

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016

Educators,

Let me start by saying thank you. Thank you for your dedication as we've transitioned to more rigorous standards and aligned assessments for our students. Like many of you, I am disappointed we are unable to provide your students with an online version of TNReady this year, especially after a year of thoughtful planning and hard work. However, we know that regardless of the testing medium, TNReady will assess *true* student understanding and problem-solving abilities that the real world requires. The alignment of this assessment to the high standards already being taught in your classroom every day will provide our students with an opportunity to show what they truly know.

To protect students' instructional time and test experience, we **determined that a paper and pencil test is our best option for this school year**. This change applies to both Part I and Part II of TNReady, as well as the social studies assessment. The state's vendor for TNReady, Measurement Incorporated, experienced a severe network outage Monday morning, causing significant problems with the MIST platform. Despite the many improvements to the system in recent months, we lost confidence in the system's ability to perform consistently.

As a result of this shift to a paper and pencil test, we will delay and extend the testing window for Part 1, which will begin no earlier than Feb. 22. Your district will share the specific testing dates for your school in the coming days. We thank you for your patience as we transition to a test medium that we are confident will allow all students to show what they know.

It's important to note that while the testing platform will change, **TNReady on paper is still TNReady**. This new assessment is fully aligned to the more rigorous standards you have been teaching for years, and it will assess *true* student understanding and problem-solving abilities, not just basic memorization skills. TNReady will provide both you and parents with valuable information about our students' college and career readiness.

You and your students have worked incredibly hard to prepare for the transition to online assessments, and I am sorry for the frustration this recent change has caused. We take full responsibility at the state department of education for the inability to test online this year, and we are working on a number of short-term and long-term solutions. We also believe that the investments you and your school have made in technology will pay off. Integrating technology into classroom instruction has always been about more than just a test; it is about preparing all our students for the world they will encounter after high school – in the workforce and postsecondary education. We remain committed to transitioning to a 21st century learning environment.

We know that you have put hours of time into the transition to TNReady – from ensuring your lessons align to standards, to adjusting the pacing of your coursework, to familiarizing your students with sample test items. What you are doing every day with your students matters, and in this transition to more rigorous standards and aligned assessments, we have been asking more of you than ever before. It has not gone unnoticed. We appreciate all you have done in support of this assessment transition, as well as your continued flexibility and dedication.

I appreciate your partnership and support of our students. Thank you for all you do to improve education in Tennessee.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Candice McQueen".

Candice McQueen
Commissioner of Education