The course redesign and accompanying professional development is better aligned to current industry demands and embed Common Core State Standards for Literacy in Technical Subjects in each of the courses, as well as general education and/or national industry standards (where applicable).

Additionally, the division oversees Tennessee’s involvement in the Pathways to Prosperity Network, which is a group of six states working together to ensure more students graduate high school and earn postsecondary certificates and degrees aligned with current labor market needs. Pathways Tennessee provides a way to coordinate efforts of multiple state agencies and local/regional stakeholders with the shared goal of developing a prepared workforce to meet the demands of current and future Tennessee businesses. These initiatives include the promotion of early postsecondary opportunities, focused academic and career guidance, as well as programs that provide last-dollar scholarships and mentors to help students succeed in postsecondary education. The CTE Division also leads the department’s efforts to develop, expand, and promote early postsecondary opportunities for high school students through the Office of Postsecondary Coordination and alignment. This office works closely with the Conseil for Cooperative Innovation, Education, which was established by the General Assembly in 2012 to promote collaboration between secondary and postsecondary governing boards around early postsecondary initiatives. The work of this office includes dual credit, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses, as well as the College-Level Examination Program. These dual-credit courses were approved by the consortium and are being piloted during the 2013-2014 school year, with plans underway for another six dual-credit courses to be piloted in 2014-2015. A challenge moving forward will be measuring how participation in early postsecondary opportunities affects student outcomes.

Not only can high school students earn postsecondary credit through advanced courses, but there are also opportunities for students to take developmental courses in preparation for college. The Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support (SAILS) program gives high school seniors who have qualified with math an opportunity to complete the complete Learning Support Math program with the goal of beginning college level math at a postsecondary institution, potential saving both time and money. As of December 2013, the SAILS program saved participating students over $2.8 million in tuition.

The SAILE program focuses on increasing postsecondary access and success by providing last-dollar scholarships and mentor guidance. The program began in Knox County with the 2009 high school graduating class, and has since expanded to serve 146 high schools across 38 school districts. In 2013, 2,497 students used this program to successfully begin their postsecondary careers. By 2014, the program reports that it will have funded close to $8.9 million in scholarships.

The Tennessee Diploma Access and Success Network (TCASN) saved participating students over $2.8 million by 2013. The Tennessee Diploma Access and Success Network (TCASN) saved participating students over $2.8 million by 2013. The Tennessee Diploma Access and Success Network (TCASN) saved participating students over $2.8 million by 2013...
The State of Education in Tennessee: Supporting Students from Kindergarten to Career

Priorities for 2014

In today’s economy, the majority of career pathways require education and training beyond high school. As Tennessee embarks on work to ensure that citizens have the skills they need to work in the fastest-growing fields in our state, the K-12 education system has an important role to play.

1. Create a data-driven environment that equips policymakers, superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents with the information and tools they need to advance student learning and success. The Measure Tennessee data system—which connects information from multiple sources, including K-12, higher education, and the workforce—will enable schools and districts to know how their students perform after high school. It is also important to be clear that the data system still protects the privacy of individual student information. Using key data will help local systems determine what changes should be made to curricular and program offerings to ensure students are ready for multiple postsecondary pathways.

2. Increase and expand opportunities for high school students to participate in rigorous coursework. Including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual credit, and dual enrollment courses. Barriers (financial, geographic, or administrative) that prevent students from participating in such courses should be identified and removed.

3. Increase and expand opportunities for students to study STEM subjects and pursue career opportunities in STEM fields. The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development identified 10 industries where Tennessee has a competitive advantage, and 7 of them require a solid foundation in STEM subjects. The work to support STEM education in the state must continue to be a priority in the absence of Race to the Top Funds.

Priorities in Action: Preparing Students for College and Workforce

Today’s global economy demands that students leave high school prepared for college and the workforce. The K-12 education system has a critical role to play in identifying possibilities for students, communicating with business and industry partners about workforce needs, and in providing students skills in critical thinking, writing, and math that they will need in life. The schools and districts profiled below are engaging students in rich conversations about their future and providing students with rigorous college and career immersion experiences.

Starting the Conversation about College and Career Early. At Frank P. Brown Elementary, a PK-8 school in Cumberland County, the conversation about college and career readiness started early. The school leverages its strong community of retirees and engages them in supporting the school with a Junior Achievement program that acquaints students with career possibilities after high school. In addition, field trips to local colleges and universities allow students, many of whom have never been outside of Cumberland County, to see campuses that they can. It’s clear that Frank P. Brown is not only talking to students about college and career but also preparing them for it – the school’s ACT performance is well above the state average in math, reading, and science.

