

What Do You Know about TCAP and TVAAS?

The Tennessee Education Association supports ongoing comprehensive assessment of student growth. Standardized tests can be a useful evaluation method and should only be used to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. The Association believes that no one measure should be used to determine a student's performance and teachers must be allowed to utilize a variety of measures to accurately assess student growth.

The following is a list of introductory questions and answers around the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) and the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TCAP includes state-mandated student assessment programs such as the Achievement Test (grades 3-8), the Writing Test, the Gateway Tests and the End of Course Tests. This document mainly answers questions about TCAP Achievement 3-8.

TVAAS is a statistical analysis of achievement data and a tool that gives feedback to school leaders and teachers on student progress.

What is the TCAP Achievement Test?

The TCAP Achievement test uses multiple choice questions that provide a measure of knowledge and application skills in various subject areas for grades Kindergarten (K) – 8. The results of the TCAP Achievement Test provide valuable information regarding student's progress in Tennessee based on TN curriculum standards.

Who will take the TCAP Achievement Test?

The TCAP Achievement Test is mandated for all students in grades 3-8. The test is not mandated for grades K-2; however, school systems may elect to test students in K, 1 and/or 2.

What subjects are covered on the test?

- Kindergarten: reading, language arts, and mathematics
- 1st Grade: reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, word analysis, vocabulary, and math computation.
- 2nd Grade: includes reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, word analysis, vocabulary, language mechanics, math computation, and spelling.
- 3rd -8th Grade: reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

When will the test be administered to Tennessee students?

The annual testing window is published by the Department of Education. Each school system chooses a 6 day testing window within the overall specified state testing window. For a list of test dates go to

http://tennessee.gov/education/assessment/test_schedule.shtml

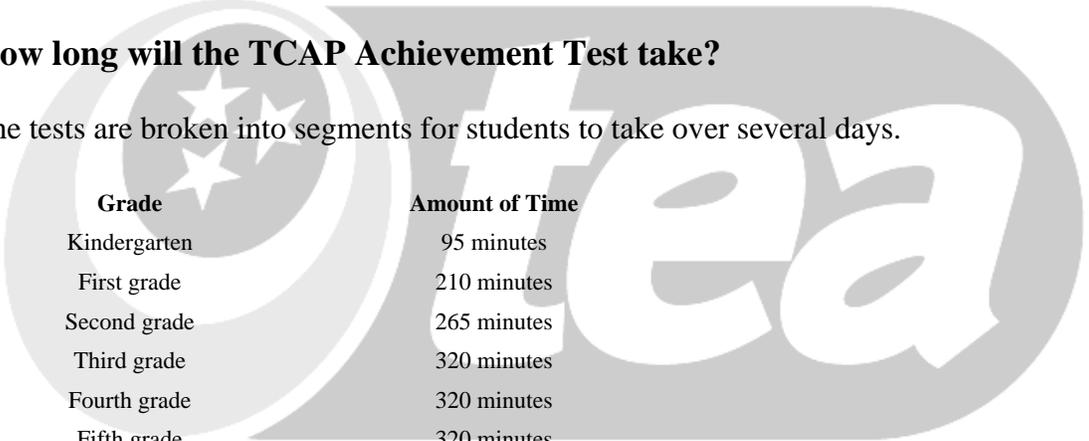
What are the accommodations for special populations?

Accommodations are modifications made to the test environment or test administration procedures. An accommodation may be used by a student only when necessary and when the student is proficient in its use. Accommodations are based on each student's IEP. There are English Language Learner Accommodations, Allowable Accommodations, as well as Special Accommodations available.

<http://tennessee.gov/education/assessment/accommodations.shtml>

How long will the TCAP Achievement Test take?

The tests are broken into segments for students to take over several days.



Grade	Amount of Time
Kindergarten	95 minutes
First grade	210 minutes
Second grade	265 minutes
Third grade	320 minutes
Fourth grade	320 minutes
Fifth grade	320 minutes
Sixth grade	320 minutes
Seventh grade	320 minutes
Eighth grade	320 minutes

These times are subject to change. See updated times at:

http://www.state.tn.us/education/assessment/doc/Time_Limits_ACH_ELSA.pdf

What types of score reports will be generated from the TCAP Achievement Test?

The reports for grades K-2 will provide information comparing the achievement of Tennessee students with the performance of students from across the nation.

The reports for grades 3-8 will provide information concerning performance on specific state objectives (criterion-referenced) and a description of student performance on academic skills based on the grade span standards (performance levels/indicators).

What types of items will be on the test?

The TCAP Achievement Test will include criterion-referenced items for all students in grades 3-8 in Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. All of the test items are multiple choice.

What are Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT)?

Criterion-Referenced items measure a student's performance according to specific standards, rather than to the performance of other test takers. These items are directly aligned with TN Content Standards and State Performance Indicators.

Where can a parent/guardian learn about their child's achievement results?

