



## **Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**

### **Understanding the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) oversees student assessment in all subject areas as mandated by state law and in fulfillment of federal No Child Left Behind requirements. Within this program are the Achievement Tests/ELSA for students in grades 3-8; the Writing Test, the Constructive Response Tests, the Secondary Assessments and End-of-Course Tests.

Students in grades 3-8 take the TCAP Achievement Tests in the Spring in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Some districts may test students, at grade-appropriate level, starting as early as kindergarten.

Students will also take the TCAP Writing Assessment in grades 5, 8 and 11. This is an assessment that provides an essay prompt and asks students to create an essay format response. Different grade levels will be expected to write in different formats, appropriate to the age.

In 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students take a Constructed Response Assessment (CRA); this is an operational portion of the TCAP test. The test is designed to measure content knowledge as taught from the Tennessee Curriculum Standards and requires students to construct their own answers. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade this test covers Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics; in 7<sup>th</sup> grade it tests covers Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics and Science.

In high school, students take End-of-Course Examinations in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, US History, Biology I, Chemistry and Physics. These assessments are also aligned to the learning objectives of the Tennessee Curriculum Standards.

These assessments measure a variety of educational measures. Student proficiency levels are shown through these assessments. Areas where teachers need to focus instruction can be seen from individual and whole grade results. The success a school is having in educating all students to the standards can be seen through the results of the assessments.

### **Format of the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**

The TCAP Achievement Tests in Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies are multiple choice tests. There are time limits for the test, however for students who require timing accommodations on a test per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) those will be provided. These tests are given in late April/early May. These tests are broken up into sections and taken over multiple days. The students are scored on a scale and those results translate into a proficiency level of Basic, Proficient or Advanced.

The TCAP Writing Assessment has students write a rough draft essay based on an assigned topic in a limited time frame. Students in grade 5 have to write in a narrative (story) style, students in grade 8 have to write in an expository (explanatory) style, and in grade 11 write in a persuasive style. These are scored by a holistic rubric that measures the overall effectiveness of the writing; the scoring is done by professional scorers.

The Constructed Response Assessment (CRA) for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders has a 90 minute test section in Reading/Language Arts and a 90 minute section on Mathematics. These call for students to construct answers rather than choose from a multiple-choice selection. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the Constructed Response Assessment (CRA) has a 90 minute section in Reading/Language Arts, 90 minute section in Mathematics and a 90 minute section in Science. This assessment is given in December.

The End-of-Course Examinations in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, US History, Biology I, Chemistry and Physics are multiple-choice format tests. These tests are given in one day. The grade a student

gets on the End-of-Course Examination accounts for 25% of the second semester grade. If students do not pass the End-of-Course Examination and still are able to pass the course, graduation requirements will not be effected.

For students with disabilities that require testing accommodations per an Individual Education Plan (IEP) those are made available. There is only English Language versions of the tests, there are no bilingual or translated versions.

### **Taking the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**

Students in Tennessee have an organized framework for learning in the Tennessee Curriculum Standards. The content the Standards states should be covered within each subject is aligned to what is tested on the TCAP assessments.

- In English/Language Arts students will gain proficiency in: language (vocabulary, grammar, and usage), communication, writing, research, logic, informational texts and literature. Underlying these are sub-skills that students should understand to bolster their ability in each category.
- In Mathematics, during K-8 the Mathematics Framework covers: mathematical processes, numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis, probability and statistics. In the high school level, students get a more in depth education in the specific subject – Algebra I, Geometry, etc – and the learning goals of those fields are described for teachers in the frameworks.
- In Science, students are expected to learn about inquiry, technology and engineering, life science, earth and space science, and physical science during their K-8 years. In high school, the subject matter does become more specific and the assessments address the content from the course, as aligned to the learning objectives for that content area in the Curriculum Standards.

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