



**Office of the Director of Schools**

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**Dr. Tim Parrott, Director**

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

As the start of a new school year approaches, I know you have many questions, specifically around assessments, and I'm pleased to share exciting updates with you today. Maximizing instructional time and reducing testing is a priority for our district, and the changes to assessments in the 2016-17 school year reflect these priorities.

Questar, a national leader in large-scale assessment, will be the primary vendor for the 2016-17 Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). Students, teachers, and parents deserve a better testing experience in Tennessee, and we are looking forward to working with Questar and the state department of education to measure student learning in a meaningful way and ensure students are on track.

Last year's Math and English language arts assessments were part of the TCAP umbrella, and in 2016-17, these tests will serve the same goal: to ensure that students are on track for the next step in their educational path. As in previous years, students in Tennessee will continue to take TCAP, but it will be shorter this year. This improved test measures how well your child has mastered the skills and content at his or her grade level.

Last year, students across the state had their testing experience interrupted due to difficulties with the previous vendor. This year's assessment, which has been designed and reviewed in partnership with Tennessee educators, keeps the same goals of focusing on real-world skills, including critical thinking, writing, and problem solving, but has greatly improved logistics and a reduction in testing time.

With this assessment, you will receive a detailed parent report, where each subject will be broken down into categories of skills to show where a student is doing well or needs some extra help. Teachers and parents can use this information to provide more focused supports or to find opportunities for advanced coursework, depending on the student's needs.

We are committed to the success of your child, and TCAP is one way that helps to ensure that every child is on the path to success.

Here are some specific details that have been shared with us by the state:

- Overall, students will spend approximately 30 percent less time taking state tests this year.
- Students will take the state assessment in one window at the end of the year.

- Online testing will be phased in over multiple years
- Socials Studies field test for grades 3 – 8 will be administered this school year only. This test will not be scored for a grade.

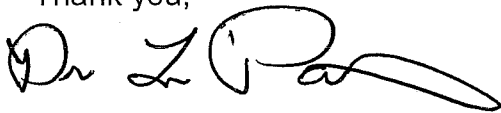
As we begin the new school year, it is important to remember that the results from these tests are just one piece of the overall puzzle. Results from TCAP are meant to be one of several measures that illustrate how a student is progressing.

Test scores should be used along with in-class performance; report card grades; teacher feedback; and what a parent, teacher, and even a student notices about his or her growth to form a fuller picture of a student's achievement.

In Anderson County, our goal is for every student to achieve his or her full potential. The end-of-year state assessment is just one way that we are able to better understand if we are meeting that goal. We are confident that with the quality instruction delivered by our dedicated educators, and your support, our students can meet and exceed these expectations.

Thank you for all you do to partner with us in your child's education.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Tim Parrott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Tim Parrott  
Director of Schools