Teachers and school administrators can share information about a student's results. For an explanation and sample of on a child's Individual Profile Report (IPR) visit <http://tennessee.gov/education/assessment/doc/ACHParentBrochure.pdf>.

What is the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS)?

Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) is a statistical analysis of achievement data that reveals academic growth over time for students and groups of students, such as those in a grade level or in a school.

TVAAS is a tool that gives feedback to school leaders and teachers on student progress and assesses the influence of schooling on that progress. It allows districts to follow student achievement over time and provides schools with a longitudinal view of student performance. TVAAS provides information to assist teams of teachers to make informed instructional decisions.

TVAAS is not an additional student test, but a useful tool to help districts make data-driven decisions, with the TVAAS analysis, districts will be able to *see*, *report* and *act* upon growth data – they will '*see*' whether their students are in fact making progress; they will be able to '*report*' on the gains made and they will be able to '*act*' on what the TVAAS analysis reveals to make relevant instructional decisions for all groups of students.

How does TVAAS work?

TVAAS reports are the result of analyses of different tests/variables to produce an estimate of student progress and effectiveness of instruction over time. Up to five years of students' available achievement data is used in the process to estimate performance. For example, when Reading/Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies achievement data are available, future Mathematics performance will be estimated from

past performance in all four areas. Value added information for groups of students provides an indication of the effectiveness of schools and school districts, rather than inferring a school's effectiveness by examining static school performance.

What are the Benefits of TVAAS?

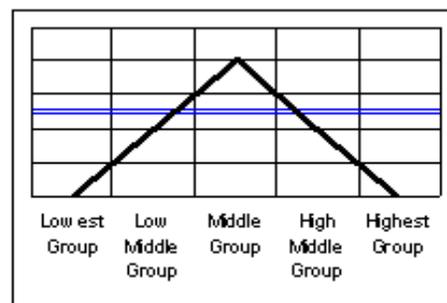
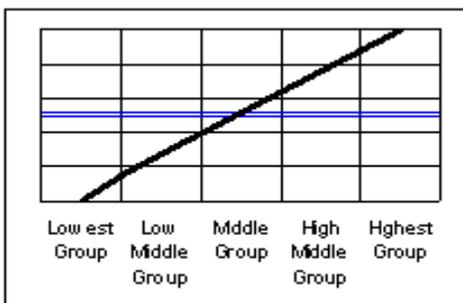
TVAAS methodology follows the progress of individual students over time. Each student is compared to his/her own past performance. By using individual student longitudinal data, each student serves as his or her own 'control' thereby eliminating the confounding impact of demographic variables, such as economic status or racial/ethnic group. TVAAS provides a unique gauge to measure how much students have grown each year.

TVAAS supplies schools and districts with rigorous statistical analyses. Reporting is at the fingertips of users and gives the option for looking at growth and growth patterns, rather than static performance of groups of students. The TVAAS methodology can analyze data obtained from a variety of assessment instruments (e.g., TCAP CRT's and High School End of Course). Consequently, results from the TCAP can be analyzed with the TVAAS model. Stakeholders are encouraged to visit the TVAAS Web site and explore the System and School Trend Analyses at <https://tvaas.sas.com/evaas/signin.faces>. Teachers can be given access to a secure site by their district test coordinator to analyze their specific data. TEA offers a demo site of the restricted TVAAS Web site.

Unlike typical achievement reports, which may reveal below average performance, TVAAS reports growth over time, thereby allowing districts to see where growth is occurring even though overall achievement rates may be below benchmark performance.

What might TVAAS look like?

TVAAS provides an analysis of "patterns of growth." Some typical growth patterns that an educator may see appear below.

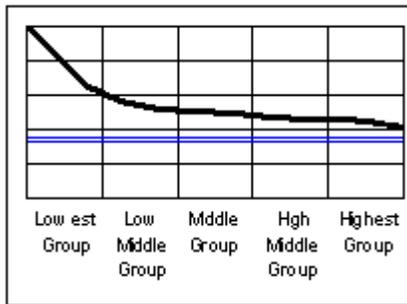


The Reverse Shed Pattern

This pattern reveals more than a year's growth for high performing students, while the low achieving group has not maintained a year's growth.

The Tent Pattern

This pattern shows more than a year's growth for average students, while both high and low performing groups are not maintaining a year's growth. Low Performing students are falling further behind.



The Optimal Pattern

This is the optimal pattern with all students making positive gains. Low achieving students are making the most gains. Over time this pattern has the potential to close the achievement gap.

The TEA recognizes the usefulness of testing, for diagnostic purposes. However, inappropriate interpretation of test scores and the use of mandated testing could lead to loss of reliability and validity of test results and/or serious misuse and abuses of testing. TEA urges the continued monitoring of standardized test data and advocates the use of a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques.

For more information on TVAAS, Teacher Effect and the restricted Web site, visit www.teateachers.org and log in to the Member Center.