District-Wide Rigor. In Kingsport City schools, a district serving approximately 7,000 students in Northeast Tennessee, an intentional focus on providing students with as much rigor as possible has led to dramatic gains. Kingsport parent Eric Hyden encapsulates the district’s approach: “Students in Kingsport are challenged to reach for the classes that are a little more difficult.” Kingsport expands opportunities for students to take rigorous courses and ensures that those courses are available to all students throughout the K-12 school in the district. Kingsport has recently expanded Advanced Placement course offerings, the district currently offers 22 courses and 24 are planned for the 2014-2015 school year, with two more to be added the following year as well. The district has also developed a robust “Pre-AP” program that exposes middle school students to rigorous courses. A new “Pre-AP” science course was added for eighth-graders this year, with corresponding sixth- and seventh-grade courses to be added next year. It is not uncommon to see sixth-grade students taking pre-algebra in Kingsport due to this approach. In addition, approximately 20 percent of seventh-graders take algebra and over 10 percent of eighth-graders complete geometry. Kingsport’s commitment to rigor is paying off with incredible growth in math across the district over the last three years.

Meaningful Career Pathways. At Oak Ridge High School, a high school in East Tennessee serving nearly 1,400 students in grades 9-12, career-based courses are just as rigorous as college prep courses. “We want every student at Oak Ridge High School to be successful whether they choose a career path or college,” said Principal David Bryant. Oak Ridge has a wide array of career-focused pathways for students including robotics, business, engineering, medical careers, and welding. The school’s career-focused programs result in multiple opportunities for students upon graduation. In Oak Ridge’s welding program, for example, students receive industry certification before graduating. This means students right out of high school are qualified to immediately pursue high-demand, high-paying jobs, or they can opt to seek more advanced training.

Whether graduates choose to pursue postsecondary education or enter the workforce, they must develop critical thinking and problem solving skills to succeed.
The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) currently encompasses subject-specific assessments for grades 3-8, as well as high school end-of-course exams. Since 2010, districts across the state have seen significant increases in the number of students who are proficient or advanced in math and science from third through twelfth grade – statewide, there are at least 91,000 more students who are proficient in math and at least 51,000 more in science. The graphs below illustrate the continued growth on state exams in math, language arts, and science.

**Continued TCAP Growth**

Grades 3-8 results by subject

**High School Improvement**

End-of-Course results by subject
Tennessee requires specific assessments to measure whether or not students are on track to graduate ready for college and career. The assessments include: ACT Explore in eighth grade, ACT Plan in tenth grade, and the ACT in eleventh grade. Students meeting ACT Benchmark scores have approximately a 50 percent chance of earning a B or higher and approximately a 75 percent chance of earning a C or higher in their corresponding college course area. Since 2010, Tennessee has seen slight progress in terms of the percent of students meeting the College Readiness Benchmarks but continues to be below the majority of other states who use the ACT. In 2013, only 18 percent of eleventh-graders, 16 percent of tenth-graders, and 17 percent of eighth-graders met all four benchmarks on their respective ACT tests. Tennessee ranks 13th out of 17 states in which more than 75 percent of high school students take the ACT.

Additionally, the average composite score for eleventh-graders taking the ACT has not changed significantly since becoming a requirement in 2010. It should be noted that ACT changed its calculation methods in 2013, which does impact the ability to look at data trends over time.

### Percent of 2013 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>80%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Four</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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### Tennessee 2013 ACT College Readiness by Subject and Grade

<table>
<thead>
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<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>80%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>36%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACT Composite Scores 2010-2013: Tennessee v. Nation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is currently the only consistent measure to compare student achievement in fourth- and eighth-grade across all states. In 2013, Tennessee students surpassed their peers across the country in several gains on national math and reading tests, making Tennessee the fastest-improving state in the nation, with only the District of Columbia having slightly greater overall gains. The charts below illustrate the gains that Tennessee made between 2011 and 2013 in terms of both scores and the percent of students proficient or advanced by subject and grade.

### Tennessee NAEP Scores 2011-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2011 Score</th>
<th>2013 Score</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tennessee NAEP Proficiency Rates 2011-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2011 Proficiency</th>
<th>2013 Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TENNESSEE’S NATIONAL RANKING ON THE NAEP MATH AND READING EXAMS IMPROVED BETWEEN 2011 AND 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>4th Grade Math</th>
<th>8th Grade Math</th>
<th>4th Grade Reading</th>
<th>8th Grade Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>46th</td>
<td>45th</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>41st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>37th</td>
<td>43rd</td>
<td>31st</td>
<td>34th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The state data presented in the previous section clearly show that Tennessee students have been improving on both state and national assessments. However, it is also important to look at district-specific data to better understand how gains in student achievement may differ across the state. The maps below illustrate the difference between student achievement growth in math and reading/language arts. Eighty-five percent of districts had a TVAS Numeracy score of four or five, meaning that their students made more progress in math than what had been predicted. On the other hand, 48 percent of districts had a TVAS Literacy score of one or two, meaning that their students were making less progress in reading/language arts.

**2012-2013 DISTRICT DATA**

The district data for each of the following indicators were obtained from the Tennessee Department of Education and apply to the 2012-2013 school year.

**District Characteristics**

- **Number of Schools** – The number of schools operating in each district for the 2012-13 school year
- **Enrollment** – The total count of students enrolled in each individual school district as of October 1, 2012
- **Percent White** – The percent of enrolled students identified as White
- **Percent Black** – The percent of enrolled students identified as Black or African American
- **Percent ED** – The percent of enrolled students identified as economically disadvantaged or eligible for free and reduced price lunch
- **Per Pupil Spending** – The total current operating expenditures on a per pupil basis in each district from state, local, and federal sources
- **Percent Local Funding** – The percent of district per pupil expenditures that comes from local revenue sources

**Tennessee Assessments**

- **Percent Prof/Adv 3-8 Math** – The percent of students in grades 3-8 who scored proficient or advanced on the state’s 2013 TCAP math assessments
- **Percent Prof/Adv 3-8 Reading** – The percent of students in grades 3-8 who scored proficient or advanced on the state’s 2013 TCAP reading/language arts assessments
- **TVAS** – The scores based on growth for one year from the previous academic year. The Standard for Academic Growth is met when the student group makes one year’s growth and maintains their relative achievement from one year to the next. Scores are provided on the following 1-5 scale:
  - **Level 5: Most effective** – schools whose students are making substantially more progress than the Standards for Academic Growth
  - **Level 4: Above average effectiveness** – schools whose students are making more progress than the Standards for Academic Growth
  - **Level 3: Average effectiveness** – schools whose students are making the same amount of progress as the Standards for Academic Growth
  - **Level 2: Approaching average effectiveness** – schools whose students are making substantially less progress than the Standards for Academic Growth
  - **Level 1: Least effective** – schools whose students are making substantially less progress than the Standards for Academic Growth

**Composite** – The TVAS Composite score shown grows at the district level based on student performance on statewide assessments across all available subjects and grades, and includes grades K-2 for districts that opted to test these students.

- **Numeracy** – The TVAS Numeracy score is based on all available data in math
- **Literacy** – The TVAS Literacy score is based on all available data in reading/language arts

**High School Success**

- **ACT Composite** – The average ACT composite score for the 2013 graduating class for all test-takers
- **Graduation Rate** – The percent of students in each district who graduated from high school within four years and a summer out of those students that entered the ninth grade four years prior
- **ACT College Readiness** – The percent of students in each district who met ACT’s College Readiness Benchmarks across all four subject areas

The following pages present in-depth student achievement data for each district in Tennessee. Descriptions of each metric measured in the report are provided, and more information about individual measures may be found in the glossary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Characteristics</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>% Black</th>
<th>% ED</th>
<th>Per Pupil Spending</th>
<th>% Local Funding</th>
<th>3-8 Math</th>
<th>3-8 Reading</th>
<th>4-8 Math</th>
<th>4-8 Reading</th>
<th>Composite</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>ACT Composite</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>ACT College Readiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement School District</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alamo City</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>$8,405</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altus City</td>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>13%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin C. York Institute</td>
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<td>661</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
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<td>37%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athens City</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>$10,257</td>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>90%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford County</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8,249</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>$7,882</td>
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<td>48%</td>
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<td>1%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>$9,563</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Blount County</td>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>19.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$9,101</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>20.1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>% Black</td>
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<td>% Local Funding</td>
<td>% Prof/Adv 3-8 Math</td>
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<td>% Black</td>
<td>%ED Spending</td>
<td>% Local Funding</td>
<td>% Prof/Adv 3-8 Math</td>
<td>% Prof/Adv 3-8 Reading</td>
<td>TVAAS Composite</td>
<td>TVAAS Numeracy</td>
<td>TVAAS Literacy</td>
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<td>Graduation Rate</td>
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Score Card: 2013 District Data
**Glossary**

**ACT** - The ACT is a standardized assessment for high school students frequently required for admission into college. The test has sections in English, mathematics, reading, science reasoning, and an optional written essay. Scored on a scale from one to 36, the test is intended to be an indicator of college readiness. The subjects align with common college introductory courses. All 11th graders in Tennessee are required to take this exam.

**ACT College Readiness Benchmarks** - The ACT benchmarks on subject-area tests represent the minimum score required for students to have approximately a 50 percent chance of earning a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of earning an A. The benchmarks are intended to be an indicator of college readiness. The subjects align with common college introductory courses. All 11th graders in Tennessee are required to take this exam.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** - Advanced Placement courses are college-level courses and exams offered by the College Board that provide students with the opportunity to take college-level courses and earn credit towards college while in high school. There are more than 30 different AP courses across multiple subject areas.

**Alternative Salary Schedule** - Alternative salary schedule is a teacher’s compensation and incentives to professional learning, student achievement, and other measures. They contrast traditional salary schedules, which uniformly increase the pay of teachers based on number of years teaching and level of degree completion.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** - Also known as vocational education, career and technical education refers to courses and programs designed to prepare students to enter the workforce. Usually in a secondary or postsecondary setting, CTE courses focus on academic and vocational skills needed in the workplace and typically include competency-based learning. CTE seeks to prepare students for jobs in fields such as agriculture, engineering, and health care.

**Common Core State Standards** - Tennessee’s Common Core State Standards are a set of expectations for math and English language arts that were adopted in 2003. The standards are a part of a state-led effort to ensure all students have the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.

**Dual Credit** - Dual credit courses are high school courses taught by high school faculty that are aligned with the curriculum of a postsecondary course. Students taking a dual credit course can receive postsecondary credit if they have satisfactory performance on an end-of-course assessment designed by the postsecondary institution.

**Dual Enrollment** - Dual enrollment is a postsecondary course taught at either the postsecondary institution or high school that allows students to simultaneously earn postsecondary and secondary course credit upon successful completion of the course.


**International Baccalaureate (IB)** - The International Baccalaureate is a non-profit foundation that offers four educational programs on a continuum for students aged three to 19: the Primary Years Program, the Middle Year Program, the Diploma Program, and the Career-related Certificate. IB students are encouraged to develop an understanding of their own cultural and national identity.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** - Also known as the Nation’s Report Card, NAEP is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics in the subject areas of mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history. Exams are administered every two years to representative samples of students in grades 4, 8, and 12, and provide common metrics to indicate levels of student proficiency across states and selected urban districts.

**Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)** - The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is a consortium of states that are working together to develop, administer, and improve the PARCC assessment, which is aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

**Postsecondary Education** - Postsecondary education refers to colleges, universities, and technical centers that grant certificates, credentials, and degrees beyond a high school diploma. STEM is a common acronym for the fields of study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Beyond the subject areas, STEM education reflects an innovative approach to teaching and learning that incorporates problem solving, critical thinking, and real-world application of skills. Additionally, STEM education is about incorporating technology in the classroom to enhance learning.

**State Salary Schedule** - Tennessee’s State Salary Schedule is a minimum salary amount determined by years of experience teaching and professional degrees earned.

**Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)** - The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program is a collection of criterion-referenced achievement tests designed to evaluate the levels of student proficiency in reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Among the assessments are the Achievement Test (grades 3-8), the Writing assessment (grades 5, 8, and 11), the End-of-Course tests (grades 9-12), and college readiness exams (grades 10, 11, and 12). Districts may also choose to administer TCAP assessments in selected subjects to students in grades K-2. There are four proficiency levels on the TCAP: basic, proficient, and advanced. Beginning in 2014-15, PARCC assessments will replace the TCAP math and reading exams.

**Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVASS)** - TVASS is a measure of the effect a district, school, or teacher has on the academic progress or growth rates of individual students and groups of students from year to year. TVASS scores are based on multiple measures, including TCAP 3-8 Achievement tests and high school End of Course exams.

**Tennessee** - Tennessee is a state where employees are hired on a permanent basis without periodic contract renewals. Ten- nessee law was changed in 2011 to enable districts to grant tenure to teachers after a five-year probationary period if teachers have demonstrated a certain level of effectiveness, based, in part, on student achievement.
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**Tennessee Department of Education (2013, September)**


**Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (2013, December). Email communication**


**http://www9.gwgeorgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hp/csw/pdfs/tennessee.pdf**


